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LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

JULY, 1914



NORTHBOROUGH CROSS

BY

L. COPE CORNFORD

Author of "Sons of Adversity," etc.

CHAPTER I

THE hand-bell ringers were ringing a tune with peal so sounding and melodious that no one heard the street door open. The ringers, some standing and some kneeling in a circle in the stone-flagged hall, were deftly setting down and picking up their bells; the servants were gathered together in the kitchen doorway; and on the further side of the hall the drawing-room door stood open.

Lancelot, reclining his little body on the broad balustrading of the staircase, gazing down upon the lighted hall, was suddenly aware of a white stranger. He stood against the front door, behind the circle of ringers, dressed in a long white mackintosh; his broad hat and the muffling which hid his face were crusted with snow, and twinkling flakes of melting snow powdered his shoulders. So he stood while the jolly bells chimed and rang the next verse; and to Lance's excited little imagination this mysterious visitor had stepped from out the Christmas Carol book and had stolen through the snowy night into his father's house. The stranger looked up at the little boy and nodded at him in a friendly way, and his strong voice struck recklessly into the tune as he came forward, passing below Lance, and reaching out a hand to him.

"Where's your father, Tyke? Take me to him, there's a good nephew."

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Lance slipped to the floor and trotted to the drawing-room door. The room was lighted only by two tall Yule candles burning on the mantel-piece; and a small, brown-bearded clergyman was reposing in an arm-chair beside the wood-fire. Lance, peering round the door, saw his father start upright in his chair with a face of terror.

"Gracious heavens!" said the clergyman.

"Why, Charlie, do you take me for a ghost?" cried the stranger.

"Dick—it's Dick!" said the little clergyman, jumping up. The brothers-in-law shook hands. "How brown you are!" the Reverend Charles went on delightedly. "How are you? How did you get here? We never expected you until next week."

"We had a quick run, and I came straight through, so as to arrive on Christmas Eve. That's the proper day for the prodigal to arrive on, is n't it?"

"Of course," said the parson. "Lance, run and tell cook to bring supper for your Uncle Dick at once."

"Why do you wear a dog-collar, Charles?" his new uncle was inquiring when Lance came back. "You never used to."

"It's clerical, it's comfortable—look at the girth—it saves washing, you can't see the join, and it's High Church," said the Reverend Charles, fingering the circlet of thin brass sheathed in linen, which was his own invention. "I wear a jewelled stole now—you shall see me wear it on the next festival."

"Shall I?" said Uncle Dick. "Hullo, here's the Tyke. Come here, nephew, and let me have a look at you."

Uncle Dick, Lance thought, was a very handsome man, with his bright eyes, heavy mustache, and his sun-browned face.

"How old are you, Tyke?" said Uncle Dick.

"Nine," said the boy.

"You've grown since I saw you," said the uncle.

"I knew you'd say that," retorted his nephew. "You'd be surprised if I had n't grown, would n't you?"

"Tyke," said Uncle Dick, "do you know who I am? I am the fairy uncle from the back of beyond, who has come home to make all your fortunes."

And Lance, who had met this hero in more than one story-book, went to bed highly excited, because he knew his father to be a poor man.

"He's not like his poor mother—not like a Thornhaigh, is he? He's more like you, Charles," said Uncle Dick, when they were alone.

"And yet," said the Reverend Charles, "I sometimes seem to trace in him a strain of poor Maria's temperament."

"Cheer up, Charles," said Uncle Dick, filling his glass. "He's young yet, and you have him all to yourself."

"I did n't mean that at all, Dick," the clergyman mildly protested.

"I can't tell you how much I esteemed and respected Maria's ascetic force of character. I miss her very much."

"Of course," said Richard Thornhaigh, with gravity. "But I want to talk to you about business, Charles—the business as to which I wrote you."

"Oh, yes, so you did. I remember the letter, now you mention it. Something about a gold mine, was n't it? Do you know, Dick, I distrust Australian gold mines. It's instinct, I suppose."

"I should think you did," cried Uncle Dick. "And if you knew as much about them as I do, you'd sicken at the word. No, sir. My business is legitimate. I am agent for the Westralian Amalgamated Trust and Investment Company."

"You think that's a good thing?" inquired the parson dubiously.

"I do. I do indeed. I put all I had into it—and here I am, as confidential agent. The shares are not on the open market—we don't want all the world to rush in. It's a snug investment, Charles. Fifteen per cent. How does that strike you?"

"It strikes me as fishy—to be candid," returned the Reverend Charles. "But we'll go into it to-morrow after breakfast, when my brain is fresh and clear. I own I am on the lookout for a profitable investment—indeed, we all are, from the Dean downward. The recent depreciation of land and—what they call—agricultural depression have seriously affected the Cathedral revenues, Dick. Dean Venables has been obliged to restrict his hospitality; and I heard he was actually putting down a man-servant."

"Well," said Uncle Dick, "I want to stay with you a bit, and do a little business for our mutual accommodation—what?"

"Stay as long as you like, and the longer the better, business or no business," said the Reverend Charles heartily.

The way to Uncle Dick's bedroom lay through Lancelot's sleeping-chamber. The two men paused, the Reverend Charles shading the light with his hand, and looked at the boy curled up and sound asleep. Richard Thornhaigh slipped a sovereign into the little stocking, bulging with gifts, which was tied to the bed-rail, and went into his room.

Over his mantel-piece hung a photograph of his dead sister, Maria; the presentment of a dark, hard woman, with tight black hair strained over the temples and twisted into a heavy chignon behind. When the Reverend Charles had left his guest to himself, Uncle Dick held the candle to the set features and looked closely at them.

"So you're in Heaven, Maria," he said. "Really, I think it's the place for you. How you did hate me, to be sure! And jealous too, because you thought I should lead the gentle Charles astray."

He set down the candle, went to the window, and drew aside the curtain.

Directly opposite the window, a white causeway led between high walls, to a flight of steps, above which a pair of wooden doors opened beneath an archway upon the Cathedral graveyard. One door was open, and the black oblong yawned beneath the snowy trees that overhung the archway from the further side. Beyond, the twin towers of the Cathedral glimmered, snow-encrusted, against myriad flashing stars.

"I wonder," thought Uncle Dick, "what I have come six thousand miles to find in this ancient, frozen city. Well, well, things will be as they must, men will drive and strive, and God help the hindmost, I say." And with that he went to bed.

Lancelot took his uncle out for a walk a few days after the arrival of that prospective benefactor. The wind blew sharply through the narrow streets of the old, steep city and the beaten snow in the roads and footways made a mottled, slippery surface.

They followed round the stone wall, some fifteen feet high, once the city wall, which closed in Mrs. Warrilow's garden, and turned up the steep hill to the right. Keeping still upon the right hand, you may turn into the north door of the Cathedral; or, if you turn to the left, the High Street leads you curving up to the Market-place. Thus, the shortest way from Saint Catherine's Gate to the High Street lay not round by the road but up the steps and through the doorway upon which Uncle Dick had looked out upon the night of his arrival, thence through the south door and the Cathedral itself.

When they returned from an exploration of the town, Lance guided his uncle around by the Deanery. The Dean, a slender, gaitered gentleman, with a large hat nestling upon a profusion of black and curling locks, was carefully closing the nail-studded door in the high wall behind him as the uncle and nephew approached.

"Ah, Mr. Thornhaigh," said the Dean affably, offering his hand as he spoke, to Uncle Dick, whose acquaintance he had already made. "I trust, sir, that you are experiencing no ill effects from your extended sea-voyage. We are a chilly city and a bleak and windy city, sir," went on Mr. Dean volubly, without noticing Uncle Dick's politely murmured reply, "but, though we are cold without, we are warm within—the northern characteristic, Mr. Thornhaigh, the northern characteristic!"

Mr. Thornhaigh was understood to observe that such a characteristic was, on the whole, the best of all characteristics.

"Have you seen our Cathedral yet?" continued Mr. Dean, turning to the huge cliff of building that towered immediately above them. "We consider our Cathedral to be one of the most interesting and marvellous monuments bequeathed to us by those wonderful mediæval times so grossly miscalled the Dark Ages. If *that* was darkness, then I should pray, Give us more of that darkness," said Mr. Dean, with surprising energy. "I don't know if you care for the relics of antiquity,

Mr. Thornhaigh; but if you do—if you are interested, sir—it would afford me great pleasure to go with you round the Cathedral some time.”

All the while he poured out his words, the little gentleman with the thin legs fidgeted from one foot to the other, and beat his hands restlessly together, his pale, eager face mobile as a monkey's, and his bright black eyes looking up at Uncle Dick's bronzed countenance. Uncle Dick, who beheld in the Very Reverend the Dean a possible investor in the Westralian Amalgamated, expressed his delight at this proposal.

As Mr. Dean left them, there emerged from the building a tall clergyman and a lady dressed and veiled in black. They stood together in conversation for a moment, then the clergyman, lifting his round, hard hat with broad brim and tassel (mark of the High Churchman), passed the uncle and nephew, with a nod of recognition to the boy. He was a black-bearded, swarthy man, with a hanging under-lip.

“Who's that feller?” asked Uncle Dick, gazing after the lean black figure with some appearance of distaste.

“That's Canon Glossop,” his nephew replied. “I don't like him. I think he's a brute, somehow—but I admire his sermons. His daughter Dolly,” added the boy, “goes to the same school where I learn drawing.”

At the bottom of the declivity, the road, after branching into Saint Catherine's Gate, led on towards Anglers' Green and the river. Half way there, on the right, stood a range of low buildings with round-arched doors and windows, like a mosque, all painted a cheerful yellow.

“That's the school,” said Lance. “Miss Starling lives in the front part, and the back is school-rooms, then there's a big garden.”

Uncle Dick surveyed the round-arched yellow building with the same attention with which he looked at everything in Northborough. In answer to his questions Lance told him that Miss Starling was a lady of some thirty or perhaps sixty years of age, and of a very kind nature; that she had started her school within the last year or two; and that she gave a good many dinners. Uncle Dick's mental notes upon this information might have been summarized thus: Maiden lady, tired of living alone, invested all her capital in school, anxious to possess social recognition and probably expending more than she can afford in attempts to obtain it. Another possible investor.

As they reached the door of Saint Catherine's Lodge, the Reverend Charles Crane, clad in cap and gown, turned out of the gateway leading to the Choir School. The Reverend Charles wore the fagged and worried aspect resulting from two hours' contention with the Choir School, of which he was master.

“Choir-boys are the worst boys in the world, I verily believe,” said the Reverend Charles.

“But I thought you were going to send the Tyke here to the Choir School,” said Uncle Dick.

"We must cut our coat according to our cloth," said the parson.

"Well, I've never been a choir-boy, thank God!" said Uncle Dick. "But I should say that some things were n't worth some other things. When's he going to start in?"

"At the half-term, I think," said his father; and Lance was immediately transported with joy.

"Take my advice, Charles, and send him to a good school," said Uncle Dick, when his nephew was out of the way. "Choir-schools are the devil, you know as well as I do. If I'd been sent to a good school, I should n't be where I am."

"That's a common delusion, Dick. Besides, I have n't the money. The Cathedral pays me a mere pittance."

"There's the Amalgamated," said Dick. "Fifteen per cent., Charles. Come!"

"Well, he must begin in the choir. I promised the Dean," said the Reverend Charles. "Afterwards we'll see." And so it was settled.

CHAPTER II

"Now, what, Mr. Thornhaigh," said Mr. Dean, striking an attitude, with his right hand to his chin, and his left foot advanced, the toe pointing upwards—"what is your opinion upon that crack?"

Mr. Dean, Uncle Dick, and his nephew were standing in the Cathedral, opposite the wall-arcading of the south wall of the choir aisle, contemplating an ominous fissure which severed a column of marble, and extended diagonally across the stonework.

"I should say, Mr. Dean," replied Uncle Dick solemnly, "that there was some kind of a settlement going on."

"Do you know," said Mr. Dean, facing round upon Uncle Dick with extraordinary animation, "that's exactly what Mr. Inkpen, our Cathedral architect, tells me? A settlement—a dangerous settlement! And the distressing thing is, Mr. Thornhaigh, that the Cathedral has really no funds available to preserve the venerable structure in decent repair, decent repair. But I was about to point out to you, Mr. Thornhaigh, the singular beauty of the Early English foliage to these capitals—commonly called the Stiff-Leaf foliage, to distinguish it from the later debased varieties, when the sculptor's mind began to forsake the purely conventional to riot in the merely meretricious—an example of what I mean may be seen in the tomb of Abbot Stephen Hagberg." The little Dean trotted down the aisle to the richly decorated tomb where beneath a traceried canopy the Abbot's stone effigy slumbered with folded hands.

"Poor Abbot Stephen!" cried Mr. Dean. "His lines, Mr. Thornhaigh, fell in stony places—his lot was cast in times not unlike our own, when the Cathedral revenues were much reduced. But his poverty was

entirely due to the rapacity of Henry the Eighth; nevertheless, he contrived to complete the twin towers, working at them, it is said, with his own sacred hands, daily from prime to nones. But to be candid, it has always been a mystery to me, Mr. Thornhaigh, where the money came from, even reckoning the tax he imposed upon every pound of butter and every dozen of eggs sold in the market-place, which earned for him the sobriquet of Stephen Butter-penny."

"Perhaps he mortgaged the whole edifice for the pew-rents. That's rather a brilliant idea—what?" said Uncle Dick.

"My good sir, mortgage! Mortgage the temple of God! Impossible, Mr. Thornhaigh!" cried the Dean. "I fear quite unthinkable, sir."

"Of course—stupid of me," said Uncle Dick hastily; but the Dean was already plunged in the full tide of discourse once more.

"No—as I was saying, Mr. Thornhaigh, the puzzle of where Abbot Hagberg got his money has never yet been solved, nor, in all likelihood, will it ever be solved. It is well known that before the dissolution of the monasteries the Abbey of Northborough Cross was among the richest of the northern foundations, until their wealth was confiscated and their lands taken away; and yet we find building operations continued without intermission upon a great scale, and large sums expended upon the Minster, which flowed from some secret source. Ah!" cried Mr. Dean, stretching a hand towards the recumbent stone figure, "could these cold lips speak and reveal the secret source!"

"Perhaps there's some of the money left, Mr. Dean," suggested Lance eagerly.

"I have often dreamed of it. But where?" said the Dean, taking the suggestion with perfect seriousness.

Lance thought that if he were Mr. Dean, he would dig for it in certain places that he had in his eye; but he said nothing.

"A little judicious investment, nowadays, might at least prove an equivalent to the butter-tax," remarked Uncle Dick.

Lancelot, taken with an idea, slipped away and sought his friend, Mr. Pottel, Head Verger. Mr. Pottel, tall, bland, and clean-shaven, clad irreproachably in black, with something of the air of a family physician and something of the family butler, stood warming his comfortable presence beside the big corrugated stove in the nave.

"Take me to the crypt, Mr. Pottel, please," said Lance.

"And what might you be wanting in the crypt, in particular, Master Lancelot?" inquired Mr. Pottel.

"I've got business there," said Lance. "The Dean told me to ask you," he added experimentally.

"Did he indeed, Master Lancelot? Now, that's curious, sir, because Mr. Dean said to me only this morning, he says, 'Pottel, on no account allow Master Lancelot in the crypt.' What do you make of

that, sir?" says Pottel, also experimentally, jingling his keys, with a benevolent smile.

"Never mind the Dean. Do come just this once, Pottel. I'll take the responsibility," and Mr. Pottel, having relieved himself of his pleasantries, weakly consents.

Lance made a tour of the crypt, came back to the Head Verger, and announced himself ready to go. As they emerged into the echoing nave, they were met by the Dean and Uncle Dick.

"Master Lancelot has been about a little particular business of his own in the crypt, sir," observed Mr. Pottel deferentially.

"And what have you discovered, young man, hey?" said the Dean, to Lance's annoyance. He was upon the trail of a discovery; but he had no desire to talk about it. "Let us come to lunch," said Mr. Dean, without waiting for an answer.

At the luncheon table appeared Mrs. Dean, a worn, silent little lady, and Miss Dean, who wore black ringlets, like her father's clerical curls, and spectacles, and whose sharp nose was just touched with a rosy frost at the tip; Mr. Bland, vicar of one of the subordinate parishes in Northborough Cross, whose kind, mild countenance peered forth from a ferocious bushy beard; and Miss Rosina Starling, a lady of middle age, with a plain, vivacious countenance, and coils of fading auburn hair. Lance observed her with curiosity. He had known Miss Starling hitherto only in her professional capacity, as the head mistress—the indulgent head mistress—of the seminary for young ladies whose drawing-classes Lance attended, and he wondered how Miss Starling would appear in society.

Mr. Dean, who had been talking all the morning, had scarcely said grace before he was launched again and again in full sail.

"As I was saying to my friend, Mr. Thornhaigh," Mr. Dean began, "we are all in want of a benefactor. That great and venerable institution in which our lives are so bound up, with whose welfare our own welfare may be said to be intimately connected—I mean the Cathedral—gazes reproachfully at us in its decay. To-day, I inquire of the universe, where is that benefactor? Where is the wealthy merchant who would make his thank-offering to the Heaven which has blessed the labor of his hand and brain? Where," cried Mr. Dean, smoothing the long hair from his little brow with an excited hand, "is the castled lord who would fain leave an enduring memorial of his piety?"

"They seem to think English railways and consols more attractive investments," remarked Uncle Dick.

"The Spirit of Mammon, my dear sir," said Mr. Dean, "own brother to the Spirit of Antichrist!"

"I sometimes think that our strength in the present juncture should lie in sitting still, Mr. Dean," said Mr. Bland. "Times change, and

circumstances, which now seem against us in material matters, may presently turn in our favor."

"Ah, I fear you have more faith than I, Bland," said Mr. Dean. "I can never sit still. It's a lesson I can't learn!"

"They also serve——" Miss Starling put in, glancing quickly about the table. "Do they not?" she added sweetly; and Lance decided that Miss Starling had been anxiously waiting for an opportunity to distinguish herself, and that she was nervous in this exalted company.

"One cannot always take one's Milton too literally, can one?" Miss Dean spoke with excessive quickness and a beaming smile.

"Doubtless the statement embodies a profound truth," her father broke in. "Still, I maintain, we are waiting for a benefactor. And when we come to think of it, are we not all, in our several ways, personally and individually, waiting for a benefactor? May it not be said of you, Miss Starling, that a benefactor who would handsomely endow, in the sacred name of education, your—ah—establishment, would be fulfilling your earnest desire?"

"Indeed, Mr. Dean, I cannot deny it." Miss Starling again rises to the occasion. "And I am sure you feel with me that the cause of education, and especially female education, is sacred indeed. If your benefactor should appear, I fear I should feel inclined to quarrel with you for his possession."

Uncle Dick, seated next to Mrs. Dean, was a good deal harassed, both by the unfamiliar manner of speech, and by the string of trivial questions whose infliction was Mrs. Dean's unflinching method of entertaining a guest; but it seemed to Uncle Dick that one thing was plain: These people all wanted money.

This deduction consoled him for the ordeal of that luncheon-party.

CHAPTER III

LANCELOT had been more idle and insubordinate than usual during his drawing-class at Miss Starling's seminary; and in order to distract the attention of his reproachful conscience, he was escorting Dolly Glossop home to her father's house in the North Alley, which descends to the left from the High Street as you go towards the Market-place.

"Supposing you could exchange fathers, would you?" asked Dolly.

Lance considered the matter for a moment. "No, I would n't. Would you?"

"Yes, I would," said Dolly, with emphasis. "I'm afraid of my father. Sometimes I think I almost hate him."

"I'm not a bit afraid of mine," said Lance. "He's not so very strict, and he does n't get cross—hardly ever, that is—even when I deserve it."

“I love your father. I think he’s perfect,” said Dolly.

They were passing the north door of the Cathedral, whence a few sedate ladies and one or two old men were emerging into the frosty twilight, starred with lamps and the kindly gleam of fire-lit windows. The evening service was ended, and the pealing of the organ sounded from within the great dark building. A lady, dressed in black, detached herself from the scanty crowd and came up to the children.

“I saw you the other day, Eleanor, when I was walking with my Uncle Dick. You were talking to Canon Glossop,” said Lance, who was privileged to address the lady of his childish affection by her Christian name.

“Do come home with us to tea, Eleanor,” said Dolly. “Then you can talk to Papa afterwards.”

“Oh, yes, Eleanor, *do* come—I’m coming,” said Lance.

With a child pulling at each hand Miss Warrilow yielded; and they had tea in the gaunt drawing-room where Mrs. Glossop lived all her days. For the Canon’s wife had been an invalid for many years. She was a woman of austere opinions, to whom self-denial was the rule of life. Seen in repose, she seemed to brood sternly upon wrong and sorrow; but at a word her face would light with a patient look of active kindness. With a countenance so lighted, Mrs. Glossop was conversing with her guests, when her husband, the Canon, entered the room; and Lancelot, who was busy, as usual, with his own observations, saw the brooding, watchful expression settle like a cloud upon Mrs. Glossop, while at the same moment the subtle flicker of pleasure seemed to pass upon Miss Warrilow’s pale face as she shook hands with the Canon. The clergyman took his tea from his wife’s hand without a word and without looking at her. Standing on the hearth-rug, his back half turned upon his wife, he talked to Miss Warrilow, while his grotesque shadow quivered and gesticulated upon the opposite wall. Lance, seated beside his friend Eleanor, stared up in silence at the bearded countenance with the loose under-lip. Presently he became fascinated by the man’s eyes. There was something wrong about the Canon’s eyes. Whether it was the boy’s fancy, or the play of the firelight, it seemed to Lance that the shifty eyes that glanced at him and glanced away were like the eyes of a beast, such as he had once seen in a travelling circus.

Finding the conversation totally uninteresting, Lance presently went to Mrs. Glossop and bade her good-night. As he shook hands reluctantly with the Canon, he noted that the clergyman’s hand was dry and trembling. Miss Warrilow, to his delight, said she would go home with him; and the Canon escorted them to the front door.

“Oh, Canon Glossop,” said Miss Warrilow, stopping on the threshold, “I should so like to borrow that book you mentioned, if I might—‘The Crystal Gates,’ was n’t it?”

"By all means," said the Canon. "I will lend it you with very great pleasure. If you will have the kindness to come into my study for a moment, I will find it."

"I will be back in a moment, Lance," said Miss Warrilow.

Lance, who was stamping impatiently in the street, had the pleasure of seeing the door shut upon him by the Canon, and, at that, he suddenly lost his temper.

"Glossop," said Lance, aloud to the dark street, "you're a brute, and a beast—and a fool. Just you wait till I'm a little older, Glossop. Just you wait, that's all! I'll"—he paused to invent appropriate indignities; and became so absorbed in their imaginary infliction that he fell silent, glowering at the shut door through the darkness.

"I shall wait here if she keeps me until to-morrow morning," said Lance. He pulled his collar about his ears, thrust his hands in his pockets, and trotted to and fro on the frosty cobbles. After some ten minutes of this exercise, Lance stopped again, glaring at the door.

"It's always jaw, jaw, jaw, with old Glossop, and never a minute's peace. She can't get away. But I never saw him talk to his wife. That's funny." Lance paused to consider this discovery. "I don't care," he went on. "He thinks he's got rid of me. He thinks I've gone home, docs old Glossop. Well, I shall simply stay here all night."

A step rang on the cobbles, and Uncle Dick came round the corner.

"Hullo, Tyke! Whom are you talking to?"

"Myself," said Lance. "And if old Glossop would talk more to his beastly self, and less to other people, it would be better for him. Here I've been waiting about two hours for Miss Warrilow, to take her home, just because he's jawing inside."

"Well, you run home, old chap. I'll wait for the lady," said Uncle Dick, who had lately dined at the house of Warrilow.

"I shan't," returned his nephew.

"All right, then, I'll go home instead," said Uncle Dick with perfect good-humor.

As he disappeared into the darkness, the door opened and Miss Warrilow came out.

"Lance, is that you? Oh, you poor boy, I am so sorry! I thought you would have run home long ago."

"I don't ever 'run' home," retorted Lance sulkily. "Besides, you said you would be back in a moment. It was n't your fault, of course," he added, recovering somewhat as he walked beside his friend. "I know what a beast old Glossop is."

"My dear Lance, you must n't talk like that. Some day I hope you will know Canon Glossop better." The neat gloved hand tightened its grasp upon the boy's hand. "If ever you are left alone in the world, Lance, I hope you will know what it is to find a friend." Eleanor's

voice was charged with some unintelligible emotion which worried Lance, while he sympathized vaguely. He said nothing; but he wished people would be more rational, as he trotted along by his friend's side through the lighted High Street.

At the corner by the Cathedral the pair were joined by Uncle Dick, who saved Lance all further efforts of conversation for the rest of the way; and the boy thought that his friend's trouble, whatever it was, presently lightened before Uncle Dick's gay talk, so that, when they left Eleanor at her door, he was consoled.

"Father's having a tea-party to-night," said Lance, as he entered the house with his uncle. "Are you going into the drawing-room?"

"Who's there?"

"Oh, there'll be Miss Buttermere, and Mrs. Bland, and Miss Mulcaster, and Miss Starling, and Mrs. Sawle, and there's sure to be Mrs. Venables——"

"That'll do," said Uncle Dick. "What an extraordinary number of ladies there are in this town!"

A servant, entering the hall, told Lancelot that he was expected in the drawing-room.

"If any one asks for me, Tyke, say I'm out," said Uncle Dick, and he disappeared into the conservatory.

There were but two ladies, Mrs. Venables, the Dean's wife, and Miss Starling, the school-mistress, in the drawing-room, as Lance entered, though the relics of tea and muffins seemed to betoken the recent dispersal of a larger company.

"Talking of investments—— Where's your uncle, Lance?" said his father.

"He's out," said Lance.

"How do you know?"

"I saw him in the town when I was out just now," said Lance.

"What a pity!" said the Reverend Charles, turning to the two ladies. "I had hoped my brother-in-law, who is, I believe, an astute man of business, would have explained to us the details of a really excellent investment. The matter, of course, is not one to be generally mentioned; but I am sure——since you have asked my opinion on the subject, Mrs. Venables——that my brother-in-law can have no objection to your knowing."

"The Dean would be most interested," said Mrs. Venables. "The Cathedral finances are in such a deplorable condition. Perhaps Mr. Thornhaigh would be kind enough to come and see the Dean."

"I am sure of it," said the Reverend Charles, inwardly pluming himself on his diplomatic talent.

"And I am very much interested in the matter of investments, as you know, who have been so kind in advising me," put in Miss

Starling. "Perhaps you would bring Mr. Thornhaigh to a little lunch some day when you are not too busy?"

The Reverend Charles congratulated himself on having paved the way upon which his brother-in-law might proceed to secure two more shareholders in the Westralian Amalgamated Trust and Investment Company. He had already, induced by Uncle Dick's glittering representations, backed by a persuasive array of figures, invested his own savings in the concern; and every shareholder "introduced" by the Reverend Charles brought him a small commission.

Upon meeting Canon Glossop after morning service in the Cathedral, the next day, the Reverend Charles thus tactically addressed him.

"By the way, Glossop, you have been so kind to me in the matter of my private affairs, that I should like to put a little financial opportunity before you, which has come my way through my brother-in-law's good offices."

The black-bearded man with the hanging under-lip gazed at the Reverend Charles with a face as dull as a sheep. An observer would have said that the Canon's mind was heavily preoccupied.

"Tell me about it," he said, after an appreciable interval of silence, and he began to walk slowly down the vast echoing nave.

Pacing to and fro beside the Canon, the Reverend Charles involved himself in a statement of such intricacy that he presently became aware of his own complete bewilderment. "I could n't have grasped this thing quite as clearly as I intended," thought Mr. Crane, and he glanced sideways at his companion. But the Canon's swarthy features remained vacant of all expression.

"I fear I am not so lucid on some points as I could wish, but I know it's all right," said Mr. Crane, aloud. "But my brother-in-law——"

"You must let me think over it at leisure, Crane," said the Canon, "and we'll talk over the matter again—with—whom did you say?—yes, I beg your pardon, your brother-in-law, of course. Yes, certainly."

Uncle Dick came up at the moment, and was introduced to Canon Glossop, whom he regarded keenly. The Canon, after shaking hands, made some excuse and hurried away. "I've just been recommending the Amalgamated to Glossop," said the Reverend Charles. "By the way, he's trustee for Lancelot's money under his poor mother's marriage settlement—I don't know if I told you."

"What's the matter with his eyes?" asked Uncle Dick.

"With his eyes? Oh, yes, his eyes? That's the result of his neurotic diathesis. He's a martyr to it, poor man."

"His *what*?"

"Neurotic diathesis—a nervous affection of the brain, I'm told."

"Oh, indeed," said Uncle Dick.

CHAPTER IV

THE middle of the Easter term of the Choir School was approaching when one day, growing weary of playing in the garden, Lance went out, ascended into the lighted town, and walked into the office of his friend, Mr. Inkpen, architect and Cathedral surveyor.

Mr. Inkpen was a meagre old man, with a sour red face and a sour tongue; but Lance understood him, and the two were friends. In his youth, Mr. Inkpen had been educated to believe that Greek architecture was the only architecture in the world; then, in middle life, he was drawn into the fanatic circle of the Gothic Revivalists; and very soon there was no more fanatical Goth among them all than Thomas Inkpen. Then, in the evening of his days, Thomas Inkpen, F.S.A., etc., etc., was appointed Surveyor to the fabric of Northborough Cross Cathedral; and this veteran Visigoth devoted himself to his charge as a lover to his mistress. He measured up the whole Cathedral, and recorded the same in a complete series of small-scale drawings. This occupied him the better part of four years. Then he began all over again, with a set of drawings to a larger scale. He hoped, finally, to draw all detail actual size, so that, if the Cathedral were disastrously burned to the ground, a second cathedral precisely the same as the first might be rebuilt immediately from the records of the faithful craftsman, Thomas Inkpen. Now he lived for two ambitions: he ardently desired to restore the ruined and decayed parts of the Cathedral to their former beauty; and when he died, he would be buried under the Cathedral roof.

Lance found the old gentleman bent over his drawing-board, the gas-light gleaming upon his thick white hair, a cup of tea and a plate of cakes at his elbow. Mr. Inkpen abhorred the use of tobacco; and, like many men of this persuasion, he retained the sweet tooth of childhood. Lance always admired Mr. Inkpen's astuteness in having made his office in the rooms above the pastry-cook's shop.

"Well, Lancelot, and how do you do? Have a cup of tea, my boy, and a cake. Young people like cakes, so I've heard." The old gentleman held his head on one side and screwed up his eyes when he spoke, and his voice sounded as if he were on the point of weeping. "Help yourself, help yourself, there's plenty more downstairs," said Mr. Inkpen; and he bent once more over his work.

Lance perched himself on a high stool, and munched his victuals, and sniffed the mingled odor of tracing paper and India ink, and listened to the click and fall of instruments on the board, and watched the patient draughtsman at his work. Lance thought it would be a sad fate to bend over a board and rule hard lines all day long.

"You know an awful lot about the Cathedral, don't you, Mr. Inkpen?" said Lance presently.

"Why do you ask, boy?" said the architect, in his peevish tones.

"Because I should like to learn about it, too," said Lance.

"Well, why don't you learn, then? There's the Cathedral"—the old man jerked his thumb savagely over his shoulder. "Go and learn."

"I thought you'd help me, Mr. Inkpen," said Lance plaintively. "I want to know about the crypt, to begin with."

Mr. Inkpen frowned at the boy over his spectacles; then he slid nimbly off his stool, went to a press, and pulled out a drawer, from which he took a large drawing.

"Here's the plan of the crypt," said he, spreading it on the desk. "Do you know what a plan is? No? Well, a great many grown people don't, neither; and what's more, they won't confess it; and what's more, they ain't ashamed of their ignorance. A plan, boy, is a horizontal section, and a section is a cutting. If I," continued the old man, with the appearance of the utmost irritation—"if I were a giant, and you were a bird—do you see, boy? Very well. Then if I were to slice through the walls of this room with a big knife at the level of the window-sill," said Mr. Inkpen, gesticulating with a T-square, "and if I then lifted the roof off, and you were a bird hovering in the air above, what you saw, looking down when the roof was off, would be a plan of the room. Do you understand? If not, think over it till you do. A giant with a knife, and a bird. Tell me when you're ready."

Mr. Inkpen crouched over his board while Lance thought it out.

"I'm ready, sir," said Lance, when he had grasped the idea.

"If you're quite sure, then look at the plan of the crypt. The black parts are the walls," and the old man, with every mark of impatience, patiently explained the diagram to the boy.

"I want your leave to go into the crypt when I like. Do let me, Mr. Inkpen."

"You really want to learn something about the place?" asked the old man suspiciously.

"Yes, I do really, sir."

"Very well, you must ask the Dean. I've no objection, provided you don't get into mischief. Now, good-night, my boy, good-night."

The Dean—good, innocent little man—when Lance, fortified with Mr. Inkpen's word, begged his leave to study architecture in the crypt, yielded an easy assent.

But the day soon came when Lancelot must leave these pleasant distractions to enter upon the battle of life.

All honeycombed and sullied, the snow still lies in ridges on either side of the hilly streets, when Lance takes his place in the Choir School as a scholar. The old, gaunt school-room, with its sour smell of ink and row of massive, battered desks, is deadly cold; the very blackboard, with the names chalked upon it of those boys who had rebelled most obstinately

against Mr. Thursby, the assistant master, on the preceding afternoon, presents a frozen appearance.

The Reverend Charles Crane, clad in cap and gown, enters as the chimes of the Cathedral clock, striking nine, fall from on high without the old schoolhouse. Five minutes are devoted to prayers; then the Reverend Charles addresses those boys whose names are written on the board, in terms of sorrowful rebuke.

Having delivered his little homily, the choir-master conducts lessons until a quarter to ten; when the whole school flocks riotously into the Cathedral to bear its part in the morning service.

After the service, the boys were allowed a break of a quarter of an hour. Then lessons were resumed in the Choir School and continued until half-past twelve. The Reverend Charles went home, and work for the boys began again at two o'clock, under Mr. Thursby, a young man of excessively respectable demeanor, who had climbed up the ladder of government examination to this excessively respectable position. And while the rest of the school disported itself in the walled playground behind the school-house, Lance spent his time in the crypt.

Thither would Mr. Pottel, silently protestant, conduct him; and there would he stay until he was tired of groping in the obscure nooks and corners, piled with ruins and rubbish, of that vast cavern. The presence of his friend the Head Verger embarrassed Lance, who wanted to borrow, or convey, a spade from one of the workmen who were always employed about the building, and dig therewith in likely places, to see what he could find. A boy of any imagination is persuaded that all ruins and antique buildings must needs hold treasure-trove concealed; and Lance had it firmly in his mind to discover some secret hoard, wherewith he would enrich whomsoever he chose. But the Head Verger's bland pertinacity had nearly caused this harmless enterprise to be abandoned; when Lancelot, groping in a little space behind a heap of stony rubbish at the far end of the crypt, found the foliated stone jambs and mullions of an ancient window, built into the wall.

"Where are we, Mr. Pottel?" asked Lance.

"Immediately beneath the little chapel opening out of the south transept, Master Lancelot. It is thought on 'igh authority that the window, which you now see is bricked up, at one time lighted a corresponding chapel down here in the crypt. The ground outside, though 'igher than it used to be, still does not rise much above the sill in that particular place." Thus the explanatory Pottel, not knowing what he said. For Lance instantly conceived a plan which should secure an independent access to the crypt.

The graveyard outside, at the angle formed by the junction of the south transept with the nave, sloped steeply in some five or six feet of green bank to the level of the sill of the old window; and that part

of the graveyard, lying high above the roof of the Choir School and the houses of Saint Catherine's Gate, was remote from observation and seldom visited; so that a choir-boy might easily turn the corner of the transept unobserved, and disappear down the bank. These strategic dispositions were carefully noted by Lance; he also observed that the bricks which filled in the window where once was glass, were rotten, and the mortar loose. The intermittent industry of a week or two made a hole in the brickwork through which he could pass into the crypt. Within, the opening was concealed by the heap of stone and mortar fragments; and after each visit he piled the bricks neatly in the gap. The door by which Pottel entered the crypt was at the further end; and should he appear, there was plenty of time to escape. Lance found half a pick-axe, with the helve attached, somewhere about the precincts, and an old spade that looked as if it might not be missed, and began his explorations.

These times of digging in the dark were times of enchantment to Lance. To enter by stealth through a window into the huge chamber, to grope for his hidden tools like a prisoner whose life depended upon his evading the gaoler's scrutiny, to toil alone in the gloom upon the track of hidden treasure, closed about with the profound tranquillity of centuries, made for Lance an adventure of pure intoxication.

At every stroke of the spade, he hearkened for the dull jar of iron upon gold or silver vessels, whose jewels winked dully through their crust of earth; in the eye of imagination, the flagons and chalices of the sanctuary, coined money in bags or worm-eaten boxes, rusting armor, bones and rings and weapons, lay plain to see, deep in the brown, friable mould. One more stroke, or yet one more, and Lance would stand upon the pinnacle of utmost expectation.

Meanwhile, Lance had discovered, in common with his fellows, that Mr. Thursby, in times of riot, was as a reed shaken by the wind.

Mr. Thursby was long-suffering; but, upon a day of sustained outrage, he fell upon the class with the cane, laying about him left and right, striking indiscriminately upon the head and hands. Only Lance he left untouched; but Lance's name appeared the next morning upon the blackboard in solitary disgrace.

"I hope you are ashamed, Lance," was all Mr. Crane said, when he entered; but when Lance went home after school he spent the rest of the day in the enforced retirement of bed.

"I told you how it would be," said Uncle Dick to the Reverend Charles. "Example? Example be blowed! How can you expect the smallest boy in the school to set an example to all the young roughs in Northborough? How much example did you set, for instance, at his age—what?"

When he returned to his burrowing, Lance, like all adventurers, came to an obstacle. A great slab of stone barred his progress; and

beneath that rock (he was persuaded) the way opened which should lead him on to fortune. Lance dug a trench about the slab, only to find it mortared upon a stone foundation. Clearly the miner must have recourse to strategy; and Lance went for a walk in order to invent a scheme at leisure.

Lance went to his favorite haunt, which lay some two miles beyond the town. Here the bare uplands were cleft by a little valley, thick with trees, where were sedgy nooks, and bramble thickets, and, in the midst, a tall cliff of yellow sandstone. On his way, Lance heard the dull report of an explosion, and he began to run; they were blasting in the quarry; and as he came in sight of the riven cliff, with the huge blocks of stone scattered upon the pile of broken fragments sloping to its base, Lance was seized with an inspiration. He found the foreman of the gang of quarrymen, and manifested so intelligent an interest in the art of quarrying, that the man kindly explained the process. Lance thanked the foreman politely, bade him good-night, and left the quarry, going ostensibly in the direction of Northborough Cross. Once among the trees, he turned aside, and proceeded with infinite craft, crawling upon his stomach in the approved manner whenever the ground permitted him to do so, and taking care to avoid treading upon dried twigs.

The hut where the quarrymen cooked their meals, and where all their gear was stored, stood a little way from the quarry, set about with trees. No one was there; the door was open; and presently Lance was heading swiftly for home, his pockets stuffed with blasting powder, and a length of fuse wound about his body under his waistcoat. Lance hid his munitions in the crypt, and went home to tea in a state of exaltation.

The next day, being a Saints' Day, was a half-holiday in the Choir School. Lance, eaten up with impatience, went directly to the crypt after morning school. By dinner-time his work was done.

That afternoon, Lance was required to attend evening service in the place of a fellow choir-boy. By some mysterious calculation he reckoned that the fuse would burn for at least two hours; and within an hour and a half the Cathedral would be closed for the night. And so, unable to contain himself, Lancelot fired the fuse before he went into the vestry.

The service came to its melodious end, and Mr. Pottel, majestically gowned, the silver poker of his office inclining upon his shoulder, rose up from his seat beneath the reading-desk, and stood in the aisle, waiting until Canon Glossop should have finished his private prayer.

The black-bearded Canon turns to the eastward and murmurs the appointed ascription; there follows the multitudinous rustle of the congregation relaxing itself to listen; and the preacher begins his discourse. He begins in a tone scarce rising above a whisper, so that presently his hearers are all straining to catch his words; when their

attention is wholly engaged, the orator will bring melodious thunder and harmless lightning about their heads, with gushing intervals of healing and sweet rain.

To Lance, the pale face of Eleanor Warrilow, sitting opposite to him, detaches itself from the bed of listening faces, set in a black field. Her face, and the succession of colored pictures, presented by the preacher's eloquence and the gray mystery of the Cathedral, blend and blur together in his mind, and he falls asleep. In his sleep, his thoughts run into dreams; he is journeying up a rocky steep, that pale face beside his own, towards high and shining battlements, crowned with a bright cloud, which opens and reveals the Minster towers, white as milk upon the blue; then comes a clap of thunder, the tower sways, the shining walls are split in twain, and Lance awakes in wild terror. The preacher's voice has ceased; frightened people are rising in their seats; a confusion of people is streaming out upon the aisle; and a pungent reek of smoke is in the air. Lance, scrambling to his feet with the rest of the boys, glances up at the pulpit, and beholds a crumpled heap of surplice and a black head, prone upon the sill, which reminds him, for a passing instant, of an incident in the life of Mr. Punch. He is possessed with some vague conviction that part of one of the towers has fallen; moving with the rest, he finds himself in the nave, where the Reverend Charles orders the boys to go home without disrobing; he runs out into the moist darkness in his surplice, and sees the twin towers looming black upon the stars; and a dreadful conviction clutches at his heart.

There are some disasters for which a clean shrift makes the swiftest remedy; Lance had half-an-hour to consider the situation before his father returned from the Cathedral. Mr. Crane was charged with dismal suspicions; but Lance hastened to anticipate his father's questions, plunging immediately into a full confession. Having made an end, he backed instinctively towards the door.

"Where are you going?" demanded the Reverend Charles.

"Out—I thought," faltered Lance, who, now that the worst was over, was eager to visit the scene of his exploit.

"You will go to bed, my son, and remain there until I tell you to get up," said his father, with great severity. "I must think what can be done with you. Ordinary methods seem to fail in the most extraordinary way."

Lancelot's pillow was wet with most unwonted tears that night. But after a while he cheered up, and lay thinking. He remembered the sudden, inglorious collapse of the Reverend Canon Glossop; and grinned to himself in the dark.

Meanwhile, his father, taken with a sudden resolution, was writing to the head-master of the preparatory school where he himself had been educated; and soon Lancelot was transferred to that genteel academy.

CHAPTER V

IN the days that followed Lancelot's departure, Uncle Dick went much into society. The Very Reverend the Dean invited Mr. Thornhaigh to dinner; so did the Chapter; and so it was that Uncle Dick was made one of that eminently exclusive body known to the other coteries of Northborough Cross as the Cathedral clique. The town used to say that the Cathedral was uppish in its ways; the county, that the Cathedral was narrow in its ideas; but the three were very good friends, on the whole; and Uncle Dick, by the exercise of a little discretion, enjoyed the confidence of all.

Mr. Thornhaigh opened an account at Greenway & Totterdell's, the local bank; and old Mr. Greenway invited Mr. Thornhaigh to take pot-luck with him, whenever Mr. Thornhaigh felt himself so disposed. Our leading ironmonger, who lived among green fields in a Gothic villa (designed by Mr. Inkpen), a little way out of the town, hoped that Mr. Thornhaigh would take him as he found him, together with a neck of mutton and a tolerable glass of port. Farmer Todmorden offered Mr. Thornhaigh a goodish mount for the next meet; and Lord Almondbury, Master of the Hunt, sent Mr. Thornhaigh a card for the Hunt Ball.

Uncle Dick opened a little office, over the saddler's in the High Street, for convenience in transacting the business of the Westralian Amalgamated Trust and Investment Company. Business came slowly, but still it came; and the shares of the Amalgamated rose steadily in value. Mr. Greenway, the banker, old-established, universally-respected, declared in his bank-parlor that in his opinion the investment, though undoubtedly speculative, was, *for a speculative investment*, sound, sir, sound.

One morning there entered to Uncle Dick, sitting in his offices, a bulky gentleman with a military air, a red face, a fierce eye, bristling gray hair, and a drooping gray mustache. He was dressed in a suit of vivid check, and wore a square bowler hat slightly cocked over one eye.

"Good morning, sir. You don't know me—you don't know me—but I know you," said the military gentleman, using a swift and abrupt manner of utterance. "With your leave, I introduce myself—Major Gorges—Tristram Gorges—Major Tristram Gorges, at your service. Uncommon name, sir. None the worse for that. Easy to remember."

The Major shook hands warmly with Uncle Dick, sat down, placed his hat on the floor, his gloves beside his hat, and his rattan cane beside his gloves; and produced a silk handkerchief of great size, with which he polished his glowing countenance.

"Trade under name of Beersheba—John Beersheba," resumed the Major, fixing his little blue eyes sternly upon Uncle Dick. "Telegraphic address, Beersheba, London. *Now d' you know me, sir?*"

"Of course," said Uncle Dick, recognizing a financier famous in the city of London. "Glad to meet you, Major."

"Gladness mutual, sir. Passing through on way to Scotland, thought a little business possible. Eh? How's business, Mr. Thornhaigh? How is the Amalgamated?"

Mr. Thornhaigh handed the Company's balance-sheet to his visitor, who glanced at it slightly, and enclosed it in a thick pocket-book secured by a strap.

"Fact is, Mr. Thornhaigh," said the Major, "I had a little scheme in my noddle, with regard to your Company, if you'd care to hear it. By the way, I suppose you have a certain amount of influence with your directors—eh?"

"I manage the Company affairs on this side the water, to a great extent, certainly," said Uncle Dick.

"Quite so," said the Major. "Companies's one-man business, after all, I often think, like everything else. Well, sir. Now, you're doing well, but (excuse me) you might be doing better. You might, indeed. I'm certain of it. And I'm prepared to show you how."

And the Major proceeded to explain a neat scheme for blamelessly increasing riches. He was, it seemed, ready to float a company (to be called the Southern Consolidated Investments Company, Limited), to purchase the Westralian Amalgamated Trust and Investment Company, with a capital of one hundred and eighty thousand pounds. Of this amount, sixty thousand pounds were to be reserved for working capital; the Amalgamated was to receive another sixty thousand in fully paid shares; and the remaining sixty thousand would be appropriated by Major Tristram Gorges, in consideration of his services in getting together a Board of Directors, and of his bearing the preliminary expenses incurred in forming the new company.

"And where do I come in?" asked Uncle Dick.

"What's the capital of the present company? Twenty thousand. Very good. For every share you now hold, my dear sir, you, in common with the other shareholders, would be allotted three shares. Besides, you might occupy an official position, with salary at proportionate rate. Now, sir! How's that? Eh?"

"I'll think of it," said Uncle Dick.

"And let me know. Good. Come to lunch," said the Major, with surprising swiftness of transition.

Uncle Dick did think of it. He did more. He made investigations into the past history and present position of Major Tristram Gorges; and he found that the Major's methods of business (however speculative) had hitherto resulted in a series of remarkable successes. Major Gorges himself was reputed to be worth one or two millions; and almost every concern in which he had dealt had prospered.

So it was that the Westralian Amalgamated was wound up, and those of the shareholders who did not sell their shares to the new Company were allotted three shares in the Southern Consolidated for each one they had in the Amalgamated. And, as most of the shareholders were of Uncle Dick's friends and acquaintance, and accustomed to be guided by his counsel, most of them not only retained their original shares but after a while invested in more. The Very Reverend the Dean and my Lord Almondbury kindly consented to allow their names to figure in the list of directors at the head of the prospectus; and Major Tristram Gorges, to show his appreciation of this act of condescension, forced upon the acceptance of these gentlemen certain checks for some thousands of pounds; which, he explained, were merely the customary directors' fees, paid in advance—to save trouble.

CHAPTER VI

THE Reverend Vyvyan Glossop sat alone in his study, a prey to neurotic diathesis. That is to say, the clergyman was huddled together in his arm-chair, his eyes closed, his head sunk on his breast, his lean fingers twining in his black beard. A fire burned in the grate, though the summer sun was hot upon the window, and a strong beam struck upon the embers, turning them to ash, the hue of which matched, in a ghastly manner, the color of the Reverend Canon's twitching countenance. There came a knock at the door, and the Canon leaped in his chair, and his eyes opened. They had a curious glassy appearance as he turned his dull glance upon the servant standing in the doorway.

"Mrs. Penfold to see you, sir."

"I have nothing to say to Mrs. Penfold." The clergyman's voice was harsh with acute irritation. "What does she want?"

"Only to see you a moment, sir, she said, if it was n't troubling you too much. She would n't keep you, not a minute, sir."

"Tell her to go away. I—er—I have nothing to say to Mrs. Penfold. Tell her I am engaged. And—here, stay—if Mrs. Penfold comes again, I am not at home. You understand—not at home."

The servant gone, Mr. Glossop sat hunched in his chair, blinking at the fire, his under-lip trembling. Presently he took from an inner pocket of his clerical waistcoat (a vesture apparently seamless and buttonless) a little case containing a needle-syringe. Then he rolled up his coat-sleeve, baring a corded arm, peppered with tiny red scars, and applied the injection.

Outside, the impartial glare of the sun, lighting upon the figure of a woman as she turned away from the Canon's nail-studded door, struck into prominence the bunch of crimson roses that burned in the woman's hand. Mrs. Penfold turned the corner of North Wynd, into

the shadow; then she leaned her arms upon the blank wall, and hid her face upon them. In this posture she was descried by Uncle Dick, who, clad in a suit of light gray tweeds, a scarlet tie, and a straw hat (slightly tilted upon one side) with a white ribbon, was strolling up from the lower town.

"What's the trouble?" said Uncle Dick, stopping beside the bowed figure.

"Please to go away," said Mrs. Penfold, without raising her head. "There's nothing the matter."

"Don't tell me," said Uncle Dick. "Come! The sun's been a little too much for you. Now, you know me—my name's Richard Thornhaigh—so just take my arm, and tell me where you live, and you'll permit me to see you home—like a sensible creature."

Mrs. Penfold raised her face, deformed with weeping. She had light brown eyes, large and round, and the braids of her brown hair drooped about her temples.

"Oh, I know who you are, Mr. Thornhaigh, to be sure," said she, "but you must n't trouble, sir. I was only a little overtook. I'm better now, sir, and thank you."

"You'd be better still if you had a little rest out of the sun, don't you think so?" said Uncle Dick. "That's Canon Glossop's house, and I'm sure Mrs. Glossop——"

"I would n't cross the door of the Reverend Glossop's, not for a million million pounds in gold, I would n't," interrupted Mrs. Penfold.

"All right, if you'd rather not," said Uncle Dick, inwardly astonished. "Give me your arm—that's right—and we'll go home. Shall we," asked Uncle Dick, noting the worn gold circlet on the work-hardened finger, "find your husband in?"

Walking bashfully linked to Uncle Dick, Mrs. Penfold explained that her husband was a commercial gentleman, travelling in the fur rug and sealskin line, who was seldom at home for more than a Sunday once a month or so; and Uncle Dick somehow gained an impression that Mr. Penfold was not a man of a sympathetic nature. From his experience of commercial gentlemen, Uncle Dick projected a fancy portrait of Mr. Penfold, fur-coated, red-faced, loud, and smoking a cigar with a flashy label round it; and he was sorry for Mrs. Penfold. When they reached the house, one of many houses in a long street of a deadly uniformity, she begged Uncle Dick's acceptance of the roses she carried in her hand.

"I plucked them myself this morning, in my friend the market-gardener's, and they were all wet with the dew," said Mrs. Penfold. "And thank you kindly, sir, I'm sure, for your goodness."

Uncle Dick stuck a rose in his buttonhole, and walked leisurely back to his office. As he passed up the North Wynd, he cocked an eye

at the three-sided, brick projection of the Canon's house where it descended upon the sloping line of the causeway, with two windows peering from under the eaves, like secret eyes. "That dusty red house knows a lot of shady stories, I'll swear," said Uncle Dick. "It seems I came upon the fag-end of one to-day. Wonder what's going on in there this minute."

Had Uncle Dick but known it, there was an informal confessional going on, and the penitent was none other than Miss Eleanor Warrilow. For, while Uncle Dick was taking Mrs. Penfold home, Eleanor Warrilow had brought a case of conscience to Canon Glossop's enlightening counsel.

The Canon Glossop who greeted Eleanor was a very different clergyman from the shaking, irritable, clay-visaged wreck which, but a few minutes before, had so roughly dismissed Mrs. Penfold.

His eyes were bright (unless you looked closely into them, you would fail to observe that the pupils were dilated), the patch of swarthy skin above the black beard was suffused with red, and his hanging underlip was steady.

"I have had," said Eleanor, "a delightful letter from Lancelot, this morning. He seems to take very kindly to his new school."

"I hope the new school takes kindly to him," said the Canon. "A very difficult lad, I should think. I should say, highly unteachable, and of a temper naturally irreligious."

"His father always thought him rather open to higher influences," said Eleanor. "And I know he has good impulses."

"My dear young lady," said the Canon, rising, and pacing the floor, "you touch upon such a common—such a fatal—error. The only thing that avails is the grace of God, as manifested in and through the sacraments of the Church; and why mere difference in years, as in the case of children, should place them on a different plane from the rest of sinful humanity for whom Christ died, I have never been able to conceive."

"But the baptized child is surely saved, though without active consciousness or effort on his part, is he not?" said Eleanor, who began to see her young friend Lancelot standing in some jeopardy.

"I would not say so—I would not dare to say so," returned the Canon, his black eyebrows rising and falling, as he paced to and fro.

"You talk as if there were no hope. Is there no hope—no remedy?" Eleanor asked.

"It is not given to the priest," said the Canon, "to pronounce upon that mystery. The priest can but point the way. He can but administer the sacraments."

"But of what avail are the sacraments without the changed heart?" asked Eleanor.

"Now, I wonder," thought the Canon, as he made reply, "if she has any one in particular in her mind. The sacraments, my dear young lady, have for their object the bringing to pass of that very change of heart—or, as I prefer to call it, character—of which you speak. Only by change of character shall a man—or a child—or a woman—gain the kingdom of heaven; and only by means of the sacraments may that blessed, all-important re-creation be effected."

"But supposing," Eleanor persisted, the point of her parasol still drawing lines upon the carpet—"supposing the sacraments are waiting upon one side of the wall, and the man—or the child, or the woman—passes by, daily, on the other. Supposing he—or she, or it—a naturally virtuous person, so far," she timidly amended, feeling the Canon's green eyes upon her, "so far as an irreligious person may be called virtuous, passes by the church door and never enters."

"She *has* some particular person in her mind," thought the Canon. "His blood be on his own head," he said easily, with a partial return to that former impersonation.

Eleanor flushed an even pink. "What ought one to do?" she said.

"I don't quite understand your difficulty," said Mr. Glossop smoothly. "What ought . . . ?"

"I mean," said Eleanor confusedly, "what should be the Christian's personal attitude to—"

"To Mr. Richard Thornhaigh?" The Canon completed the sentence in his mind. "To the wilful unbeliever?" was what he said. "To the wilful unbeliever, the Christian attitude is one of pity, of course; and, emphatically, also of course, an attitude of consistent aloofness," said the Canon, with great firmness.

"But one can't help meeting such people. One does n't live in a desert," Eleanor objected. She stopped tracing lines on the carpet, and looked squarely at the Canon, somewhat to his surprise. He had expected her to avoid his glance at this point.

"True," said he. "But we are told to be in the world, but not of it. How shall the Christian," said the Canon experimentally—"how shall he (or she)"—the child, as an example, seemed to have dropped out of the conversation by this time—"be unequally yoked with an unbeliever?"

Eleanor glanced at the clock. The hands pointed to ten minutes to one. At one o'clock Mr. Thornhaigh was accustomed to leave his office and return to Saint Catherine's Gate to lunch.

"I don't care," she thought, "Mr. Glossop has no right to dictate to me like that;" and she proceeded to take her leave of the Canon.

As Uncle Dick emerged from his office, a bunch of roses in his hand, he caught sight of Miss Warrilow, walking homeward on the other side of the road.

"Would you care for these?" said Uncle Dick, presenting his roses.

"They were picked very early this morning—with the dew still upon them."

Eleanor, as she set them in her belt, felt that she had a little misjudged Mr. Thornhaigh. There was evidently a vein of poetry deep-seated in his practical nature which might yet be worked to spiritual profit.

"Do you remember," Mr. Thornhaigh went on, "how you promised to come to Conyers Royal? You've never come, you know. Let's make up a party, and go."

The day before, even the hour before, Miss Warrilow would have fobbed him off with feminine excuses. Now, she assented easily to the proposition.

So upon a Saturday, Mr. Thornhaigh, Miss Warrilow, and her mamma, the Reverend Charles with a few of his numerous lady friends, all drove to the ruined Abbey and fair demesne of Conyers Royal; and Lancelot, had from school, and his friend Dolly Glossop, were of the party.

The shadows of evening lay broad upon the shaven lawns of Conyers Royal when Uncle Dick and Miss Warrilow paced to and fro beneath the great tower of the ruined Abbey. High above them, the stone figure leaned over the parapet, as though listening to their talk. The place and time brought emotional recollections of poetry to Eleanor's mind; certain disjointed lines came to her mind; and she felt inclined to repeat them to Uncle Dick. But, glancing aside at Mr. Thornhaigh, Eleanor put away that inclination. Uncle Dick, with his hat on the back of his head, serenely smoking, serenely reminiscent of his lunch, serenely conscious of a general peace and contentment, presented an appearance hopelessly incongruous with Miss Warrilow's sentimental impulses. Her thoughts turned into a different channel. The recollection of Mr. Glossop's sinister denunciations rankled in her mind.

"Have you never thought, Mr. Thornhaigh," began Eleanor, "of the true and beautiful idea which underlies the conventual system?"

"I haven't a doubt they were—and are—very good men and women," said Uncle Dick, beginning to feel that, were it not for the combined influences of a strong lunch, a good cigar, and a summer evening, the conversation would have bored him.

"Nothing more than that?" said Eleanor. She said it so earnestly that Uncle Dick looked at her.

"My dear Miss Warrilow," said he, "I don't want to be flippant; but, really, I've never given the matter a thought. It hardly concerns me, you see."

"And yet," said Eleanor, looking away into the rosy sunset, "it should concern you."

"But why?"

"The great principle of Sacrifice concerns us all, surely."

"That's what the parsons say, isn't it?" said Uncle Dick, with some appearance of awakening interest.

"Certainly it is part of their duty to expound that doctrine," said Eleanor.

"Well, you see, parsons are not much in my way," said Uncle Dick. "I run across them sometimes in the way of business; and I generally find, on those occasions, that it is always the other party who is to do all the sacrificing—never the parson."

"Mr. Thornhaigh," said Eleanor, with the same earnestness, "believe me, you are prejudiced."

"I am," Uncle Dick agreed, with great cheerfulness.

"To these men whom you, judging perhaps from one or two isolated examples—to them, we are told, are committed the oracles of God."

"We are told? By whom?"

"By the Church, the great Mother," Eleanor replied glibly.

"Exactly," said Uncle Dick. "In other words, by the black-coated gentlemen themselves."

A pause, not devoid of some slight embarrassment. Uncle Dick took his cigar from his mouth, surveyed it critically, and put it back again.

"Are you never serious, Mr. Thornhaigh?"

"I am at this moment; and I tell you, I've seen these same parsons doing more harm than I can tell you. I've seen more than one woman's life spoiled by the family clergyman—health ruined, peace of mind upset, friends estranged, and all the rest of it—all with the best intentions on the part of our clerical friend. And so," said Uncle Dick, coming rather suddenly to a conclusion, "when you talk to me of parsons, Miss Warrilow, I'm sorry, but—much as I should like to—I can't agree with you."

"Neither can I agree with you, Mr. Thornhaigh," said Eleanor. "How can I? I don't doubt that you speak in all sincerity, but that makes it all the worse. . . . I think we had better drop the discussion."

The sun had gone down behind a curtain of gray, the light had faded, and a little wind went past with a chill sigh. Uncle Dick felt, vaguely, that he had somehow behaved in a brutal manner.

"Oh, who's that?" cried Miss Warrilow, looking upwards, as some small missile struck the crown of Uncle Dick's straw hat, and perceiving, for the first time, the dark figure leaning over the parapet.

"That's a monk—a clergyman who chucked himself off the tower, sooner than be a clergyman any longer," said Uncle Dick, also gazing upwards. "But dead monks don't throw stones. I'll go and see who's up there," he added.

"I like her very well," said Uncle Dick to himself, as he climbed the winding stair, "if it was n't for this pious craze. She's a good sort,

and it may wear off. If it does——” Uncle Dick began to speculate, not for the first time, as to how he would appear in the character of suitor.

As Uncle Dick’s head appeared upon a level with the leads, his hat was crushed over his eyes, and Lancelot tried to slip past his uncle and down the stair. But he was seized and pinioned.

“What shall I do with him, Dolly?” asked Uncle Dick, of Miss Glossop.

“Hold him over the edge by his heels, if you’re strong enough, and see if he cries out,” responded that young lady promptly.

For a dizzy moment, Lance, swinging head downwards in space, saw the grass and bits of sculptured ruin, far below, beckoning to him. Eleanor Warrilow turned a white face skywards, and shrieked aloud; and Uncle Dick as he handed his nephew over the parapet glanced aside at Dolly Glossop. Leaning against the stonework, the color of her pink cheeks not a whit heightened, her round gray eyes quite serene, Dolly was placidly entertained.

“Good boy,” said Dolly. “Good dog, then, not to howl when he’s held up in the air.”

“Well, there’s no parsonic rot about *that* young lady,” was Mr. Thornhaigh’s inward reflection, as his nephew swiftly kicked his uncle’s shins and as swiftly escaped.

CHAPTER VII

LANCELOT had much to do when he came home from Saturday to Monday. On Sunday morning, before service, he walked round about the Cathedral, picking out his old acquaintances, the grotesque little beings carved on gargoyle and finial, and noting Mr. Inkpen’s last restoration. Then he went inside; and, finding Mr. Pottel with both his hands employed in pulling the small ropes which worked the hammers striking upon the bells, pilfered the keys from the Verger’s coat-pocket, and went into the crypt. The acrid, earthy odor took him by the nose, and carried him straight back to the days of his childish explorations; which seemed so incredibly childish and so far away that Lance turned from the remembrance. Upon the traditional site of an ancient well, was an excavation; and Lance, coming upon Mr. Inkpen after service, respectfully inquired of him as to its object. The old man eyed him with a wry face.

“You’ve a wonderful thirst for information, my boy,” said he sourly. “I remember that very well. Now, why do you want to know?”

“I am really interested, sir,” said Lance.

“Another gunpowder plot?” asked Mr. Inkpen, who had never forgiven Lance for his blasting operations.

"No, sir. That was a long time ago, sir," said Lance, with an engaging smile.

"Why, then," said the architect, mollifying, "I'll tell you some more. The Dean thinks—and so do I, as I've been saying for years, only no one heeded—that the whole subterranean structure of the Cathedral should be surveyed—so far as our limited means will allow—if it were merely for structural reasons. But, quite as important," said Mr. Inkpen, shutting his eyes and speaking as though he were just going to burst into tears, "even more important, is the question of symbolism. Now, as you doubtless know, after your exhaustive studies in the Cathedral, Master Lancelot, the symbolical scheme of the structure is at present sadly incomplete."

Lancelot could extract no more than that from the old gentleman; and he went home to that cold roast beef and those pickles which are a British institution as impregably established as the Church itself. Followed, the inevitable drowsy consequences; the Reverend Charles, who was understood to be in a state requiring delicate consideration, owing to the exhausting nature of his spiritual labors, retired to his study; and Lancelot went to smoke with Uncle Dick in the conservatory. Uncle Dick allowed his nephew one cigarette on these occasions.

Presently, the somnolent quietude of the summer afternoon was broken by the ringing of the front-door bell; an event, occurring at that sacred time, so extraordinary, that every one in the house woke up with a start. A servant announcing a gentleman to see Mr. Thornhaigh, there entered to Uncle Dick and his nephew a brisk gentleman with very red cheeks, very black eyes, very black whiskers, and a general glistening air of alert, aggressive good humor.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen," said the stranger, in a high, conciliatory voice, bowing with great politeness. "I am a stranger to you (though I know your name well, Mr. Thornhaigh) and I must apologize for this intrusion. Permit me to present to you my card. Beautiful weather for the time of year, is it not?" said the stranger, conversationally aside to Lancelot, while Uncle Dick perused the legend, ornate with many flourishes, "Mr. Samuel Penfold. The Pelagic Fur Company, Limited."

"I felt I could not do less than come and offer you my personal and grateful thanks—though without introduction, and at the risk of being thought intrusive—for your kindness to my wife (Mrs. Penfold) the other day, sir," continued Mr. Penfold, fixing his sparkling gaze upon Uncle Dick. "And Sunday being my only day, and only two Sundays a month at home (which is short allowance, you'll agree, I'm sure, gentlemen, for a man fond of the domestic hearth), and my wife (Mrs. Penfold) saying, 'Sam, I'm sure Mr. Thornhaigh will pardon the intrusion,' and I being highly desirous of coming to, as I say, offer

you my personal and grateful thanks, sir, for your kindness to Mrs. Penfold (my wife) the other day, why," said Mr. Penfold, with a cheerful laugh, "I came, sir."

"Very glad to see you," said Uncle Dick, who had been inwardly comparing the picture his fancy had constructed of Mr. Penfold, out of Mrs. Penfold's few words about her husband, with the very different reality. "Sit down, Mr. Penfold. (Don't go, Lance.) Have a cigar. And how is Mrs. Penfold?"

"You're extremely good, sir, and very excellent these cigars are, I feel sure. Mrs. Penfold, sir, thank you, is fairly well, at the present time. She suffers a good deal from her spirits, as a rule, and that's our sad trouble." Mr. Penfold's mobile voice took on a sympathetic and lamenting tone. "My wife (Mrs. Penfold), sir, does n't move," said Mr. Penfold confidentially, "on what you might call an even plane. Her fits of depression are dreadful at times; and nothing seems to comfort her but continual going to church at the Cathedral—and even that, as you may say, don't always act as it should. And when you were so kind to Mrs. Penfold the other day, Mr. Thornhaigh, my wife was in one of her bad times. And it's lonely for her, you see, we not having any family, and me being forced to be away so much. Like being married to a sailor, my wife says. But without the danger, as I always tell her."

"I should think a little cheerful society might be beneficial," observed Uncle Dick.

"And so it would, Mr. Thornhaigh, without a doubt," cried Mr. Penfold. "But that's where it is. You know what the society of Northborough is, Mr. Thornhaigh, as well as I do, and what an exclusive set they are. Now, my wife (Mrs. Penfold) comes of a good stock, sir (her father was a clergyman); so she's a cut above the ordinary tradesman's wife. She can't help that, can she? And because she married, as you may say, into business, the ladies won't call upon her, Mr. Thornhaigh. We don't complain, though I could wish matters were otherwise, for my wife's sake, you understand me, sir. And what I say is, I believe in a gentility of nature that's above the social conventions, Mr. Thornhaigh, and there's the whole matter in a nutshell."

Mr. Penfold, with immense care, deposited the ash of his cigar in a flower-pot, and got up to go.

"I thank you again for your kindness, sir, very heartily, I'm sure," said Mr. Penfold, warmly shaking hands with Uncle Dick. "And if you'd allow me to be of any little use to you in the way of business, such as obtaining furs, or rugs, or woollens generally, and the like of that, at cost price (and that makes a difference, it does indeed), I shall be only too proud and pleased, sir, at any time, to do so."

"Whatever, Lord, I lend to Thee, repaid a thousandfold will be."

That's a deal of gratitude for a very little piece of cake, ain't it?" said Uncle Dick, when Mr. Penfold had bowed his rosy, glistening self out of the front door. "And I had a bunch of roses from the lady, too."

"Who is this funny chap with the champagne sparkle all over him?" asked Lance.

"Mr. Samuel Penfold, known to his employers as Our Mr. Penfold. He's a commercial gentleman, commercial traveller, or bagman," returned his uncle. "His wife, Mrs. Penfold—as he calls her—seems a foolish sort of body," continued Uncle Dick, after a pause. "But I don't see why some of these idle ladies should n't look after her. Why should n't Miss Warrilow go and see her, for instance?"

"Eleanor," said Lance, "is not idle. I don't see why she should be bothered with your Mrs. Penfolds."

"I withdraw the expression," said Uncle Dick, "on condition you persuade her to go. Mrs. Penfold, 97 East Watergate Street. Don't forget, Tyke. I expect you're going over the road to tea. Tell her what Mr. Penfold said about his wife, Mrs. Penfold; and you can say that your Uncle Richard, who is a man of feeling, thinks it would be a great kindness to go and see her."

Since Miss Warrilow (at whose shrine Lance continued to offer mild devotional sacrifices) would be attending afternoon service, Lance went to pay a duty call upon Miss Starling. That good lady welcomed him with effusion.

"And how is your good father, after his strenuous labors?" inquired Miss Starling. "I do hope he is not overworking himself."

Lance replied that his father was really resting; and, in response to Miss Starling's inquiry as to the means of relaxation employed, he specified Indian cigars and a novel.

"And your Uncle Richard? What a clever man of business your Uncle Richard is, indeed, is he not? It is entirely due to his cleverness and kindness—though I must n't say how"—Miss Starling becomes archly mysterious at this point—"that I have been enabled to build a new class-room, or rather—to be precise—to begin building it. Would you like to see the beginnings? As I may really lay claim to you as an old pupil," says the engaging lady, "I am sure you will be interested."

Lance replied that his Uncle Richard was very well; and, with a show of interest that was not all pretence, he inspected the new brick walls, the crusted heaps of mortar, solidifying in the sun, the trenches and general dismal chaos.

"Has your Uncle Richard happened to say anything lately as to the commercial prosperity of the Westralian Trust and Investment Company?" continued Miss Starling, as she led her visitor into the house to tea. "For, after all," she went on, with a great appearance of friendly candor, "why should I conceal the fact from an old friend

such as yourself, Lancelot, that it is in your good uncle's Company that my modest savings have increased? And I am naturally interested in its prosperity."

"I believe the shares are standing at a heavy premium," said Lance, who had overheard the statement without comprehending its meaning.

"How pleasant that is, is it not?" cried Miss Starling. "We are taught (are we not?) that money is not everything in this life, and of course that is profoundly true. And yet, properly used, what a means of usefulness it is, Lancelot! As I always say, your good uncle is the Benefactor of Northborough Cross. He is so popular, is he not?"

"Oh, yes, every one likes Uncle Dick," Lance politely agreed.

"I should n't wonder if your Uncle Richard would soon begin to think of settling in life," Miss Starling suggested.

"Is n't he settled? He seems pretty comfortable," returned Lance obtusely, with his eye on the muffins.

"When one has been a great traveller, as your uncle has, one never knows what tie would suffice to keep one at home. Mere business would scarcely—do you think so?" Miss Starling insinuated.

"No, business is all rot, of course—I mean, it is n't a bit interesting," Lancelot agreed; and Miss Starling tried a new tack.

"Have you seen your friend Miss Eleanor Warrilow to-day? I am so fond of dear Eleanor. Do you know, I admire her self-denying and useful life so much? My only fear is, lest she should overtax her strength," said Miss Starling. "She works so hard among the poor, under Canon Glossop's direction."

"Canon Glossop," said Lance, roused at the name, "is enough to make any one overtax their strength."

"A most influential man," said Miss Starling gently. "And Miss Warrilow is such a wonderful help to him, is she not?"

"She's always going to him, any way," said Lance sulkily.

"Some more tea, dear boy?" said Miss Starling. "And does she never permit herself any recreation or amusement? Those delightful parties, for instance, which your Uncle Richard——?"

"She'll hardly ever come," said Lance. "I think visiting the poor is a mistake," he added. "It does n't do them any good, and it does you harm. The poor are all right, if you leave 'em alone."

Miss Starling smiled with indulgent sweetness.

"Have you seen Dolly Glossop, your old schoolmate?" she inquired.

"Not to-day," said Lance. "I hate to go to the house, you know."

"Poor Dolly! Her mother is, I fear, growing steadily worse," said Miss Starling, with a sigh.

"She'd better die soon, and be done with it," said Lance, with the nonchalance of youth.

"My dear boy, why do you say such shocking things?"

"Well, the Canon hates her, does n't he?" said Lance. "And I should think she hated him."

"Come, come, I really can't listen to you any more, you naughty boy, if you talk in such a dreadful way, I can't indeed!" Miss Starling assumes a mock indignation; and Lance goes away a little swollen with importance, and with a strong impression upon him that he has rather shone in conversation as a shrewd, bold man of the world.

Lance went back to school; and thereafter, about the quiet study overlooking the green garden and the river, where the Reverend Charles grew more and more to hug his hours of solitary ease; about that other clerical retreat, where the Reverend Canon Glossop, behind a locked door, fell into shuddering deeps of horror, and rose again to purple heights of inspiration; and where he received his penitents, and diagnosed their several cases, and administered such spiritual drugs as he thought fit; and about the gray house in the walled garden, where dear, good Mrs. Warrilow drowsed contentedly among her cushions, and where, in a chamber of ascetic furnishing, candles burned at the feet of a crucifix, late into the night, lighting Eleanor Warrilow to certain spiritual conflicts with the powers of darkness, and wrestlings with some unseen, phantasmal power which she believed to be divine, there rose and buzzed a whispering of many tongues, all wagging in idle gossip.

One virtuous matron had been told by another virtuous matron that the Reverend Charles Crane read novels of a Sunday; that he smoked on that sacred day; a third unimpeachable authority gave it to be understood that the Reverend Charles was lax in certain directions not to be definitely specified; a fourth opined that the Bishop, or, at least, the Dean, should take order with the backslider. A committee of virtuous matrons, dressed for the most part in rusty black, with elastic-sided boots, and all of Low Church views, decided that Canon Vyvyan Glossop was a most dangerous man, whose pernicious views and Roman proclivities were eating like an ulcer into the heart of society; and in at least one instance—there must be no names mentioned, but of course there is no objection to my mentioning it, in the strictest confidence, to *you*, my dear—in at least one instance, the most deplorable consequences were becoming notorious. How her mother can be so blind, we cannot think. And poor Mrs. Glossop—really, we can find it in our hearts to pity poor Mrs. Glossop. Some one ought to tell the Dean; but the Dean, poor man, is so immersed in his archeology, that he has no time to see what is going on under his very nose. To such purpose, and much more in like manner, did a whisper and rumor rise in Northborough Cross, and beat unheard about the homes of its unsuspecting victims.

CHAPTER VIII

MISS ELEANOR WARRILOW, sitting in Mrs. Penfold's little front parlor, was distressfully conscious that its atmosphere reminded her of certain houses in the Zoölogical Gardens. For, by privilege of his position in the Pelagic Fur Company, Limited, Our Mr. Penfold was enabled to carpet his house from top to bottom with the skins of beasts; a luxurious system which was not without an olfactory disadvantage.

Mrs. Penfold, sitting in front of the spiritless flickering in the grate, with her hands folded in her lap, seemed like one who had been imprisoned in that cheerless room until prison and prisoner had grown together into the same depressing aspect. This had been the burden of Miss Warrilow's reflections when she came to see Mrs. Penfold for the first time; it was their burden still, upon this her fifth or sixth visit.

"I often wonder to myself, sitting here—for I pass a good part of my time alone, Miss Warrilow, Mr. Penfold being so much away—what it would feel like to be dying," said Mrs. Penfold pensively.

"I suppose we all do sometimes," said Eleanor, with a dutiful show of cheerfulness. "But death, after all, is only the parting of the veil, is it not? And we don't mind the length and discomforts of the railway journey, when home lies at the end of it." Miss Warrilow quoted this sentence from a sermon, which (as she expressed it) had been greatly blessed to her.

"There was a time when I would have said the same thing," said Mrs. Penfold wearily. "Now, I don't believe in any of it any more. I am just like"—she looked left and right into the gloom—"like a person left in a great dark room, all in disorder, and not knowing what to do next, or which way to turn."

Miss Warrilow, rather at a loss, fell back upon another quotation.

"Well, well," said Mrs. Penfold, "all I can say is, there's no light for me. It shone once, it's true. Now the smoking flax is quenched. When you go down upon your knees to-night, Miss Warrilow, you may render grateful thanks that the light still burns within you, to lighten your darkness."

"The light you speak of is never really withdrawn, though it may seem otherwise for a season," said Eleanor, still speaking by the book.

"I've heard that too," said the sad lady. "It may be true, or it may not. It is n't true for me. The last state of that man is worse than the first. That's a true text, at any rate. And cursed," said Mrs. Penfold, rising into animation, "is he that removeth his neighbor's landmark—and doubly cursed, I say, if he put it there first," she added, with some appearance of obscurity.

Miss Warrilow began to grow curious.

"I wish I could help you. I should like to so much," she said.

"I know you would, and you do, my dear (if you'll pardon the liberty), with your kindness. And yet I'm past help—past praying for, as you may say—and what I earnestly hope is, you may never come to say the same."

Eleanor's face, by the light of the fire, was eloquent of sympathy.

"I would n't say a word," Mrs. Penfold resumed, after a pause, "to trouble you with my distress—for, after all, what does it matter?—but for that same fear, the fear of you coming to the same state. A failure I am, there's no doubt, a hopeless failure; but I can stand for a warning, I should hope to goodness, like Lot's wife, that they turned into a pillar of salt, poor woman. And if tears were any good, I should be a pillar of salt, too, by this time," said Mrs. Penfold, "for I'm sure I've cried my eyes out, time and again."

"Anything you would like to tell me, I should be only too glad to hear, dear Mrs. Penfold."

"You've found grace, I know," said Mrs. Penfold. "Three years ago I found grace, too. I was seeking for years, for the wicket gate is cruel hard to find sometimes, considering, as I've often thought. Then, one Sunday morning, I seemed to come at it all in a minute. Something Canon Glossop said in his sermon in the Cathedral opened my eyes, and there was the gate of salvation, the shining gate, standing wide open for me to step in, only I had n't seen it before. I was so glad and thankful that I could n't but speak to the Canon about it afterwards. He'd said in his sermon, you know, that he would be so very glad to help any one who liked to come to him. Oh, he's a wicked, cruel devil, is Canon Vyvyan Glossop!" cried Mrs. Penfold, with a startling leap from listlessness to an extraordinary display of anger.

"What did you say?" said the amazed Eleanor.

"I say," Mrs. Penfold resumed, with deliberate emphasis, "that Canon Glossop is a wicked, cruel devil. Now, listen, my dear. I've gone so far, I'll go further, and you shall judge for yourself. He talked to me in the kindest manner. He made me happy as I never was before (and never will be again) and asked me to come and see him at his house whenever I was troubled by spiritual difficulties. I was troubled a deal in those days, me being so much alone, and I used to put it down to the assaults of Satan, but I've sometimes thought since it might be poor living and not enough butcher's meat. For when her husband's not at home a woman often does n't feed herself as she should," said Mrs. Penfold, in parenthesis. "But however that might be, troubles and wrestlings of spirit I did have, and the Canon helped me wonderfully, for he's a clever, clever man. Often and often he'd be praying with me in his study till I've really thought the Spirit of God must be shining in the room with a visible light. All the time I never saw Mrs. Glossop, and never so much as knew he was married. Mr. Glossop

was my father in the Lord, leading me up the straight and narrow path—and I truly believed it. And he used to talk so much about my being unequally yoked with an unbeliever—for although Mr. Penfold is a professing Christian, I could n't honestly say it ever went deeper with him—that I used to try and influence Samuel for good, and it was only Samuel's sweet temper and good heart which kept us from quarreling, as I see now I look back. And there was nothing I did n't tell Mr. Glossop. He persuaded me to confess to him regularly. I could cut my tongue out as I think of it." Mrs. Penfold stopped suddenly, and Eleanor sat staring at her in silence. As Mrs. Penfold went on, Eleanor knew, as certainly as though she had been told, that she had made an omission in the narrative.

"So things went on, until there came a change. I was ill, and though the Canon came to see me once, he never came again, though I wrote to him to ask him. I met him in the street when I was about again, and he passed me by like a dog. Thinking I had offended in some way without knowing it, I went to his house, and never shall I forget it. He sat in his chair, balancing an ivory paper-knife between the tips of his fingers. 'What can I do for you?' he said—just as though I had been a common woman come to beg from the poor-box. 'I don't want to hurry you in any way,' he said, 'but I am so often obliged to explain that my time is not my own, to dispose of indiscriminately to all comers.' And then, seeing, I suppose, how hurt in my feelings I was, he took another tone, and for the time I really thought he was his old self again. And thinking it over again when I got home, I made out—like a weak fool—that the fault was on my side, and I made up my mind to go again and put matters straight. I could n't bear, you see, to think any different. I took a few flowers with me—and the servant at the door denied me. Everything seemed to turn topsy-turvy; and, what with the heat of the day, I don't know how I should have got home if it had n't been for Mr. Thornhaigh's kindness in helping me." By this time Mrs. Penfold's impulse of energy had expended itself, and she relapsed into silence. "I gave Mr. Thornhaigh the flowers," she added inconsequently.

Mrs. Penfold's rather shadowy story discomposed Miss Warrilow, without concerning her. But, as Eleanor continued to question the injured lady, a clearer view of Mrs. Penfold's late experiences began to dawn upon her friend.

An emotional, good-hearted, foolish, and weak woman: turning for support and the sentimental gratification of a religious impulse to a clergyman whose personality attracted her; who received the penitent with a welcome something more than sacerdotal; who, having received her confidence, such as it was, and won her admiring affection, such as it was, forthwith lost all interest, human or professional, in his dependent;

and who, at that point, sent her away: this was the image in the mirror upon which Eleanor was forced to look. And in that mirror she could not but perceive her own reflection, side by side with the lachrymose presentment of the commercial traveller's foolish wife. With that picture hanging in her mind, Miss Warrilow walked homewards through the dim streets. Whenever Miss Warrilow recalled that time in her life, she saw again the line of lamps, their yellow reflections gleaming in the wet pavement, swept bare of passengers, the pallid face of the moon, hanging high above the double line of sombre houses, unveiled and staring upon her, and veiled again by the travelling clouds. For, hitherto, Miss Warrilow had reposed her innocent trust in the Reverend Vyvyan Glossop, stopping her ears against the instinct which warned her against a lean, black-bearded, green-eyed man with a hanging under-lip. She ardently desired to believe, and did believe, that the clergyman whose outward aspect so belied him, was leading her, with a strong and wise guidance, upon the steep way which led to the Eternal City, the bourne of all Christian wayfarers upon earth. Painfully agitated, her thoughts revolving in a timorous confusion, Eleanor came beneath the shadow of the Cathedral, and turned down the hill to the right hand, beneath the old wall of the city, and heard the voice of the river rising upon the night, and came into her chamber. She lit the candles, and the black and white crucifix hanging on the wall sprang into prominence. But it was not to the ghostly emblem of her faith that she turned. Across the mingled disarray of her thoughts, the memory of Mrs. Penfold's conclusion to her dismal story grew suddenly distinct. Eleanor opened a drawer, where, among other fading relics of sentimental occasions, was a bunch of withered roses. Miss Warrilow had examined Mrs. Penfold as to the day upon which the Canon had turned her from his doors, comparing dates in her own mind. She remembered Mr. Thornhaigh's words when, upon the same day, he had given her the roses, and how she had given him credit for a new delicacy of sentiment. "They were picked very early this morning, with the dew still upon them," said Uncle Dick. Now it appeared that Mrs. Penfold had gathered that posy, and that— Miss Warrilow pursued the reflection no further. She flung the dead blossoms into the grate; whence the housemaid transferred them, next morning, to the dust-bin.

CHAPTER IX

THE Reverend Vyvyan Glossop, pacing uneasily to and fro in his study, was conscious of a vague apprehension that the hand of the Lord had been turning against him of late. His wife's malady was increasing upon her; and, although Mr. Glossop avoided the invalid's society, the knowledge of her illness and unhappy, secluded existence, caused him a

certain discomfort. His daughter Dorothy was developing a highly unfilial habit of tacit rebellion, directed against the parental scheme of life generally; and this irritated him intensely. And, more than these, the continued abstention of Miss Eleanor Warrilow from spiritual communion with her father in the Church caused Mr. Glossop some painful searchings of heart. His conscience, with the rest of the clerical system, was heavily drugged; and so long as the daily current of circumstance ran smoothly, that inward monitor slumbered and slept; but so soon as misfortune seemed to threaten, it would wake to some confused and angry mutterings of reproach, which would too often induce that condition of mind and body most susceptible to attacks of neurotic diathesis. So the Canon lived a double life. Not that he was a hypocrite. The hypocrite is a bird of a rarer breed than Mr. Glossop belonged to. He told no one of his secret vice—why should he—and, save for that tacit suppression, he made no deliberate pretence to be other than he was. Canon Glossop, rising upon the wings of a subtle drug to airy pinnacles of pulpit eloquence; Canon Glossop, receiving female penitence with opposing motives as inextricably intermingled as flesh and spirit are; Canon Glossop, neglecting his wife, and formulating rigid systems of discipline for his daughter, which he never succeeded in enforcing; Canon Glossop, making the most fervent prayers, alone in his chamber; and Canon Glossop, a prey to inevitable reaction, cowering and shaking before a nameless terror: were all of a piece. And, like all who practise that fascinating pastime of the double life, the Canon was haunted by an impression that people began to look askance at him.

To Canon Glossop, pacing to and fro in his study, perceiving and dreading the approach of neurotic diathesis while the fiend was yet afar off, there entered a servant with a message from Mrs. Glossop, desiring to see her husband. Mrs. Glossop never intruded upon his solitude; and the Canon, surprised at this unwonted request, went downstairs to the cheerless room where his wife wore out her weary days, and nights more weary still.

In that quiet chamber, the whispering of the fire, and the tiny click of the knitting-needles moving in Mrs. Glossop's black-mittened hands, were clearly audible. The invalid lay upon a couch drawn to the side of the hearth, a black shawl wrapped about her shoulders. The white knitting she was holding flowed upon a garish many-colored worsted rug, which covered her to the feet.

"I hope I am not disturbing you, Vyvyan," said Mrs. Glossop, in her peculiar, monotoned voice, that seemed attuned to the sombre room. "If I am not, I should like to speak to you."

"Surely," said the Canon. He looked at the needles, moving, like long antennæ, in her twisted hands, at the fire, at the parti-colored

coverlet, whose green and yellow gave him a disagreeable sensation—anywhere but at the square countenance which confronted him.

“I want to speak to you, first of all, about Dorothy,” the even voice went on. “I have been talking to her, Vyvyan; and I want you to promise me that, if she has any definite wish as to her future life, when I am gone, you will let her do as she desires.”

“When you are gone? What do you mean, Lucy?”

“I shall not be with you very much longer, Vyvyan,” said Mrs. Glossop steadily. “There is no use in blinking the inevitable.”

“When you talk in such a strain as—as this,” said the Canon, his under-lip trembling as he perused the carpet, “I must really request you, Lucy, to be more explicit. I must ask you to make sure, before we pursue the subject, that you are not giving way to nervous fancies. Has the medical man, for instance, said anything which leads you to suppose——” His voice trailed into silence, and he glanced furtively at his wife. She was regarding him with an expression of peculiar misery.

“I am telling you what I believe to be the truth. Don’t force me to say it again, Vyvyan. Do but give me your word to let little Dorothy have her chance in life. Will you?”

Confused and perturbed, the Canon began to pace to and fro.

“When——” he began, and stopped. “If anything,” he began again—“if, as the phrase is, anything should—happen, can you not trust me to do the best for our child?”

The knitting-needles clicked, and the fire muttered to itself in the silence.

“Vyvyan, I don’t often ask you for anything. I have been a burden to you for years, though I have tried to leave you free as I could. Now I ask you to do this for me, from the bottom of my heart.”

“Such a pledge,” said the Canon, staring out of the window with his back to his wife, “willing as I am to give it, cannot but argue a want of confidence between husband and wife, which I am loath to recognize. You cannot imagine that I do not love my daughter?”

“And loving her,” answered the monotonous voice, “try to put yourself in my place, Vyvyan, and think of yourself as leaving her, beyond all sight or sound, for all her life.”

The knitting-needles were stilled, and the fire took up the conversation. Canon Glossop, gazing out of the window, could not see the look with which his wife was regarding him. The ghost of an old love, long since withering, to perish of neglect, looked from out the sunken eyes in the sallow countenance.

“I have not lived a very happy life. I should like to die in peace,” the sad voice went on; and the Canon, turning about, met his wife’s glance, and was moved to some pity.

“I promise, Lucy, if it will make you any easier,” said he. “Not

that I admit your position—for I feel sure you are merely under the influence of a morbid fit that will pass away.”

“Vyvyan, you have lifted a great load from my heart.” She stretched a poor, gnarled hand towards her husband, and Mr. Glossop, after a moment’s hesitation, drew near to her. It was long since they two had exchanged the common coin of endearment; and the Canon, touched with some nameless emotion, which was not pity or regret, and which yet owned both these qualities, was conscious also of an uncomfortable embarrassment.

“When one lies awake at night a good deal,” went on Mrs. Glossop, holding fast to her husband’s dry, hot fingers, and looking up into the black-bearded countenance with the shifty green eyes and the tremulous mouth, “hour after hour, counting the Cathedral chimes, this earthly life sometimes seems to lie very far away, and the other life comes near, so near that I often think if a corner of the veil were lifted, I should see into the great mystery which is hid with God. And at such times I see the future, clear and sad like a picture, of life stretching in a desert way for a long, long distance when I am taken, and my child wandering, alone. I see all the dangers and the trouble which beset her path; and so that I might be with her to help her, I think I would endure any suffering. But God orders otherwise, and one must try and have faith.”

The Canon, who was in no condition to withstand a sudden stress of emotion, knelt down, buried his face in the green and yellow wool of the coverlet, and wept miserably. His wife began to comfort him with tender words; and, in his tears, Mr. Glossop wondered how much knowledge she had of the tangled threads which went to make the spotted web of his life. She had never reproached him by so much as a word; it might be that she believed wholly in his goodness; and he made, in that hour, some tentative, conditional resolutions of amendment. But even as they formed themselves in his mind, he knew that, as the Reverend Vyvyan Glossop had lived in the past, so he was condemned to live in the future.

For the next ten days or so, Mr. Glossop showed his wife more kindness and more attention than he had done in the past ten years. Then, finding that, to all appearances, she grew no worse, but rather better, the Canon’s fears, and with them his new-found devotion, began to subside; and it presently occurred to him that the strain which he had lately undergone put him under the necessity of taking a little holiday. So he went away for a week leaving Dorothy and her mother together. Three or four days after the Canon’s departure, Mrs. Glossop held a long talk with Dorothy. After a bitter struggle, she had decided to sacrifice her husband to her child.

She told Dorothy that she believed she must shortly die; and then

she told her, in plain words, of her father's manner of life. Nothing that her husband did was hidden from this silent lady, who sat alone in her dark room; and when she had finished talking, Dorothy had passed, at one step, from the ignorance of childhood to the plain, ugly knowledge which transforms childhood into age, by a swifter operation than the natural process of time.

"I believe your father to be essentially a good man," said Mrs. Glossop, "in spite of everything. He has this fatal weakness in one point—and so have many great and good men. And now for the rest, it is not for you or me to judge him. When you are older, you will understand better; and the more one understands, the more one forgives. It is an old saying, that if one was able perfectly to understand all, there would be no such thing as condemnation. And, remember, he is always your father. He has promised me that you shall choose your own life."

Upon the morning of the second day after this memorable conversation, Dolly awoke to a sense of grisly disaster and hushed confusion in the house. Her mother was released at last.

CHAPTER X

TIME, in its revolutions, carried Lancelot through his school career to the end, and brought him home again to his father's house. At seventeen, Lancelot had acquired a respectable proficiency in games, an athletic habit of body, and a superficial acquaintance with the ancient languages of Greece and Rome. Eight years' schooling had turned him into an active and cheerful youth, with a strong liking for the open air, with polite manners, and an invincible paralysis of speech when he was snared into the society of ladies. As for knowing anything at all of the world in which he lived, or being able to write an ordinary letter in lucid English, or owning any intelligent acquaintance with the literature of his native country whatsoever, had he spent his eight years alone upon a desert island, Lance could scarce have known less upon these subjects.

To Lance's surprise, Dolly Glossop opened the door to him. Dolly's hair was gathered in coils upon her head, the hem of Dolly's black dress swept the ground; and Lancelot, who had forgotten to expect these symbols of maturity, was seized with a painful embarrassment. But Dolly was quite at ease.

"Hullo, Lance!" she said. "How are you? Don't look so astonished. I'm staying here—did n't you know? You don't look very pleased. I hope we shall get on together," Dolly concluded, with cheerful assurance.

Lance was not at all pleased, at first. The entertainment of a young lady formed no part of his schemes for the summer, which were founded

upon a strictly selfish basis. Upon the day of her mother's death, in the absence of Canon Glossop, the Reverend Charles had taken charge of Dorothy; and when the Canon announced his intention of going away once more, as soon after the funeral as possible, the Reverend Charles had offered to keep his daughter as long as the Canon liked. Mr. Glossop was only too glad to rid himself of responsibility for the time. There was no one else to consult, save Uncle Dick; and Uncle Dick never raised any objection to anything, as long as his personal comfort was not thereby endangered; and so the matter was settled. The Southern Consolidated Investments Company had been steadily productive of wealth; and the Reverend Charles and that benefactor to society, Uncle Dick, were by this time possessed of a comfortable income.

The Reverend Charles, indulgent parent that he was, gave his son a generous allowance of pocket-money, and his liberty during the summer, merely suggesting that Lancelot should endeavor to evolve from his inner consciousness some definite preference which should guide him to the choice of a profession. But Lancelot gave himself small concern as to the future, for the present filled him full. Released from the fetters of school, Lancelot woke every morning to a blessed sense of freedom. For the time being, the whole sunny world was his to enjoy; and he enjoyed it. So he played cricket for his native town, and was happy. Cricket was the chief end of man's being; and cricket, pursued, as it were, upon the beautiful background of the ancient city, set with green gardens and encircled with the shining river, where every one was friendly, and where the haunting sights and sounds and memories of boyhood were renewed and transfigured, made up all that Lancelot knew, or cared to know, of life. Meanwhile, Miss Dorothy Glossop stayed on in the house of the Reverend Charles, from week to week; for her father, the Canon, was always just about to come home, and never came; and the Reverend Charles was always just about to make some definite arrangement with Mr. Glossop, and never made it. And meanwhile it occurred to Miss Starling that a match between her two old pupils, Lancelot and Dorothy, would be a very nice and appropriate consummation; naturally, she confided this reflection to a circle of particular friends; and thus the matter became part of the common talk of Northborough Cross.

"Every one says we're engaged, Dolly," said Lancelot. "Did you know that?"

"People are such fools in this place, they'll say anything," Dolly answered, with composure. "What does it matter?"

"It does n't matter in the least, if you don't mind."

"Why should I? I've got a lot to do before I get engaged to any one."

"So have I, I suppose," said Lancelot vaguely.

Doubtless, Lancelot had contemplated Dolly, for passing months, in the light of future possibilities, as the light in which all young women presented themselves to him at that time of his life. But the tongue of gossip, however idle and irresponsible, seemed to lift the matter from the realm of the purely abstract into the province of practical affairs; and the idea came home to Lance with a prickling sense of novelty.

"But what is it you want to do?" Lancelot asked. "You're not going to philander in the slums at the heels of a parson, I hope."

"No," said Dolly; "I'm not going to do that."

"What, then?"

"Well, there are not many things a girl is supposed to be able to do, are there?" said Dolly. "She's allowed to do other people's dirty work, as much as she likes, and there it seems to stop. She may go out as a governess, of course; when she will be treated with less consideration than the cook, and get less wages."

"Why do anything? There's no point in working if you're not obliged to, that I can see," said Lancelot.

"One can't live on one's father," said Dolly.

"I can, as long as he's got plenty of money. The governor's getting quite wealthy, too," returned Lancelot.

"Your governor and mine are rather different, you see," Dolly observed. "And even so, you will have to earn a living. What are *you* going to do, for instance?"

"I wonder what I *shall* do," said Lancelot, quite forgetting his companion's affairs as soon as the conversation touched upon his own. "I should like some interesting sort of work which left me time for myself. And I must have peace and quiet," said this lusty youth, with great earnestness, "and air and exercise. I might go into Uncle Dick's office. Or I might take up Art."

"Oh, painting!" remarked Dolly dubiously.

"Painting isn't the only art," said Lancelot, with a superior air. "There's architecture—and music, and literature, and all that."

"Do you like drawing?" Unconsciously, Dolly's mind worked in the reverse direction; she was interesting herself in Lance's airy schemes, and forgetting her own.

"I like the Cathedral. I don't often say so, but I do," Lancelot admitted. "I like lots of things, in a way, but the Cathedral is what I really take to. I might be able to work at that sort of thing. I've never really worked yet, but I might perhaps toil at architecture."

"Go into Mr. Inkpen's office as a pupil," said Dolly. "Then you could live at home, and be comfortable."

"Good idea. I never thought of that," said Lancelot. And the next time the Reverend Charles questioned Lancelot as to his ambitions,

Lancelot replied that he had some notion of taking up the study of architecture.

“Is there money in it?” Uncle Dick inquired.

“Competence—fame—money too, perhaps,” said the Reverend Charles. “But, after all, money is a secondary consideration. The great thing is, to follow an honorable profession that one really likes.”

“Yes, I know,” said Uncle Dick. “I know all that. But somebody’s got to make the money, Charles.”

“Well, and are n’t you occupied in doing so?” returned the little clergyman, undisturbed. “The Consolidated’s all right, is n’t it?”

“I suppose so. Gorges sold out and made a lot t’ other day,” said Uncle Dick, “and I don’t see why he should n’t be a noble architect, if he wants. I venture to suggest that we should consult the venerable Inkpots. What do you say, Tyke?”

“I should think so, certainly,” replied Lancelot.

After more desultory talk and consideration, recurring at intervals for a week or two, Mr. Inkpen was called into consultation with the Reverend Charles and his brother-in-law. The old gentleman expressed the gloomiest view of the case.

“But look here,” interrupted Uncle Dick, “can’t a man get a decent livelihood out of the job?”

“Of course he can.” Mr. Inkpen opened his eyes and stared angrily at Uncle Dick. “Of course he can—if he’s industrious.”

“Well, that’s something,” said Uncle Dick.

“When I say industrious,” Mr. Inkpen, shutting his eyes again, resumed, “perhaps I attach a different meaning to the word to what you do, Mr. Thornhaigh. When I speak of industry, I don’t mean office hours ten to one, and go home and enjoy yourself. I mean office hours ten to ten, or eight to eight, and go home and work till you go to bed, aye, every night, and all the year round.”

“And what prospects could you hold out, now, to the aspirant in question?” asked the clergyman.

“Dependent upon his own exertions—entirely dependent on his own personal exertions,” returned the architect. “Influence, of course, can do something—I am far from denying it. He might rise to the top of the tree with influence; or he might, of course, get there without it. There’s always plenty of room at the top of the tree.”

During a short silence, the Reverend Charles looked at Uncle Dick with inquiring eyebrows, and Uncle Dick nodded.

“The fact is, Mr. Inkpen,” said the clergyman, “we had thought of asking you to take my boy Lancelot as a pupil.”

Mr. Inkpen shut his eyes and shook his head. “I could n’t think of it,” he said.

“And why not, may I ask?” the Reverend Charles inquired.

"I am too old to give a pupil that continual attention which is his due, for one reason," the architect replied. "For another—but I need n't mention it."

But, being pressed upon this point, Mr. Inkpen made known his second objection.

"I like Lancelot very much," said he, in a weeping voice. "In fact, I think I am justified in saying that your boy and I, Mr. Crane, have always been very good friends. But, sir, I don't forget, and I can't forget, that it was to a piece of boyish mischief that we nearly owed the destruction of the Cathedral. I can conceive of no more terrible catastrophe, short of a European war, than the disaster which nothing but chance, and the hand of Divine Providence, so narrowly averted."

The father and uncle set themselves to overcome this difficulty; and at length, after a great deal of persuasion, Mr. Inkpen agreed to receive Lance as his pupil for a term of three, four, or five years; the term to be concluded at the end of the third year, at the option of the parent. Upon the first of October next ensuing, Lancelot was to be bound apprentice; signed, sealed, and delivered for a premium of three hundred guineas.

"We can pay the premium out of the balance at the bank, without going to Lance's trustees at all," said the Reverend Charles joyously. "My dear Dick, what a benefactor you are!"

With such happy facility was Lancelot's future planned; and he beheld a mark set up, beyond which, as the Reverend Charles had observed some three or five times since Lancelot came into the world, his real life was really to begin; and he was clothed upon with a singular, delusive sense of distinction, of which he was so keenly conscious that he wondered the people in the street did not remark him. To his bourne, he thought, the peaceful way ran straight and smooth between flowery banks. Easy hours of congenial work, free hours in the open air, a home full of arm-chairs and good cheer; towards such a prospect the architect braced his youthful energies. And, together with the thought of Dolly, the remembrance of that rare possibility ran in his mind, the foretaste of a rich and dim future. Thus his relations with her were so pleasurable, that he went in wholesome fear of disturbing that nice equilibrium. He resolutely declined to contemplate marriage or betrothal, conceiving those holy estates, however blissful, to be still estates of bondage.

The summer waned into dust and dull green; Miss Glossop went home to keep house for her father the Canon, who had come home at length; and Lancelot led his team into the field to play the last match of the season, and won it.

Upon the morning appointed for his first appearance in Mr. Inkpen's office, Lancelot arrived there at seven minutes past nine.

"Seven minutes a day, forty-two minutes a week, one hundred and sixty-eight minutes a month—you can reckon for yourself the amount of

time lost in a year by the habit of unpunctuality," observed Mr. Inkpen, with severity.

"It shan't happen again, sir."

"You will oblige me by working until seven minutes past six, instead of leaving at six, this evening," said Mr. Inkpen; and he set the new pupil to trace an elaborate plan of the drainage of a brewery.

Before six o'clock, Lance had discovered that the process of mechanical drawing is not so easy as it looks. He finished the tracing with fatal rapidity; and when he got up from his stool to go, Mr. Inkpen tore that work of art in pieces, and bade him take the drawing home and trace it again. Lancelot expostulated.

"Have n't I done enough drainage for one day, sir? I want to learn architecture," he said sulkily.

The old man looked at his hopeful pupil over his spectacles, with a sour grin; but he said not a word, good or bad, and as Lancelot passed beneath the Cathedral on his way home that venerable edifice seemed to grin at him, too. The next day his master set him to survey the roof of a warehouse for alterations and repairs. Lancelot nearly lost his life by sliding down the slates into a skylight; but his heels catching in the gutter, he returned unharmed to the office, black as a sweep in the soot, with a smeary little drawing, presenting problems that would not be resolved by any known process of mathematics; so that he had to do the work all over again. He was counting upon Saturday afternoon and evening to recompense him for these sordid toils; but upon Saturday morning Mr. Inkpen suggested that he should spend his spare time in making a careful sketch of the north porch of the Cathedral.

Mr. Inkpen was an old gentleman of great piety; and, regarding all flesh as grass, and corrupt exceedingly, he praised no one, unless they were dead, for fear that corruption should increase. His pupil presently learned to be content so long as he escaped a sour reproach; and, after a while, a little success followed upon his labors. He began to obtain the mastery of that stubborn and rebellious implement, his pencil. Then, after a series of engagements, in which he was routed with great loss, he had carried the outworks of that frowning citadel. And by that time three years of his apprenticeship were expired.

CHAPTER XI

MISS ELEANOR WARRILOW was accustomed to regard what she called her soul as an entity having a separate existence from herself; a thing indefinable, blind, suffering from hereditary disease, standing in jeopardy every hour of some tremendous condemnation; so that it required constant spiritual medicine and solace, and a continual series of miraculous

interpositions, to save it from remediless destruction. And after that distressing interview with the sad wife of the commercial traveller, Miss Warrilow beheld her soul as a storm-beaten bark adrift upon black waters, with never a star alight to steer by. The subtle casuistry of the Church, in which she had been nurtured, taught that the consecrated minister of the oracles of God was Heaven's ambassador, the representative of the one true faith; surcharged with the message of that faith; so that the man was in some sort not only a mere vessel or vehicle, but himself the message. The identification of the man and his teaching is more or less inevitable; and although Miss Warrilow refused to give full credence to Mrs. Penfold's story, her estimate of her spiritual guide, the Reverend Vyvyan Glossop, was shaken; and the light hitherto shed upon her by that apostle of light was darkened.

She went little abroad after that memorable evening, going only to the Cathedral, and to visit one or two sick persons in the district the Canon had assigned her, into which he never set foot himself. She remained shut up in her chamber with the crucifix on the wall, for hours; anxiously reading solemn, inconclusive works upon theology, in which the authors were apparently trying to persuade themselves of something they could n't come to believe in any other way, with depressingly small result; praying much, brooding more, and—in the ancient phrase—eating her heart. Uncle Dick, who held some observation of her in his lazy way, noted that the cheek-bones began to show through the pallid skin, that little wrinkles began to crease themselves about the sad mouth, that the pale blue eyes had a strained and shifty look. "Parsons' work," said Uncle Dick to himself, shaking his head. "The hand of the Church is evident. I doubt it's gone too far. And what a pretty girl, and a nice girl, she might be."

It befell, on a dull November afternoon, that Eleanor took her soul and its troubles out for an airing. The heavy sky lowered over the city like a pall; the streets wore an air of stolid melancholy; there was a gritty taste in the air; and Eleanor took the shortest way out of the town, which led her to Angler's Green. The level sward was solitary, gray, and very quiet; only the ripple of the river, coiling, lead-colored, between its crumbling banks, rose upon the air; and a sudden sense of utter loneliness descended upon Eleanor. She looked at her life, running to waste lead-colored like the river, and there was no pleasure in it; she looked for the spiritual prospect, dimly splendid, with which she had been wont to solace herself; and the vision was hid from her. She had no friends to whom she might turn; for the single pursuit of one form of piety alienates the devotee from the rest of mankind; if she thought of Uncle Dick, it was but to dismiss the image of a lazy epicurean; with her mother she had scarce a thought or hope in common, and to the Canon she could not go. Eleanor stood still, a solitary black figure in the drear landscape of level

green, and leafless trees, and dull river, and mist; and began to weep quietly behind her veil, in sheer pity for herself, since there was none other to pity her. Standing thus, she was aware of a lean black figure striding across the stepping-stones, and Canon Glossop came up to her.

"A lonely spot, a lonely day, and—to me—a lonely time, Miss Warrilow," said the Canon.

From the Cathedral tower, lost in the haze, the bells began to chime for evening service, one—*two*, one—*two*, in the minor. Walking beside the Canon, Eleanor was conscious that her thoughts of him began there and then to change. In spite of her own judgment, the man's personal presence was influencing her. Perhaps the Canon was conscious of this; perhaps, for a long time, he had been trading upon his knowledge.

"I am so sorry for—your great grief," said Eleanor.

"Sympathy is a precious gift," said the Canon. "More especially when it is offered by those who belong to the household of Christ."

They walked on side by side for a while, and the chiming bells filled up the interval.

"The need of sympathy—human sympathy, and human companionship," the Canon began once more, "seems immanent in man's nature." Here the Canon went on to illustrate his meaning from the histories contained in the New Testament. "So we may take it," he concluded, "that the need is a divinely implanted necessity, which we are not only permitted, but commanded, to satisfy. Do you not think so, Eleanor?"

The clergyman used the Christian name quite naturally, as he had sometimes done before. But to Eleanor, trying to discover to what this talk was tending, the word was the red glimmer of a danger signal.

"One has always looked to the divine ordinances as sufficient to supply all our need," Eleanor said, feeling compelled to say something.

They had reached the spindle-legged foot-bridge which spanned the river. The Canon paused and leaned against the rail. The sinking sun, a red and sullen eye, peered through the fog-bank at the two; his red reflection wavered in the dull stream, and a wandering gleam lit upon the looming Cathedral tower, turning it faintly crimson. Eleanor somehow connected the ruddy splashes with the danger signal vaguely imaged in her mind.

"I have always regarded the marriage bond as eternal and indissoluble," observed the clergyman, his lower lip beginning to tremble. "The world allows a succession of marryings and giving in marriage—not so the eternal law. And the world, at the same time, admits no other spiritual relationship as possible. Hence, if I were minded to ask one to console with, say, such a one as myself, I could not do so, save under the cover—the ostensible cover—of marriage."

Miss Warrilow, conscious of a certain nervous trepidation, told herself that the Canon was talking merely for the sake of conversation.

“That,” went on the Canon, fixing his eyes upon her, “is not my fault. Is it, Eleanor?”

“I do not understand what you mean, Mr. Glossop,” Eleanor said.

“It is very simple,” answered the Canon, still holding her in his glance. “Supposing I were fain to live a lonely, solitary, intensely miserable life no longer, bereaved as I am, I could not change my unhappy state save under the guise of matrimony.”

The sun gradually closed his red eye, as though, having satisfied his curiosity as to the man and the woman talking together on the bridge, he winked in a large and solemn manner; and the river turned to lead again, and the Cathedral tower, whose bells had fallen silent, faded and was lost in the gathering dusk. Eleanor, vaguely frightened, made as though she would go; but the Canon laid his twitching hand upon her hand, as it rested upon the rail; and although Eleanor withdrew it, she stood still while he spoke.

“The communion between us has been very close and very precious to me, Eleanor,” said Mr. Glossop. “And although of late I have fancied that you cared less than your wont for spiritual conversation, I know that we have been very closely knit together. . . . Need I say more? I do not want to press the matter—I would not attempt a single word of persuasion——”

Despite those premonitions of danger, if the clergyman had struck her in the face Miss Warrilow would not have received a shock more astounding. A sensation of physical repulsion towards this twitching, green-eyed, black-bearded presence shook her from head to foot; the whole of Mrs. Penfold’s story returned upon her mind with a rush, together with the remembrance of Mrs. Glossop’s patient, kindly face; and in that moment Eleanor believed that the man who was capable of formulating such a proposition scarce six months after the death of his wife was also capable of the behavior of which Mrs. Penfold had accused him. The real Glossop stood revealed, a monstrous deformity. Eleanor looked the apparition in the face, turned her back upon it, and walked swiftly away, choking with shame and indignation. But the Canon overtook her in a stride or two. The patch of swarthy cheek showing above his black beard had turned a dull red.

“What do you mean by this, Eleanor—what do you mean by this?” said the Canon. It was plain, from his voice and manner and his clenching hands, that Mr. Glossop had lost control of his emotions. Eleanor quickened her pace without replying.

“Answer me, if you please,” said the Canon, between his teeth.

“How dare you speak to me like this!” Eleanor was conscious that the retort was not only undignified but inadequate.

“I have made you,” said the Canon, “a definite and an honorable proposal. You shall answer me—I *will* be answered!”

They had reached the wicket gate which led into the road by this time. The Canon, by leaning his back upon the gate, barred the way with his person.

"I must ask you for an answer," he repeated, visibly trembling with anger.

"Mr. Glossop, please allow me to pass," said Eleanor.

"Answer my question, if you please," said the Canon.

Eleanor, looking all round for help, descried the highly respectable figure of Miss Starling, as that lady emerged from her house, crossed her little bridge, and came towards her, unseen by Mr. Glossop, whose back was towards the road. Perceiving that succor was at hand, Eleanor plucked up her courage.

"You are accustomed to bullying defenseless women, I know," she said, looking the clergyman in the face. "I have heard about that."

The Canon, with a great and visible effort, recovered control of himself in part.

"Miss Warrilow," said he, "if I have been unwittingly betrayed into the use of some hasty expressions, I tender you my apologies. My nerves have been greatly shattered of late. I—I am painfully conscious that I am not always myself."

"Canon Glossop, please allow me to pass." By this time, Miss Starling was within some twenty paces of the gate.

"May I beg of you to explain the words you used just now, before you go?" said the Canon, carefully modulating his voice, and moving a little aside as he spoke, still, however, keeping his hand upon the gate.

"How do you do, Canon Glossop?" said Miss Starling blandly, at his elbow; and the clergyman started and turned with every mark of the most lively confusion. Try as he might, he was totally unable to compose his tremulous lips and shaking hands. With an effusive apology, he held the gate open; and Eleanor, greeting Miss Starling and excusing herself in a breath, passed the twittering Canon with the slightest inclination of the head, and hurried away.

"What dreadful weather, Canon, is it not?" said Miss Starling, with an obvious assumption of having interrupted a chance meeting without having noticed anything unusual in the manner of the two persons concerned. "I admire Miss Warrilow's courage in venturing out for a walk. She keeps so much indoors that I am often alarmed for her health."

The Canon, who was casting about in his mind for some plausible explanation of a situation which, under the skilful guidance of the most mischievous tongue in Northborough, must lead to a disastrous access of scandalous gossip, was understood to remark that there was nothing like fresh air.

"No, indeed," replied the lady. "But pray tell me, Canon—I am always a little anxious about dear Eleanor—whether" (here Miss Starling

lowered her voice to a sympathetic inflection) "after your long absence" (voice recovering) "you thought her looking better? I always think that one who sees with what one may term a fresh eye, sees so much more clearly than those who——" Miss Starling, not quite sure of the end of the sentence, came to an interrogative pause, looking brightly at the Canon.

"I fear," said Mr. Glossop, "that trouble of mind, always so much more difficult to deal with than mere trouble of body, has much to do with——" The Canon, feeling his way, resorted in his turn to the interrogative pause. Miss Starling kindly filled it up.

"Ah, dear me, yes! How sad, is it not?" she said, also feeling her way.

Miss Starling, who, having remarked the Canon and Miss Warrilow talking together, from an upper window of her house, had come out with no other intention than that of seeing what material for friendly gossip she might pick up, now turned back towards her house, the Canon stalking solemnly beside her.

"It has fallen to my lot," he went on, "to give such counsel to Miss Warrilow (in common with many others who come to me) as I am able. You will easily understand," hinted the clergyman, who thought he saw a way out of his difficulties opening before him, "that such counsel is not always very palatable, either to give or to receive."

"I have always thought that the duties of a minister of the Gospel are often of a most delicate and trying nature," said Miss Starling, treading warily.

"They are indeed," responded the Canon, with sighing emphasis. "They are indeed. But, I am often compelled to observe how much lighter they might sit upon his shoulders, if the congregation did but lend intelligent aid to the pastor. Now, in this very instance of which we have been speaking, a friend—a woman—might do much where the minister must, almost of necessity, fail."

"I need hardly say that I—as a personal friend of—if I could do anything——" responded Miss Starling suggestively.

The Canon, who saw his way grow clearer and still clearer, suddenly assumed a brisk and magisterial manner.

"I certainly think you might, Miss Starling. At any rate, I would leave no stone unturned to induce the person in question to follow my advice. The matter is plain and simple—there are no metaphysics, no intricacies of spiritual trial concerned. In a word, I have been advising marriage."

"Marriage!" echoed Miss Starling. She wished immediately that she had received the proposition as though she had known all about it beforehand; but she was startled out of her presence of mind.

"I have been advising marriage," went on the Canon, as though

she had not spoken, "ever since certain facts came to my knowledge. Indeed—by a singular coincidence—we were talking upon the very subject when you came up just now."

Miss Starling would have greatly preferred not to ask the question; but she was lost in conjecture, and a burning curiosity left her no choice.

"Whom should she——? I mean, is there any particular person——?" faltered the lady, with a becoming embarrassment.

The Canon's restless hand went to his mouth, and hovered there, and grasped his black beard. By this time, he saw his road quite clear before him; and he hesitated. But not for long.

"Really," said he presently, "I find myself in a singularly painful position. On the one hand, as Miss Warrilow's friend, I should like to place the opportunity of helping her in your power; while, on the other, circumstances make it exceedingly difficult and unpleasant to myself even to hint to you the facts which alone would enable you to do so."

Miss Starling gave utterance to an inarticulate murmur, intended to convey a general sympathetic acquiescence.

"The tortuous windings of the human spirit are so extraordinary that, really, one is inclined to say that the longer one lives the less one knows of poor human nature," said the Canon, with the air of one whose innate modesty compels him to make a damaging admission. "Two years ago, had any one, even a brother minister, hinted to me that one who, humanly speaking, is undoubtedly an elect person, might confuse the messenger with the message—might hearken to the voice itself rather than to its utterance—might even come to look upon that messenger, and hearken to that voice, for their own sake—had any one, I say, even hinted at the bare possibility, I should have laughed the suggestion to scorn."

"Mr. Glossop, you don't mean to say——" cried the lady, startled out of her discreet composure once more.

"Yet," pursued the Canon, "that thing has happened. Doubtless, though unwittingly, I am much to blame. I speak, of course, in the strictest and most candid confidence. And it is therefore in answer to your question, that it is not so much the person who—the person which—it is not, in fact," said the Canon, finding himself a little involved—"the point, I would say, is rather negative than positive. I place my hopes in what has been called the expulsive force of a new affection."

They had reached the corner of the street by this time, and the Canon, who, having said all that he wished to say, had no intention of saying another word, stopped and held out his hand.

"I feel sure, Miss Starling," said he, grasping Miss Starling's hand, and gazing into her face with a kind of earnest resignation, "that I may rely upon your kindness and discretion. Good-night."

The Canon returned to his study; and the conflict of emotion through which he had passed bringing on an acute attack of neurotic diathesis,

he betook himself to his accustomed prophylactic. Soon his baffled desire, and futile indignation, and the process of mean retaliation he had set a-rolling, faded from him as though they had never been.

Meanwhile, Miss Starling was industriously piecing the Canon's innuendoes into an intelligible story. She was a happy and contented schoolmistress that evening, for she had a table before her spread with the fare she loved.

And meanwhile, in a bare chamber with a crucifix hanging on the wall, under the shadow of the Cathedral, which towered into the serene air, between the old maid maliciously busy, and the clergyman, huddled in his world of giant dreams, Eleanor Warrilow was pacing up and down, up and down, her fingers locked together.

CHAPTER XII

MISS STARLING, that blameless virgin, held a female gathering of selected friends; and the talk ran in channels which led indirectly to the scandalous. The selected friends went home, and plied their several confidential maids with injudicious confidences; and the several maids sought out *their* selected friends (both men and women, but especially women), and repeated dubious rumors with a specious air of impartiality. "Mind, I'm not saying it's true. They tell you to believe nothing of what you hear, and only half of what you see, as the saying is. But she says to me, says she——" And so it came about that Mr. Penfold, Our Mr. Penfold of the Pelagic Fur Company, looked up the street and down the street, as he approached the entrance to Mr. Thornhaigh's office, as though he feared some hostile observation; and, entering Uncle Dick's room, closed the door behind him with an appearance of mistrustful caution.

Mr. Penfold, soon after his introduction to Mr. Thornhaigh, had engaged himself in business relations with that financier; and he was constantly in and out of Uncle Dick's office, into which it was his pleasure and privilege to import the gossip and scandal of three counties, picked up in his voyagings.

"If my wife, Mrs. Penfold, was to see me now, sir," observed Mr. Penfold, a cheerful smile lighting up his ruddy countenance, "there'd be what you might term a little discordance upon the domestic hearth. It's in vain I say to her, business is business all the world over, and the less we permit business to invade the—as I say, the domestic hearth—the better."

"What's the matter, Penfold?"

"Well, sir," said Mr. Penfold, sitting down with a confidential air, "as between man and man, I don't believe it. And so I told my better half; I told her straight, Mr. Thornhaigh."

“Don’t believe what?”

“A nod,” said Mr. Penfold, with great cheerfulness, “is as good as a wink to a blind horse. As between man and man, I can see as far through a brick wall as most people. Now what”—Mr. Penfold suddenly exchanged his confidential tones for the brisk accents of his business voice—“what about the balance due on those preference shares, sir?”

“Look here, before we get to business, I want to know what you mean with all this mystery,” said Uncle Dick.

“Least said, soonest mended. And speaking for myself, I never give a minute’s heed to women’s chatter,” said Mr. Penfold.

“I know you don’t,” retorted Uncle Dick. “But that’s no reason why you should n’t tell me the latest scandal.”

Mr. Penfold dropped his gaze to the floor, and remained silent.

“Look here, Penfold,” said Uncle Dick abruptly, “if there’s any dirty piece of gossip going about which concerns me, I wish you’d tell me and be done with it. If it does n’t, I don’t want to hear it.”

There was that in Mr. Thornhaigh’s tone which gave Mr. Penfold the final stimulus he required.

“If you ask me straight, sir, I should say you *had* ought to know it,” said he. “And, begging your pardon for mentioning it, but people will have it that there is something betwixt you and a certain young lady, sir.”

“That may be true or it may not,” said Uncle Dick composedly. “What next?”

“Well, sir, that young lady’s name, what I can hear of it, is being hawked about in certain circles of society in a—in a what you might call—a deleterious light,” said Mr. Penfold, with a deprecating air.

“Never mind the name. What are they saying?”

“I never give any heed to women’s chatter and tomfoolery, myself,” said Mr. Penfold. “Heard too much of it in my time. But they do say—but there, what’s the use of repeating such things.”

“Out with it, Penfold. I want to know.”

“Well, they do say, since you will have it, sir, that Miss War—that the lady in question got a little bit what you might call infatuated with the Reverend Mr.—with a certain clerical gentleman, who shall be nameless,” said Mr. Penfold, with cheerful unction—“and that—to put it short—she proposed to him, and he would n’t have it. And how could he, seeing that his wife has been dead only a few months?”

“That sounds like a lie,” said Uncle Dick. “I would rather not hear the name of the lady, Penfold—but who is the clergyman?”

Mr. Penfold looked at the door, hitched his chair a little forward, and bent confidentially towards Mr. Thornhaigh.

“The Reverend Mr. Glossop,” said he.

“What rot!” said Uncle Dick. “Where did you hear this?”

"My wife, Mrs. Penfold, heard it from Mrs. Saunders, the Dean's butler's wife," answered Mr. Penfold. "But Lord! I don't believe a word of it, sir. As you say. And that's why I would rather my better half did not know of my coming here, Mr. Thornhaigh. 'I know you'll betray yourself, Samuel, if you do,' says she, 'the business or no business, that you're always talking about. Miss Eleanor's been a good friend to me,' she says, 'and if aught were to come between her and Mr. Thornhaigh out of this house, I should never forgive myself, nor you neither.' But you know what women are, Mr. Thornhaigh."

"Not I," said Uncle Dick. "And now you've got that off your mind, Penfold, we'll get to business. . . . About those shares?"

Uncle Dick walked homewards with a brooding face that evening. There had been a light fall of snow during the afternoon, and the streets glimmered white in the dim shine of the scattered street lamps. As Uncle Dick descended the hill, he was aware of a black figure approaching, a figure that corresponded with the image in his mind at that moment. Recognizing Miss Warrilow, he half paused, then checked himself, his hand in mid-air on its way to his hat-brim. For the dark figure passed him without a sign of recognition, with a white face staring fixedly in front of it; a face that, in its look of misery, detached itself from the surrounding glimmer and gloom, floating past like a bodiless apparition. Uncle Dick, with that impression strong in his mind, was conscious of a strong access of pity, mixed with some emotion without a name. That the scandal concerning Miss Warrilow had any foundation in fact, he did not believe; and yet he felt that something must have happened which led to this misconstruction. He had a mind to go directly to the Reverend Charles, as a comprehensive repository of urban gossip; but when he entered the house a familiar tinkle of cups and saucers and a confused murmur of conversation broke upon his ears. "At it again," said Uncle Dick irritably. "I never saw a man with such a passion for tea-fights as the Reverend." And Mr. Thornhaigh betook himself and his grievances to the conservatory. He was still smoking and brooding there when a servant announced that a lady wished to see him; and, going into the hall, Uncle Dick found Mrs. Penfold.

"You may think it strange of me, Mr. Thornhaigh," said Mrs. Penfold, in her quick, nervous utterance, "but I could n't rest till I had seen you, after having said something to Mr. Penfold this morning, which I had better have left unsaid, a thousand thousand times, knowing Samuel's tongue as I do, and a wicked piece of gossip it is, sure enough. And I said to myself, I know how kind Mr. Thornhaigh is, and I know I can rely upon him, and me being so fond of Miss Eleanor and all, I just slipped on my bonnet and shawl and ran round."

Mrs. Penfold, eying Uncle Dick with a frightened look, paused for lack of breath.

"Glad to see you," said Mr. Thornhaigh, composedly regarding her. "What's the trouble?"

Mrs. Penfold seemed to find a difficulty in replying. "Really, now I am here, sir, I hardly like to say," said she, looking this way and that, any way to avoid Mr. Thornhaigh's steady observation.

That gentleman seated himself upon an oaken chest, opposite to his visitor, and nursed his leg and smoked in silence.

"I'm sure you'll believe me when I say I came with the best of good intentions, and a pure heart to do what's right," said Mrs. Penfold.

"Surely," said Uncle Dick. "Surely, surely."

"I would n't wish to mention no names——" began Mrs. Penfold, after some further hesitation.

"I had rather you did not mention names," put in Uncle Dick.

"But," continued Mrs. Penfold, with firmness, "when I hear a kind and good young lady, who has been a good friend to me, ill spoken of, in a way that's fit to ruin her prospects in life, all because of another person—a wicked, artful man, Mr. Thornhaigh," said Mrs. Penfold explosively, "why, then, I can't bear it, and what's more I won't. It's a lie, sir, that's what it is—a downright, cruel lie. And I know who it was set it on foot, what's more."

"Oh," said Uncle Dick. "Ah. Well, now, you could n't tell me who it was, I suppose—without mentioning names."

"I *could*," returned the lady, with spiteful emphasis. She looked expectantly at Uncle Dick. There came sounds from the drawing-room, as of guests taking their leave. "Come this way," said Mr. Thornhaigh, and he led his visitor into the dining-room.

"Now," said Uncle Dick, "I don't know why you have come to me of all people, Mrs. Penfold; but since you have come—with the best of intentions, I am sure—we may as well get to the bottom of this business. There's a silly piece of gossip afoot, it seems. You say you know who started it?"

Mrs. Penfold nodded. "Well I know it," said she. Her embarrassment had disappeared by this time; under the stimulus of the hated remembrance of Mr. Glossop, she had become alert and self-possessed.

"If I've heard anything of the matter," pursued Uncle Dick, "it is that a certain person whom I will call A is said to have behaved in a—in an unusual and perfectly incredible and impossible way towards another person whom I will call B. I'll do more—I'll admit that B is a clergyman."

"And a wicked disgrace to the holy title," said Mrs. Penfold.

"Now, since it could n't be A who spread this report, was it B? Or was it——?"

"It was B, as I'll take my Bible oath to my dying day," asseverated Mrs. Penfold.

"Well, if it was, the less said the better," said Uncle Dick. "What does it matter? Who believes a yarn like that?"

"Everybody believes it," answered Mrs. Penfold. "You're a stranger here, sir, and you perhaps don't know the place. An idle word like that in the air is enough to ruin any one. That's what vexes me so. And that's why I made bold to come to you, Mr. Thornhaigh, for you move in the higher circles of society, and a word from you would have a deal of weight. I'm sure you'd contradict any such story if it was told you, sir."

When Mrs. Penfold had taken her departure, Uncle Dick sought his brother-in-law.

"Did you hear any particular gossip in your assembled seraglio this afternoon, Charles?"

"Concerning which?" inquired the Reverend Charles.

"Concerning our friends across the road," said Uncle Dick.

"Oh, them. Yes, they talked about them a good deal, now I come to think of it," responded the parson. "Eleanor has been proposing to Glossop, it seems—so they say."

Uncle Dick looked at his placid brother-in-law.

"You did n't contradict 'em, I suppose?" said he.

The proposition seemed to strike the Reverend Charles as novel. "No, I don't know that I did, in so many words," he said, after a little reflection. "Why?"

"Why indeed?" said Uncle Dick. He seemed about to add something, and to check himself.

"She may have, you know," remarked the Reverend Charles lazily. "Any way, scarcely any one will speak to her now. It's hard on her, I'm afraid."

"Do you know, parson," said Uncle Dick, after a short pause, "I sometimes fear that you are undergoing a strange and fatal metamorphosis. I believe that you are changing organically. I don't know if you've noticed it—but you're turning into an old woman, Charles. It's the effect of comparative affluence upon a frugal clergyman. It would do you good to be ruined and beggared, my boy." Mr. Thornhaigh, who had approached the door as he spoke, shut it behind him to avoid any repartee that might be forthcoming. But there was none; the Reverend Charles being impervious to that kind of criticism.

Uncle Dick went his way, swearing softly to himself. "Good God, what a mean crowd it is!" said he. "The only decent girl in the place—except one, perhaps," he corrected himself, "and they round on her like this. And fattening on the money I brought 'em too. . . . The Penfolds seem very anxious I should marry her. I've often thought of it. Shall I? Why shouldn't I? . . . That would show these people what I thought of them."

CHAPTER XIII

To Lancelot, fully immersed in the study of his art, the tattle of the town was a thing of no account. By this time he had served his three years and more; the imperative necessity of unremitting toil, so ugly at first, had ceased to daunt him; he had formed the habit of work; he was on the way to delight in it like a glutton. And by this time scattered webs of scaffolding clung about the Minster, alow and aloft, within and without; gangs of brown and dusty workmen haunted the precincts; and excavations were in progress in the crypt. Mr. Inkpen was having his will of the ancient foundation at last.

Among the parts of the building under repair was a massive buttress which projected from the eastern wall of the chancel. The ground upon which the walls of the chancel rested being of a somewhat shifty nature, the old builders thought to counterbalance this disadvantage by the erection of a pier so great and wide that they found room in it for a tiny cell, approached by a narrow winding stair which was concealed within the buttress. Within the cell, which was lighted by a single slit, there was room for a man to stand or lie, and even to stretch himself. The chamber bore traces of occupation. Mr. Inkpen held that here was the penitential cell, or temporary prison, of the adjoining monastery; while the Dean contended that the chamber was designed for the habitation of an anchorite.

Here, some few days after Mr. and Mrs. Penfold's visit to his uncle, in the brown, cold, earth-smelling gloom of the cell, Lancelot was busy with note-book and pencil and two-foot rule, when he heard a step on the stone stairway; and Miss Dorothy Glossop stood in the doorless opening. Dorothy had grown into a neat and slim young lady, with foot and hand and everything of her in a neat and slim proportion, save her light gray eyes, which were large and wide open, and her light brown hair, coiled in thick plaits at the back of her small head. Lancelot, who was developing an eye for pictorial effects, noted that her face showed with a peculiar pallor in the dusky shadow, and that her hair and her dress were tremulously stirred by the winter wind that blew shrilly through the slit of the window.

"What are you so busy about?" asked Dorothy; but she paid no attention to the elaborate explanation which Lancelot was beginning. "How dirty it makes your hands!" said she.

"Is that all you came to say?" inquired the architect. "One can't work in kid gloves, you know. Mr. Inkpen would turn me into the streets if I wore gloves on the job."

"Supposing he did, what would you do then?" asked Dorothy idly.

"Set up for myself, I suppose," said Lance. "Brass plate, designed by self. Advertise in local papers."

"You would n't really, would you?"

"How do I know?" returned Lance. "Why? What's the good of talking? Look here, if you don't mind waiting a few minutes, it will be too dark to see, and then I can come with you."

Dorothy leaned against the lined and gnarled piece of timber which had once made a door-post, and watched the young man prying into the stonework, and measuring, and setting down figures as though there were nothing else in life. Outside the thick walls the wind went by with a heavy rush and a rustle of withered leaves, that died away, and rose again, and again fell into silence. Dorothy listened for about the space of one minute before her patience gave out.

"I can't wait any longer," said she. "I'm so cold. What are you so busy drawing?"

"Do you see those marks?" Lancelot indicated a stone whose face was graven with certain illegible hieroglyphics. "Those are Masons' Marks. Every mason had his own mark, or sign, as they have still. But this one is like no other I have seen. So I'm just sketching it in."

Dorothy did not take the trouble to examine this curiosity more nearly. "What curious things you care for!" said she. "A mark's just a mark, and it's done with."

"And what do you care for, for instance?"

"Not much," Dorothy answered. "Nothing in Northborough. That's why I'm going away."

"What?"

Dorothy nodded her head. Lancelot could not see her face clearly through the dusk.

"Perhaps you would n't mind explaining a little," said he.

"I can't stand this place any longer," said Dorothy.

"What's the trouble, Dolly?"

"Do *you* want to stay here forever?" Dorothy returned. "Are you going to live all your life in Northborough, and become 'our worthy and esteemed townsman'? You might become an Alderman, even a Mayor. Would you like to be a Mayor?"

"I'd rather be Cathedral Surveyor," said Lance.

"Is that the top of your ambition? Well, I should think you might achieve it," said Dorothy, with some appearance of sarcasm.

"I don't pretend to be ambitious," said Lance sulkily. "Besides, what does it matter? I want to know why you are going away. Has your father been bothering you much?" he added.

"I've come to the conclusion I ought to go away from him and earn my own living," said Dorothy, after a short pause.

"Oh," said Lancelot. "Has anything particular been happening?"

Dorothy made no reply. "If you're in any trouble that a person could help, you might as well tell a person," said Lance.

"There's nothing to tell," said Dorothy, in whose mind the fear and distrust of her parent mingled with the remembrance of the gossip of Northborough concerning her friend Eleanor Warrilow, and rankled. "I can't stand this place any more, that's all. I hate the place, and I loathe the people. So I'm going away."

Lancelot perceived that something was going on of which he was ignorant; and, careless as he was of local gossip and the petty affairs of the tea-table, he could not guess what this might be; and he was conscious of a sudden, cold premonition of coming trouble and disturbance. "Let's come down," he said. The two emerged from the cell which seemed to cut them off from all mankind, into a gray world of twilight and a blustering wind smelling of the open fields. Beyond the towering shoulder of the Cathedral, the dying sunset of pale gold, all barred with sombre clouds, shone faintly luminous; beneath their feet, the houses and gardens lay in a heavy shadow, spotted here and there with yellow lights. To Lance, that prospect of night's solemn approach, beheld from the high place whence the Minster towered into the void air, was both dear and familiar. To-night it seemed to wear a melancholy and brooding aspect, the presage of inevitable change, as he paced with Dorothy up and down the flagged walk that ran beneath the pinnacled buttresses.

"You men who have something to do in the world don't know what a girl's life is," Dorothy went on. "A girl must wait about for some one to come along and marry her, and all the while she must pretend that she never thinks of any such thing. And meanwhile she puts on her best frock and goes to silly parties, and orders the dinner, and arranges the flowers, and tries to coax her father into a better temper. And she might as well be dead for all the use she is, or even for any enjoyment she gets out of it."

Dorothy spoke vehemently, but without bitterness; and Lancelot listened to her talk, as a thing new to his experience. His irritation had vanished, and he felt instead an access of sympathy for her. In the increasing darkness, her form was indistinct and alluring as a figure beheld in a dream. He desired to console her by methods more direct than words; but she appeared so confidently unconscious, so wrapt apart in the tumult of her mind, that Lancelot rebuked himself for the impulse. He told himself, firmly, that she was no more to him—as yet—than a friend.

"Can't I help you?" said he. "I should like to do something for you if I could, you know."

"No one can do anything for me," said Dorothy briskly. "I must help myself. I must live my own life. And the only thing I see to do is to become a hospital nurse."

"Will your father let you go?"

"Yes—I've settled that. I'm going to London."

"When?"

“To-morrow.”

Lancelot echoed the word dismally. He foresaw that in some indefinite way this change was but the precursor of wider changes; that the old, settled, leisurely order of things with which he had grown up, once deranged, would crack and fly in all directions, upsetting his own private scheme of life. There is a time of life when a youth of an easy temperament would fain look forward along a smooth pathway laid for him all the way through life, leading by gentle declensions to the grassy edge of the grave. So Lancelot had planned his future; and Dorothy's future had, incidentally, made part of his own. But his destiny comes to every man, soon or late; and Lancelot felt the iron fingers already plucking at his sleeve. He yielded to the touch. If he could not remain quietly at Northborough, taking his pleasure in Dorothy's friendship, and waiting, as it were, for love to come leisurely, if love would—why, then, he must follow where fortune led.

“All right, I'll come to London, too,” said he. “I ought to have some London experience, as a matter of fact; here, you see, I only——”

“You'd better not,” interrupted Dorothy. “You're very well off where you are, and I think you'd be very silly to change.”

“Why, you said just now——” began Lancelot, rather aggrieved, when Dorothy again interrupted him, elaborately explaining that she was considering his life for him as a whole, and taking broad views of the future, when she implied that he was too easily contented.

Still talking, they turned the corner of the Cathedral, and the north wind leaped at them and blew the words from between their teeth. When they came to the nail-studded front door of the Reverend Canon Glossop's residence, Lancelot, somewhat moved, had an indistinct idea of proffering a vow of perpetual allegiance to his friend, who looked so little and fragile in the blustering night. But he kept silence; held Dorothy's hand in his own with a longer clasp than polite usage demands; heard the door close heavily and dully behind her; and went home with a troubled mind; angry with the trouble, and angry with himself for being troubled.

CHAPTER XIV

WHILE Lancelot was conversing with Miss Dorothy Glossop, upon that stormy winter's afternoon, his uncle was deeply engaged with another young lady. Mr. Thornhaigh, still wrestling with his perplexities, still setting “should he?” against “should he not?” had discovered, about lunch-time, the necessity of a little light distraction. Accordingly, he had treated himself to lunch at “The Pair of Spurs”; and, finding some jovial acquaintances about a like business, the doubting swain had played two or three hundred up at billiards, with suitable accompaniments. Good drink acts in different ways upon different constitutions;

Mr. Thornhaigh's liquor inspired him with a mixture of vaguely amorous and vaguely religious enthusiasm. The wine still singing in his head, he left "The Pair of Spurs" towards four o'clock in the afternoon, and plunged into the cold and gusty twilight, as into a bath, with a sudden determination to seek out Miss Eleanor Warrilow. His flushed imagination, unwontedly alive, pictured her standing in a mellow gloom, shot through with port-wine hues, like the solemn light shed through a church window, calmly and devoutly waiting for him, even Uncle Dick. Of his precise destination he was uncertain; sometimes he found himself imaging a corner of the Cathedral, and at the same time mechanically rejecting that place as both cold and liable to interruption; and then his intelligence would assert itself for a moment, explaining to him that he was really only walking homewards just as usual; and, further, that he had chosen that time and that way because Miss Eleanor Warrilow was in the habit of attending the afternoon service.

Uncle Dick came to this conclusion and to the north door simultaneously; and in the open space before the entrance he stopped and looked about him, with a sudden irresolution. Supposing the people came out and found him standing there, they would (he thought) infallibly guess his errand. He would then present an absurd spectacle. He tried to think of some method by means of which he could avoid observation without going away; but no idea whatever occurred to him. This annoyed him. The sombre front frowned upon him; it seemed taller than usual; Uncle Dick threw his head back with a sudden desire to see the sky above the darkling pinnacles, and his hat fell off behind him. The wind blew it towards the north porch. "I must be very careful about this," thought Uncle Dick; and he began cautiously to stalk his hat. The organ began to peal from within the Minster; and Uncle Dick forgot his intention and stopped to listen. The solemn music was exactly what he had wanted; he had not been conscious of the want before, but he knew now what he had lacked without knowing it.

"Lost your hat, sir?" said a voice; and Uncle Dick, looking down with a start, beheld a wrinkled old bedesman of the Cathedral, holding a dusty hat towards him.

"Oh," said Uncle Dick, "I was just going to look for it. Thank you very much." A half-crown seemed to spring into his palm, and he pressed it upon the old man.

Mr. Thornhaigh had no time to remark the old man's evident astonishment, for he had caught sight of a familiar figure among the few people who were emerging from the Cathedral. For one moment he stood irresolute; the next, he was approaching Miss Warrilow with long strides.

As she greeted him, Uncle Dick was visited with one of his recurrent flashes of perception, and he noted something strange—he could not define what—in Miss Warrilow's appearance. Save that she was muffled about

the neck in fur, there was nothing unusual about her attire; and Uncle Dick set the impression to the account of his wine. He fell into an uncomfortable silence; his head spun and righted itself, and spun again; the skin of his face and hands was hot and prickling, although the wind was bitter. His brain drew clear again, and he plunged into speech.

"It seems a long time since I had the pleasure of seeing you," said he.

"I have been away," said Eleanor.

"Oh," said Uncle Dick. "Well—I am glad you are back again."

"Indeed," Eleanor went on, "I am going away again immediately;" and Uncle Dick saw his chance.

"It's lucky I happened to meet you, then," he said eagerly. "Because I wanted very much to ask you a question I've wanted to ask you for a long time——" Here, finding the sentence had escaped his control, he prudently stopped.

"Yes?" said Eleanor. There was a settled quiet about her demeanor that a little discouraged Uncle Dick; this was not, so far as he could recollect, quite what he had promised himself; but he persevered.

"Miss Warrilow," said he, "you know me—we've known each other, if you'll allow me to say so, for some time now. I'm a man who's had to shove his way through the thick of life as he could, without any education but what he could pick up for himself—a rolling stone, a restless kind of card—who's tried twenty trades and never made a fortune at any of them. And now," pursued Uncle Dick, surprised, and even a little moved, at his own eloquence—"and now, here I am, drifted here after a bit of luck with a little money invested (though I don't say but what it may go the way of all the rest, one of these fine days), and——" Uncle Dick came to a dead pause and looked at Miss Warrilow, who was steadfastly regarding him. They both stopped, and stood facing each other on the pavement.

"I wanted to ask you to marry me, my dear," said Uncle Dick, with amazing ease. "If you thought you could, you know."

The dim and wavering lamp-light showed him a face as sharp and white as a quillet of paper. In the silence that followed, Mr. Thornhaigh had time to admire his own coolness in this crisis.

"Mr. Thornhaigh," said Eleanor, with great earnestness, "I believe you mean most kindly and truly—do not think me ungrateful when I say that I cannot—I ought not—it is utterly impossible for me—to listen to you. Believe me, there are reasons I cannot explain just now why I cannot——" She broke off, and began to walk forward.

"I would n't trouble you or worry you for the world," said Uncle Dick, a little dashed, but persevering still. "I don't want an answer all at once—it is n't fair to expect it, I know. But if——"

"Nothing—there is nothing, Mr. Thornhaigh, that can ever make any difference," Eleanor interposed, with the same steady earnestness.

Uncle Dick, seriously discouraged, thought heavily for a moment. Then he had an inspiration.

"If by any chance you should happen to be thinking of what—what some people are saying—not that you would notice things beneath notice like that—I should like to say, once and for all, that I would n't give a farthing for the whole measly crowd," said Mr. Thornhaigh.

"I had no thought," said Miss Warrilow, "of the world in what I said. Please, let us say no more—and believe me, Mr. Thornhaigh, I am not heartless or ungrateful. You will understand my reasons in a day or two."

By this time they had come to the iron gate which led into the garden of Miss Warrilow's home. She turned to Uncle Dick, holding out her hand, and the wind blew aside the fur boa which encircled her neck, the light from the lamp above the gateway falling sideways upon her.

"Good-by," she said.

Uncle Dick took her hand mechanically, staring at her, and holding her hand in his. "Good God!" he exclaimed. For Miss Warrilow's wealth of yellow hair was gone. She was cropped like a schoolboy. "Have you been ill?" he asked, with a sudden wild surmise that she had refused him because she retained the fatal consequences of some fell disease. Miss Warrilow's neck and cheek flushed an even crimson, and she hastily muffled her face again.

"I have been ill, very sorely ill, but not in body," she said, in a voice so low that Uncle Dick bent forward to catch her words. "But I found the one cure for all ills whatsoever, and I am healed. . . . Once again, forgive me—I shall always remember you in prayer."

Mr. Thornhaigh felt a slight pressure upon his fingers, the gloved hand which he held was withdrawn, and Miss Warrilow opened the iron gate, looked full at him once, with a sad and steadfast countenance as she shut the gate with a little, decisive clang, and turned away. Uncle Dick, stricken mute with amazement, watched the indistinct figure grow more indistinct as it receded, saw a gleam of light fall upon it for a moment from the opening door, and she was gone.

"Well—I am ——!" said Uncle Dick. He repeated that observation at intervals for an hour or so. "But perhaps it's all for the best," he added.

CHAPTER XV

MR. THORNHAIGH made no appearance in public until lunch-time upon the day after his remarkable conversation with Miss Eleanor Warrilow. He presented a somewhat haggard and bloodshot aspect, as he sat at meat; but the Reverend Charles, who never remarked anything that was not forced upon his attention, prattled on as usual, happily

oblivious both of the traces of strain and stress in his brother-in-law's appearance, and of his son's evident preoccupation.

"I had a distressing interview—really, a *most* distressing interview—with dear old Mrs. Warrilow, this morning," said the Reverend Charles. "She came to me in great trouble, with a most extraordinary story. She tells me that Eleanor has gone into a convent, and taken the vows, without a word to any one."

"Has she, by God!" said Uncle Dick.

"Absolutely without telling even her own mother," continued the Reverend Charles. "It seems that poor Eleanor left home, ostensibly to pay a visit to a friend. The friend lives not far from the new Convent of Saint Ursula, which has just been dedicated by the Cardinal-Archbishop up here. Eleanor went there, was received by these people, and underwent all the rites of admission. They actually cut off her hair! I am not without sympathy with certain aspects of the Roman Communion, but some of their practices strike me as really rather revolting."

"Do you mean that Eleanor has actually become a nun?" asked Lancelot, shocked and dismayed.

"It's sad, very sad," answered his father. "But there seems no help for it. The vows are as binding as the marriage pledge. They regard it, in fact, as a Celestial Betrothal."

Uncle Dick looked and listened, with a lowering countenance, and drank his wine, and looked and listened again.

"But why"—Lancelot with difficulty brought himself to frame words of such brutal signification—"why should they cut off her hair?"

"To take the vows is to die to the world and all its vanities," responded the clergyman. "The tonsure symbolizes the death to all carnal things."

Lancelot sat confounded and sorry. He saw his old friend removed from all acquaintance; gone out of knowledge without even a word of farewell. Here was another pin knocked from out the edifice of his future that he had so lightly constructed.

"It's such a mistake to desert the Anglican Communion," pursued the Reverend Charles. "We provide all things necessary to salvation, at what I may term, in vulgar language, a lower price. We are just as spiritually dead to the world as they are," said the parson comfortably, refilling his glass. "But poor Eleanor may have received a Call. I am far from denying that to some natures the outward forms and stately ceremonials and multifold symbols of the Roman Church may even be said to be necessary elements. She may have had a real revelation. Who knows? It is not for us to judge harshly."

Then he rose from the table, brushed the crumbs from his rotund, seamless waistcoat, and wandered out of the room, humming the air of an anthem in his flexible little tenor.

Uncle Dick filled another glass of wine, the neck of the bottle rattling on the edge of the glass.

"I'm going to town for a spell," said Mr. Thornhaigh. "Come along too. I'll stand you. We'll quit to-night. What?"

"I can't leave the office just yet. Wish I could. Every one's going away, as far as I can see," said Lancelot dismally.

Uncle Dick took no notice of his nephew's refusal. He sat staring at the empty plates, an unlighted cigar in his fingers.

"I want a change," he said. "I did n't know how bad I wanted it till to-day. . . . I've met parsons abroad," Mr. Thornhaigh went on, with apparent irrelevance. "I thought I knew the breed. But I did n't. I did n't know the half, by gad, I did n't! Now I want a little change."

So Uncle Dick went south by the express; Eleanor Warrilow was no more seen in Northborough Cross; and a little after, Dorothy Glossop also left her native city, by a train that started before breakfast. Lancelot would have said good-by to her at the station, but he slept until too late; and it is possible that Dorothy never forgot that unintentional defection.

So Lancelot was deprived of three familiar friends at a blow; and the streets and ways of the old city put on a particularly stale and tedious aspect after their departure. Lancelot would have gone to London, leaving his father alone, with but small compunction; but Mr. Inkpen would not hear of his leaving the office until the several pieces of work on which he was engaged were completed. "I won't have it said that any pupil of mine looked back after putting his hand to the plough," said the old man. "That's what you want to do, I can see," and he read the aspiring youth a lecture on the evils of impatience. So Lancelot stayed where he was; contenting himself, as best he might, with such hasty scrawls as Dorothy vouchsafed in answer to his elaborate epistles. For both these children suffered at this time under the illusion proper to youth, the conviction (clouded though it was by a little, secret doubt) that the relation between any young man and any young woman may be governed by the rules of friendship alone.

Lancelot wrote of himself and his feelings, of his aspirations, of his discoveries in Art; those discoveries of youth which seem mint-new when they swim into nescience; and which are so soon to be recognized as the commonplaces they were before the Pyramids were founded. Dorothy wrote little of herself; telling only of her surroundings, and of her manner of life in hospital. She also mentioned, occasionally, that she had seen Mr. Thornhaigh. This, it would seem, made but meagre fare for even friendship to subsist upon; but Lancelot was contented enough; and carried in his breast-pocket the folded sheets of sprawling caligraphy, which looked as though they had been written with a split quill pen in a wager against time, until the packet became too bulky for convenience,

when he dutifully transferred part of it to a drawer in his desk, to repose beside some withered remnants of flowers and leaves. Still, he lived on from day to day in Northborough Cross as it were under protest. The place had lost its charm; the people seemed dully to resemble each other like a flock of sheep, and to repeat themselves like a set of wearisome automata; the very air had turned vapid and tasteless; when a new enchantment suddenly transformed the face of the old city.

For the youngest daughter of the Very Reverend the Dean came home, finished, from school. It was in the Cathedral that Lancelot beheld her for the first time, during the performance of an oratorio, wherein Miss Rosamund Venables played a solo upon the violoncello. Lancelot was immediately and completely overthrown, subjugated, and as it were trampled under foot by the mere sight of this slim young lady with the pointed features, dark eyes, and fine ruddy color, making melody which entranced and carried him quite out of himself.

He went to sleep that night with the philosopher's stone beneath his pillow; when he woke, the world was all gold; and gold for a season it remained. It is probable that neither Mr. Dean nor Mrs. Dean was entirely insensible to the fact that Mr. Lancelot Crane was a good and virtuous youth, a youth manifesting some promise of future achievement, and a youth, moreover, who had a little inheritance, bequeathed to him by his mother, when he came of age; and whose father and uncle seemed to possess the secret of increasing wealth. For Lancelot was invited to the Deanery, and before long he was permitted to come about the house whenever he chose.

These days (Lancelot vainly dreamed) might have touched perfection, had it not been for the huge slices of time that were inexorably demanded by his work. Lancelot lost all love for labor, counting these hours of intolerable tedium as grimly ravished from him and lost eternally. All the hours from dawn to moon-rise, and from moon-rise to dawn, were not enough to satisfy his lust of life; and still the river of daily circumstances swept away so many hours of potential felicity. And, at the same time, he began to put away the thought of Dorothy. He did not forget her; she lived indeed in his memory, but in a place assigned to her apart; where, by a strange illumination, he beheld, for the first time, a hundred trifling blemishes in his friend. Their letters became fewer and still fewer, and said less and less; and what they said now differed from what they used to convey.

So Lancelot rebuilt his pleasure-house of the future, and thanked his Maker for that it was so fair. Providence had sent Rosamund to him, and also sufficient means to support (some day) his trembling aspirations towards her; and he was inexpressibly grateful. He rose at three in the morning to gather flowers for her, and to get his work done so that he might gain that exquisite presence the sooner; he followed her like a

shadow; and when he sat alone with her, he was conscious of a miracle of happiness, marred only by the knowledge of its brief duration. And yet these two young people said no word of love. What they did say was trivial past recording; so that Lancelot, after a whole day with Rosamund, going about with his love-sickness so heavy upon him, so open and undisguised, that people smiled upon one another, would go to bed chilled by the thought that Rosamund might never have noticed his devotion after all.

Spring waned into summer; and Lancelot saw an alluring vision folding and unfolding before his eyes. He saw a wedding in the Cathedral; he heard the bells clash and the organ flute and thunder; he saw the old house in St. Catherine's Gate made new by his own device and art, opening its doors for the bride and bridegroom to come in; he saw—but here he would go no further; knowing that to anticipate even so much was to risk the anger of the jealous gods.

But presently a cloud rose upon the clear serenity of those mid-summer days; and the lover was troubled with the doubt that comes to trouble all lovers. Was her mind towards him? Was it even conceivable that she, the unapproachable, should ever turn to a thing so mean and common as himself? Other people (it was undeniable) had loved and married and had children at their desire; and yet all the persons in the world, save two, seemed to live and move like players upon a distant stage, mere painted figures of soundless talk and gesture without meaning. Lancelot began to be tormented. He told himself that devotion should be self-reliant; and the plain fact remained to contradict him. He held it unfair to the lady to make an open declaration until he had attained a certain position in the world, or had performed some achievement worthy of consideration. Moreover, there were other men in the world; the sons of county families, with family places in the country, and family houses in the town, who came about the Deanery; and Lancelot, becoming acutely conscious that he was but an architect's apprentice, after all, made acquaintance with that cold and bitter shadow of love's brightness, jealousy.

One evening, Lancelot, going to sup at the Deanery, beheld the sunset sky of rose merging into orange, and orange changing into green, the hue of the moving sea, where huge cloud-galleons, all of rose melting into pearly white, were hanging above tower and broken arch and ancient wall, that lifted dumb, unfeatured countenances to the dying radiance. Night, shrouded in her dim cloak gleaming with stars, drew close the curtains of the sun, breathing deep airs of peace; and Lancelot, sitting with Rosamund beneath the grave trees that whispered to themselves and held converse with the gathering shadows, felt all his excellent resolves swiftly ebbing out of him. For time and place and chance had conspired together against those children, in their old, remorseless,

irremediable way; and when the two came to the parting which hurt them so cruelly, though it was but for the night, the girl was possessed of an inestimable treasure, and the boy exulted and talked aloud as he walked, in the triumph of a stupendous discovery.

CHAPTER XVI

FOR five days the lovers went about in a state of happiness, high and inexpressible, yet tremulous. They had plighted their troth; not death himself should part them; how much less, therefore, parents and guardians or unforeseen misfortune; especially as they had resolved to put off a formal declaration of their betrothal to the said parents and guardians until a more convenient season. "For," said Rosamund, "let us be happy while we can. When we're ready to marry, we'll tell them, and get all the fuss over at once." And yet, with all these precautions, they were conscious of a secret foreboding. People were not allowed to be so happy in this world—so ran the writing on the wall. They thought of Romeo and Juliet, those most unhappy lovers, and they were uneasy.

Upon the morning of the sixth day after the greatest event in the world had befallen, Uncle Dick walked into the office, where Lancelot was sitting alone, staring absently at his drawing-board.

"Hullo!" said he.

"Hullo!" replied his uncle, and sat down heavily, and looked at his nephew with a troubled eye.

"Anything happened since I've been away?"

"Nothing that I know of."

"You have n't heard of anything in particular, then?" asked Uncle Dick.

"No—except one thing." The prohibition did not extend to Uncle Dick, to whom one naturally told most things. "Supposing I told you I was engaged, what would you say?"

"Engaged? What should I say?" repeated Uncle Dick, with a curious look and emphasis. "Poor devil! That's what I should say. Poor devil! Why, good God," cried Uncle Dick, "I'm engaged myself!"

"What!" shouted his nephew. "Who to?"

"I'll tell you presently. That's not what I came to say," returned Uncle Dick shamefacedly; and, twisting his mustache in his fingers, he fell silent. The dark hue of his cheeks turned to clay color, and a tiny pulse began to beat perceptibly in his temple.

"What on earth's the matter?" said Lancelot.

Uncle Dick's uneasy gaze wandered round the room, and came back to his nephew's face.

"The Consolidated's burst up," said he.

"What do you mean?" Lancelot was conscious of an unpleasant sinking and, as it were, falling away within him.

"Burst up—smashed—broke—failed—gone up," said Uncle Dick. "We're all in it, my boy."

Lancelot had a swift thought of Rosamund; and that sinking and falling away within him seemed to resolve itself into water.

"I don't understand," said he. "How does it happen?"

"The Southern Consolidated Investments Company—that's what the old Amalgamated was turned into, if you remember—can't pay its debts. That's all. And the creditors have filed a petition. That means that the directors and officials (I'm both) will have to appear before the Registrar in the High Court. The company will be wound up; and the shareholders will lose their money. And there you have it."

"All their money? Will they all lose everything?"

"It looks like it," said Uncle Dick.

Lancelot contemplated the immediate prospect of his father's ruin, and, generally, the ruin of every one he knew, the Dean (as a director) in the Dock, and the cessation of the Cathedral restoration.

"But *you're* all right," said Uncle Dick, noting the expression of his nephew's face. "There's your mother's money coming to you."

"That will do for the governor, any way," said Lancelot. "Have you told him yet?"

"No," said Uncle Dick. "But I must. I came straight here from the station."

"We'd better go and get it over," said Lancelot.

They went out into the street, and through the echoing dimness of the Cathedral, and down the sunny flight of steps to Saint Catherine's Gate; and the familiar sights and sounds were as a flight of arrows in Lancelot's heart.

"Hullo, Dick, you here! Why did n't you telegraph? Then I could have arranged about lunch. Lance, run into the kitchen and see about it," said the Reverend Charles.

Lancelot was glad enough to go. He remembered, as he crossed the stone-paved hall, how he had gone to the kitchen on the same errand, on the night of Uncle Dick's arrival, years and years ago. When he returned to the study, Uncle Dick was looking out of the window, and the Reverend Charles was leaning his little elbows on the mantel-piece, his face buried in his hands. He looked up and turned round as Lancelot closed the door.

"Well, Lance," said the kind little man, "don't look so miserable, my boy. Your uncle brings bad news, but I tell him we must hope for the best. Things may not be as bad as they seem—they never are, you know. And it's ill talking between a full man and a fasting—so we'll just make a proper meal before we say any more about it."

If Lancelot had never admired his easy-going parent before, he admired him in that moment. The little parson's simple courage put heart into them all, so that even Uncle Dick was a little cheered.

"Did you see anything of Dolly Glossop while you were in town, Dick?" asked the Reverend Charles, when they were seated at lunch. "She's in Saint Barnabas's Hospital, you know," he kindly explained.

"Yes, I know. Oh, yes, I saw her. In fact, I——" Uncle Dick looked up, met his nephew's inquiring gaze, and stopped for a moment. "I saw her—in point of fact—several times," he added.

"Can this thing be?" thought Lancelot.

"And how does she like her new occupation—her new fad, one might almost say?" pursued the Reverend Charles amiably.

"She talked of giving it up before very long," replied Uncle Dick. "But now—I don't know whether she'll be able to—what?"

"I suppose Canon Glossop is—er—involved?" hinted the clergyman.

"Up to two thousand five hundred or so, I believe," said Mr. Thornhaigh.

"Two thousand five hundred? That's an odd coincidence? Are you sure you are right, Dick?"

"What do you mean?"

"That's the very sum—within a hundred or so—that Glossop is to hand over to Lancelot in a few months. Glossop's co-trustee with Bland for his mother's money."

The three looked upon one another.

"It can't be," said the clergyman.

"It can, though," said Uncle Dick. "Look here, we'll go and see Glossop this very afternoon—all of us—what?"

They had little mind to linger over their meal; and presently they were standing in the broad afternoon sun, outside the nail-studded door of the canonical residence. Lancelot felt as though he were moving in a disordered dream. Here, in the dizzying sunshine, under the sense of imminent calamity, were his father and his uncle and himself, brought there by a sudden impulse; and behind that forbidding door, there lay in ambush—what?

A servant with a harsh and pockmarked countenance, opening the door, said doubtfully that Canon Glossop was in, as though she would have denied it if she could; and stood upon the threshold looking sourly at the visitors.

The Reverend Charles politely requested an audience.

"I'll see if the Canon is disengaged," said the maid unwillingly; and she would have closed the door, had not Uncle Dick already insinuated his leg into the opening.

"Come along," said he, as the maid disappeared up the staircase. "I'm going up."

"Certainly not"—the Canon's angry tones sounded from above. "You know perfectly well I never see any one at this hour. Give Mr. Crane my compliments, and——"

"Good morning, Canon," said Uncle Dick, walking into the study. "I wanted to see you about a little business, and ventured to come up."

The clergyman's tall, stooping figure loomed indistinctly black upon the sunlight which streamed in dusty rays through the window, striking here and there upon the litter of open letters, newspapers, and piles of books which filled that disorderly apartment. Lancelot's professional eye noted that the ceiling was grimy and discolored, that cobwebs festooned the corners, and that the sash-line of the window hung in a broken strand.

Canon Glossop greeted his visitors without any show of surprise, and slowly and gropingly transferred to floor and table the miscellaneous heaps of rubbish which encumbered the chairs, like a man but half-awake.

"The fact is," began Uncle Dick briskly, "I came to offer my services—as I am going to town in a day or two—in case I might be of service to you in the matter of the transference of the trust moneys under the terms of the late Mrs. Crane's marriage settlement, as to which my brother-in-law here tells me he has written you."

The Canon appeared to meditate upon this suggestion.

"You are very good," he said, "but I do not think I need trouble you." Again he appeared to meditate, frowning at the carpet. "I presume," he went on, "that a formal transference of the securities now standing in my name will be sufficient?"

"Depends on the securities," said Uncle Dick, before the Reverend Charles could speak.

"You should be a judge of that," said the Canon. And the Reverend Charles was immediately conscious of a painful pressure upon his right foot. Perceiving Uncle Dick's retreating boot, he recognized that his part was to maintain silence.

"The Consolidated was all right at one time," remarked Uncle Dick composedly. "I did n't know it was a proper investment for trust-money," he added.

"That, I take it, is, after all, a matter for the trustee to decide, Mr. Thornhaigh," said the Canon, with a sort of heavy pomposity, raising his glance to Mr. Thornhaigh's face for the first time; and Uncle Dick noted the curious, glassy shine in the little green eyes. The Reverend Charles, who was mopping his forehead with a green silk handkerchief, paused in the act. Lancelot sat very still. "Mr. Bland, my co-trustee, having long ago tacitly relinquished his responsibility to me, I acted as I thought best."

"Of course," said Uncle Dick. "And you invested the whole amount in the Southern Consolidated?"

"Precisely," said the Canon.

Uncle Dick, rising abruptly, stood in front of the Reverend Charles, and backed towards the door, so that the clergyman found himself involved in a retreat before he could open his mouth.

"He's admitted the fact before witnesses," said Uncle Dick, when the trio found themselves outside again in the dizzying glare of sunshine. "Now, has that scoundrel any private means?"

"I believe he has," said the Reverend Charles tremulously.

"Well, well! And that other condemned fool—what's his God-forsaken name—Bland? Has Bland any pieces?"

"I don't know," said the clergyman. He was shivering with misery and excitement. "Let us come home, Dick, and we can talk it over—talk it over."

Along the hot streets, through the great cool sepulchre of the Cathedral, down the steps and along the causeway to Saint Catherine's Gate, Lancelot followed, sick and silent. The sunshine annoyed him acutely. He wished the rain would fall and the wind blow; and then he was visited by an unreasonable fear lest they should meet Rosamund.

"I must think this thing out," said Uncle Dick, as they entered the house; and he disappeared.

"And I must go to the office," said Lance. He took his father's delicate, shaking hand in his hard fingers. "Cheer up, Daddy," said he. "Have a smoke and a lie-down, and you'll see we'll pull through somehow. I don't want the money, except that you could have had it. Now I must earn it, that's all."

"God bless you, my boy!" said the little clergyman, with unwonted emotion.

Out again in the remorseless sunlight, with that singular dread of meeting his betrothed strong upon him, Lancelot walked to the office, looking disaster steadily in the face. He found a pencil note from Mr. Inkpen awaiting him. The old man wrote that he was confined to bed with a severe chill, adding a string of minute instructions.

"What next?" said Lancelot. "It's coming upon us—coming upon us, as I always knew it would. The luck's turned at last." He stood quite still for three or four minutes, absorbed in thought that was partly prayer. His dead mother had bequeathed to this singular youth something else besides money. Then he turned to his work, and found to his surprise that he could work easily.

After dinner, when the candles gleamed on the silver and the white napery, Uncle Dick broke his cryptic silence.

"The way I take it," said he judicially, "is like this—and a devilish unpleasant way it is. We're all in Queer Street, and high up; and I know very well you think it's my fault. Well, and so it is, but I could n't help it. . . . There's no use talking about that. The question is,

what to do? Now, first, as to the trustee business. Glossop is a fraudulent trustee under the Act, and so is Bland. They must have known that the Company was an illegal investment, and if they did n't it's all the same. Very well. They must pay up. If it strips 'em bare, they must pay up, every last cent."

"But supposing they can't?" interposed the Reverend Charles.

"Then they'll go to prison," answered the man of affairs. "But the worst of it is," he added, "that besotted scamp will stand in the position of my father-in-law!" He stared defiantly at the audience, with raised eyebrows. There was an astonished pause.

"Oh," said Lance. "It's Dolly!"

"Do I understand you——" began the Reverend Charles, completely bewildered.

"We'll drink her health," said Uncle Dick a little wildly. "*Fiat justitia*. . . . You see, I'll not spare her father. He balked me once—I might have married Eleanor Warrilow—by God, I might! She liked me well enough—but Glossop sent her to —— for orders. Now I'll marry his daughter, God bless her, in spite of his teeth! Unless she gives me up—I'll give her the choice, as a person ought. But she's stanch, is Dolly—she'll stick by me, sink or swim."

"But you don't mean to say——" the clergyman began again.

"Pass!" said Uncle Dick. "I'll tell you all about it presently. Now, who's the girl of your heart, Lancelot? Who's your fancy, my winsome boy?"

"By the way," he continued before Lance could reply, "the Dean will join the Canon—over the oakum. The Dean's heavily dipped—the Very Reverend is a Director, so he is! Come, Tyke, give us a toast before we get to business!"

The two elder men looked expectantly at Lancelot; the Reverend Charles with an indulgent smile, Uncle Dick with preternatural solemnity.

"The Dean," Lancelot began, "will stand in the position of——"

Uncle Dick beat upon the table with shouts. "It's not the ringlets—not the corkscrew curls—say it is n't the curl-paper daughter with the barnacles. Oh, say it is n't, on your bended knees!"

Lancelot waited, glass in hand, until his uncle had done.

"Father and Uncle, will you drink the health of Rosamund?" said he.

They clinked glasses, and drank, and shook hands. Lancelot saw a gathering doubt in his father's eye. "I'll tell you all about it presently, Daddy," said he.

"Pass!" cried his uncle. "And now to business—for to-morrow I go back to town. This place is n't healthy just now for the poor Colonial."

They talked far into the night; but, talk as they might, disaster still

stared them in the face. When his father went to his room, Lancelot followed him.

"I should like to tell you," said he, "that I really meant that about—about Rosamund. I was going to tell you, any way."

"My dear boy," said the Reverend Charles, with great kindness, "I only wish it had happened at some other time."

"What ought I to do?"

"I had rather you made up your mind by yourself," said the clergyman. "Then come to me if you like—you know how glad I am you should do so. Morning brings counsel—and so, good-night, my son."

Lancelot lay long awake. He hearkened to the bells chiming the hours, the night wind breathing in the leaves without, and the voice of the river as it rose upon the silence; and all his heart turned to Rosamund with a bitter and passionate desire.

CHAPTER XVII

LANCELOT confronted the morning sunshine with the dismal conviction that it was his duty to renounce all his pretensions to Rosamund, quite irrespective of the lady's own wishes. "'I must be cruel to be kind,'" he murmured to the tragic image of resolution in the looking-glass, with its hair ruffled over its eyes. He confided his resolve to his father.

"I think you are right," said the little clergyman. "I think you're quite right. And the time of trial," he added, with pious cheerfulness, "will be good for both of you. If you are really fond of each other—as I've no doubt you are—the test will but cement the bonds of your affection. And if you are only under the influence of a passing fancy—why, the sooner you find it out, the better. Why, bless my soul!" cried the little clergyman, "I was in and out of love a dozen times before I found your dear mother, my boy."

"Poor Maria would have a word to say to me, just now, I expect," put in Uncle Dick, who entered the room at this moment, with his tall hat tilted over one eye. "Well, well, she was right, after all. Dick's the Family Curse. Down with Dick! Exile him—cut him off with a shilling—away with the prodigal! And quite right too."

"I wish you would n't talk so wildly, Dick," said the Reverend Charles. "You know I think none the worse of you for what's happened. It's destiny—the act of God, like the thunder-storms."

"There came a blooming thunder-storm and washed the beggars out'—what? Well, good-by. I'm going to investigate the wreck of the Hesperus."

So Uncle Dick departed for London once more; and Lancelot went to his office treadmill. Mr. Inkpen was no better, but rather worse, and

Lancelot had his hands full. As he worked, he made up his mind that he would not go to see Rosamund until the news of the failure of the Southern Consolidated Investments Company was published abroad; for if he saw her he must infallibly explain the position of affairs; and since (he argued) no woman could keep a secret, the matter would then become known. But Uncle Dick had enjoined secrecy; doubtless he had his own reasons for so doing, and Lancelot felt bound to respect them. His plan of heroic avoidance had only one flaw; but that one was to prove fatal. For, with the sublime egoism of youth, he forgot to take account of the other party involved in the scheme.

Meanwhile, Lancelot had plenty of work which might profitably be performed instead of philandering in the Deanery garden. There were letters to write, specifications to draft, foremen to instruct, details to design, and more than one survey to make about the Cathedral. The restoration of the fabric was steadily progressing; and the work required perpetual supervision and a continual attention to minute details. To-day, the great northeast buttress which contained the hermit's cell had to be measured and surveyed; and thither, in the late afternoon, Lancelot carried sketch-book and two-foot rule.

A summer gale had sprung up during the day, turning all things lead-color, whirling the dust about the gloomy streets, and tearing the leaves from the trees. Lancelot, as he worked in the cell, heard the storm crying among the pinnacles and battlements overhead; and he recalled that other day of wind, months ago, when Dorothy had come to tell him of her departure. He had an impression, then, that he had set his affections upon her; or, at least, that he might do so. Now, when he knew that Uncle Dick had unaccountably claimed her, he was scarcely moved beyond an amused interest in the consideration of his grizzled uncle taking to himself that flighty little girl; and a distinct feeling of relief upon his own account; for there had been times when his conscience (that ignorant voice) told him that perchance he had troubled Dorothy's peace of mind. Meditating on these things, he stooped to examine the mason's marks upon the stone in the wall of the cell, which he had pointed out to Dorothy. She had scorned to look at these relics, he remembered. Not so Rosamund, he thought, were she here; and immediately there came upon him that strange sense of having lived that moment before, and of certainly knowing what would happen next, which comes to most people at times. "A step . . ." he said. He stood upright, and through the melancholy bluster of the wind there fell the light sound of a step scraping the stone stair. "And what next? . . . Oh, Rosamund, of course," said Lancelot; and she stood in the doorway, most radiant to his vision and beautiful beyond compare.

"Lancelot, why have n't you been to see me?" Rosamund directly and positively demanded.

"I had n't time—really, you don't know what a drive I've been in," began Lancelot. "Mr. Inkpen's ill, and I——"

"Oh," said Rosamund, graciously accepting the excuse. "Well, you're coming to-night, of course."

"I'm afraid I can't, really," said the wretched youth, with every signal of confusion. "I'm frightfully busy."

"Nonsense!" said Rosamund, quite unimpressed. "You can spare an hour or two. You'll work all the better afterwards."

Lancelot began to frame broken excuses. Rosamund regarded him steadily.

"Tell me the real reason. I insist," said she.

"Well, the fact is, I think it's better we—we should n't—I mean, I ought not to spend so much time——"

"So you just made up your mind you'd leave off coming to see me, without a word," said Rosamund. "I think you're horrid. I never thought you'd be so unkind—and it's so unnecessary, too."

Lancelot, deeply hurt, began to feel irritated.

"I think you might let me try and do what I think is best for us both," said he. "Won't you take my word for it that I have good reasons, which I can't tell you? Do please take my word. Will you?" he added imploringly; and perhaps no form of speech he could have chosen would have defeated his own object so completely.

"No, I won't," returned Rosamund promptly. "I don't see why I should. We're doing nothing wrong. Come, Lancelot, who's been talking to you? I shan't go away till you tell me everything. I've a right to know—have n't I, now?"

Hunted into a corner, and a good deal afraid of his dear huntress, Lancelot considered this point for the first time; and it seemed to him that there was reason in her words. After all, he had never promised Uncle Dick to keep secrets from his betrothed. Uncle Dick would tell Dorothy fast enough, he thought; and at that, the last strand of resolution parted; and he plunged into a history of the whole matter. He wondered in what manner Rosamund would receive the disastrous news; and he was astonished at her composure.

"Is that all?" she asked.

"Well, I should think so," said Lancelot.

"I mean, there's nothing more behind everything? It's just a lot of money lost, and that's all?"

"That's all," repeated Lancelot, with sarcastic emphasis.

"And for that you were going to give me up?" said Rosamund. "You silly boy!" She put her arms about his neck, and the world and all its concerns dropped away from Lancelot like the phantoms of a dream; and for a little while their conversation concerned themselves alone. Then Lancelot took her home.

"You'll go on coming just as you always do," said she. "Then the news will arrive, and I dare say they will forbid you to come, or they'll send me away, perhaps. Well, then we'll just have to wait till things are better."

"But they don't know we're engaged, therefore why should they turn me out?" Lancelot objected.

"Of course they know. Do you suppose they would have allowed you to come as they have if they did n't like you? It's all their doing, and I shall tell them so," said Rosamund; and so they parted.

Lancelot went back through the windy dark with a candle lighted and burning in his heart with a pure and serene radiance. He saw his inheritance lost, his father ruined, wide disaster threatening the old city where he was born and bred, and the fulfilment of his heart's desire suddenly removed far off from him; he regarded all these things, in that hour, with a mind untroubled; for a single joy possessed him wholly.

Lancelot had his survey to finish; and that night a flickering gleam shone from the narrow window of the anchorite's cell, until the chimes rang two in the morning. The stone engraven with the curious mark being loose, Lancelot, in order to investigate the inner condition of the wall, fetched pick and chisel and prized it from its place. Facing him, at the back of the square hole left by the removal of the block, was the mark again, cut somewhat more distinctly. Lancelot made out a crown and key, graven in outline; the crown horizontal, with three points, the key vertical as it were standing within the crown, with a simple notched oblong for the wards. The sign struck Lancelot, in his state of exaltation, as coincidentally symbolic. "Crown and key is what I've gained," said he. "I want no other crown than hers; and I have a key that fits the lock of the world." He was pleased with the conceit, and began loosening the stones in the square hole. The joints were fitted without mortar, and presently he had a recess big enough to hold his head and shoulders. And there, cut on a stone that faced upwards this time, was the crown and key again. Lancelot began to feel a little excited. He would trace out the handiwork of this old mason who had built his wall without mortar; and he continued to ply pick and chisel until he had excavated the mouth of a tunnel which had a slight downward slope. All the stones were laid without mortar, but he noted that where they came away from the body of the stonework the fine joints they revealed were closely mortared. The loose stones fitted and bonded in like a puzzle; and always, as he pulled away stone after stone, the strange mark of the crown and key was uncovered; and always the succession of marks trended slightly downwards. Lancelot was well into the heart of the buttress, where the mass of stonework flanged on to the main wall of the choir aisle, when the last of his candles gave out and forced him to retreat.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE next morning, Lancelot went to report himself to Mr. Inkpen, who was still kept prisoner by his illness. He found the old man propped up in bed, his spectacles half-way down his nose, surrounded by a litter of manuscript papers, parchments, and old brown volumes of county history.

"I have been devoting my enforced retirement," said Mr. Inkpen, with a kind of snarl at the words, and eying his pupil sideways, "to working upon my monograph on the Cathedral. We must labor, young sir, while there are yet twelve hours in the day wherein men ought to work. I have been enabled to discover a curious fact about Abbot Stephen Hagberg that the Dean's so fond of. I find my theory that he must have amassed considerable wealth curiously confirmed, if we only take into consideration the fact that he sold the Abbey corn at famine prices to the starving townspeople, in a time of scarcity—a monstrous piece of business altogether. The legend has it," said Mr. Inkpen, shutting his eyes and shaking his head, as though to disclaim all responsibility for such things—"the legend will have it that he was supernaturally visited by a plague of snakes and scorpions, which ate up and devoured hoarded grain faster than he could sell it—but even so, he must have made a perfect fortune. Now we have documentary evidence that he never paid his workmen for completing the towers. I have always disagreed with the Dean upon the character of Abbot Hagberg—the Dean thinks him a good man. I think he was a very bad one. Eh?" said Mr. Inkpen sharply, opening his eyes very wide.

"I should think so," said Lancelot, anxious to change the subject. "Have you found out any more about the eastern buttress?" and he told Mr. Inkpen of his discovery of the marked stones fitted without mortar.

"Simple carelessness," said the old man. "Nothing else in the world. I've found the same thing constantly, in old work. Trace out that man's work, and you'll come upon rubbish, and bits of wood, and garden mould, very likely—anything would do for a mediæval mason, when he was a shirker. You know the history of the last occupant of the buttress-cell? No? Good gracious me! How's that? Here—read it."

He took up an old ragged book from among the miscellany of volumes about him, and turned over the leaves.

"You know there's no communion plate in the place older than the sixteenth century, of course?" the old man went on, perfectly contented in having secured a hearer who had perforce to listen to him. "Well, the reason is, because the original vessels were stolen in the Scotch foray of 1318—which happened, you see, about a century after Abbot Stephen

Hagberg's time. Robert Bruce led the Scots, and he made a clean job of it—sacked the Cathedral, robbed it of everything portable, and burned the town. Then the Scots went on their murdering way, leaving one of their number, who was wounded, behind them. He was made prisoner by the Abbot of the time, who confined him within the Gyrrh boundaries—of course you know what that means?" The old man stared severely at his pupil.

"Limits of the rights of Sanctuary," answered Lancelot promptly.

"Within limits of the rights of Sanctuary, so that the Scotch prisoner was, to all intents and purposes, a Gyrrhman. He was relegated to the great buttress for his sleeping room; in the day he would be employed in the Cathedral, 'to be reddey,'" Mr. Inkpen began to read from his book, "'at the dirige, and the messe at such time as it is done at the warnyng of the belman of the towne and do your dewte in ryngyng,' and so on. So the Dean's hypothesis of an anchorite may be said to be exploded—utterly exploded."

Lancelot, not unnaturally, inquired why the Scot made no attempt to escape.

"How do I know? He was well enough off where he was, I suppose. No Scotchman that I ever heard of ever went back to Scotland if he could live anywhere else," retorted Mr. Inkpen. "The records say he expired suddenly, in the crypt, of some kind of falling sickness. He was the last inhabitant of the buttress, by all accounts."

Lancelot's heart smote him as he hearkened to the old man babbling contentedly on, and thought of the blow which must presently fall upon his white head. Much more than the total loss of all his savings, which he had invested in the Consolidated, would the enforced cessation of the restoration work about the Cathedral oppress the veteran. For the cost of the operations was defrayed entirely by private munificence; and now no one would have any more money. It was even doubtful whether the authorities would be able to meet the liabilities already incurred.

Lancelot went to examine his work of the night before. The chisel might or might not have been where he had placed it—he could not be certain. As he picked it up, his eye lighted upon a small, round, gray object lying among the loose stones. He rubbed it on his coat-sleeve, and lo! it was a silver button. "The Scotch prisoner!" said Lancelot, staring upon it. "Now, did he build this wall, and did he brand his stones with the crown and key? That would explain why the mark differs from all other marks. Perhaps they set him to repair the place after his friends had knocked it about."

He stood for a long time, the button in his hand, all sorts of fancies shaping themselves in his brain. The imagination of youth will weave a whole history out of cobwebs and moonshine, in one moment of time. Lancelot saw that dead Scotch prisoner visibly before him. He was a

long, bony, dark man, round-shouldered, with lively gray eyes, high cheek-bones, and his cheeks hollow above a ragged fringe of beard; and the blue cloak about his shoulders was fastened at the throat with a silver button. He limped heavily from his wound; that was why he could not escape. "But what," said Lancelot, "was his little game, with his mason's marks, and the loose stones?"

Since he might not use his master's time to prosecute an enterprise of private curiosity, Lancelot rose at dawn the next morning and went up to the cell in the buttress, through the golden and profound quietude of the summer morning, shot through by the call and twitter of the birds.

In the earthy damp and grayness of the cell, Lancelot took mason's hammer and chisel in hand, and struck upon the stonework at the back of the excavation. The sound rang hollow; he dislodged a stone, and put his hand through the hole into empty space. After removing more blocks, a narrow tunnel gaped at the explorer. There was barely room enough for Lancelot to drag himself forward on his stomach; but he worked his way in head first, for some three or four yards; when he touched a solid wall. With a good deal of difficulty, he rummaged a candle end and matches from his pocket, lit the candle, and passed it over the face of the stonework. Sure enough, there was the crown and key, cut right in the centre of the irregular circle of squared stones. Lancelot reckoned that he had come to the wall of the choir aisle. But here the stones were mortared together. Dragging himself out backwards, Lancelot descended the stair and made certain measurements outside the buttress, which confirmed his theory. There was scant room to wield hammer and chisel in the tunnel; so he went into the Cathedral, with the intention of breaking through the wall from that side; but when he took his bearings he found that the tunnel communicated with the inner wall at a spot above the groined vaulting of the aisle. Since there was no access to the space between the upper side of the vaulting and the lead roof, there was nothing for it but to return to his tunnel. So Lancelot burrowed once more; and lying on his back like a miner, with a candle stuck by his side, he drove at the wall with hammer and chisel. Partially suffocated, wet through in the close heat, choked with the fine dust that flew from the chisel, after near an hour's toil he dislodged a stone that fell outwards upon the top of the vaulting. The next stone was more easily dislodged; and before long there was a ragged opening through which Lancelot forced himself. He was now on the upper side of the vaulting which roofed the choir aisle; but instead of a large, triangular roof-space, extending from the top of the vaulting to the under-side of the rafters which carried the lead roof, in which Lancelot had expected to find himself, he had to lie prone beneath what seemed to be a level floor of stone. He turned on his back and held the candle to the flat stone above him, and there again was the mark of the crown and key.

The stone rang hollow to the stroke of the hammer; and Lancelot, crouching on his knees, heaved upwards with all his might. But the stone was fixed as fate. Again he heaved, and the stone yielded a very little.

Lancelot put his whole strength into another effort, and the stone rose on his shoulders. But the weight was intolerable, and he had to let the stone drop into its place again. For a while the explorer lay on his face, panting and sweating. "A screw-jack," said he. "Breakfast first, then a screw-jack, and the office may go hang."

Covered with dirt and dust, his face seamed with little rivulets, where the perspiration had trickled down, his knuckles bleeding, Lancelot emerged blinking into the light of day. The magic quality was gone from the air, the stir of life rose all about him, smoke ascended from the house chimneys against the blue, and Lancelot went down to breakfast in the broad and common sunshine of workaday life.

After breakfast, he had a small screw-jack carried into the cell by one of his workmen, and started anew. He got the jack through the tunnel, and into position; turned upon the levers, and hoisted away the big stone. It fell back with a loud echo; and Lancelot, candle in hand, climbed through the opening. He found himself in a long, low chamber with a barrel roof of brick or stone, and a level floor of stone flags. Beneath his feet was the choir aisle; above the barrel vaulting, the battlemented roof of lead. The eastern end of the chamber was raised by a low step running across the whole width, and against the eastern wall stood a plain stone altar. The chamber was absolutely bare. Above the altar, the foliated stone jambs and mullions of a small window, which had been built up, showed against the coursed masonry. Lancelot had stumbled unawares into a disused chantry; and he remembered how, in the history of the Cathedral, it was related that, in the latter half of the fourteenth century, there were in the Minster several chantry chapels, where tapers burned continually, and priests never ceased to offer masses for the quick and the dead. The stairway leading to the chantry from the aisle below must long ago have been destroyed, and all means of communication blocked up. In the corner, at the end opposite the altar, Lancelot's trained observation took note of the square opening in the floor, where the stairs once landed, and where now the rough upper side of the vaulted ceiling to the choir aisle showed a little below the floor level. He held his candle on high, in the middle of the chantry, and looked about him. The flame burned steadily in the hot and musty air, making a little dome of uncertain light, closed in with murky shadow. The place was very still. High above him, Lancelot heard the bells chiming to matins, one, *two*, one, *two*, in the minor.

The sign of the crown and key had led him so far; would it lead him farther yet? Lancelot quested round the chapel, searching every stone in the floor and in the wall high as he could see. To and fro he went for

a long time; and at last, with a thrill of excitement, he found the sign cut upon a flagstone, one edge of which was bedded against the outer wall, upon the same side as that upon which Lancelot had entered, and at a point about the middle of its length. Lancelot fell to work with hammer and chisel, and levered up the stone. The curve of the vaulting beneath dipped to the wall; and in the wall itself appeared an oblong opening. The candle revealed a narrow staircase of stone descending at a sharp angle in the thickness of the wall. Lancelot let himself into the opening, feet first, and cautiously descended. So sharp was the incline, and so narrow the shaft, that, lying with his chest on the edge of the steps, with his back scraping the wall above, he had but just room to bend his knees. Down and still down he climbed, expecting every moment to step off into a deep hole, until he calculated he must have descended to a point below the floor of the crypt. At last he grounded upon solid stone; and, feeling with his feet, he could discover neither crevice nor opening. There was nothing for it but to return. When Lancelot reached the chantrey again, he took a series of measurements; then he returned through his tunnel to the outside of the Cathedral, and marked a corresponding series on the face of the outer wall of the choir aisle. Going within, he traced the course of the stair on the inner wall. He found that the shaft passed immediately beneath the crack in the wall-arcading, which, he remembered, the Dean had pointed out to Uncle Dick, years and years ago. Then he traced the course of the stair into the crypt. By this time it was late in the afternoon, and the explorer was very hungry and very tired. Having marked a spot in the crypt, he set two men to excavate a hole in the earthen floor to a certain depth, and went home to get some food, in a state of vague expectation and excitement. What he expected to find, he did not know; he did not even formulate the question to himself. He was wholly bent upon searching out the secret of the crown and key.

CHAPTER XIX

It was dark when Lancelot returned to the Cathedral. The doors being closed, he let himself in at the door of the south transept and went directly to the crypt. He jumped into the waist-deep pit his men had digged, and, stripped to his vest, he set to work by the light of two candles, to break through the wall, at the point where the stairway in the wall, by all calculation, should end.

The ringing of iron upon stone echoed in the vast chamber like the blows of a giant, as Lancelot plied mallet and chisel upon the hard mortar joints. An hour went by in strenuous toil, and Lancelot had not dislodged a single block. He sat down and mopped his face and neck, and stared at the blackness which closed him in on every side. Listening,

half-consciously, for the slightest sound to break the profound stillness, he caught the faint echo of a footstep somewhere in the huge bulk of building above him. Lancelot, as he thought, had locked the transept door behind him. It was possible, but very unlikely, that old Pottel, who kept the keys, would return at this hour; and, a good deal startled, Lancelot strained his ears to listen. For a few moments there was dead silence; and then there fell the unmistakable sound of footsteps crossing the nave. It occurred to Lancelot, with a disagreeable shock, that his duty was to go and meet that intruder; and at the same moment he thought of the Scotch captive in the cell, the owner of the silver button, dead so long ago. Overcoming a strong reluctance to making any sort of movement, however slight, he took up a crow-bar, and stood upright. The footsteps rang louder—drew nearer—a yellow shaft of light shone at the head of the stair leading down into the crypt—and descended the stair, to the accompanying beat of footsteps. A voice cried his name, and Lancelot experienced a spasm of relief which surprised himself. He answered, the light came swiftly forward, and the face of Uncle Dick appeared out of the shadow behind a bull's-eye lantern.

“Uncle Dick! How did you get in?”

“Through the door, same as you. You're a fine chap to take charge of the House of God! I might have looted the whole place—what?”

“I thought you were in London.”

“So I was—but I'm here now. Came up with a bit of news for you, my boy. They told me you were over here, so I collared a lantern and came. What in the name of goodness are you playing at? Trying to bury yourself in despair? I advise wait till you've heard what I've got to say first.”

Uncle Dick, whose manner betrayed some excitement, turned his light on every side to see if there were any solid object to sit upon, and, finding none, sat down on the ground. Lancelot sat on the edge of his pit, and kicked his heels.

“Who do you think I travelled up to town with, t' other day,” Uncle Dick resumed. “No less a person than your fraudulent trustee, sir, the Reverend Canon Glossop. I saw him at the station, and I says to myself, says I, ‘Your guilty conscience, my reverend sir, is taking you up to town to find out if there's anything wrong with the Consolidated, after what I let drop to you.’ So I did a little thinking till we got to the next station, and then I changed into his compartment, and we dropped into an affable conversation. I led him to talk about the trust-money business, and by what he said, I really don't believe he knew he was doing wrong in putting your money in. So I made believe to sympathize—talked of grandmotherly legislation, which would n't let good trustees do what they thought best, and so on; and when we got to town, I gave him dinner—sumptuous victual and choice liquor. Then I talked to him about how

he had committed a criminal offense, how, if it came to the Bishop's ears, he'd unfrock him, and how he stood on the verge of ruin generally, until he got real frightened; and then I made a little proposition. I said I wanted to help him and keep matters smooth, for the sake of all parties; and why shouldn't he leave the two thousand five hundred where it was—in the Consolidated—since it was such a rattling investment, give an order to his broker to sell out other securities to the same amount, and hand us the check?"

Uncle Dick paused expectantly.

"But he would lose the lot if he did that," said Lancelot.

"Sharp boy!" said Uncle Dick. "He would. In fact, he has. The suggestion was pure spec. on my part, for I did n't know whether he had any money of his own or not. But he had—then. He has n't now. And I stayed at the same hotel with the beggar—kindly consented to go with him to interview his broker—steered the whole business through, cashed the check the next day, and paid it into your father's account. I call that good business—what?"

Lancelot found himself shaking hands with his delighted uncle while he was trying to find words to express his emotions. Then he applied his mind to comprehend the situation in detail.

"Then you did n't tell him the Consolidated was smashed?"

"No, sir," said Uncle Dick. "I did not."

"I suppose he would n't have signed the check if you had?"

"He would have made it out to self and bolted with the lot," returned the man of many wiles. "What else could he do? As it was, he was paying for more things than one, with that little piece of paper. He did n't know it—but he will!"

"What will he know?" Lancelot asked.

"I might have married Eleanor Warrilow, if it had n't been for that reverend impostor. And now where is she? Buried alive, poor girl."

"But you're going to marry Dorothy," said Lancelot.

"That's not the point. Besides, she won't have me till this trouble's blown over," Uncle Dick answered gloomily. "She says it's my fault—she says I should have known what was going on, and all that—and she says I've got to get things right again. How the deuce am I to do that, I ask you?"

"Well, you seem to have begun all right," said Lancelot.

"I can't do any more," returned his uncle. "We're ruined, my boy, and no mistake. Now let's go home."

"I've got my work to finish first;" and Lancelot, fearful of questions, explained that he must investigate the interior of the wall, which had settled upon its foundations.

"Must you do it yourself? And won't to-morrow do?" inquired his uncle. "You're a curious boy. I like to sleep at nights, myself. Here,

give me the pick for a spell. I used to be able to handle a pick at one time;" and Uncle Dick took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, jumped into the pit, and, spitting on his hands, went to work like one who knew his job. Lancelot stood watching the miner, not without misgivings. He wanted to achieve the quest himself; but, at the same time, under the impulse of gratitude to his uncle, he had a strong inclination to confide in him.

Presently Uncle Dick stood up, panting. "Why am I doing this?" said he. "It's no manner of use. Three days would n't see you through this masonry. Why don't you set a gang of navvies on the job?"

"I'll tell you why," said Lancelot, coming to a sudden resolution; and incontinently he told how he had followed the sign upon the stone.

"And what do you expect to find?" inquired his uncle. "Skeletons? What's the market price of bones?"

"I don't expect anything," said Lancelot, who had long known that his uncle lacked imagination.

"You're right there," said Uncle Dick. "Now I vote we go home to bed. The Cathedral won't run away in the night. Come along."

Lancelot slept late next morning; and when he awoke he found a pencil note upon his dressing-table, signed his affectionate uncle, R. T.

I thought you'd like to know that as I could n't sleep last night, I got up and had another turn at the wall, and broke through a thin place into a big hole. There is nothing in it, not even a bone. I have to catch the early train to town, so good-by. I put the keys where I found them. By the way, you need n't mention my name when you report the matter. Inkpots might think I was interfering.

There was nothing in it, then. Remained only to report to Mr. Inkpen the empty discoveries of an old chantry and a vacant tomb. Sure enough, these would please the old man mightily. Lancelot visited the crypt on his way to the office. There was a ragged opening, leading into an empty chamber of hewn stone, some eight feet long by five feet high and three feet broad. The sepulchre was quite empty.

So Lancelot went to his master and made his report, duly omitting, as unessential, all mention of Uncle Dick's part in the matter. Mr. Inkpen sent him to the Dean; and that very reverend antiquary rushed over to the Cathedral, crawled through the tunnel, explored the chantry, slid down the stair into the chamber in the wall, and emerged, all tattered, covered with dust, and in a high state of glorification.

It took him a few days to elaborate a theory; then he brought forth a beautiful legend, complete at all points—save one.

"It came upon me," the Dean used to say, expatiating to an admiring audience, "all in a moment. Mr. Inkpen was right, and I was wrong. The cell *was* utilized as a prison; the prisoner, a certain wounded Scot of whom we read, left behind from the Bruce's terrible raid in 1318.

Now, the raid took place not quite a century after the death of our old friend, Abbot Hagberg. What does that suggest? Plainly, that the Scots were not merely attracted by the natural instinct of murder and foray, but by the rumors of the Abbot's concealed treasure, amassed during a laboriously penurious lifetime, by fair means and foul—fair means *and* foul. Let us admit it and pass on. They sacked the Minster, but they never found the treasure. Perchance it was hid in the very place!" Here the Dean, with a dramatic gesture, would indicate the cavern in the wall. "Turn we, then, to the prisoner. Confined more or less rigidly to his buttress, he sets himself to seek the treasure. He cuts his private mark upon the stones as he goes, so that, if he fails himself, another, coming after him, may succeed. Perhaps—who knows?—he was in direct communication with Robert Bruce. We have but the record of his sudden death to guide us—and the empty chamber. Whether, upon my hypothesis, he succeeded in stealing the treasure, we shall never know."

And yet there were just two persons in the world who could have enlightened the Dean upon this point. But they never did.

CHAPTER XX

WHEN Uncle Dick said in his note to his nephew that he could not sleep, that he had returned to the Cathedral and had there broken through the wall, presumably for the sake of amusement, his statement was, so far, within the truth. Lancelot thought his uncle destitute of imagination; but he was wrong. In certain directions, Mr. Thornhaigh was gifted with imagination of a high order; and his nephew's story of the quest of the crown and key made a strong appeal to it. He was careful to hide his interest from Lancelot. And when his nephew had gone sound asleep after his labors, it occurred to his uncle that the fruit of those labors, if indeed there were any (and stranger things had been), had better fall to the share of Uncle Dick. The venture was, at least, worth attempting; any venture would be, in the ruined state of his fortunes; and Uncle Dick arose and dressed, and did as he had said in his letter.

"There is nothing in it, not even a bone"—thus he had written to his confiding nephew. Nor was there when Mr. Thornhaigh quitted the Cathedral. But when he broke through the wall he broke into a chamber wherein there were five small iron coffers full of coins, both silver and gold; an oaken chest filled with priests' vestments, rotten as tinder, but set with precious stones; and an iron chest containing the vessels of the sanctuary, cups and chalices and patens, all of gold. If there were aught else, Uncle Dick kept no record of it.

He came first upon the small iron coffers; hoisted one out upon the floor of the crypt, and prized it open with a crowbar. The sweat dropped upon his hands as he plunged them into the mass of dingy coins.

When he had cleared the chamber of the spoil, and it lay strewn upon the ground, showing darkly in the candle-light upon a black dome of shadow, Uncle Dick took his chin in his hand and set himself to strenuous consideration. How was he to carry away the booty? At first his brain ran swiftly and giddily, like a wheel turning; then the motion of his thoughts grew slower and settled to a steady revolution. He must get help. But whose? The treasure did not belong to him. But he would take it all the same: he had no faintest scruple on that point. Should he fetch his nephew? But Lancelot was a servant of Dean and Chapter; he might ("being my sister Maria's son, and a bit of a blameless prig," said Uncle Dick) consider it his duty to report the treasure-trove to the Dean; when a goodly proportion would in all probability be claimed by the crown; and where would Uncle Dick come in? That was not to be thought of. The stuff must be got to London at once. Uncle Dick wished fervently that he had used some misspent time in pursuing a friendship with some burglar of repute; and he immediately conceived a new admiration for the character of the skilful thief. In absurd contrast to the deft methods of the professional, he saw himself lugging his booty, grossly obvious, through the midnight streets, to the railway station. He would infallibly be arrested by the first policeman he met. The thing was grotesquely impossible. And yet burglars were accomplishing like feats, undetected, every night of the year. He thought of getting a cab. But, even supposing he could obtain a vehicle at that hour, without rousing half the town in the process, he would have to bribe the cabman—and be forever blackmailed afterwards. Meanwhile, the night was flying fast; and unless the spoil could be smuggled out of Northborough by the night mail, all would be lost. Clearly, what he wanted was an accomplice. Uncle Dick concentrated his whole energy of thought upon the word; and presently, the smiling, ruddy image of Mr. Samuel Penfold swam into his mind. "The very man!" said Uncle Dick, in a triumphant whisper (he dared not speak aloud). "He's got packing-cases for samples, and a trap of his own. He's straight, so far as I know. . . . I'll risk it."

Out of the Cathedral, locking the doors behind him, along the dark streets, Uncle Dick hurried towards the house of Mr. Penfold.

He passed beneath the residence of Canon Glossop, looming upon the stars. "I've euchred *you*, my reverend friend, whatever happens," said Uncle Dick, as he ran down the hill. As he ran, he prayed fervently that Mr. Penfold might be at home. A light burned behind the blind in Mr. Penfold's house; Uncle Dick knocked gently; and Mr. Penfold himself, in shirt and trousers, opened the door.

"How fortunate I was n't gone to bed, sir!" said Mr. Penfold, speaking low, with a subdued cheerfulness. "You know the reason, sir? Or perhaps you don't read that part of the daily paper. I never did myself, till lately;" and Mr. Penfold, with his repressed cheerfulness breaking

out all over him, explained that a week ago his wife had presented him with a daughter.

"No more jim-jams and church-servicing at all hours *now*, sir," said Mr. Penfold, shaking hands, as the two men stood in the little parlor, where Eleanor Warrilow had held that memorable talk with Mrs. Penfold. "No more world-without-end whims and fancies and such doldrums. My wife's a new creature, Mr. Thornhaigh, and will be, I say! And I don't forget how it was you first helped her, sending her as it were a female confidante, who tided her through, like—and there she is," said Mr. Penfold, beaming.

"I'm very glad," said Uncle Dick, a good deal embarrassed. "And I'm all the sorrier I've got bad news for you, Penfold. The Consolidated's gone up."

Mr. Penfold took the news with a steady visage. "It's bad news indeed, and bad for me at this time in especial, Mr. Thornhaigh, I can't deny. Is there anything to be pulled out of the fire?"

"That depends," said Uncle Dick. And thereupon he told Mr. Penfold of his discovery, and of the dilemma in which he was. "Now, Penfold, will you stand in with me, and give me your word that you'll never breathe of it to any living creature? For it's a big thing, and it's serious, I tell you," said Uncle Dick.

"Give me two minutes to think it out," said Mr. Penfold. He turned his back on Uncle Dick, and stood with one foot on the fender. The silence was broken by a faint wailing from the room above. Mr. Penfold stirred uneasily. "I'll do it," he said. "I will that!" And he shook hands upon it.

"And the sooner we get about it the better," said Uncle Dick.

"Right," said Mr. Penfold.

At dawn that morning, Our Mr. Penfold of the Pelagic Fur Company, accompanied by a friend who seemed, from his muffled appearance, to fear the night air, went south by the mail train, with a heavy consignment of samples.

CHAPTER XXI

SUMMER waned into autumn, and autumn darkened into a green winter, with dripping westerly gales and continual rain; and every day, to Lancelot, was just as dreary as the day before had been, and as tomorrow would be. When the news went abroad of the failure of the Consolidated, the house in Saint Catherine's Gate was besieged by all sorts of people, who desired to see Mr. Thornhaigh, since he was not to be found at his office. But as that gentleman had unaccountably neglected to send his address, either to his nephew or his brother-in-law, the Reverend Charles had nothing to do but disclaim all knowledge of Mr. Thornhaigh's movements. So it was that people began to say that he was

shielding Mr. Thornhaigh; that they were both in a conspiracy; and, presently, that Lancelot was also involved; and, further, that all three had conspired from the beginning to rob the good folk of Northborough Cross. "What else," said Miss Starling, "could one expect from a minister of the Church who smokes (and drinks) and reads novels on Sunday—as I always said." And so it was that Lancelot and his father presently found themselves shunned as though they had committed a felony. Good old Mrs. Warrilow alone continued to call upon the Reverend Charles; and even begged him, as an old friend, to accept a check to help him over his most pressing difficulties. For the Reverend Charles found himself deeply involved in debt. He renounced cigars, and took to a pipe; gave up wine, and drank whisky and water; reduced his establishment to a "plain cook" with a "help"; and tried, hopelessly, to obtain work on the Press. The interest on Lancelot's little capital, and his own stipend, barely sufficed to pay the necessary expenses; and tradesmen began to send offensive letters.

The Cathedral restoration was stopped abruptly by order of the Dean and Chapter; and old Mr. Inkpen, who thought nothing of the loss of his savings in comparison with this disaster to his Cathedral, grew worse, and presently died. He was buried in the Cathedral, and so part of his ambition was fulfilled. Lancelot was left to carry on the work of surveyor to the Cathedral; but the Dean intimated that, owing to unforeseen misfortunes, the funds at the disposal of the Dean and Chapter did not admit of their offering him more than a nominal salary.

Meanwhile, Rosamund had been sent away from home, and forbidden to write to Lancelot; so she told him in a sad little note that he carried about with him.

The Reverend Charles talked of leaving Northborough. Lancelot said he would stay and carry through his work until the authorities could find a better man, and face through the trouble. His father even applied to the Bishop for a living; but his lordship replied with particular coldness; even hinting that Mr. Crane's reputation as a clergyman "fell short of that high ideal which his lordship could not but consider a not unreasonable standard to expect a minister of the Gospel to attain to." So the Reverend Charles paid his account with local gossip; and went about his duties still, and grew a little grayer and more bent.

Meanwhile the date fixed for the appearance in court of the directors and officials of the Southern Consolidated Investments Company, at the suit of its creditors, was postponed, and then fixed again, and again postponed. And meanwhile, there came nothing from Uncle Dick, save a hasty line occasionally, saying that his time was taken up with a little business which obliged him to travel continually from place to place.

On Christmas Eve, Lancelot sat before the fire, gazing at the green Yule log, sulkily hissing and smoking in the grate. The Reverend Charles

was smoking a long clay by the light of the Yule candles. Outside, the wind rattled at the shutters, and went by with a moan, and the rain dripped from the overflowing gutters.

Lancelot sat gloomily meditating. These days were all gray rain and mist and dead leaves, he thought. There was the eternal burden of debt, and a dead wall in front, barring all prospect; and there was Rosamund. Like a spring released, his mind always shifted back into the same groove.

The voice of his father broke upon his meditations. "The first Christmas for ten—eleven—years without your uncle," said the Reverend Charles. "I have ordered roast beef for to-morrow," he added. "We must n't afford turkey, you know. I hope you won't be disappointed, my dear boy. There's a plum-pudding. The servants like it."

It was not the thought of the beef that touched his son with a sensation of irrepressible pathos, as he looked at the little gray-bearded clergyman nursing his knees in the worn arm-chair. Lancelot had seldom felt more miserable in his life than he did at that moment. Then the door-bell rang, steps and voices sounded in the hall, and Uncle Dick came suddenly into the room, with a gray-eyed young lady on his arm and his face shining.

"Mrs. Richard Thornhaigh!" said Uncle Dick. "She's done it—she's married Poor Richard, for better and worse! . . . For things are straightening out," continued Uncle Dick, when the burst of greetings had subsided. "I think we shall pull the Consolidated through, after all—I've contrived to stave off the creditors, and get matters into my own hands, and the shares are going up. . . . We're leaving England to-morrow for a spell—we leave here to-night—so we thought we'd look in and pass the time of day, and get through a little necessary business before we sailed. Being Christmas Eve and all," said the Benefactor of his kind.

They sat down to eat and drink and make merry, and Uncle Dick talked continuously. Presently he took the Reverend Charles aside.

"How much will it take to clear you?" said he. "I mean, really to pay everything you owe. No one has ever been able to answer that question truthfully, so I'll just ask you to put the amount rather over than under."

"Of course," said the Reverend Charles, who was trembling all over. "Of course, my dear Richard!" And, after a good deal of hesitation, he named a sum.

"I can let you have that, and a little more to play with." The financier produced a check-book. "There's an amount standing to your credit on the Company's books—I can't explain now, but I'll write you fully later on." He blotted a check and handed it to the Reverend Charles. "The other shareholders are getting a bonus too—'on Christmas Day in the morning,'" said Uncle Dick.

The Winding Lane

“My dear Richard—my dear Dick, it’s marvellous—it’s miraculous!” The little clergyman was unconsciously shedding tears. “How ever did you do it?”

“I could n’t manage to get it done before. It took a little time to work. But it’s wonderful what a little enterprise will do,” said Uncle Dick.

“And so,” said Dolly, as they stood in the hall, ready for the departure of the bride and bridegroom, “you’re Cathedral Surveyor after all, Lance. And you’re going to stay here and marry and settle down?”

“Yes,” said Lancelot; “I am.”

“Ah, well,” said Dorothy. She looked at him with an expression he could not read. “Give my love to Rosamund,” said she. “And—good-by!”



THE WINDING LANE

BY ETHEL HALLETT PORTER

THE wood-light grows more mellow-dim,
 The leaves dance happily,
 The russet path glows deeper hued
 To greet her worthily,
 And all the birds in chorus sweet
 Sing, rapturous, insane,
 When lassie comes to meet me
 Adown the winding lane.

She’s sweet as little roses are,
 As quaint as mignonette,
 And shy as modest pansy-buds,
 With shower-jewels set;
 She’s Happiness! And from this world
 I’ve nothing more to gain
 When lassie comes to meet me
 Adown the winding lane!

This earth would be a kindlier place,
 If every man could know
 The fragrance of a shady path
 Where cool, green grasses grow;
 Where, when the sunset hour came by,
 And life was sweet and sane,
 His singing lassie turned the stile
 Adown the winding lane.

THE FUNNY SIDE OF MARRIED LIFE

By Christine Terhune Herrick

SHOULD you cherish the conviction that you can be really happy, though married, without a sense of humor, rid yourself of the belief at once. Beg, borrow, or steal such a sense, if you do not already possess it; or, if these are impossible, give your mind to cultivating even a rudimentary appreciation of a joke.

A sense of humor is indispensable to satisfactory married life, because much of this is either a joke or a tragedy. The latter is a most uncomfortable housemate, while the former soothes and sustains to a degree surpassing most consolations of religion and philosophy! So long as you can laugh at the little ironies of life, they don't sting very badly; but it is dreadful when you take them and yourself seriously!

For an illustration of what I mean, look at the very beginning of wedded life—the marriage service. Putting aside the tremendous satire of the ordinary man and woman swearing to love and honor each other as long as they both shall live, when neither one can have the slightest idea of the real character of the other or of the modifications of feeling and circumstances the years may bring, pass on to the chiefest jest of the ritual of matrimony:

“With all my worldly goods I thee endow.”

(If we don't hear Cupid chuckle at this, it is because he has presided at the marriage ceremony so often that his chuckling apparatus is worn out.)

This joke has several aspects, all equally refreshing. One phase is presented when the penniless man marries the wealthy woman. He can well afford to plight his troth with fervor. His worldly goods would hardly keep her in hair-pins, and he has no hesitation in pledging them to her when he thinks of the stocks and bonds and ready money he gets in exchange. She says nothing about yielding her worldly goods to him, but he knows he is getting them just the same. As his mind—unwillingly, no doubt, but inevitably—hovers around the new motor-car or the blooded riding-horse or the swift yacht or the rare books or the exclusive club his bride represents, his sense of humor must be power-

fully held in abeyance to enable him to keep a straight face while he declares before the altar and "in the face of this company" that he endows her with the sum which has barely sufficed to pay his slim board.

Another fact of this especial joke displays itself when the stingy man marries. He too says with more or less emphasis that he endows his bride with all his worldly goods, but probably he makes several mental reservations. These will declare themselves later on when his wife asks him for money for a new frock or for housekeeping or for charity, perchance for carfare, or even—crowning indignity!—to enable her to do something for one of her own family. Then is the time when she herself needs a most robust sense of humor to savor the joke of the troth-pledge at its full worth.

The ironies of the marriage service are by no means exhausted with the bestowal of the worldly goods. There are the clauses concerning sickness and health, poverty and riches. The man who affirms his intention of loving and comforting his wife in all these circumstances is usually prompt with affection and consolation so long as she is well and well-off. When she takes to the invalid list the love and comfort are noticeably modified, and his own perception of a joke is rarely keen enough to help him see how funny his attitude really is. There is nothing amusing in it to him. "It's very hard on a man to have a sick wife," he is likely to inform the sympathetic listener—even if this be one of the witnesses of his marriage, who had heard his buoyant vows!

And she? Does she offer no provocation to amusement? Observe her when "for better" becomes "for worse," and see if there is not place for a sardonic grin.

"If my husband ever grudged me money [or drank, or struck me, or looked at another woman, or swore at me,—you may take your choice of a dozen varieties of "for worse"], I would n't live with him a day longer!"

Does n't that have a familiar ring? Unless Cupid has gone entirely out of earshot by the time this stage is attained, he must smile—or weep—at the declaration.

Housekeeping develops the humorous side of married life to an extent unguessed at by those who merely board. In a boarding-house or hotel neither the husband nor wife has a chance to assert that the other is absolute master or mistress of the joint establishment. (What is it, by the way, which makes humanity so anxious to prove itself badly off?) The contention for supremacy in suffering always seen between two persons who are comparing woes or grievances is particularly conspicuous in the home.

"If ever there was a man who was master in his own house, it is my husband! He has everything just as he wants it, without any regard

to my wishes," pronounces the wife; but in his own declaration of his position he is no whit behind the very chiefest apostles.

"My wife is the cock of the walk in our joint," he informs you, and with an agreeable mixture of figures goes on to tell how he is henpecked.

The humor of the situation appeals to the bystander, at least, for any one who has given attention to the matter is fully aware that the men and women who dominate are almost always those who claim that they are down-trodden and imposed upon. The story of the man who was chased through the house by his wife with the broomstick and finally took refuge under the four-post bed illuminates this. After he had been lying *perdu* for an hour or so, he cautiously raised the valance and peered out. His wife stamped her foot.

"Get back under there!" she cried, but he asserted his rights.

"While I have the spirit of a man," he returned, with all the dignity he could muster in the circumstances, "I will peek!"

One dares think after this that the man who had been brought into such subjection that he habitually spoke of "our hat" was probably a veritable domestic tyrant and was clever enough never to let his wife find it out!

Although there is a theory that men have more sense of humor than women, this may be questioned when household conditions are considered. Does a man laugh at his own discomfiture as a woman does? How would a man take the pleading of his wife for something "like father used to make"? She has never tried it, but his longing has become a byword. What joy to the wife when he is hoist by his own petard!

"My dear, these pies don't taste as mother's used to!" complained a husband. "They are good, of course, but not the sort I was fond of as a boy. Can't you do something to improve them?"

"I'm afraid not, dear," rejoined the wife sweetly. "She takes so much pleasure in making them for you that I would hate to intimate to her that you don't enjoy them as you once did!"

Did he smile? I wonder! But I am very sure his wife would have chuckled if the conditions had been reversed.

Home economies are among the subjects which give play to a sense of humor. Here, perhaps, the man sees the joke better than the woman. I have noticed that few women care to have their efforts at reducing expenses by concocting cheap dishes no one cares to eat made the subject of humorous remarks. There a man's appreciation of the joke comes out strong, because it is n't on him!

On the other hand, when he attempts to save money by painting the porch himself and paints himself into a corner, his wife stands on the outside of his self-made prison and goes into convulsions of mirth without in the least convincing him that the situation is other than tragic. So, too, when he saws wood or splits kindling or cuts the grass

or puts a shingle on the roof, he receives admiration of his most amateurish performances as a merited tribute to excellence,—but when he fails he cannot laugh at himself.

A further proof of the superiority of the wife's sense of humor to any mere husband's appears when some other woman flatters him. For all that men have had to take the rough side of life, to come into contact with a harsh and cruel world and learn volumes concerning the seamy and treacherous aspects of existence, they are terribly gullible! The sheltered and unsophisticated woman could never choke down the praise that a man swallows with smiling composure. Some writer has remarked that the cleverest woman in the world is a fool in the hands of a stupid man if she loves him. This may be true—with limitations—but it is equally true that a clever man can be fooled by a very silly woman if she is pretty and can persuade him that she understands him!

Perhaps never is there more of a triumph over natural sex disqualifications than when a woman who loves her husband smiles indulgently and comprehendingly—not contemptuously—while he makes himself just a trifle absurd by his unquestioning acceptance of the appreciation of another woman. The wife knows so well what it is all worth! She is convinced that her husband loves her devotedly and faithfully—and yet he likes to feel that he has not ceased to be attractive to the other sex!

So does a woman? Of course she does, but she does not let it be seen so plainly. Should she permit her pleasure in admiration to be too perceptible, she is generally light-headed or ill-balanced, while it may be the most sensible and admirable of men who yields to the fascinations of an innocent Delilah. And his wife looks on as she would at the vagaries of a small boy. The husband would n't take it that way if the cases were reversed, you may be sure.

Hence my claim for the woman's advanced perception of humor. This, by the by, has been defined as a sense of the incongruous, and perhaps that is the reason a man takes the devotion of other men to his wife so seriously. To him there is nothing at all incongruous in it, bless his heart! "Young ass!" (or old one!) he will comment to himself, and wonder how so sensible a woman as Mary can stand such idiocy! It is altogether different when he receives the homage of another woman!

If a sense of humor is an essential in a dual life, what word is strong enough to express the need for it when children arrive? Then is the occasion when a man's necessity for humor is less than a woman's. Somehow a mother can never put her children sufficiently in perspective to make herself ridiculous about them. I don't mean to deny the absurdity she often manifests in her over-appreciation of their perfections, but that is less subtle than the exhibitions supplied by the other parent.

As for instance. The father comes in with a stern countenance.

"Mary, I met that boy of yours on the sidewalk and he was a disgrace! Dirty, his cap gone, a hole in his stocking! Can't you do anything to induce him to have a little care for his appearance?"

Later, the boy having been soaked, scoured, and arrayed in fresh garments, diffusing about him that peculiarly radiant cleanliness possessed in so impressive a degree by a recently tubbed child, the father views him approvingly.

"Pretty nice-looking boy of ours, eh, Mother?"

But when the lad takes a prize or wins a contest or distinguishes himself in some way, behold the father swelling with pride.

"I tell you, my dear, I feel proud of that boy of mine!"

I am sorry for any woman who cannot extract the full fun from this condition. She loses much of the best of life. The man never has a chance at anything just like it, for the mother always says in her heart, "that boy of mine," no matter what his scrapes or his shortcomings. She feels she makes a big concession when she refers to him aloud as "our son," and privately hopes his father appreciates the honor!

These same children do more to develop what might be called the joint sense of humor in husband and wife than any other one agency. The two laugh at the children together—perhaps laugh at themselves because of their absorption in their offspring, their faith in the youngsters' cleverness and achievements and good looks. There is nothing like such mirth to draw two people close to one another.

"A difference of taste in jests is a great strain upon the affections." One of the greatest; and the converse is true.

"We laugh at the same things and like the same things to eat," I heard some one say once in explanation of the close friendship existing between himself and a comrade. The happy marriage is founded on something more than this, but laughter at the same causes is a strong bond. In course of time the persons who make a practice of such mirth may learn to relish jokes on their own weaknesses and peccadilloes, and then a great gate of enjoyment and sympathy is open to them.

Do I seem to make too much of the urgency for a sense of humor in the married life? Set your wits to work and think how it simplifies matters if you can laugh instead of cry—or swear—when the water-pipes are frozen and you have to wash in a teacupful of water from a neighbor's, or when the butcher fails to appear and you must dine on bread and cheese and kisses, or in any one of a dozen other contingencies. Consider how nearly every exigency of life is eased by a laugh.

One of the most entertaining dinners I ever attended was in the country, when a sudden cold snap had burst the water-pipes too late for notice to be sent to the expected guests. The kitchen floor was flooded, and the cook had to prepare the dinner in rubber boots; but the fun of the situation was so clearly perceived by host and hostess and their

friends that the occasion became a whirl of jollity. Compare this with what the dinner might have been in the establishment of the serious-minded, and then venture to say that a sense of humor is not a saving grace!

That is not the best humor, however, which laughs at some one else and cannot laugh at oneself. If you can find amusement in your husband's mistaking an unknown woman's back for yours and bringing down upon himself the scorn of the stranger who thinks he is trying to scrape acquaintance with her, and consider yourself to be pitied when a man blunders into a similar mistake with you; if you can jeer at your better half when he makes a bad break in the course of conversation, and can feel only resentful mortification when he laughs over a like error on your part, you have something yet to gain in the way of a properly directed sense of humor. To my mind, no family joke is the right sort which means actual hurt to any one. Married life may have its tragic and ironical sides, but humor should be the means to lighten all but the bitterest of them.

A recollection comes to me of a couple I knew who had been burned out of house and home, saving little besides their own lives and their children and an inadequate insurance. The day after the fire a letter came telling them of the failure of a company in which they owned stock; their small boy was taken down with measles; their little girl developed whooping cough; and that evening their real-estate agent called to inform them that some tenants who owed a goodly sum had "skipped" between daylight and dark, with their furniture. The bearer of ill-tidings expected an outburst of distress, but the husband and wife looked at each other for a moment and then broke into wild mirth.

"What is the matter?" asked the agent, rather startled.

"Oh, it's so like Job!" both exclaimed, and the wife elucidated. "It's been just this way all day. Every little while some piece of bad luck would blow in, and don't you remember how in Job it was all the time?—'While he was yet speaking' some one rushed in with something dreadful that had happened? I never knew before what it was to be like any one in the Bible. Is n't it funny?"

"I thought they must be daffy if they'd come to the point where they found Job funny!" said the agent when he told the story.

Myself, I confess to understanding their attitude and admiring it.

Nothing really hurts you so long as you can laugh at it. Some troubles cannot be smiled away. They are the real kind, but they don't come every day. Cultivate the ability to find the fun that is at first invisible, and you will come to count the laugh the champion lifter of burdens.



THE WISDOM OF FOLLY

By Owen Oliver

A WISE man came to the end of his days,
And he saw his life laid bare:
The deeds he had done in his wise, wise ways—
And one little folly was there.

The works he had wrought, the thoughts he had thought,
In a big, big ledger were;
And The Angel Who Waits at Heaven's gates
Was striking a balance fair.

There was page and page of deed so sage
On the debit side of sin;
But the folly stood to the wise man's good;
And the Angel said: "Come in!"

MOST people have one true story to tell; but they don't tell it. I don't tell mine; but this is some one else's story, and no one will ever connect him with it if I alter the names. I'll call him Dallas. I might set down many things about him, but one is enough. He was the wisest man I ever knew.

There were several reasons why he told me his story, I fancy. No doubt the story burned to be told; and we were shipmates, and one tells stories at sea; and we were outside each other's lives; and the biggest reason was to point a moral for my good. That reason, of course, I don't explain. Well, here is the story, in his own words, so far as I can remember them.

Physicians never take their own prescriptions. I always preached that "the simple women are the dangerous ones"; but I thought it would take a clever woman to make a fool of me. Ethel Callington is n't a clever woman; not even clever enough to know that she has befooled me. If she guessed how things stand, she'd cry. I've come over these thousands of miles of sea to keep her eyes dry. You see how completely fooled I am!

She was such a slip of a creature; six-and-twenty, and with her hair down she'd have passed for sixteen. It seemed ridiculous that she should be three years married. It shook one's faith in the universe

that she should be married to a man like Callington. "Saint and Satyr," Mrs. Leeder called them—Sally of the sharp tongue, I called *her*. There was no love lost between us then, because there had been a waste in the past.

I take half the blame for my past—Sally included. I put the other half on my upbringing in idleness. If ever I find a young fellow making an ass of himself, I try to oust folly by occupation. You can live in a hundred ways; but the first law of life is that you must do something. That is why— But that's *your* story.

Well, I'd come within hailing of forty; and life at the moment was unsatisfying. At a garden party somebody introduced me to Ethel Callington, and I talked to her. She listened to me in a still, expressionless way at first. I had to interest her or pass her on. I did not want to pass her on. I enjoyed looking at the slim figure and the still, pale face. They were like iced drink to a fevered man. I laid myself out to amuse her; and presently she smiled the ghost of a smile.

"Do you know," I told her, "I never won a smile so hard!"

She looked at me in her grave fashion.

"It is very kind of you to take trouble to interest me," she said. "Thank you. . . . Yes. You have interested me; very much. Now you will like to talk to some one who is clever and can interest you."

"My dear lady," I protested, "don't you know that talkers prefer to listen to themselves? I once travelled for two hours with a lady, and she did not let me get in a dozen words. At the end of the journey she told me that she had never enjoyed a conversation so much! This afternoon I have been enjoying conversation at your expense."

She smiled her faint smile again.

"You only say that to put me at my ease," she declared. "Thank you again! . . . There is something that I often want to say to clever people; but I've never had the courage before."

"And you have now?" I asked.

"I think I have," she owned.

"Then— Those people in the corner seat are going at last. I began to think that they belonged to the bench! Shall we sit there? . . . Now you can show your bravery!"

"Well. . . . I want to say, 'Please, clever people, I am not quite so stupid as you imagine. I do think of things to say; and if you seemed to want to hear me, I would say them.' . . . It's funny that I can say it to you."

"Not funny at all," I denied. "I'm not clever enough to frighten!"

"You are clever enough," she asserted; "but it is n't cleverness that frightens me. I don't think clever people are usually kind; and you are. So— Perhaps you can make out what I mean?"

"I think," I said, "you mean what no one ever makes out. We

take to a few people; and to the many we don't. I don't like long words like affinities. I'll put it in plain Saxon. You and I are going to be friends. Pardon my bluntness. You're a child to me. . . . Friends, eh?"

She looked at me in her grave way again; and again I had the feeling of a big iced drink.

"Have you courage enough to say 'friends,'" I asked, "or only 'friendly'?"

"Friends," she pronounced. She laughed under her breath, like a child who has been given a new toy.

I did n't laugh. I was wondering whether my "friendship" was a good gift to give her. I don't think I ever thought for the woman before, but—I never smear facts. I cared very much for Ethel, right from the start. I suppose goodness was a new toy to me. She was good. . . . Goodness is n't so catching as evil; but it *is* contagious. She infected me. I did n't take it very badly; but I was careful of her; very careful. No one ever said anything against *her* on account of our friendship. I gathered that some people said things to her against me. I asked her why she cut Sharp-tongued Sally and one or two others. She answered very soberly that they had slandered a friend. I thought of a legal maxim: "The greater the truth, the greater the libel." . . . Well, if they said that I meant any harm to her, it *was* slander. I'll swear that by any gods that are worshipped in the heart of a hardened sinner; by my dead mother, and the sister who loves me, and the faith that I keep with a man; by Ethel herself—and she's the worshipped saint in my calendar! I want to make that clear before I go on.

Our friendship lasted just three months. If I'd have gone on with it for about two years, I reckon I'd have caught enough goodness from her to make me a really nice man! I like to think that she caught no harm from me and some happiness. She needed it, poor girl. Her husband was a drunkard. In his sane mind, he respected her, and was not intentionally unkind. I like to give other devils their dues, as well as myself. Sober he curbed his coarse tongue before her, and did the best thing he could for her by leaving her alone. He was not often sober. Sometimes he was drunk in company. Twice I helped her take him home. Once he was incapable of talking. Once he was maudlin. He wept and said that her cruelty had driven him to it. She spoke to me about that the next day.

"You know," she said, "I am not good at expressing myself. There are things too that one can't express; but—— You are the one friend I have had for years and years. . . . I did n't drive him to it. It went on before he knew me. . . . If I had been able to care for him, I might have saved him. I feel responsible to that extent. That is why I don't leave him. I can go and take the drink away when he is home. No one else dares. . . . No. Don't speak. Silence is best. . . . Thank

you! . . . Drive me in your motor, will you? And we won't talk. . . . Every night in my prayers I thank God for your friendship."

It was at the end of the three months when she came to me one evening. It was about half-past eight. Her face was like marble. Her eyes—they were big always—seemed unnaturally large. There was a bruise on one cheek, and a little cut on her lip. She stood very still and looked at me without speaking.

"Ethel!" I said. "Oh, Ethel!"

I—I tell you I could have *cried!* I!

She did not speak.

"He has struck you!" I said hoarsely.

"He has done more than that," she said. "He has thrashed me." She said this very quietly. Then she gave a sharp cry. "Take me away!" she begged wildly. "Take me away!"

My heart seemed to leap out of me; and then back again.

"Yes," I said.

I packed a little bag—she had her bag—and we went out. I called a cab and told the driver to go to Euston.

"Where shall we go, dear?" I asked. I was mad with the rapture of possession. My arms were aching to go round her. Thank Heaven they did n't before she spoke!

"It will be better for me to go alone," she said. "If you took me, people would misunderstand. They do not know you as I do."

And I knew her; and misunderstood *her!*

There was a long pause before I spoke. I was thinking chiefly how to prevent her guessing that I had misunderstood; wondering if she had noticed my bag. I wonder sometimes now. . . . Sometimes I think— Well, never mind.

"Dear girl," I said—I hardly knew my own voice, it was so gentle; "fatherly," I thought, and almost laughed—"I have considered all that. I am taking you to my sister's. There is time for me to come back to-night. I will see your husband to-morrow, and—and obtain a separation."

"You will not—will not——"

I laughed softly.

"Oh, no!" I said. "Oh, no! I would give a few years of my life to thrash him to death, but for your sake I won't."

I did n't—not to death!

"Thank you, dear friend!" She sighed. "I have put up with things, because your friendship was possible while I lived—at home." She laughed bitterly at the word. "Now I must go away, I think. A woman's name. . . . Dear friend, you know."

"Dear," I said, "I know. You shall stay with my sister, and I—I have to go abroad for a good while soon. I will go at once."

“God bless you!” she said. “I—I——” Her voice broke, and she turned her head away. I let down the window and shouted to the driver.

“Hi! This is n’t the way to King’s Cross.”

“You said Euston, sir,” he protested.

“Nonsense!” I contradicted. “King’s Cross.”

The trains to my sister’s go from there.

“You heard me say King’s Cross, did n’t you?” I asked Ethel.

She did not answer. That is why I wonder if she guessed that I thought that she meant—— Well, if she did, she forgave me.

I took her to my sister’s; told Mary the whole story; told her that I was going away.

“She’s the world to me,” I said, “if she knew. I’d lie down and be a cushion to ease her little feet. . . . Love her for me, Mary. I dare n’t stay. . . .”

“My dear boy!” Mary sobbed. “My dear, good, bad boy! I always knew there was no better man than you!”

Women are good judges of ninety-nine men out of a hundred, but they can’t judge the hundredth: the one they care for!

I went away. I did n’t even kiss Ethel when we said good-by. I think she would have let me; but I knew she’d torment herself about it afterwards. And besides—— It is n’t easy to find the right words sometimes. I felt as if she was too—too precious to soil. You see, I was a fool very completely. . . .

Anyhow, I arranged a separation for her; settled up my affairs—you see, I am an idler, so there was n’t much to settle—booked my passage for the next week; and here I am. An exile to folly! . . . Well, well!

I don’t know whether you see the moral. If you want to apply it——

The rest of Dallas’s remark is the truth that I don’t tell. I did n’t apply his moral—who ever profits second-hand from other people’s experience? Now I rather wish that I had; but that’s nothing to do with his story.

I was home in three months; and a few days afterwards I met Dallas in the Strand. I scarcely knew him. He had shaved off his mustache, and he looked absurdly young.

“Hullo, Dallas!” I said—you will understand that the name I said was n’t “Dallas.” “I thought you were staying abroad for years.”

“So did I,” he said; “but I found something to do here.”

We shook hands, and I laughed.

“It seems to me that you did n’t apply your moral,” I remarked.

“Did you?” he asked.

“Well—no! . . . I was a —— fool. . . . Come and dine with me at my club to-night.”

He looked hard at me.

"You're a chap I'd like to be friends with," he said frankly; "but I can't. I told you a certain story, and—Mrs. Callington's husband died while I was on the voyage out. She is going to marry me; and you see——"

"Oh!" I said. "I see. . . Well, since I am to lose your friendship—I'd have liked it, Dallas—on account of enjoying your conversation, you must give me compensation: tell me the finish of the story. It won't matter, since we shan't meet again."

"There's a deal of passing on in life," he said; "and sometimes you have to pass on a good hand. . . Yes, old chap, I'll tell you; and you can make one of your little stories of it, if you like. Nobody will guess that it's true! Come along! We'll have a cigar together, anyhow."

We sat down in a quiet restaurant to coffee and cigars; and he told me the end of his story:

I was a bigger fool than I thought over Ethel Callington. I had the cable when I landed; and the ship was returning the next day, and I returned with it. That was ordinary folly; almost excusable in a man of my age. He does n't give up so much by settling down with a wife. The queer thing was that a conscience woke in me. I hardly knew that I had such a thing, so far as a woman was concerned. I felt that I was n't a bit worthy of her—that was n't folly either, but fact—and I felt that before my fair white lady gave herself to this reprobate she ought to know just what she was doing. I told her as soon as we met; while we were holding hands hard, and I suppose she was wondering that I did n't kiss her.

"Ethel," I said, "I'm afraid of your goodness. I—the things you heard of me were pretty true. I'm not the man you think me, dear simple soul. . . I did n't know how good you were till that night when—I was fool enough to think you meant me to run off with you. . . And of course I was going to. . . I don't know if you'll take the risk of marrying me. I want you. . . I don't think you have the least idea how *much* I want you."

She gave a queer little cry.

"I wonder," she said, "if you even dream how much I want you to want me! Sometimes I am frightened because I care so much!"

"My dear!" I said. "My dear!"

I said a lot of other things that I need n't tell you.

"I shan't make you bad, Ethel," I promised at last. "You'll make me good. . . but not so alarmingly good as you are, my dear."

"But I don't think I am so alarmingly good," she whispered, with her face buried on my shoulder. "I saw your bag that night, you know; and I—oh, I had to fight with myself so hard! . . . Now you won't think such a lot of me, and love me so much!"

"My dear," I told her, "I should love you with my whole heart, whatever you did, and whatever you do."

"That," she said, "is how I feel—and always have felt—about you! You see—I don't think there is so much difference in what clever people and silly people think and feel. It is only that I can't say things, and you can. . . . I think you are a very, very clever man! . . . Except about me!"

"About you," I owned, "I am a perfect fool!"

She laughed a soft laugh; and then she made the only clever remark that she has ever been guilty of. She was "a little above herself" at the moment, she protests, when I tax her with it.

"That only proves your cleverness," she told me. "If folly makes you—you and me!—happy, it is wise to be a fool. . . . Two fools!"

And as the days go on, we are proving the wisdom of our folly!



CLICK O' THE LATCH

BY NANCY BYRD TURNER

THE silence holds for it, taut and true;
 The young moon stays for it, wistful white;
 Winds that whimpered the sunset through,
 Sigh for it, low and light.

*Click o' the latch, and he'll come home,—
 A stir in the dusk at the little gate.
 Hush, my heart, and be still, my heart,—
 Surely it's sweet to wait!*

The tall skies lean for it, listening—
 Never a star but lends an ear—
 The passionate porch-flowers stoop and cling,
 Parting their leaves to hear

*Click o' the latch, and him come home,—
 A step on the flags, a snatch of song.
 Hurry, my heart, be swift, my heart,—
 How did we wait so long!*

BUM O'REILLY, PROBATIONER

By Lucy Copinger

BUM O'REILLY pulled off his ragged coat and flung his still more ragged cap joyfully down on the bricks of the school-yard. "Come on! I dare any of youse to tech it! Come on an' try—I dare youse!" Thus taunted, the group of boys before him fell into various belligerent attitudes, and one of the bolder spirits rashly kicked the hat into the gutter. That his opponent was twice his size did not cause Bum a moment's hesitation. With a whole-hearted yell, he flung himself forward, and in a moment the two were rolling about on the ground, a pummelling, kicking mass. Immediately the yard, so recently the picture of peaceful boyish gambols, became a scene of carnage. A good fight on forbidden territory was too good an opportunity to lose, and sides were at once taken by every boy in the yard, except a few timid First-Graders, who burst into tears and added their lamentations to the general uproar. It was only after the Principal, rushing distractedly out, had gathered the chief contestants into his office, that peace descended upon the school-yard.

It was not until dismissal time had come and the last First-Grader had gone that Bum, battered but cheerful, reappeared. He wore an expression of vainly concealed happiness.

"Gee, but I got a busted nose!" he remarked complacently. Miss Lucy ignored him, but her displeasure was wasted.

"It'll be swollen all over m' face by termorrer, I betcher," he continued with satisfaction. Bum's self-constituted task was to help Miss Lucy every day after school, and as he spoke he fell to work upon the blackboards.

"I don't wish you to help me to-day, James," said Miss Lucy coldly.

As she expected, Bum was visibly affected by this. "Aw, now, miss," he pleaded, "lemme help yer. Wotcher want to be havin' all that there chalk-dirt in yer mouth fer?"

Miss Lucy was adamant, however, and Bum departed with dampened spirits. The next afternoon he appeared with such a chastened countenance and such a beautifully sticky, quite unlicked apple-on-the-stick that Miss Lucy could not find it in her heart to be unforgiving. It was an unpleasant surprise to her when in the middle of the afternoon recess he was again returned to her, gory but triumphant. Vexed beyond discre-

tion, Miss Lucy stood him in the corner, although she had well learned in those hard days before she had come to understand how to handle this especial scholar of hers, that nothing was to be gained and all to be lost by such high-handed treatment. Stood in the corner, Bum unrepentantly amused himself by doubling up his arm and watching the swell of the hard little muscles through the ragged coat-sleeve.

Miss Lucy, called out of the room, a few minutes later returned to an uproarious Primer Class. Sophie Bauerschmidt dramatically described events:

"Miz, Bum wuz standing in the corner making long noses at uz wot you said ain't nize, und a big boy come in, und Bum made a nose at him, und then Bum he said, 'Come on und spid in my eye, I dare you,' und, Miz, the boy done id, und they wuz un orful fight, und all us children run around und hollers."

"I simply can't stand him any more," Miss Lucy declared to the Principal. "He keeps the class so disturbed that I feel I cannot do my duty to them."

The Principal was sympathetic but helpless. However, the next afternoon he came into Miss Lucy's room with a pleased look.

"Well, that young hoodlum is gone," he said, with a nod toward Bum's empty seat. "It seems, he is the leader of a gang known deservedly as the 'Roughnecks,' and they got into a stone battle with an opposing gang, during the course of which your young man heaved a brick through the plate-glass window of Bauerschmidt's saloon. Incidentally, Officer Mulcahey gathered him in. His case comes up in the Juvenile Court to-morrow morning. You will be summoned as a witness, to testify as to O'Reilly's character, or lack of it. I'll be down there to back you up in everything you say, and if you make it good and strong it'll be a year at St. Vincent's Industrial School. Good news, eh?"

To his surprise, Miss Lucy received his good news with a strange lack of enthusiasm. She turned to the board, where she had been explaining to Anna Karenina why two and three could not possibly make one.

"Well, anyhow," she remarked illogically, "I guess the O'Reilly income bought most of that plate-glass window."

Then, because the empty seat seemed somehow unfairly to accuse her, she put Frederick William Schneider in it, and tried to tell herself that it did n't seem queer to see his smug, proper little countenance there. At frequent intervals she was conscious of the smiling face of the Principal appearing at her door, repeating congratulations.

"Old Cheshire cat!" she muttered, as she made an unpedagogical face at his retreating unconscious back. "How he gloats!"

The next morning, early, Miss Lucy arrived at the Juvenile Court.

After a sleepless night, she had finally decided that it was her duty to her class, to the Principal, and to Bum himself, that she should do all in her power to help in removing the boy from unfavorable home influences and the company of the "Roughnecks," to the right living of the Reform School. So it was with an easy mind that she entered the Juvenile Court-room. The body of the room was filled with benches on which sat the youthful transgressors, with their parents, awaiting trial. At one end, on a raised platform, was the Judge's desk, with the bar before it, and a small enclosure to the right for the accommodation of any chance visitors. It was to this last that Miss Lucy was conducted, and from here, as she waited for the case of O'Reilly to be called, she witnessed clear, impartial justice tempered with a very humane mercy, dispensed to what seemed an endless procession of erring boyhood. The Court was a newly established one in Miss Lucy's city, with a beneficent head, of whom she had heard much. In the course of that morning she saw boys of twelve or thirteen who under the old order would have received the brand of a jail sentence for some thoughtless prank, released with a word of advice and warning, placed on the probation list for another chance, or at the worst committed to one of the industrial schools. To Miss Lucy, as she sat there and watched the cases that came before the kindly Judge, the saddest creatures of all were the mothers. There was one question that the Judge asked that, no matter how vicious and sullen the offender, always received the same answer.

"*'Stabat mater,'*" softly said a woman who sat beside Miss Lucy, a woman whose great heart and mind and fortune had been given to this problem of the city's young. "Wherever you go, in whatever city, always the same answer to that question: 'My boy was always a good boy, Judge.' God bless and pity the mothers! They follow their sons to the penitentiary doors—sometimes even to the gallows steps—with those same pitiful words."

So absorbed was Miss Lucy in the spectacle before her that it was with a start that she heard the clerk's voice, "James O'Reilly to the bar!" and she saw Bum, his mother, and Officer Mulcahey making their way up to the Judge's desk. One glance at the voluminous, untrammelled figure of Mrs. O'Reilly—clad in widow's weeds consisting of a greasy black wrapper and a disreputable bonnet enveloped in several yards of black veiling—and Miss Lucy knew that that lady had succumbed to a habit of hers when life grew too stressful of comforting herself with a "little drap." Under such circumstances, she invariably buried Mr. O'Reilly.

She had not much time to worry over this, however, before the Judge motioned her to a position at his right. There she stood while Officer Mulcahey and herself held up their right hands, and the Clerk of the Court rapidly muttered something about "the truth, and nothing but

the truth." Then the Judge, having read the charge, took off his glasses and regarded Bum. As Miss Lucy, too, looked at her late scholar, she was amazed to see how little he really was. He had always seemed so much larger than the other First-Graders, but now, facing the dignity of this tribunal, he seemed only a child, little, dirty, and forlorn. Suddenly Miss Lucy surprised herself by sniffing.

"Now, don't be a fool," she cried to herself angrily, blinking her eyes rapidly and fastening her gaze and her thoughts on Officer Mulcahey. The officer was telling how he had come upon the two gangs in the midst of the stone battle, just in time to see Bum hurl the brick that had shattered the window. All the time the officer was telling his story the superintendent from the Reform School was hovering in the background, waiting—"like a long-nosed bird of prey," Miss Lucy thought unjustly. Then the Judge turned to Mrs. O'Reilly, who, during the taking of the officer's testimony, had been weeping loudly, her widow's veil coming in very conveniently as a handkerchief. "Madam, is this boy your son?" the Judge inquired, not unkindly.

At this question Mrs. O'Reilly's grief burst all bounds. "Me only one!" she cried wildly. "Me little Jimmy! Me only child! The boy of me heart, and me nothin' but a poor lonely widder woman!"

"Ah, a widow!" said the Judge sympathetically, and then he looked at the record of the case before him, in which record "Martin O'Reilly, garbage remover," was entered as the active father of a numerous progeny.

"Some mistake here," he said sharply to the Clerk.

"Your Honor," explained Miss Lucy in a timid whisper, "it's not a mistake. She always thinks she's a widow when she gets—worried."

"I see," said the Judge gravely, but Miss Lucy detected a furtive twinkle in his eye as he dismissed Mrs. O'Reilly with a grave remark concerning the impropriety of intruding on a widow's grief. Then the Judge turned to Bum.

"Well, James," he began severely, "you have heard the evidence against you. Have you anything to say for yourself as to why you threw a brick through this window?"

"Mister, I never had no more stones," said Bum, with an innocence that was real and unmistakable.

For a moment the twinkle came again into the Judge's eye.

He addressed Miss Lucy.

"I understand that you are this boy's teacher," he said. "What kind of a boy is he in school?"

Now, Miss Lucy had memorized a neat, well worded little speech expatiating upon Bum's troublesomeness, his truancy and general bad conduct. But as the Judge asked this question Bum raised his eyes to her and hope sprang into his face. It was plainly the call of one in

trouble to his friend for help—appealing, hopeful, confident. As pal to pal, the two spoke silently to each other across the Judge's Bar.

"He is a very good boy," said Miss Lucy.

As she spoke, she was aware that a figure suddenly upheaved itself from one of the front benches, and she was conscious of looking into the amazed face of the Principal. She clutched the rail defiantly. "He is a very good boy," she repeated firmly, "one of my best pupils."

For a moment the Judge's eyes rested upon Miss Lucy. Then he fumbled silently through his records for what seemed ages to Miss Lucy. Had she saved this dear ragamuffin of hers, or would it be a Reform-School sentence? Her hands were icy and her checks burnt.

Finally the Judge spoke.

"James," he said kindly, "I am going to suspend judgment in your case for a month. During that month you will be under the surveillance of one of the Juvenile Court Probation Officers. This officer's report on you will depend, in turn, largely upon your teacher's report of you—your teacher being, I am sure, trustworthy, honorable" (here Miss Lucy blushed violently), "and also, I believe, a stanch—a very stanch—friend of yours. You may go."

Monday morning the Principal greeted Miss Lucy with a sour face. "And yet you object to being classed legally with idiots and criminals! You—heaven forbid!—even want to serve on grand juries. Tell me, will you, exactly why you acted as you did?"

"Well," said Miss Lucy judicially, "I just didn't like the Reform School superintendent's nose."



ABOUT WOMEN

ONE of the easiest ways to make an enemy of a woman is to give her advice that she knows is good.

A MAN may be interested in a clever woman, but the one he really admires is the one who thinks he is clever.

To nearly every woman there comes at least once a time when the demands of her self-respect seem all out of proportion to its value.

WOMEN are tolerant of their own men, but merciless in their judgment of others. Men condone in other women much that they would not tolerate in their own.

SOMETIMES a woman refuses to divorce a man who has been a failure as a husband, simply because her pride will not permit her to admit publicly that her judgment is at fault.

Ann M. Walker

THAT BLOOMING AZALEA

By Agnes Edwards

WE went aboard the night before the steamer sailed—I say “we,” for there were about four hundred of us in the first cabin, but I was all alone. I wanted to be alone. I wanted time and solitude to reflect and to recover, recovery meaning in my case, as it does in the case of nine young women out of ten, from an *affaire de cœur*.

I was not perfectly sure I wanted to recover. In fact, as I looked about my little stateroom and saw everywhere the evidences of Ernest's devotion, I felt with a gratified thrill that it was rather pleasant to be in possession, so to speak, of a man so attentive and so truly considerate of one's wishes and comforts. That he was thoughtful and considerate, admitted of no controversy. Instead of the conventional cut flowers, he had sent me a sturdy blooming azalea which would last all the way over; he had supplied me with an electric flash, a fountain-pen, a small folding camera, and excellent guide-books marked with convenient signs. He had seen to it that I had some English coin for tips on the steamer, and some Italian change for immediate use at Naples.

In fact, there was nothing, absolutely nothing, in which he had failed, and I knew that these attentions were not merely sporadic evidences of an infatuation. Ernest always displayed the same forehandedness toward every one; his sister once told me that he invariably purchased theatre tickets two weeks in advance, and his mother was a walking eulogy of his virtues. Added to this, he was a well-set up, well-groomed young fellow, with a steady heart and head, and good prospects. And, most important of all, he was in love with me, and I was, it must be confessed, a little in love with him. Why, then, was I fleeing to Italy? Why did not that smiling face and genial voice fill me with more than merely agreeable affection? Why did not those constant and assiduous attentions, of which the comfort of my stateroom was but one expression, fill me with greater assurance? Why did I not accept at once his pleading to let him take care of me always? Why? Why? And I fell asleep, still wondering.

The next morning I was waked by the cheerful voice of my neighbor next door. It was such a pleasant voice that I felt as if a shaft of sunlight had fallen across my little room.

"Tizzy?" said the voice. "Tizzy?" Was this a fantastic exclamation or an equally fantastic appellation? In any case, it had a jolly sound, and the mellifluous English intonation gave it added charm.

"Tizzy," repeated the voice again, buoyantly, "it's a glorious morning—glorious." There was a pause, then a bell rang and the steward came running.

"I say," called the voice, "I want my bath at eight and my tea at quarter before. What about you, Tizzy?" There was no answer, and the voice continued amiably, "Cold bath, you know, steward, and a slice of toast with the tea."

"Very well, sir;" and the steward evidently vanished.

It must have been the energetic owner of the voice who then proceeded with a lively campaign of pulling out trunks, stropping a razor, letting down the wash-stand, and struggling with the porthole, for "Tizzy," whatever or whoever it was, made no sound of any sort.

"I say, Tizzy," called the voice, after a brief pause, "you'll need your sweater on; it's cold. Can I get it for you?"

The answer was an indistinguishable murmur, but evidently enough for the owner of the voice, for I heard the trunk being opened again, and a gay "Here it is, Tizzy. Can I get you something else?"

"No, thank you," came a faint feminine response; and I knew then that Tizzy was his wife.

"Did you arrange with the stewardess about your bath-hour," queried the voice solicitously, "or would you like me to see about it?"

"I did," was the brief rejoinder.

"And when is it to be?" came the voice, evincing what I, in my solitary estate, considered a very flattering interest in the matter.

"Eight-thirty," answered Tizzy colorlessly, and I felt myself growing indignant at her indifference. He was such a cheery soul and seemed so anxious to please her, and she seemed so unappreciative. And as I lay there—for I was scheduled for second breakfast, and they were preparing for first—I could not but feel this more and more. The thin partition between us, with its opening at the top for ventilation, made it impossible not to hear every word spoken in the next room, and although I tried by various jinglings and judicious coughings to make them aware of my presence, it was quite futile. The voice kept up the same cheerful stream of conversation and ejaculation, while the owner of the voice splashed and shaved and rubbed himself, and shook out his clothes, and the voice of Tizzy, weak and curt, replied in occasional monosyllables,

"Odd," I mused, as I began my own morning toilet, "how sunny men like that always marry low-spirited women. I wonder what's the matter with Tizzy?"

However, I had no means of determining, for I did not see my next-door neighbors that day or for several days. As I have said, there were

four hundred of us in the first cabin, and I could not pick out the young man to whom I had credited the fresh young voice, or the listless girl whom I had pictured as the unenthusiastic Tizzy. As they used a different corridor to approach their cabin, they never passed my door, and although I heard them night and morning, nearly a week passed before the voice and its echo found their habitation. And in that week many things happened.

It is rather a curious situation to find oneself a third in a conjugal relationship—an invisible member, as one might say, of a marital partnership; and yet every morning I heard the voice call out, "How are you, my dear?" and then proceed through the matutinal preparations.

"Here's your tea, Tizzy," it would say affably. "How is it? Here, let me add a little water. That's right." And then, "Time for your bath, Tizzy. Here are your slippers. Skip along, now;" and he would open the door for her.

Such unceasing, unwavering consideration I had never heard in my life. I was amazed at the minuteness and persistence of his attentions. He always asked her what dress she was going to wear, helped to get it down, and finally buttoned her into it. And he was equally friendly about his own affairs. He confided in her his daily plans, what the weather was like, what suit he was going to wear, what he had discussed with the men in the smoking-room, all in a frank, boyish way that was very attractive to me. I fancied they had been married a year or two, and it pleased me to think that his thoughtfulness still kept the ardor of courtship days. And, for some reason or other, I found myself thinking of Ernest. He was very much the same type of man, he had the same interest in little things, the same solicitude over details.

"That's what really counts," I reflected, as I struggled with the hooks on my dress—Tizzy was being hooked at that very moment by efficient fingers—"some one who really cares about you every day; who looks after you in all sorts of trifling matters as well as in bigger things;" and I looked at the flowering azalea more favorably.

It took me a long time to understand Tizzy. Her husband was vivacity itself, but she seemed sulky. He was chatty, bright-tempered, obliging. She was taciturn, unresponsive, indifferent. He was interested in everything, particularly in her and her affairs; she was interested in nothing—least of all in him and his affairs. I used to wonder why she never talked, and it was a long time before it dawned on me that she never had a chance. Mr. Tizzy, for so I called him, was like a merry water-rill that runs on and on and on. His cheerfulness was commendable, but it was also unendable. It was persistent, insistent, incessant. Every idea that entered his head immediately left it by way of his mouth. His solicitude for Tizzy, I realized with slow realization, was only a habit. His questions concerning her health, her occupations, her dress, and her desires

were actuated by an evanescent yet perpetual curiosity, by an insatiable mania for collecting facts. I began to feel compassion for the girl, whom I pictured as no longer a bride, but still young enough to chafe under the inexorable dominion of a tyranny of kindness. I was conscious that she was already drooping under the resistless battery of attentiveness as a flower would droop under the merciless glare of continual sunshine. And the sturdy azalea which Ernest had bought because it would last all the voyage began to look hateful to me.

And then, one night, the unexpected happened. It was one of those evenings, nearing the end of the trip, when a few public-spirited individuals get up what is termed euphemistically an "entertainment" in the saloon dining-room. Against my wish I was borne thither, and, ensconcing myself in the seat of the scornful, I surveyed the people who had already assembled. There were four ladies playing cards in a corner near me, and when the entertainment commenced three of them started to lay down their cards, but the fourth, a starved and faded little creature of fifty-five or thereabouts, clung to hers tenaciously, and not only insisted upon playing but on whispering throughout the whole performance. I glared at her reprovingly; could she not talk in some other time and place? Why must she disturb an entire company with her eager, breathless undertones? And just then a fresh-faced, stoutish man, immaculate, hearty, beaming, appeared at the door.

"Here's your coat, Tizzy," he called in the cheerful tone there was no mistaking and with the firmness there was no dodging. "I thought you ought to have it in this draughty room. Here, slip it on;" and the process I had so often heard I now witnessed, as her lord and master and possessor wrapped Tizzy up in her coat and his prattlings.

So this was Tizzy! This worn, repressed woman who had whispered so greedily throughout the entertainment. Ah, I understood now that she had to make the most of every moment! He was so cocky, so noisily eupeptic, that I had pictured him as young and Tizzy as a little younger. I saw now that he was not young; that his good humor was not even to be downed by age, and that Tizzy was like all exhausted creatures, without age, without color, almost without sex, and for some unaccountable reason it flashed through my mind that perhaps one did not even spell her name with a capital.

For a moment my eyes were riveted upon them—those two people in whose most private life I had participated morning and night without volition, and then I turned my face away. Considering my peculiarly intimate knowledge of them, it seemed indecent to survey them in the flesh.

That night, after we had all retired—I to my stateroom and Tizzy and Mr. Tizzy to theirs—I lay awake, thinking. I was trying to recall some man of my acquaintance who was silent, morose, uncommunicative.

I regretted that Trappist monks were vowed to celibacy; surely a Trappist would be an ideal husband. At all events, the only possible companion for life must be one who would be willing to let you live your life while he lived his. Neglect would be infinitely preferable to being smothered, stifled, and overwhelmed with perpetual advice, optimism, and attention. And I got up, flung my coat about me, picked up the flowering azalea, and, tiptoeing my way to the deck, threw it over the rail.



A LITTLE CONFESSION

By Ellis O. Jones

I AM a Child.

I think I average up pretty well with other children.

I like to play around and investigate and ask questions and feel that every day I am becoming better acquainted with the world.

I like to go to school when they make it interesting, and I don't like to go to school when they don't make it interesting.

I am very selfish, which, they inform me, is wrong, but, in spite of everything that is told me, I can't keep from thinking of myself before any one else.

I hear old people say that they are unselfish, but I never could see that they really were. "Number One" always figures very prominently in whatever they do.

I like my father and my mother, especially when they are in a good humor.

I don't like them as a matter of principle, nor because they are particularly wonderful, but chiefly because I am used to their ways. And then, of course, they are used to my ways, which helps a great deal.

I suppose I could get used to other parents, if necessary, and like them just as well.

I never think of leaving my parents even when they are harsh, for I know that other parents would be just as faulty at times.

I don't know whether I honor my father and my mother or not, as the Bible teaches. I don't really know what the word "honor" means. I think old people should be more careful in the use of their words.

I make these few confessions in the interest of philosophy, ethics, science, and the general welfare.

I should be glad to elaborate upon application.

I want to be set right before the world, and I want the world to be set right before me.

I am a Child.

A COMMUNAL EXECUTION

By Francis James MacBeath



“IT’S hard, boys. A lot o’ you are my friends, and I ain’t never shot a man yet; but I’ve sworn to uphold the law, and, by God, I’m going to do it! You know me.”

Zeb Jenkins, able sheriff of Fayette County, stood behind the prison gate of inch-iron bars and fronted an impassioned, ever-increasing mob of men and boys and inciting women. His face was drawn and gray, but the set eyes did not flinch.

The faces before him were not criminal. They showed determination, courage, anger. A few were irresolute, waiting to be led, more were flushed with a savage lust that boded ill to a cowering wretch within the jail.

Through the gathering dusk the Sheriff perceived the district attorney of the county. “You talk to ’em, Major,” he begged. “You can make ’em understand. I’ll hold ’em back. Come in here.” He touched his rifle to support his words, as the lawyer glanced apprehensively at the men about him.

“Shut up, Zeb!” some one shouted from the mass. “This is too big a job for you.”

“Put down that toy or you’re goin’ to get hurt,” another threatened.

The District Attorney had pushed forward, doffing his hat and raising his hand in a professional gesture for silence. “Listen, men: the Law will punish swiftly——”

A storm of jeers overwhelmed him, and, striving weakly to preserve his dignity, he was jostled back into the crowd.

“Come on, Zeb, open up, or we’ll smash your cage.” The speaker was a prosperous citizen, incongruous as a leader of a mob.

“You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Zeb Jenkins,” shrilled a woman’s voice. “She was always a good friend to you.” This emotional appeal stirred the crowd.

“She was a friend of all, even of that cur we’re after. She don’t get killed without him getting his.” There was a general outcry of menace and approval.

“There never was n’t a day she did n’t help some poor guy.”

"She visited yer derved old jail," one yelled, "and made it seem like home."

"Well, you ought to know, Bill," broke in a mocking voice. The ill-timed gibe brought forth a nervous laugh that was quickly shamed to silence. The prosperous citizen again turned to the crowd, and there was now a catch of feeling in his voice.

"She saved my little boy after the doctors gave him up. I don't forget, and I'm going to see this through." In instant response, the mob pressed, threatening, toward the barricaded gateway.

"Cut it out, Zeb. You done all you could do."

The sentry-like figure thus addressed stretched out his arm in awkward supplication.

"Boys, don't try this. You can't do it, and somebody 'll get hurt. I tell you I'll hold the jail—I've *got* to. I'll hold it if I die for it." During the resultant clamor the Sheriff continued to exhort them, though they did not heed him. Then his voice rose till they could not choose but hear. "Let me give you this!" he yelled. "I've phoned to Exmoor for the State Police, and they're comin' on the 9:16."

The intelligence brought back an angry roar that beat against the grim stone walls and echoed through the murky, tree-arched streets. The little town had never been stirred like this. Women's voices could now be heard, vindictive, implacable.

The tragedy that thus moved a whole community had taken from it its gentlest, best loved member. While on an habitual errand of mercy she had been waylaid and robbed, and the brutal hand that stilled her startled cry had clutched the tender throat too hard. The apprehended murderer was swiftly jailed; but the town went supperless, and would not sleep unless the object of its wrath slept soundest of them all.

"Make way there!" Six lusty youths suddenly broke through the crowd, among them swinging a battering-ram of steel whose impact must shatter the barricaded gate. The crowd closed in behind them, pushing and cheering. There was a warning shout from the Sheriff, a shot, and the rail clattered to the stones before the unscathed bars. A man with a splintered knee was carried away, and the sight of blood aroused a new and deep resentment. The Sheriff had by this act become their enemy. They no longer hailed him as "Zeb," nor wasted friendly counsel, but sought to slay him. He had dared to shoot at them, and his life was forfeit.

From left and right shots flashed, and leaden flakes dropped harmless from the impassive wall. In the comparative quiet noises could now be heard from within the jail, the sounds of battered iron and muffled cries. Were the prisoners attempting to escape? Could they have learned that the victim of the new inmate had been the gentle little

lady whose ministrations had done most to keep them from losing all kinship with the outside world?

From somewhere off in the outer darkness came the owl-like hoot of the 9:16. A barrel of oil had been rolled close to the wall, and men were working at it in an effort to flood the gateway and burn their way into the jail.

“For God’s sake, stand back!” warned the Sheriff. “I’ll hold out, I tell you—I’ll hold out now if I have to kill you all.”

“This here fire won’t die out till we roll the varmint in it,” was the answering threat.

As the red flame leaped forward beneath a suffocating pall of black smoke, an agonized shriek rose, quavered, and slowly died in the tense air. Could that have been Zeb? No, there he leaped, back from the gateway into the jail. They could hear the approaching train slow down at the station. There was yet time to rush the gate.

Suddenly, swathed in smoke and flame, like a spirit condemned, stood the Sheriff. “You’re too late, boys,” he shouted, and the ring of comradeship had returned to his voice. “The cur you was after has got his. The gang o’ convicts back there heard you tell who he killed, and they busted the day-room. There ain’t a whole bone left in his body.”

Up the street on the run, armed *cap-à-pie*, came the no-longer-needed police.



DAWN

BY MAHLON LEONARD FISHER

THE baby Day came creeping o’er the hill,
 A slimmest prince in silver, in his eyes
 All the hushed loveliness of light which lies
 The lily’s look within. He came so still
 The slumbering birds were not disturbed until
 He paused an instant in his wending: then
 They woke in unison, as if, agen,
 As yester, did his silken footsteps thrill
 The tissue of their dreamy sleep, and so
 Were startled by the stillness which befell!
 Now one and now another note of bell,
 In leafy steeple swung, began to flow
 Adown the world—the throats of gold to sing
 The perfect bliss a little Child will bring!

BABES IN THE WOODS

By Thomas Grant Springer

THERE was no sign, "Keep off the Grass," for it was an uptown park that Kent had wandered into, and it was not a lawn but a rocky, dusty imitation of a tiny bluff, whose slight rise seemed to shut out the brazen city. He threw himself down on the ragged grass that seemed to cover the earth like a worn carpet, but the earth was underneath, real earth, not asphalt, and he snuggled to it as if it was his mother's breast. A squirrel, impudent as a street gamin, begged to be fed, and when Kent ignored it waddled off in gluttonous disappointment. A pair of sparrows fluttered down beside him, wrangling like urchins. But the ragged grass made up in part for the sophistication of birds and beasts, and Kent snuggled close to it, rubbing his beard into it and trying to dream that he was lying on an open Western hill-slope, where the heat was tempered with the breath of a free wind, not merely stirred by warm puffs as it was here.

He had just enveloped himself in the hazy garments of a day-dream when a girl came slowly from the path and sat down on the grass a little way from him. At first glance, he was tempted to resent her intrusion, but as he unconsciously studied her, there was something in the listless droop of her shoulders and a certain hopeless pathos in her face that shamed him. A troop of tiny freckles now merging into the pallor of her cheeks told of the honest kisses of a country sun—kisses the city had not entirely bleached out. The scrupulous neatness of the unmodish dress proclaimed her a fellow-prisoner of the city streets, and as he watched her fingers twist themselves into the grass with a movement that was almost a caress, he felt a sense of kinship for her. Long he watched her, his desire to speak—an impulse he would have obeyed in his native West—being held in check by the conventions the city had laid upon him. He wagered that she was as lonely as himself; but this was a city park, not a country-side, so he held his peace.

He fancied that he saw her somewhere down in the San Joaquin Valley—for he knew nothing of the Eastern country—the daughter of a small rancher. He could imagine himself riding up under the spreading live-oak tree by the back porch, and her coming out with a gingham apron on and telling him with a smile that her father was off cutting alfalfa and *might* want a man to help him. And she would hand him

a dipper and show him where the pump was; then he would leave his horse standing in the shade and go off looking for the old man, guided by the smell of alfalfa as the sun steeped the pungent perfume from it. He closed his eyes, sniffing at the grass, and went on dreaming. It was that kind of sun that made that kind of freckles the city heat was wiping out. Under his curtaining lids, he saw the heat shimmering on the broad valley floor of the West. The sticky moisture of his skin seemed to become again the cooling perspiration that clearer sun drew out, the sun that made such freckles across a girl's nose. His deeper breathing drawing in the scent of the grass was gradually making his conscious dream more of a reality as sleep touched it, when he felt a tap on the sole of his shoe, and, sitting up quickly, found himself looking into the face of a policeman.

"Sorry," he said, but not unkindly, "but you can't lie on the grass here."

Kent rose slowly to his feet, and the policeman, noting the disappointment on his face, added, "It's a new rule. So many people are doing it now, it makes the grass die out."

Kent nodded and stooped for his hat as the officer moved off toward the girl. A moment later she and Kent stood in shy embarrassment on the walk, she red-faced, he shamefaced; then they both moved off to a bench a little way down the walk, and sat down, she at one end, he at the other. Each shot a sheepish glance at the other, and, their eyes meeting, strove to hide the embarrassment each felt. Kent pulled out a bag of Durham and a packet of brown papers, and rolled a cigarette. She began nervously clasping and unclasping the catch of a tiny grip she held on her knees. Suddenly it fell to the walk, Kent's cigarette following as he reached to return it. She thanked him awkwardly, and he stood nervously twirling his hat and shifting his weight from one foot to the other.

"Awfully hot, ain't it?" he said at length, striving to take advantage of the accident without appearing forward. She nodded her head and began playing again with the clasp of the grip. He waited a moment, mopping his forehead, then sat down, a little closer this time. After a moment's awkward pause, he cleared his throat determinedly, and said in a voice too evidently casual, "Sorry we had to get off the grass. I thought the signs were only for the lawns."

"So did I." Her voice was low and soft. Its memory thrilled him through the silence that followed.

"Out in 'Frisco you can sit on the lawn," he said at length, following his original lead.

"Are you from there?" she asked, in an almost cautious tone.

"No, I ain't exactly from there, but I'm from California—from the country," he added.

She smiled at him frankly. "I thought so."

Kent edged a little closer. "You are, too, ain't you?" he asked eagerly.

She nodded. "I'm from Connecticut."

"I knew it."

"How?"

He laughed, then grew somewhat embarrassed.

"Do I look like a country girl?" she persisted.

"No, it was n't that. Promise you won't get mad?"

She nodded.

"Well, it was the freckles. You know, it takes real sun to make them. Why, when I first come here I was as brown as a greaser, and now I'm gettin' all white, like a sickly girl. Seems as if there ain't anything to breathe in the air here."

"Why don't you go back west?" she asked softly.

He reddened and wiggled painfully. "Seems as if I can't get money enough, and it ain't so easy to work that way. You see, I only had one job drivin' team since I got here, but that played out, and I could n't get another."

She sighed. "Yes, I know."

"Ain't you working, either?" he asked quickly.

"Not now. I had a job in a laundry, but there was a strike."

"Why don't *you* go home, then? Connecticut ain't far."

She looked into his eyes, which were frank and clear as his own Western skies; so she told him—told him of her tiring of the old place and the old ways. She thought she could do something, and now she could n't go back beaten. Besides, there was little to go back to, as the farm was poor, and she had been expected to do her part, or at least—and then she hesitated—marry. So she had come to the city of great hopes and greater disappointments, and somehow could n't go back. "But of course it's different with a man," she concluded.

"Yes," he agreed; "it's different." And then he told her how he had worked his way east. He had thought there was money in the city, and the bigger the city, the more money, but now he knew it was not for him.

Then they talked on and on, drawn closer in their common love of the out-of-doors. They laughed at the fat squirrels that came begging, and Kent said he was ashamed of their being civilized. Then he told her of the wild things of the West that he had hunted, and she told him of the tame wilderness of the East she knew so well, while the hours became years with the things friendship crowded into them. They forgot they were chance acquaintances, for the city that lay behind the screen of dusty trees seemed far away, and the park path became a country lane where they had met for friendly gossip.

Bit by bit they grew more intimate. She told him of her cows, and

he in the broad vanity of the West boasted of the ranges he had ridden, a single one of which contained more head than all New England. From that, he confided how, with the passing of the ranges, it had been his ambition to have a ranch. One could rent one out there, or work it on shares, but somehow he had never settled down to it, possibly because there was no one to hold him. "But I'm going back," he said. "The biggest city's only taught me how little it is in every way. Why, there ain't no place in it for a man to really breathe."

"No, nor a woman either," she agreed.

Unnoticed by them under the shadows of the trees, the sky had darkened. The air was closer and more oppressive, full of a copperish haze that gradually thickened into clouds. Almost without warning, a clap of thunder sounded, and as they sprang to their feet there came the light patter of the first rain-drops.

"Say, this is kind of bad!" cried Kent. "I don't know any place to go around here. Guess I'd better take you to a car."

She laughed a little nervously. "It's only a shower. I don't mind it at all. I often got caught at home, and this is almost like the country."

He gave a quick glance around, then answered her laugh heartily. "It sure is, but there's a niche in the wall yonder. We won't get wet there;" and, grasping her hand, he ran with her to the shelter.

They huddled close under the arch while the sudden shower descended. It was one of those quick patters that wash the dust from the leaves, freshen the grass, and mercifully clear the brazen oppression of the air when it becomes past enduring. They drank in the cleanness of it in deep breaths, knowing how temporary the relief was.

In a few moments the rain ceased, and they stepped out on the path again to note that the clouds had cloaked the sunset, and it was now clearing into twilight.

"Say, it's getting late," said Kent. "If you don't board regular, why, let's go somewhere and get something to eat. I have n't eaten with anybody I knew since I came to New York."

"Well, you don't know me," she said slowly, her first shyness returning.

"Why—why—I mean——" he hesitated; then they both laughed and as if by arrangement walked side by side down the path.

They found a dairy lunch on a side street, and, after a little urging, Kent was gratified to see her eat a good meal with a frankly keen appetite. They dallied over it as long as possible, but the freedom of the park was wearing off, and the restraint that the city imposes on those not wholly of it was settling on them.

"Well, I guess we better go," he said at last, and as they stopped at the counter he paid the check with a five-dollar gold piece.

"Western money, real money, and about the last of it," he said, rolling up the change in bills as they stepped out.

They passed the park, no longer posing as the country, but frankly proclaiming itself with its yellow lights set here and there, like lamps in a conservatory. They paused a moment on the sidewalk.

"It don't look like the real thing now, does it?" he asked; then added slowly, "I don't want to go in there again, do you?"

She shook her head.

"Well, I guess I better take you home."

She hesitated. "Why—why, I can go alone."

"Sure you can, but you won't."

She tried to resist him, but he laughed. "Now, I'm not fresh or nothing, you know that, but where I come from a fellow don't let a girl go home alone."

She began to grow nervous. He had been too kind and need n't trouble, she said; but when she saw there was no other way but to offend him, she broke down and began to cry. Kent took hold of her elbows and drew her into the shadow of the hedge.

"Here, here, little girl," he said, "what is it? What's wrong?"

"I—I have n't got any home," she sobbed.

"What do you mean?"

She held out the tiny grip. "That—that's all I've got. I—I could n't pay my board last week, I had n't any work, and—and I was ask to leave."

Kent's arm slipped round her, and she leaned against his shoulder, while the whole miserable story was sobbed out. She had intended to go to some institution—she had heard of such places—but the dread of actual charity had held her back. As he pieced together the story from the broken sentences, his mind went over the situation, and he patted her shoulder till she had gained control of herself.

"Now, listen to me, girl," and there was a note of tender authority in his voice, "I've got a hall bedroom, an unbroken twenty, and what's left of the five you saw, and next week I've got a job to go to, or I would n't have been loafing in the park to-day. I'm going to give up my room to you to-night and sit in this very park and dream till morning. I'll tell the landlady, who's real folks, that you're my girl, and I'm going to come for you in the morning, and we're going to be married—and we *are*," he added vehemently.

She gasped. "You're crazy! Why, you don't even know my name."

He gripped her hard. "It's Kent to-morrow," he answered, "and I'll stick to the job awhile, and we'll save our money, and before this time next year we'll be working eighty acres I know out in the San Joaquin, if you're the girl I take you for."

And he knew she was as she lifted her face to his.

THE "MOVIES" IN CENTRAL AMERICA

By Caroline Lockhart

THAT no people or country are immune from the deadly germ of the "movie" is shown by the virulence with which the fever has seized upon the natives of Central America, who walk long distances and spend their last *real* for the privilege of yelling themselves hoarse over the pictures.

Whatever happens on the film is as real as life itself to the audiences made up of Spaniards, Indians, and Caribs, who at exciting moments rise in their seats, shouting admonitions to the actors, yelling encouragement to the noble heroes, and hooting the villains, until the theatre is like a gathering of excited Bedlamites.

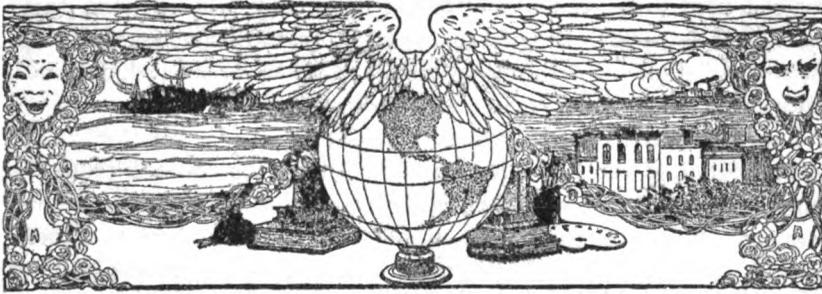
At La Ceiba, a port town on the east coast of Spanish Honduras, an enterprising priest opened a moving-picture show, giving The Passion Play on the opening night.

During the Last Supper it was no fault of the audience that the Apostles did not find out what kind of an *hombre* Judas was, as they were warned often enough from "the front," and told to "watch out!" While the crucifixion scene was enacted, several fat Señoras fainted and had to be carried out, but when Christ rose from the dead and came out triumphant from the tomb, they cheered him to the echo, all but yelling their heads off with shouts of "*Viva el Cristo! Viva el Cristo!*"

The western film, however, is the most liked and surest of a crowded house. The natives have come to think that the entire population of the United States is made up chiefly of cowboys, Indians, and soldiers, who spend their time chasing each other. The sympathies are always with the cowboy, and he is notified in plenty of time when the wily redman is waiting for him in ambush.

The spectators writhe in their seats and wring their hands when the Indians scale the stockade and the ammunition is exhausted save the single cartridge which the Colonel reserves for his beautiful daughter.

"*Hijo de Maria!* [Son of Mary!] Don't lose, old man!" they plead, with the tears all but streaming down their faces, and the "bravos!" and shrieks which split the air when a cloud of dust tells them the cowboys are riding to the rescue would stampede a band of Ogallalah Sioux.



WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC



THE BROADER GAUGE

WHO watches his world must observe that it grows yearly less willing to be nose-led by convention. To be studiously unconventional is unclever, but to think and act for oneself in matters that concern oneself is what practical individualism means. We grow less puritanical, less sheep-like in morality.

It has been the habit for generations for women to invent banal little mysteries concerning too many things. Lest they be deemed ungentle or "immodest," they have become puppets of tradition and hurlers of platitudes. Happily, during the last few years they have opened their minds and let in wholesome thought. Wise mothers no longer preach, nor cite maxims. Those who have travelled or lived in other countries have come to see the narrowness of what the English call the "middle-class view-point." The Sabbath is no less holy because churchgoers no longer return solemnly home to bemoan their sins, eat cold midday dinners, and create an atmosphere of gloom. We worship God none the less because we appreciate Nature more.

Mothers as truly deplore inebriety as did their foremothers, although they no longer point to the "adder at the bottom of the wine-cup." If they speak of bibbing, they casually indicate the unbecomingness of a red nose. The typical American father and husband prefers a cigarette smoked by any other woman than his wife or daughter, but he does not put a moral ban upon young matrons who think differently. Nor are fair faces so religiously watched. A *souçon* of rouge is not the sign-manual

of unchastity, these happier days. Those who attend the play are not necessarily en route for nethermost parts. Novels dominated by sex problems used to be read behind locked doors and discussed with bated breath; not so to-day. Nor do maidens slip past costumeless statues in galleries and studios as from things unholy. Life has broadened, deepened, grown more worth while to those who are worth while.

Fewer things are forbidden. "Don't" has made way for "Do." Notwithstanding, the forbidden still bulks large in desirability to the young. To see, to know, to feel, is their ambition to-day as a hundred years ago. "Even as you have seen and known," they plead to Experience. Lest their sons and daughters suffer from aftermaths born of ignorance, certain modern wise men and women have covenanted together to satisfy the inquiring minds of children rather than to apply rods to the bodies of those who disobey prudish commands or step over chalked lines. Its own itinerary hereward is of immense interest to the intelligent child. The sooner it understands, the better, decides Modernity.

Mothers who once blushed before their children's inevitable queries blush now at their own erstwhile stupidity. The ability of a child of average mentality to grasp vital truths and see through conventional lies has not been properly accounted unto it. In lesser matters as in vital ones, clever parents of to-day keep ever in mind the danger of over-emphasis. The chosen way is to ignore as much as may be tortuous ethics. When things must be gone into, mother and son, dad and daughter, chum together and settle sex differentiations in wholesome talks hitherto undreamed of.

Since no man will ever understand woman, and no woman, despite her superior sex perspicacity, will ever wholly fathom man, is it not an admirable idea that a maiden, tormented by a lover's vagaries, shall get a man's point of view, and that a lover, distraught over a woman's moods, shall ask his mother to adjust the focus in order to help him find the answer?

As the centuries circle apace, life becomes more complex, broadening daily. Minor erstwhile-sins are "follies," and serious errors more leniently dealt with than ever before. Self-analysis is less common than when Puritan ideals prevailed. If the world prays less, it thinks more.

The modern trend is toward frankness—not boldness, as some insist. Biology has done much to stamp out prudery. When the necessity arrives, men and women of to-day speak together of things that would have shocked their self-conscious ancestors. Yet women are as delicately womanly and men as thoroughly manly as when the Mr. Broadbrim and Miss Prim ambled along historic byways, or Sir Knight wore Her colors upon his shield.

MINNA THOMAS ANTRIM

NOTHING NEW IN STAGE VILLAINY

IN these days when the villain of various types has become, when not actually the hero, at least the "exciting force" of numberless dramas, we are quick to conclude that, because we call them crook plays and "crook" is a word of more or less modern coinage, the drama of crime is for that reason absolutely new. Not so. In all epochs of the English playhouse, the criminal and his lawless though consummate accomplishments have proved fruitful material for the ever-ready playwright.

In fact, far back in the days before the playhouse itself had yet been even foreshadowed, the thief was thought fit subject for the drama. And when, in the early middle ages, English comedy was born, whom do we find presiding at the birth but that calm and sly, impassive product of environment, the ingratiating scoundrel whom our own playwrights have but recently discovered anew and offered as a novelty. The "Second Shepherds' Play" of the Towneley cycle of miracle plays, dating from the second half of the fifteenth century, contains the first germ of English comedy. Crime provided that germ. Mak, the wily, sheep-stealing villain of this little religious play, was the very first captivating crook, the first romantic rogue in the English drama. He first illustrated for the stage, as does the criminal in the drama of to-day, Balzac's assertion that "men are neither good nor bad." A waggish, rascality-loving, clever youth he was, who, like Jackson Ives in "Ready Money," took an honest workman's pride in a dishonest calling.

The moral plays of the fifteenth century produced another early forerunner of the modern criminal. This was the Vice, originally a variation of one of the Seven Deadly Sins, "a child of the devil," who made life a hell for the devil himself, so hardly did he harass him. These Vices strove to overcome the Virtues, as the modern crook contends against the law. Later they merged into the "humours" which Jonson dealt with in so modern a realistic manner. Even old Ben Jonson tried his hand at the crook play. His "Alchemist" was the "Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford" and the "Officer 666" of its day rolled into one. As in the latter, a rich man leaves town, entrusting his mansion to his servants; and, with a suavity worthy of Wallingford, the servants proceed to use it as a means of getting rich by twentieth-century methods.

But before Jonson's time, about 1575, came a "right pithy, pleasant, and merie comedie . . . played on the stage . . . in Christes Colledge in Cambridge," "Gammer Gurton's Nedle," the "Stop Thief" of its time. Like "Stop Thief," it gains its effects by the juxtaposition of real and supposed thieves. On the morning on which the play begins, while busily employed in one of the regular duties of those whose place is in the home—in this case reinforcing the trousers of her grandson,

Hodge, in all the most vulnerable places—Grandmother Gurton lost her precious needle. A great tragedy was that in the days when a needle was a treasure to be handed down through generations as an heirloom. The search for the needle occasions many clever and uproarious complications. The innocent, as in "Within the Law," suffer unjust accusation and unwarranted arrest; a peace-loving parson's stupid head is cracked as a result of his zealous intermediary efforts; the chief of police is put upon the case, and, unlike the stage police of to-day, does effective work. The cause of most of the trouble is Diccon the Bedlam, a half-witted, inscrutable rogue who lives by helping himself to the edible contents of the cupboards of his friends. He it is who sets all at last aright by simply slapping Hodge upon the leg. The slap elicits from the slapper a sharp cry. His hand has struck something pointed; and his howl of distress brings about the dénouement of the farce. The needle is revealed, sticking in the seat of Hodge's trousers. There it has been throughout the whole eventful day, where Gammer Gurton, woman-like, had left it in the morning.

All these examples of the playwright's use of crime in his dramas are, with the exception of the "Alchemist," found among the plays produced before Shakespeare began to learn his trade. To-day crime is crowding much of the love interest from our plays. But it is no newer to the drama than is love. Like love, crime is a subject of perennial interest to play-goer and play-maker alike.

ARTHUR POLLOCK

INCOMPETENT EMPLOYERS

ARE there such things as incompetent employers? We hear of poor business men, but that is not exactly the same as a poor employer. Incompetent employees, of course, seem to abound, for almost any one is able to tell of scores of them with whom he has had dealings, and many are the troubles that are blamed upon them. But, as we go along the streets and about our business day by day, nobody ever mentions the incompetent employer either in scorn or in pity. Nobody writes dissertations about him. To all intents and purposes, he does not exist. And yet it is not at all likely that all employers are perfectly competent. There must be some among them who ought to be given their walking papers or otherwise relieved of their responsibilities.

Won't somebody look into the matter? Are there incompetent employers? If so, what are the causes of, the character of, and the cure for their incompetence?

ELLIS O. JONES

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THE UNDERTOW

BY

NEITH BOYCE

CHAPTER I.

THE question was about Dorothy's swimming. "She should have learned long before!" said Mrs. Byrnes indignantly. "All girls nowadays know how to do everything—swim, sail, ride, run their own cars—and most of them fence or box, too. I must say, Sarah, I think Dorothy's education has been *sadly* neglected."

Mrs. Byrnes was Dorothy's aunt, and Sarah was Dorothy's mother. These two sisters had a family resemblance. They were both fresh-colored, blonde, handsome women, tall and dignified, prosperous and well-dressed. Mrs. Byrnes, the younger, had more curves as to figure and also as to mind. She was inclined to be social, while Mrs. Forsyth was merely domestic. Both were able, within their respective lines.

Mrs. Byrnes had arrived that afternoon, motoring down from New York to the shore, and already while partaking of tea on the veranda her well-known power of initiative had come into action. Mrs. Forsyth had no initiative outside of her house, or houses. She now looked perfectly placid and neutral.

"You know Dorothy has always been delicate," she remarked.

"Delicate!" cried Mrs. Byrnes. "Of course she has—kept like a hot-house flower, and a nervous specialist at every turn! If she had had a modern outdoor training——"

"I have always had the best doctors and followed their advice," said Mrs. Forsyth calmly.

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"Followed their advice, yes, but you have to use your common-sense too," retorted Mrs. Byrnes warmly.

Mrs. Byrnes always lost her temper with her sister, who never lost hers, but who had a perfect mild obstinacy, as easy to make a lasting impression upon as a feather pillow.

Meantime the subject of this conversation sat between the two sisters, on the low railing of the veranda, looking abstractedly out to sea, and swinging a slim foot with a white pump partly on and partly off it. Dorothy was not at all like her mother or her aunt. A totally different strain had come in here, with marked results. She was not so tall, she was slender as a reed, with small bones, a small head and face, a cloud of dark hair, and deep-set, narrow blue eyes. She was pale, but her shadowed eyes were very bright. She had style. She wore her plain and expensive clothes as though she had not given them a thought. There was grace about her, but no obvious coquetry.

Mrs. Byrnes, on the contrary, was distinctly coquettish, from the long pearl drops in her ears to her shoes and stockings. She was admirably groomed, and had a kind of gloss about her. You could not miss seeing that she was perfectly and elaborately turned out. Mrs. Forsyth again was merely immaculate, sober, and costly.

"As to Dorothy's learning to swim," said the latter, after carefully counting the stitches in a bit of lace she was making, "I am perfectly willing. Only, I think she ought to learn in the swimming-pool at the Casino, and not in the ocean."

Dorothy's blue eyes were following the rise and fall of the surf a hundred feet away. There was a strong breeze off the sea, and the waves rolled in gloriously and crashed in a wide welter of foam.

"I will not learn in the pool," said Dorothy. Her voice was low and tired, and the wind blew the words from her lips.

"What did you say?" asked Mrs. Byrnes, bending her stiffly-corseted figure forward a little.

"I said," repeated Dorothy, turning toward her aunt, "that if I swim at all, I'll swim in the sea. Not in the pool."

"But why not the pool—just to learn in?" coaxed Mrs. Byrnes, glancing at her sister. She glanced away because Dorothy was now looking straight at her, and Dorothy's eyes always made her uncomfortable. She would say to herself, with unpleasant feelings, "There's something morbid about that girl."

Dorothy's sharply-cut lips curled. "Because it's messy—always full of people. And it's stagnant," she said.

"Why, you know they change the water every morning," protested Mrs. Forsyth.

"And I'm sure none but very nice people go in there," supported Mrs. Byrnes.

Dorothy looked at her mother, then at her aunt, and got up off the railing.

"I'm going down to the beach for an hour," she said in her tired voice.

"George may be here any minute now," Mrs. Byrnes suggested. "Shall I send him down——"

"No!" said Dorothy, with extreme positiveness. "Keep him right here."

And she went slowly down, across the velvet lawn, across the broad avenue, a highway for motors, and disappeared beyond the board-walk.

Mrs. Byrnes looked at her sister, whose eyes were on her lace-work, and who was patiently counting stitches.

"Sarah, is anything wrong between Dorothy and George Clayborne?" she asked sharply.

Mrs. Forsyth finished counting her stitches before replying.

"Wrong? Why, no, Milly. Not that I know of."

"Well, Sarah, you would n't know if there was! Did you hear what Dorothy said just now?"

"Certainly I heard it," said Mrs. Forsyth, with dignity. "I think Dorothy is perfectly right in not wishing to be very much alone with Mr. Clayborne until she has made up her mind about marrying him."

Mrs. Byrnes bestowed upon her sister, who was quite oblivious to it, a look of utter contempt.

"Sarah, you know no more about human beings than the man in the moon," she said. "I don't believe you have any more idea of what is going on in Dorothy's mind——"

At this, Mrs. Forsyth's color deepened slightly, and her lips, for a moment, shut tight together.

"I don't believe you have, either, Milly," she remarked coldly.

"No, but if I were her mother, I would have! I don't pretend to understand Dorothy, but I know something of human nature, and——"

"Well, if you had ever had any children, Milly," observed Mrs. Forsyth, "you would know that it is n't so easy to know what is in their minds, unless they've a mind to tell you."

"Oh, well, it's useless to talk to you, Sarah! You would n't interfere if Dorothy wanted to walk off the end of the pier on a dark night."

"I really don't know why you should take that tone, Milly——"

"Well, Sarah, you would n't lift your little finger to help George Clayborne, and I consider that it's really a wonderful chance for Dorothy. Just think, *everything*—an only son, inheriting a business worth *millions*, and the town-house all ready for her, as Mrs. Clayborne wants to live abroad—all Mrs. Clayborne's friends to help Dorothy on socially—and a most excellent young man and madly in love with her—I really do *think*, Sarah, that you should care enough about the child's future to——"

"Now, Milly, once for all," said Mrs. Forsyth evenly, rolling up her

lace, "I don't wish you to talk to me like this again. In the first place, I have no influence with Dorothy. She doesn't care a button for what I say, nor for what you say, nor, so far as I know, for what anybody says. Dorothy is, and always has been, a most peculiar child. She has never given me her confidence, as you know perfectly well. If you think *you* can talk her into marrying Mr. Clayborne, you are perfectly welcome to try it. But it will be far more apt to set her completely against him. And I for one would certainly never urge Dorothy to marry any one, whether he had millions or not. If she *wants* to marry him, I would not oppose it. I think a girl must decide for herself."

Finishing this unwontedly long speech, Mrs. Forsyth rose, with her usual stateliness.

"Excuse me, Milly, I have a letter to write. I hope you will make yourself perfectly comfortable, and when Mr. Clayborne comes ring for some fresh tea."

"Thank you, I will," said Mrs. Byrnes tartly.

She sat tapping her high-heeled shoe on the floor with impotent vexation. To her managing mind, a mother like Sarah was a pitiable spectacle and really immoral. No wonder Dorothy was peculiar! No direction, no discipline, no forming influence! A mother to confess blandly that she had no influence with her child! . . .

When George Clayborne arrived, as he did within five minutes, leaping out of the motor with a bright, eager, expectant look, Mrs. Byrnes received him, for her, funereally.

"Well, George," she said. "Sit down and make the best of it, and have tea with me."

"With great pleasure," said the young man, depositing a large, square, florist's box beside his chair, and continuing to look eagerly down the broad veranda and into the dim vista of the long hall.

"Orchids?" said Mrs. Byrnes. "If you're looking for Dorothy, she is n't here. She'll be back some time. Mrs. Forsyth is writing a letter and will be down presently. Just touch the bell there, will you, and order whatever refreshment you like?"

"Thanks, I don't want anything," said Clayborne, rather crestfallen.

He was a tall young man, in his thirties, just verging on the floridity and stoutness of middle age, his blond hair beginning to thin on the temples and over the forehead. He had a firm, passionate mouth, and gray eyes that looked now wistful and pathetic as a disappointed child's.

"Where is Dorothy?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know. Just wandered off. She said we were to keep you till she got back."

"Oh, you can keep me, all right," murmured George ruefully. "But she knew I was coming on this train."

"Of course she knew it. . . . I wish, George," said Mrs. Byrnes

abruptly, "that you did n't care quite so *much* about Dorothy—or, at least, did n't let her see it so plainly——"

"Oh, Lord! how can I help it?" protested the suitor. "I'm perfectly smashed up, crazy about her, and I can't hide it any more than I can stop breathing! . . . If you mean I ought to play some kind of a game with her—I can't, that's all. I've never been in love before, and I'm madly in love with her—and she'll just have to take me or leave me on that basis. . . ." He lit a cigarette nervously, and said with a forlorn appeal: "You don't think I have much chance, do you? You don't think she cares a hang. . . . ?"

"Oh, I don't know, George," said Mrs. Byrnes. "*I* can't make her out. I know that if I were her mother, she'd turn my hair gray in no time. I think she's the most exasperating, provoking——"

"Oh, well, perhaps she is," said George, with some irritation. "But," he added grimly, "she's the one I want, whatever she is——"

Mrs. Byrnes sighed impatiently.

"You're too good to her. You'd let her make a door-mat of you, if she wanted to. You know, if you want my opinion, that is *not* the way to impress a girl like Dorothy."

"I can't help it," said the lover sombrely. "I've tried staying away, but I can't. I can't pretend with her—can't pretend that it makes no difference to me whether she marries me or not, for, in fact—you know"—he laughed a little, lamentably—"I really don't know what will become of me, if she won't!"

CHAPTER II.

DOROTHY walked along the firm edge of the sand, looking out to sea, where a reflection of the sunset tinged pink the water and the sky. For some time now she had not missed this hour on the beach. The board-walk was crowded with people, most of them women elaborately dressed. A band played gayly in one of the pavilions. A few bathers were dipping in the surf. It was just past high-tide, and the crest of the waves glittered full of color. Dorothy seated herself on a log of drift-wood, and waited quietly, now glancing at the sea, now along the board-walk, with a barely perceptible turn of her head. Her narrow, far-sighted eyes presently saw, some distance up the walls, what she was waiting for—a gleam of scarlet—and immobile she watched its approach.

Through the midst of the polite, chattering crowd a man came walking, with a vigorous and light step. His powerful legs and arms were bare, and sunburned to an even, smooth red-brown. He wore a light red bathing-suit, softened by sun and salt-water to a color almost matching his skin. His head, joined by a short neck to broad shoulders, was covered with thick, close-cut curls, red-blond in color. He walked with the firm, pleasant swing of disciplined muscles. He was startling in the midst of

that parade of artificial luxury. He was beautiful, bathed in the glow of the sunset and the sea.

The girl, sitting on the drift-wood log, remnant of some boat beaten to pieces by the waves, continued to watch with narrowed eyes until he was almost abreast of her. Then she rose and began to walk down the beach. This was in order that she might watch him till he was out of sight, without obviously turning to do so. As he passed her, walking now on the edge of the board-walk, he turned his head and looked down, and his eyes—clear, light blue eyes under a low brow—met Dorothy's in a brief, grave glance. He went on without hesitating, and she, strolling slowly along the sand, watched him go, a bright gleam of golden-red color among shadows. He disappeared at the far end of the walk.

She continued to stroll after he had vanished. The brilliance of the sunset had faded, but the sea was a wonderful brew of all colors, infinitely soft, liquidly inviting. Dorothy wandered and dreamed.

She knew all that could be learned from observation about that man. He was a life-guard on duty at the Casino during the bathing-hours. He was accustomed to spend those hours lying in the shade of the board-walk or in the lee of a life-boat, on that section of the beach reserved, together with a corresponding roped-off portion of the sea, for the elect members of the club. So far, during the month that he had been under Dorothy's notice, no one had needed to be rescued. But the shore was a dangerous one, the undertow powerful and treacherous. He kept a watchful eye on the swimmers. But he often had a book, too. Passing near him, she had tried to see what he was reading, but in vain. At the close of the bathing-hours he would leave his station and walk down to the swimming-pool at the end of the board-walk. Dorothy was as a rule alone on the beach at this time. She had never spoken to him, never heard his voice. But he was aware of her presence, as she of his. That quick meeting of the eyes was an almost daily event. And to Dorothy just now it was the only event that mattered.

The intense pleasure crowded for her into these few minutes daily might partly be explained thus: she was a creature of the keenest æsthetic sensibility, with nerves all quivering and alive to the sight of beauty. And this man was beautiful, a classic statue in flesh and blood, a living being brilliant as a Pompeian frieze. He fitted the beauty of the sea and shore, marred as this was by so much of the trivial round of life that she hated. She had once or twice seen him walking in the edge of the surf, glowing against the blue-green water. To her he was like poetry, like music—like the sweep of the wind, the roll of the waves. . . .

Dorothy returned to the house at the dinner-hour, to find her aunt, rustling in fresh silks, on the porch, and George Clayborne beside her, his blond face looking pink above his white shirt-front.

"Dorothy, where have you been?" demanded Mrs. Byrnes, scanning Dorothy's face and noting her hair, dishevelled and whipped into strings by the wind.

"Down on the beach," said Dorothy serenely. "How do, George? Dinner ready, Auntie?"

"As soon as your father comes down. His train was late. But you won't have time to dress," said Mrs. Byrnes.

"I know it. Just to brush my hair," and with a smile and nod at George, Dorothy escaped up the stairs.

She appeared at dinner ten minutes later, with her hair in its usual simple order, and in the severe white dress she had worn all day. George Clayborne thought her perfectly dressed, as always. That blouse with its dashing plain lines, its open broad collar showing her lovely throat—could anything be more charming? Mrs. Forsyth, in a majestic robe of white embroidered crêpe, seating herself at the round, richly-furnished table, had George at her right hand. Then came Mrs. Byrnes, in pink taffeta, then Mr. Forsyth, and Dorothy sat between her father and her mother, and opposite the adoring eyes of George. A butler and a parlor-maid served.

The conversation was sustained mainly by Mr. Forsyth and George, with an occasional brisk remark from Mrs. Byrnes, and dealt with business and politics. Mrs. Forsyth listened with mild interest. Dorothy did not listen at all, but pursued her own thoughts, smiling absently at George when her eyes met his.

George, as became an aspirant, was extremely deferential to Mr. Forsyth, and Mr. Forsyth showed as much friendliness to George as was consistent with his impassive face and inexpressive manner. His were blue, deep-set eyes, like Dorothy's, and with the same fire in them, more hidden than in hers by heavy, drooping lids. He was a silent and intense man, and for twenty-two years his life had run side by side with that of his placid wife, and the two had never once really mingled. Mrs. Forsyth "never interfered" in her husband's affairs. She knew nothing about them. She had not so much as a suspicion that her husband—so regular in his habits, so kind and generous to her, never touching intoxicating drink, nor even smoking—that this model man was a desperate gambler, his business constantly involved, freeing himself by luck or sleight-of-hand, for years on the brink of catastrophe. Mr. Forsyth wished to make his respectable capital a fortune, and, besides, he speculated for the pleasure of the game. That was the exciting and temperamental part of his life. That was his real life.

No one of his family had an inkling of this—not even the shrewd Mrs. Byrnes, or she would hastily have withdrawn the considerable funds she had invested under his direction. George, however, knew a great deal and suspected more. The knowledge that Mr. Forsyth might ruin him-

self at any moment did not affect George's attitude in the least—except that, looking at Dorothy, he wished that she were penniless, so that he might be able to take care of her completely. And at this thought tears of tenderness came into his eyes, for he was subject to the lapses of mind that all lovers know. And Dorothy, beholding his eyes suffused with tears, colored with annoyance, turned her head away, and refused to look at him again during dinner.

CHAPTER III.

SHE knew, however, that she could not escape a talk with him; and, indeed, she had something to say, unpleasant but necessary. After dinner Mr. Forsyth retired to the library, in company with a sheaf of documents which occupied him for the rest of the evening. Some visitors came for Mrs. Forsyth, and Mrs. Byrnes joined this group at one end of the veranda. Dorothy and George Clayborne were left to themselves. Dorothy had received the orchids, as she did the homage of George's attitude toward her, rather suffering than accepting. But when they were alone she began to speak directly.

"I am sorry you brought me those orchids," she said.

"Why, Dorothy?" he asked in a low voice. "Don't you like them?"

"I don't like any cut flowers out of a florist's shop," she explained, in a preoccupied way. "And particularly I don't like orchids, because they are just the most expensive and fragile. And, besides, they are not pretty. A daisy out of a field is prettier. And I hate all that costly and useless kind of thing."

"I'm sorry," murmured George. "But somehow those pink orchids always make me think of you—they're so delicate and fine. You're not a bit like a daisy in a field!"

But Dorothy was leading up by means of the orchids to something that she wanted to get said as quickly as possible.

"It hurts me," she said gravely, "to have you give me things that——"

"That you don't want," he supplied in a pained tone. "I wish—I only wish I could give you something that you *do* want. Is there anything you *do* want, Dorothy?"

"Yes, oh, yes—but not what anybody can give me. People have always been giving me things. I want to get something for myself."

"Well, dear, what sort of thing?"

"Why—a different sort of life, to begin with. I want to be free—and not live in this stupid kind of comfort. I'm bored to death with it. I want to work."

"How work, Dorothy?"

"I want to do some kind of hard work. There are several things I've thought of. But I'd have to go away from home, by myself, and I know I shall have an awful time getting away."

George was silent for some moments, and then he spoke as to a loved, unreasonable child.

"Dorothy dear, you don't know what hard work means. How could you go away from home, alone? How could you take care of yourself?"

Dorothy clenched her fist and struck the arm of her chair a sharp blow.

"That's it! That's the way you all talk to me! I knew it. . . . I tell you what you'll drive me to: I shall *run* away—you'll see!"

"Oh, Dorothy, dearest——"

"Yes, it's always 'Oh, Dorothy'! . . . Ever since I can remember, when I was a tiny child: 'Oh, Dorothy, don't do that, don't go there, you'll muss your nice white dress and get your shoes dirty'! And when I was bigger, it was: 'I would n't play with those children, dear. They have n't nice manners, and their parents are very common'! . . . And then when I wanted to work really hard at my drawing: 'Oh, Dorothy, the doctor says you must *not* work more than an hour a day or you will break down'—and, of course, I broke down! . . . I know I'm a weak thing, George, or I would have taken my own way long ago, and it's because I'm weak that I've been so unhappy. But it's got to the point now where I *must* take it. . . . And of course I know you'll all come running to prevent me. Mother will forget her housekeeping, and Father his business, and Aunt her schemes, long enough to try to smother poor Dorothy back into the nest of cotton-wool! And even you, George! Yes, you're just like the rest, just the same protecting, negative attitude! Orchids! Oh, yes, all the orchids I want, and all the other things—only, I don't want them. . . . All my family wants is to keep me quiet until I can get married and then hand the job over to my husband. And you feel just the same way—indulgent and kind and patient with all my tempers and whims. And now won't Dorothy be a good child and there's a lovely surprise for her, a box of candy or a picture-book——"

"Oh, I say, Dorothy!" George interrupted this nervous torrent of words, but she bore him down.

"No matter *what* I want to do. It's a tradition now in my family that whatever I want to do is wrong. . . . Why, see here—I'm just learning to swim, and I want to swim in the open, and my whole family unite in a shout of protest: 'Dorothy to the pool!' If you only knew how typical that is! You would all be so glad if you could shut me in four walls forever!"

"Now, look here, Dorothy, you're unjust!" cried George forcibly enough to get a hearing this time. "Take your typical instance of the pool: You're a beginner, and you'd never be a very strong swimmer, any way, and this is a dangerous coast, with an undertow, by Jove! that could drown *me*, if I did n't look out. Your family is perfectly right, confound it! And it's exactly the same about your idea of getting away

from home. Of course, if they knew it, they'd oppose it. The trouble is, you don't know anything about the dangers you want to run into. You——"

"You talk like a grandfather, George."

"That's right, make fun of me, if you want to. I tell you, Dorothy, I'll take you out to-morrow morning—I'll take you anywhere you want. And you'll be safe with me."

"Yes, that's what you think—I'll be safe with you!"

"Well, I *do* want to take care of you, if that's a crime——"

"It's worse, a mistake. . . . Can't you realize, George, that I don't *want* to be taken care of, I don't *want* to be safe?"

She stood upright against the pale sky, her whole eager young figure, the clear, beautiful lines of her head, so full of life, so instinct with charm! The man beside her, overcome with a passionate desire to seize her in his arms, bowed his head with a moan. She moved slightly away from him, and said sharply:

"George, it will never be that way. . . . I am never going to marry you. I can't let you go on thinking I may. I never shall."

He sprang up.

"You never said it in that way before! Dorothy!"

"I've told you so before——"

"But never that way! Dorothy—so long as there is n't anybody else—if there is, you ought to tell me——"

"And you ought n't to ask, it seems to me. . . . It's enough that I know I never can marry you——"

"No, it's not enough!"

He came quite close to her, and his hand closed tight on her slim wrist.

"Tell me that you care for somebody else," he said imperiously, thickly, "and I'll never trouble you again. I'll be off."

"You're hurting my arm," said Dorothy. "No, I won't tell you that."

"You want to keep me in suspense, in misery——"

"I don't want to keep you at all. Let me go."

A sudden sob lifted his breast.

"God, how cruel you are! You're perfectly heartless! What a fool I am to care for you! Useless suffering! But I'm done with it. Yes, I'm done. I won't come back again—I'll go to-morrow—to-night—and that's the end."

He turned away and rushed down the steps and off toward the sea.

Dorothy went up to her room, undressed, and lay down in the dark. She lay there for hours, gazing with wide-open eyes into the darkness, listening to the fall of the waves on the sand. At first she thought about George, wincing at what he had said to her, and at his suffering. That could n't be helped. She *was* heartless, for him—she could n't give him

what he wanted. But she had told him so from the first, only he would n't take no for an answer. He had said that even if she would n't marry him, there was no reason why they should n't see each other and be good friends; and there was no reason for shutting the door on him. At the same time, she had known perfectly well that he was hoping, waiting for her to come round. So long as there was no one else, it was always possible; that had been his feeling. . . .

She hoped now that he would really go, that it would end. And it must end now, for she meant to begin a new life. . . .

Strange—her new feeling that life could be joy! She had but begun to live. It was almost too vague to find expression even to herself, and yet it was the most real thing that had ever happened to her. It was like the opening of great doors on a radiant landscape. It was like the sudden flooding of the sun into a dull day. It was like the rush of a great wind, sweeping the mists before it. . . . The world was vast and beautiful. One's spirit could move in it as sometimes in dreams, light as air, quick as a flash of light. . . . This earth could be as unearthly fair as the magic country, islands, lakes, and mountains, that you see in a cloudy golden sunset. . . .

Dreaming open-eyed for hours, she drifted off at last into sleep.

In the morning she found a note slipped under her door:

Forgive me, Dorothy, I was crazy last night. Honestly, I won't act like that again. I want to stay over to-morrow, just to prove to you that I really do care more for your happiness than for anything else in the world. Leaving me out of the question, if there's anything I can ever do for you, it would make me happy.

Dorothy sighed as she tore up the blotted page.

CHAPTER IV.

THE tide was past the full, and going out. In the early sparkling morning there were more bathers than Dorothy had counted on.

"I thought we should be the only ones!" she said with laughing petulance to George. "I thought we'd have the sea all to ourselves!"

George was radiant. To be awakened by a note of forgiveness, an invitation to a before-breakfast swim, "an escapade," as Dorothy put it—what happiness!

She flung off her long wrap and stood a slim, trim little figure in her blue satin bathing-dress and scarlet cap.

"Come on!" she cried, with hardly a glance at him.

She threw up her arms and plunged head-foremost into a curling breaker, to emerge, blinded and tingling with the shock, but only waist-deep, on the other side.

"Well, you're not afraid of the water, any way!" shouted George, coming up beside her. "Wow, but it's cold! Storm at sea yesterday. You can't stay in long."

"I'm not cold. Now I'm going to swim. No, keep away. I'm perfectly all right——"

And she launched out with a nervous, quick stroke, her slender body rising and falling on the waves.

"Careful!" cried George, keeping beside her. "Don't get out of your depth."

He swam beyond and around her.

"Keep inshore!" he insisted, turning his head and his eyes, blinking from the salt water, anxiously toward Dorothy.

She swam on, her chin under water, striking out vigorously with her slim arms and legs. A new and glorious sensation possessed her. For the first time she felt at ease in the water. She was buoyant, floating light as a feather, free and confident. The delicious freshness of the water, the large force of the waves bearing her up, floating her like a supple, swaying weed on the surface, the flash of the white foam, gave her a wonderful feeling of strength and life. She lifted her head to cry joyously:

"It's splendid!"

Then she lost the stroke, her body began to sink, her head went down under water. She felt a nervous arm suddenly clasp her round and lift her—and came to her feet, her head just clearing the surface. George half lifted, half dragged her further in.

"I'm all right!" she cried, resisting, shaking her head to get the water out of her eyes. "Why, I was n't out of my depth even!" There was disappointment in her voice.

"Well, you don't want to get out of your depth!" shouted George. "The tide's running strong."

She waded in and dropped down on the sand, breathing fast and smiling.

"That was good!" she cried. "Only, I wish you would n't be so fussy. I was having a beautiful time——"

She looked out at the heaving, flashing plane of the sea, dazzling under the morning sun. A few women were dipping up and down in the breakers near the shore, holding to the life-lines. Farther out a man was swimming strongly, his head visible now and then as a dark spot on the crest of a wave.

George crouched beside her on the sand, shivering.

"Well—have n't you had enough for this time?" he asked, his teeth chattering.

"Oh, *no*—I must go in once more. Are you cold? I'm as warm as toast!"

She stretched out her white arms, all her slim body vibrating with pleasure. Her head, with the red cap a little askew, and a tress of black hair escaping flattened down against her cheek, looked like a child's. Her eyes, bright blue in the sun, half-closed, smiled joyously.

"Let me go in alone this time!" she coaxed. "I don't want to drag you in, if you're cold—just ten minutes longer——"

"Come on, then," said George heroically.

He took her by the hand and they raced in together.

For the first few moments Dorothy recaptured the same feeling of buoyant well-being. She swam out, meeting the rise of the breakers, seeing nothing about her but the swell of the blue-green water, the white gulls swooping down over it, hearing only the rush of the water and the wind. Suddenly she had a feeling of being alone and of being far beyond her depth. Undoubtedly George was there, close behind her, but she could not see nor hear him, and for the moment she did not want to. She was swimming easily, sure of herself. Presently she would turn, but not just now. . . .

The stroke became a little more difficult. She began to feel tired a little. Rising on the top of a wave, she turned her head and glanced back. She could not see any one near her. She heard a stifled shout, and turned to the other side. There was George, a little distance behind her, his face showing pallid. He shouted again. Could n't he overtake her? . . . Well, then, she must turn. . . . She began to feel that she had gone far enough.

But when she wanted to turn and swim back, she could not do it. . . . No, she could not turn and make head against the tide. . . . To swim had become very difficult. She had a moment of fright. Then, summoning all her strength, she turned and struck out. She could see at moments George's face, but it seemed farther from her now. She could see the yellow line of the beach, but indistinctly. That too seemed far off, farther off. . . .

Suddenly she felt that she was being dragged out. There below in the water was a terrific force that had hold of her and was pulling her out to sea. She struggled with all her strength. But in terror she felt that it was vain. She was being pulled down from the bright surface into the depths.

She cried out once, a sharp cry suddenly stifled, for she felt herself sinking. . . . It seemed a long time of terror and of struggle in the dark choking depths. . . . Then came a great confused flash of light. She felt something near her, something that she could grasp, and frantically she clutched at it. . . . Then struggle again . . . a desperate struggle to hold fast something that would escape . . . and darkness. . . .

CHAPTER V.

Two days later Dorothy, dressed and escorted downstairs by a trained nurse, was tucked up in a long chair on the veranda and surrounded by a family which had been badly frightened and was now correspondingly reproachful. There was George too, quite pale and shaky. A bare escape from drowning had not improved the state of his nerves. It was otherwise with Dorothy. She had an unusual color and looked pensively radiant. She was full of genuine penitence and solicitude for George, who, however, seemed uncommonly gloomy. But she took rather lightly the remark of her mother and her aunt.

"All very well," growled Mr. Forsyth, who was enduring his Sabbath sentence of repose, "but I can tell you it was a narrow squeak. If that fellow had n't happened to be swimming out there——" He paused, folding his Sunday paper and frowning at it.

"Yes?" said Dorothy. "So he pulled us in, did he?"

"Yes, but you'd nearly drowned George before he could get to you. Got him tight round the neck. The guard got you off and kept you both up till they could run out the boat. Don't know how he managed it. He must have the strength of a horse."

"Poor George!" murmured Dorothy. "Will you *please* forgive me?"

He met her bright glance with rather a forced smile.

"Oh, it would n't have mattered much anyhow," he said listlessly.

Mr. Forsyth looked keenly at the young man over the top of his paper, and observed: "Well, it would have mattered some to me."

"Oh, of course—Dorothy. But I meant about me," George said heavily.

"Well, you too. . . . I felt pretty grateful to that guard. I went and hunted him up last night."

Dorothy turned her bright eyes on her father's face.

"Yes," meditated Mr. Forsyth. "I offered him a hundred dollars, but, do you know, he would n't take it. Said that was his job, anyhow, and he was well enough paid for it. I asked him what he got, and he said sixty a month. I asked him if he wanted anything else in the line of a job, and he said no, he had one in the winter-time as athletic instructor in a school. I gave him my card and told him to look me up if he ever wanted anything, and he thanked me politely. I took down his name and address. . . . Quite a superior fellow."

"What *was* his name?" asked Dorothy.

"Why, it was Robinson, I think."

Mr. Forsyth took out his notebook and flipped over the pages.

"No—Robertson, Duncan Robertson. He talks like an Englishman. I see I have n't got any address down—I remember now I asked him for it, but he said it did n't matter."

"I think we ought to go and thank him, don't you, George?" said Dorothy lightly.

"Yes, I think you should," agreed Mrs. Forsyth. "Especially as he would n't take any money."

"Remember not to offer him any," said Dorothy gravely, her brilliant eyes smiling at George.

"I don't feel inclined to reward him for saving my life," George said moodily, "or to thank him either. But I'll do it as a matter of form, if you like."

"I *do* like," Dorothy responded vigorously. "Don't talk like a child, George. Nobody wants to be drowned. I'm sure *I'm* extremely obliged to him."

She glanced at the warm blue of the sea under the cloudless afternoon sky, and got out of her chair.

"Come on, we might as well do it now," she said, smiling. "He'll be up there on the beach by the life-boat."

Mrs. Byrnes, who for some reason had sat silent and looking displeased during this conversation, now inquired coldly:

"Do you think you ought to walk out in the hot sun?"

"Oh, it is n't very hot," Dorothy said carelessly. "Besides, I'm perfectly well."

She went into the hall, put on a broad white hat, and took a parasol. She was wearing a pale-pink linen dress, and she had never looked prettier. She laughed at George as he walked gloomily by her side across the boulevard and down the board-walk.

"Don't be Byronic—it is n't your style," she said. "It's nonsense pretending you'd have liked to be drowned."

"Honestly, I should n't have minded," George assured her. "I don't see what I have to live for."

"Oh, stuff! Life itself—life is enough!"

"Is it?" he muttered.

She laughed and walked on lightly. They came to a flight of steps leading down to the beach. Dorothy descended slowly. There was the life-boat, drawn high up on the sand, and beside it, half in the shade of the board-walk, the guard. He was lying on an old steamer-rug, of a mottled tawny-brown, his head on his arms, his face hidden. He did not move as they approached, nor until Dorothy spoke his name clearly. Then he sat up and looked at them gravely, but did not rise.

"We must have made you a lot of trouble," said Dorothy. "I did, rather. I'm sorry I lost my head."

"You should n't have gone out so far," said the life-guard, and his steady blue eyes turned from her face to George's. "It's no place for women to swim. Two or three men get drowned here every year."

His voice was low, rather husky and veiled in quality; his speech curt

and brusque, with the accent Mr. Forsyth had noticed. His face was almost as expressionless as that of an antique statue, where all the expression is in the lines of the body. It was a conventionally modelled face, on classic lines, but by no means the purest; there was something of the heaviness of the decadence about it. But it was an uncommon and a handsome face. His age must have been close on forty.

Dorothy sat down on the edge of the rug and looked at him simply; George remained rather awkwardly standing.

"It was my fault," she said. "I was sure I could manage. Were you in any danger?"

"I? Oh, no." He smiled slightly. "Of course I could have let you both go if the boat had n't come in time. But we were pulled out quite a distance. There's a good bit of undertow."

"We came to thank you," said Dorothy, and glanced up at George, who said stiffly:

"Sorry we gave you so much trouble."

"Don't mention it—that's my business," the life-guard answered. "Of course, though, it was out of bathing-hours. It was just a chance that I happened to be out. Otherwise——"

He was looking steadily at Dorothy, watching her speculatively, expectantly, coolly. The color had deepened and burned hotly in her cheeks.

"Better take it in hours next time," he said. "And keep close to the lines."

"I don't believe she'll take any more risks," George advanced, with a note of authority which Dorothy instinctively and instantly denied.

"Of course I shall," she said calmly. "But not with you. I shan't risk *your* life again."

"But you'll risk your own, is that the idea?" inquired the guard.

"One has to take some risks," said Dorothy. "Otherwise life is n't worth having."

"Oh, if you just want the excitement of it——" he shrugged.

"No, it isn't just that, it's more than that. I can't tell you exactly——"

She was looking at him intently, without self-consciousness. But she was aware that George moved impatiently near her, and she broke off and rose to her feet.

"I'll tell you some other time," she added clearly.

He got up too, took her offered hand, and held it in a close grasp for a moment. Then he returned George's nod, and as they moved away flung himself down on his rug again and once more buried his face on his arms.

"You were n't very gracious," said Dorothy coldly to George.

"Well, you were enough so for two," he retorted. "I don't see why you needed to flirt with the fellow."

"Oh, I was n't flirting," she said indifferently.

CHAPTER VI.

BUT an impression, a definite suspicion, had been left in George's mind—a mind already prepared for passionate jealousy. A word from him, escaping him as though against his will, put Mrs. Byrnes on the alert. There was nothing, to *her* mind, incredible or preposterous in his idea. Dorothy, she would have said bitterly, was exactly the sort of girl to get into a low entanglement. She said nothing to Dorothy's mother, but, in George's absence, she watched as keenly as though her own interests had been involved—as, in fact, to some extent they were. She liked George, found him useful, and wanted Dorothy to marry him; and she most strenuously objected to Dorothy's doing anything to disgrace the family.

Meantime, quite unaware, Dorothy proceeded on her destined course. Mrs. Byrnes's judgment of her was correct as to the facts: Given her character and temperament, it was inevitable that she should break through the restraints put upon her, inevitable that she should refuse to conform to the standard, and that she should obey the first powerful impulse urging her away. The impulse that now swayed her was powerful in proportion to the narrowness of her life: that is, it was irresistible. It did not even occur to her to resist it. The one question in her mind was how to satisfy it.

She considered the alternative of writing to Robertson, or of going openly to speak to him, and chose the latter. And she went, the next morning, after her father and George Clayborne had gone to town, when her mother was busy with household matters, and Mrs. Byrnes, according to her morning custom, secluded in her own room. The trained nurse was staying over another day, and offered to accompany Dorothy in her walk, but was firmly refused; which fact she at once reported to Mrs. Byrnes, who bestirred herself and followed her niece at a distance and unperceived.

Dorothy walked up the beach, along the edge of the sand beaten hard by the retreating tide. It was a hot and almost breathless day, with a faint land breeze that drove out clouds of gnats from the marshes. The beach and board-walk were almost deserted, though there were a good many people splashing in the low waves that lapped softly on the sand. Dorothy paused opposite the life-boat and sent a glance under the ruffles of her parasol. At first she thought he was not there; and her heart, that had been beating furiously, seemed to stop. Then she saw him, under the board-walk, that cast a black shadow on the dazzle of the sands. She went slowly but straight up to him, with a glance about her; seeing no acquaintances, but not in the mood to stop if she had thought herself observed.

Robertson was lounging against one of the wooden posts, smoking a

cigarette, which he threw away as Dorothy approached. He answered her "Good-morning," but made no other move, as though expecting her to go on up the steps. She paused, uncertain, for a moment, meeting his steady gaze. Then he said gently:

"Don't stop here. You'll be seen."

"But I want to talk to you," she said quickly. "I don't care if I am seen."

"Well, if you don't care——"

He stopped a moment, then with the same gentleness asked:

"What do you want of me?"

"I don't know," said Dorothy.

She had been perfectly simple and direct; but now, as she sank down on the sand beside him, self-consciousness seized her; she blushed and uttered a false note.

"I want to know what that book is I've seen you reading," she said half-playfully.

He seized her hand and drew her toward him; then, suddenly, almost pushed her away.

"You're only a little girl. Better run along," he said roughly. "You don't need to know anything about me."

"But I do," said Dorothy, with passionate sincerity. "I *do*."

"Well, why? I'm not your sort. You're a young lady, and I'm hired to look after you. It strikes me that you *need* somebody to look after you. If you were just a girl, now——"

"I am—just a girl," said Dorothy.

"You're a baby. You look about sixteen."

"I'm nearly twenty-two."

"Girls don't know much at twenty-two—girls of your sort."

"No—I don't know much."

He looked at her condescendingly, critically, but with admiration.

"You're too pretty to be running about alone. Where's your young man?" he asked abruptly.

"I have n't any young man," said Dorothy haughtily.

He laughed, looking much amused.

"Well, he would like to be your young man, then. You nearly drowned him, though. You're a rather dangerous young lady."

"Don't make fun of me," said Dorothy half-absently.

She looked away from him, out to sea, narrowing her eyes against the fierce glare of the sun on the water, thrilling with keen pleasure. She had a sense of being alone with him, in the midst of boundless space. There was no one near them. From time to time a foot-fall had sounded on the walk overhead, but the invisible passer did not disturb her.

"My father tells me he had a talk with you," she said.

"Yes, he was very kind."

Robertson's tone was still amused, still condescending.

"He asked me to come and see him," he added.

"Well, won't you come?" said Dorothy.

"Come where?" he asked coolly.

"To the house, of course."

"He did n't invite me to call on his family."

"Well, I invite you."

"Very kind of you, I'm sure. No, I don't think I will."

"Why not?"

"My dear young lady, why should I?"

"Because I wish it."

He laughed again.

"Are you serious? Think how your respectable family would snub me! No, thank you; I don't pay calls."

Dorothy's eyes swam in tears, and she looked at him silently, her lips trembling.

"You spoiled child!" he said in a low voice.

He moved, looked about him for his cigarette-case, lit a cigarette, and blew out violently a cloud of smoke. Then he said gently:

"Don't you see, my dear girl, that I can't come to your house? It would only make trouble. I have n't sought it, and it would be unpleasant for me, probably. Do you think you ought to ask me to do it?"

Without answering, Dorothy took up her parasol and started to rise. He put his hand over hers on the sand.

"Don't be angry," he said.

She looked at him with her tear-blurred eyes.

"Good-by, then," she said brokenly.

"No, confound it, this is too much!" he cried. "Look here, can't we meet——"

He stopped suddenly, released her hand, threw away his cigarette, and sat up. A frown contracted his low brow and made his blue eyes look sullen. He muttered something impatiently. In a moment he stood up, took Dorothy by the wrists and pulled her up to her feet.

"All right, I'll come," he said shortly. "I'll come—once. Don't blame me if there's a fuss. Will to-night at eight suit you?"

Dorothy nodded gravely, drying her eyes, and went away.

CHAPTER VII.

At eight she was on the veranda, dressed in white, with a cloudy spangled scarf over her head. Her mother and Mrs. Byrnes were finishing their dinner; her father was staying in town, as he did several times a week. Promptly on the hour Robertson came, strolling slowly up the walk. She went to meet him at the top of the steps and gave him her hand.

"Shall we sit out here? It's so hot inside," she said softly.

"As you please," he responded, taking the big wicker chair she offered.

The air was close and oppressive. A thunder-storm was approaching, rumbling low in the west. There were a great many mosquitoes. Robertson fanned himself with his straw hat and waited for Dorothy to speak. He looked bulky and rather clumsy in his gray clothes, which fitted badly.

"Won't you smoke?" said Dorothy. "It will help to keep away the mosquitoes."

She took a box of cigars from a little table where some pastilles were burning, and brought it to him. He took a cigar, and she lit it for him.

"Will you have anything to drink—a whiskey and soda?"

"Thanks, I will," he said.

She rang, and when the tray was brought out, she poured the whiskey for him and added the soda and cracked ice. It pleased her to wait upon him, and he took it as a matter of course.

"My father is in town to-night," said Dorothy. "My mother and my aunt will be out in a few minutes."

"What shall we talk about—the weather?" asked Robertson.

"It does n't matter. That will do as well as anything," said Dorothy. "I have n't told them you were coming."

"Oh, you have n't? I hope they'll be polite to me. I'm not used to society."

"What *are* you used to, then? I'm very curious to know."

"Why, nothing much, my dear. A little of everything. I've drifted round the world."

"But *tell* me——"

"You want the story of my life? . . . You'd be disappointed. There's nothing romantic in it."

"Are you English?"

"Born in England," he said shortly. "Raised on a Canadian stock-farm, along with the rest of the live-stock. Why do you want to know?"

"Well, I do."

"Yes, I see that, but——"

"Here they come," said Dorothy, glancing into the hall.

The two ladies came out slowly, rustling in light dresses. Robertson rose from his chair, and Dorothy presented him.

"I am very glad to see you," said Mrs. Forsyth, "and to thank you, Mr. Robertson. I'm sorry Mr. Forsyth is n't at home this evening."

After a moment of dumfounded surprise, Mrs. Byrnes seized the situation which escaped her placid sister. She promptly sat down and entered conversation. Mrs. Forsyth stood a moment, puzzled, then said:

"Really, there are too many mosquitoes out here, and I think we shall have a storm. I shall go in, Milly. Dorothy, you will be eaten up if you stay here." She hesitated, and put out her hand to Robertson.

"We are greatly indebted to you. I'm sure Mr. Forsyth will be very sorry to have missed you. Won't you come in?"

"Thank you, no. I must be going on in a moment," said Robertson.

He had remained standing, but now, as Mrs. Byrnes showed no disposition to follow her sister, he sat down again, and answered some of her questions.

Yes, it was his first season here. No, not three people, only two, had been drowned so far this year—farther down the beach, where there were no life-lines. Certainly, people were extremely foolish to go in over their depth, unless they were strong swimmers. Yes, most people *were* foolish, in one way or another. What was *his* particular line of folly? Difficult to say, there were so many to choose from—perhaps he might claim to be an all-round fool. Yes, decidedly the storm was coming up with a rush.

The lightning was flashing now over the gray, still sea, and the thunder rolling heavily. Dorothy sat on the railing, looking out and listening to Robertson's slow replies and her aunt's quick questions. The first gust of wind swept across the veranda and blew out her tulle scarf, and the end of it dropped on Robertson's shoulder, touching his cheek. He started and turned toward her, then got up from his chair.

"The rain will be here in a jiffy—you must n't stay out," he said, bowed to Mrs. Byrnes, and took up his hat.

"Good-night," said Dorothy, and watched him go with quick, firm steps down the walk and out of sight.

"Dorothy," said Mrs. Byrnes, rising, "would you mind telling me, just for the fun of it, what you are up to?"

Her tone was light, indulgent, and coaxing.

Dorothy laughed, throwing back her head and shutting her eyes.

"Really, I would n't mind telling, if I knew," she said.

"Come up to my room," coaxed Mrs. Byrnes. "Let's have a talk. You must n't stay out here."

"I want to see the storm break. Then I'll come up," conceded Dorothy.

She went into the hall and put on a coat, tied the scarf over her head, and escaped again to the veranda, where she stayed alone, watching the lightning flashes and the gray drifting rain lashing the sea, lifting her face exultantly to the rush of the wind, till her mother ventured to the door and pleaded with her to come in. Then she went upstairs resignedly, found her aunt waiting for her, and submitted to be questioned. Mrs. Byrnes opened with a piece of information.

"I know, Dorothy," she said, "that you were talking to that man on the beach this morning. You made an appointment with him for to-night, did n't you?"

"Yes, I did," Dorothy replied easily.

"Well, I'm glad you made it here, instead of—— You are interested in him, are n't you?"

"Yes, I am."

"His looks, I suppose. He is a striking-looking creature. Not common at all. You know, he's quite a local beau. I asked Lena about him to-day——"

"Lena?" said Dorothy haughtily.

Lena was the chambermaid.

"Yes, she knows all the gossip. She says the girls are crazy about him. She knows several who go down to meet him——"

Dorothy's cheeks were dyed crimson. She looked at her aunt, speechless.

"Yes. So, you see, you must be careful," went on Mrs. Byrnes. "I don't say you should n't see him here, if you find him interesting. But you must remember, of course, that he is n't a gentleman, and not give him any reason to think——"

"To think what?" inquired Dorothy dryly.

"Well, you understand. Don't put yourself at a disadvantage. Men of his class are very quick to——"

"His class? Do you really believe in all that?" demanded Dorothy, eying her aunt with recovered composure.

"Do I believe in what, child?"

"Do you believe that this man, for example, is really inferior to—well, say, to George Clayborne?"

"Of course he is—in every way except looks. There, I admit, he has the advantage. But in training, education, manners——"

"I prefer Robertson's," said Dorothy.

"What? You prefer——"

"I would rather marry a man like him than a man like George."

"Dorothy! Are you crazy?"

"No, I don't think so. But you know I'm of age, and I can do as I like."

"Dorothy!"

"None of you can prevent me," said Dorothy resolutely.

Mrs. Byrnes sat and gazed stupidly at her niece.

"You confess it—you're in love with him," she gasped. "You're mad, Dorothy——"

Dorothy rose and picked up her damp scarf and shook it out, smiling.

"No, but I shall go my own way," she said. "I don't like the way you want me to live, or the husband you've picked out for me. It bores me—George bores me. If I have any husband, I shall pick him out myself, and he'll be a *man*."

With this she left the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHE went across the wide corridor into her own room, locked the door, and opened one of the big windows facing the sea. The first violence of the storm was past; the thunder-clouds were rolling out to sea. The rain drove by in gray veils before the wind. The lights blinked below on the deserted boulevard. The surf, beaten flat by the squall, was beginning to rise again, smashing sullenly on the sand.

Dorothy sat on the window-sill, poised light as a bird about to take flight, leaning forward eagerly, drinking in the freshness of the air, stretching out her slim white arms to the night and the sea. She was possessed by joy, throbbing with it, triumphant, arrogant in the delight of humbling, of yielding herself. She affronted all obstacles to her desire, she invited, defied them. He had not sought her, no. But with so much the more intensity did she seek him. He was conscious of her, and had been for long. He was waiting for her. And she would go to him though the whole world stood in the way. She stretched out her arms to him blindly, rejoicing in all that opposed her, even that he himself opposed her, that he hesitated, was reluctant, simply waited. So much the more was she certain, resolved, afire.

CHAPTER IX.

THERE was a dance at the Casino. The big wainscoted room was filled with women and girls in light dresses, alert, full of life, and there were a few languid men, not enough to go round:

Dorothy, in her tulle ball-dress, sown with tiny pink roses, had escaped the eye of her mother, who sat chatting placidly in a group of dowagers. Dorothy was sitting in the sand, where the shadow of the board-walk cut the moonlight. She had a light cloak about her, and she lay against her lover's shoulder. She sighed, with his kiss on her lips, overcome with happiness.

"You do love me, then?" she murmured.

"Of course, I love you," he answered.

"But for always?"

"As long as you like."

"But you know—we said always."

"Yes, sweetheart."

"You said it——"

"Yes, child. . . . But you'll forget me."

"Never—how could I?"

She clung to him, possessed by the memories of the last few days, the stolen meetings, the passionate self-surrender.

"It was for always," she murmured.

"Must we say it?" he said, and there was a protesting, almost quizzical note in his low voice. His clasp of her was lightly protecting rather than passionate.

"Why not say it?"

"Well—always is a long day. Why not just say what is?"

"Well, what is, then—if you know?"

"Why, that you are a spoiled baby and must have everything you want—and you happen to want me—for the moment——"

"You don't understand."

"I understand better than you do. I've seen a little more of the world than you have, remember."

"The world—what has that to do with it?"

"More than you think, little girl. Do you think you can make the world over to suit yourself?"

"Yes, of course! We can make our own world. Did n't I make you love me?"

"Yes, of course. But perhaps some day you'll cry for the moon and won't be able to get it. Then what?"

"I don't want the moon. The earth is enough for me."

"You don't want much—just now!"

"I want you—don't you consider yourself much?"

"Well, not very much. I'm modest. I have to be."

"I don't see why you have to be. And you're not, any way. You're awfully vain of your looks and your strength."

"No, I don't think so. Besides, that's all I've got to be vain of, you know. I'm not half as proud of myself as you are, my little love."

"I'm not proud—only that you like me."

"How could I help it? You made me."

"Yes, but did n't you want to?"

"Of course, but I did n't dare! I had to wait, don't you see?"

"It had to be," she said dreamily. And then, after a moment: "It has all been easy so far."

"How do you mean, so far?" asked Robertson.

"Why, I mean no one has interfered. But naturally there will be some trouble, when I tell them."

"When you tell them what?" he asked shortly.

"Why, that I intend to marry you."

There was a silence. His arm suddenly clasped her closer and something like a quick sob escaped his lips.

"Good God!" he said.

Dorothy for a moment could not speak. Then she asked, frightened:

"What do you mean?"

He released her and moved away from her. His face was in the moonlight now, and she saw him frowning.

"I mean that you've knocked me over," he said harshly. "What on earth put the idea of marrying me into your head? You can't marry me."

"Why can't I?" cried Dorothy. As he did not answer, she said heavily:

"You mean you don't want to? . . . I never thought of that. . . . I never thought you really would n't want me——"

"I *do* want you," said Robertson sullenly. "But, good Lord! I never saw such a baby in my life! I don't know how to explain it to you——"

Dorothy looked at him in silence.

"See here," he said almost roughly. "I never thought you had any such idea about me. . . . I thought you were like the rest of them . . . you know there are always plenty of girls that want to amuse themselves and have a good time on the quiet. Well . . . naturally, I thought you were one, that's all. What else could I think? You don't know anything about me—you don't know what I'm like any more than Adam. You did n't wait to find out. You did n't even find out what I thought about *you*. You just went out and picked me up because—well, I don't know why, you liked my looks, perhaps—that's generally what it amounts to. Now I find out that you expect to marry me, and you had n't consulted me about that either. . . . Now, look here—and I feel like a fool when I'm saying it—the truth is, I'm married already."

Dorothy sat quite still, looking at him. Her face was in shadow, he could just see the gleam of her eyes.

"I don't like the way this makes me feel," he burst out angrily. "It looks as though I'd been crooked—taken advantage of you—and God knows I never meant to do that. Here you are, a kid about half my age, and knowing no more of the world than a baby—oh, Lord!"

With a savage groan, he threw himself on the sand, away from her.

Still she sat, immovable. The cloak had slipped off her shoulders, and the wind blew her loosened hair about her face.

"Can't you say something?" he demanded harshly.

With a great effort she spoke.

"I—I will—in just a minute. . . . Let me think——"

But it was not thinking—it was a confused, horrible pain that she felt. It was like a physical blow fallen on her.

"You can say anything you want to, to me," he said sullenly. "I'm an awful fool to have got into this."

"No—no," she stammered.

She shivered. He got up and put the cloak carefully about her.

"There's no reason why you should catch cold," he said. "And you'd better get back now, or you'll be missed. We have troubles enough without that."

He put his arm about her and lifted her to her feet, and she leaned against him, closing her eyes.

"Don't think," he said, with emphasis, "that I don't care about you. I do. I liked you from the first time I saw you. I admired you. I did n't like to think, either, that you were—well, I was a fool to think what I did about you. But I never knew anybody like you before. Now, see here, I must talk to you—or no, I'll write. I want to tell you some things. Can you get a letter from the post-office without any risk?"

She nodded.

"Then, if you want to see me, just mail me a note and say where and when. . . . I hate to have you go like this, but there's no use making it worse. . . . Can't you say a word to me?"

She stayed herself against his shoulder with one hand and drew a long breath.

"Only that I love you," she said with a curious hardness in her voice. "And I want you to remember that."

She fastened her cloak at the throat, and put up her hands to arrange her hair.

"I shall go home, and send the man to my mother with a note," she said. "I shall tell her I had a headache or something—she never asks questions. . . . I shall look for your letter to-morrow morning."

"I'll post it to-night," he said shortly.

"Then, good-night."

She put her cheek against his. She felt his cautious glance about them in the moonlight. They kissed each other.

CHAPTER X.

MRS. BYRNES, judging it useless to say anything to her sister, had gone straight to the head of the house with her report of Dorothy's madness. Mr. Forsyth, interrupted in the rush of a disastrous day, had barred the door of his private office for twenty minutes, and, turning round in his chair and fixing his haggard, intense eyes on Mrs. Byrnes, had listened without a word. She gave a succinct and definite account of Dorothy's acts and words, and ended thus:

"I have n't said anything to Sarah about it, because I knew she would n't do anything. But I'm sure you will, and somebody ought to act promptly, if Dorothy's to be saved."

Mr. Forsyth was silent for a moment, drawing lines on a blotter with a carefully pointed pencil. Then he asked curtly:

"What was your impression of the man?"

"I think he's dangerous," she replied promptly. "Not only is he extremely good-looking, but he has any amount of assurance. He has a quiet way that's really impressive. I think Dorothy's taken the lead in this thing, but of course he'd be willing enough, even if he was n't infatuated with her. He'd see it as a chance."

Mr. Forsyth frowned and jabbed the point of his pencil into the blotter until it broke.

"I can't go down there to-night," he said. "Nor to-morrow either. I've got all I can handle here. It's too bad that you women can't look after Dorothy——"

"Well, you know how much looking after Sarah does," said Mrs. Byrnes caustically. "And as for me, I've done my part in getting hold of the thing and warning you. Dorothy won't listen to me. She might to you, although I must say I don't think either of you has ever tried to get her confidence or to guide her. But I think your best chance is to deal with the man. You might buy him off—get him to disappear. If you could make him see that he has n't anything to expect from you——"

"Perhaps I can make him see that, all right," said Mr. Forsyth grimly.

His mind reverted to his business troubles, to the net that was closing in about him. To struggle against that he needed all his energy.

"I can't go down for a couple of days," he said irritably, rising. "This comes at the worst possible time for me. Can't you go back and keep an eye on Dorothy till I come?"

"No, I can't," said Mrs. Byrnes decidedly. "I have engagements for the rest of this week."

"Well, how would it do to send George down? He has some interest in this——"

"It would n't do at all. He has too much interest, and he'd do something crazy. You don't know George Clayborne as well as I do. He might shoot the man."

"Oh, nonsense," muttered Mr. Forsyth.

"It is n't nonsense. He's crazy about Dorothy. I wish to goodness we could have got her married to him. I've always felt that she might do something wild."

The parent of the wild strain in Dorothy looked deeply oppressed.

"I'll go down just as soon as I can," he said. "At present I'm tied up here."

"Business worrying?" asked Mrs. Byrnes sympathetically, as she arose.

She was used to seeing Wall Street men worried—in fact, she seldom saw them otherwise—and therefore she was not greatly impressed by her brother-in-law's manner. He said carelessly, as he conducted her through the outer office:

"Oh, nothing much."

Nevertheless, it did just cross her mind that it would be a good thing to sound George. George would know what Mr. Forsyth was doing, and if things were n't going well, it would be necessary to investigate and perhaps change her investments. But her confidence was not shaken enough

to make her change her plans for the week. Consequently, she went to Long Island without seeing George.

And Mr. Forsyth remained in town, absorbed in his losing fight. The failure of a big firm was rumored, and he was making frantic efforts to clear himself from his connection with it, not to be dragged down in its fall. When he got away finally, with the result still uncertain, it was Saturday night, the night of the dance; and he entered the house to find his wife and daughter absent. Rather reassured at hearing that Dorothy was dancing, he went into the library to await their return, and, tired out, fell asleep in his easy-chair.

When Dorothy came in a little later, the butler told her that her father had arrived and had asked for her.

"I think he's waiting in the library, Miss," the man added softly.

"I want you to take a note for me to the Casino," she said, throwing off her cloak wearily, and she went upstairs slowly. In her mirror a vision of her own face, white and hard, confronted her for an instant. She wrote her note, and rang.

"Tell my father that I'm home, and that I'm not well and am going to bed," she said to the maid who answered the bell, "and give this to Jerome. He's to go at once."

She shut her door, with a feeling that the servants had looked at her curiously, with a dull question as to her father's reason for wanting to see her. But whatever that was, she could not talk to him to-night. Sighing heavily, she began to undress. In her hair a wreath of little pink roses was fastened. Her cold, trembling fingers could not undo it, and with a sudden fierce gesture she tore it out, hurting herself, and glad of the physical pain.

Then came a knock on her door.

"Dorothy—I want to speak to you," said her father's voice, it seemed to her harshly.

She could not answer for a moment. Then she opened the door a few inches.

"I came home with a fearful headache, and I was going to bed. Is it anything important?" she asked, surprised at the calmness of her own voice.

"Yes, it's important. Can't you come down for a while?" Mr. Forsyth said sombrely.

She hesitated and looked at him forlornly.

"I'm really ill. If you *could* wait till morning——"

"I suppose I can," he said. "But then I want a serious talk with you, Dorothy."

"Yes, Father."

"Well, get to bed, then. Where's your mother?"

"She's coming. I felt ill and came away. Good-night, Father."

But he still waited there, and suddenly she knew, strangely, what he was waiting for. She bent forward and kissed his cheek. And this was a strange thing, for it had been a long time since any sign of affection had been between them. Then he went away. And Dorothy, locking her door, and slowly undressing, found now that she was crying, and the terrible pressure inside her head, behind her eyes, lessened a little. She fell asleep in the dawn, and, waking late, thought the first thing of her letter. She remembered that this was Sunday, and that Jerome went to the post-office on Sundays at half-past ten. She must get that letter before it went into the family post-bag. It was now ten o'clock. She dressed quickly, and tied a veil over her hat to hide her unusual pallor and the black lines under her eyes. She could not hope to escape inspection, for her parents breakfasted early, and they would be awaiting her downstairs.

Her father looked over his newspaper, as she went out on the veranda, and her mother said:

"Why, Dorothy! Have you had your breakfast? Where are you going?"

"I've had all I want. I'm just going along the board-walk for a little way. My head still aches," she said.

Mr. Forsyth rose, putting down his paper.

"I wish you would n't go out now, Dorothy," he said rather sternly.

Tears of nervousness rose to her eyes.

"I *must* go," she said. "I'm going alone, and I'll be back in twenty minutes."

CHAPTER XI.

At last she had her letter. The sight of it, her name on the envelope, made her heart leap. She had never seen his writing before. It was a clear, careful, painstaking writing, small and regular. She carried the letter in her hand as though it were a live thing, a thing terribly precious and important to her, and yet that might wound her almost to death, a fateful thing. She went down to a pavilion, deserted for the moment, overlooking the sea, to read it.

MY DEAR GIRL:

I hardly know what to write you. I think what you feel about me is just a fancy and will pass away. I think if you knew me better you would n't care much about me. You would be disappointed in me, and whatever romantic ideas you have would not last very long. It has always been so. Women have n't cared for me very long. I'm not that kind.

Now you ought to know a little about me, though I don't care to write about myself. I had a very miserable childhood, though I shall not tell you the reason, for it does n't matter. I always felt that I had to look out for myself, and I can't remember the time when I did n't have a bitter feeling about those I lived with. As soon as I was able to work, I ran

away. I have been a cabin-boy and a sailor, a tramp, a farm-hand, and a prize-fighter—all before I was twenty-five. Then I met a woman who wanted to marry me. She was older than I, and she was independent, had a big farm of her own and was a splendid manager. She was very strong-willed and always knew what she wanted. She wanted me to be educated. Of course I'd never had any education, except what you can pick up round the world. Well, to please her, I went to a country college, and even studied law. But it did n't suit me. I'd always been used to life in the open, and roving. But that lasted nearly ten years. We had one baby, that died. Then she found she could n't do what she wanted with me, after all. There was a good deal of trouble. I'm not going to say a word against her. She's a good woman, and means well by every one, only it has to be her way. And after a while she saw that her way could n't be my way, and we separated. That was six years ago. She writes to me still, and has never wanted a divorce, though of course she is n't contented. So that's how things are. I was fond of her for a good many years, but I've liked a good many since, in a way that suits me better. I don't seem to be cut out for a domestic life.

So now you can understand why I was thunderstruck at your idea that we could marry. I have seen plenty of romantic women in your class who thought it very exciting to have an affair with a man in my position. I don't know why it seems to them exciting, but it does. I suppose they like the idea that I am an inferior, in a way, and that they can be unworldly and unconventional. Perhaps you felt something like that, that it would be rather a fine thing to stoop to me and raise me up. I know my wife did. But she was willing to stick to it and take all the consequences, and you seem to be too. I respect you both for it. I don't mind your thinking that you had only to put out your hand and gather me in. I don't blame you. You've been taught to think that you can have anything you want, and that the rest of the world exists only to serve you. If it's just a fancy you have for me, nobody's hurt, and nobody need be the wiser. You can forget me when you go away from here, or when I go, in a couple of months—or, I hope, just remember me pleasantly, once in a while, in a way that won't hurt you.

But I don't want you to get into any trouble on my account, with your family or anything. If they suspect anything, and you have n't taken any trouble to avoid it, it's bound to be hard for you. I just want to say that I'll take my share of any trouble that comes along, if I can. If you want to drop me now, it's all right, and I understand. It's probably the best thing for you. If you want to keep on seeing me, you'll have to take your choice whether it's in secret or openly. You've seemed to prefer the latter, but perhaps now you won't. When you've thought it all over, let me know. I think enough of you to say that you can count on me as far as you want to go.

Yours,

D. R.

CHAPTER XII.

DOROTHY read this letter twice, folded it, and put it carefully back in its envelope. Then she went back to the house, walking slowly and firmly. Her father was in the library, busy with the long-distance telephone. He beckoned her in impatiently, and finished his conversation, to which she

listened attentively, with a feeling that this business detail was somehow immensely important. She looked at him intently, and noticed his nervous manner and haggard look. It seemed to her that she had never really looked at him before. She had a sense that for the first time she could see clearly.

He sank back in his chair and glanced at his watch.

"Dorothy, I have to get the next train to town," he said abruptly, "and I don't know when I shall be back here. I would n't have come down if it had n't been for what your aunt told me. Now, I have just half an hour, and I want you to sit down and tell me whether what she said about you and this man, what 's-his-name—Robertson—is all nonsense, or what it is."

Dorothy sat down, facing him and the bright light from the eastern windows.

"It is n't nonsense. I care very much for him," she said clearly.

"It's true, then!" Mr. Forsyth groaned. "I wish to the Lord, Dorothy, you had n't chosen this time to cut up, when I 'm strained about to the breaking-point as it is. Look here!" he cried, sitting up suddenly, grasping the arms of his chair. "Do you know that if I can't pull myself out of the place where I am in a couple of days, I shall be bankrupt? Yes, every dollar I have in the world! Everything! . . . Now, is this a time to come bothering me with nonsense?"

Dorothy's narrow eyes opened to their widest. She leaned forward.

"Is that true?" she asked breathlessly. "Oh, poor Father, how did it happen? Why did n't you tell me——"

"Tell you? Tell you?" he repeated irritably. "Why should I tell you? What do you know about it? . . . And, mind, not a word to your mother. I may get through all right, and there 's no use worrying her. I only told you because—because I want you to realize that something serious might happen, that 's all, and that you ought to stand by to help, and not——"

His voice quavered and broke, and he dropped the bronze knife that his nervous hands had been playing with noisily upon the floor.

Stand by to help! In all her life it was the first time that words like that had been spoken to Dorothy.

She sprang up and seated herself on the arm of his chair and put her arm round his shoulders.

"Father! Why, you 're perfectly worn-out!" she cried, and her voice thrilled with feeling. "I think it 's terrible that you should have been worried like this, and none of us know! It 's wrong—you ought to have told us!"

Mr. Forsyth's hand closed tight upon his daughter's, and he stifled a sob. She drew his head against her shoulder and kissed him.

"Father! I will help! I want to, any way I can—if I only knew how!"

"Well, don't worry me," he murmured peevishly, still holding her hand tight, and, she felt, clinging to her as he never had done before, with a sudden desperate need of affection and support.

"I won't worry you," she said, profoundly moved. "You need n't worry about me——"

She broke off suddenly, and sat staring over his head at the wall opposite.

"Father," she said after a moment, "don't you think I could understand if you told me just what's the trouble?"

"No, you could n't, and, anyhow, I have n't time now," he said wearily. "You don't know anything about business——"

"Well, I want to know, when you have time to tell me. . . . And I just want to say, Father, that I don't want you to worry about *me*, whatever happens. I mean that if—if we lose our money, I shan't mind being poor—I shan't really—I can work, and I will. I want to, any way——"

With a brusque gesture, letting go her hand, he got up.

"Well, you don't know anything about *that*," he said. "I guess you could n't do very much work, Dorothy."

His tone was bitterly indulgent, rather slighting, and yet he looked at her with a new kindness, even with a certain vague pleasure.

"You just be a good girl, that's about all you can do," he said paternally.

Then the shadow darkened his face again, and he looked at his watch and began gathering up some papers on his desk.

"What's the matter with George Clayborne?" he said abruptly.

"The matter with him?"

"I mean, why did you quarrel with him? I thought you liked him pretty well."

"I liked him—in a way——"

"Well, I wish you'd liked him enough to marry him—then *you'd* have been taken care of, anyhow——"

"I don't want to be taken care of," said Dorothy absently.

She was watching her father, and thinking what his reference to George meant. Perhaps that George could help him. She noticed that he had difficulty in tying up his parcel of papers.

"Let me do that."

She tied the string carefully, and said:

"Father, does George know about this?"

"He does n't know much—yes, he knows I'm involved."

"Well, can't he do something?"

"I would n't ask him—now," said Mr. Forsyth shortly.

Dorothy was silent.

He took his parcel and looked round the room.

"Now I've got to go, the car is there. Just don't say a word to anybody about this. And promise me that you won't do anything foolish while I'm gone. I meant to talk to you about this crazy notion of yours, but somehow the other thing came up, my mind's so burdened with it. I don't believe for a minute that you're serious. You could n't want to marry a man like that. Why, you might just as well talk about marrying Jerome or the chauffeur! Now, for heaven's sake, be sensible, so that I won't have to think of anything but work just now—and Lord knows that's enough! You'd find out the difference quick enough if you did n't have me to look out for you!"

He kissed his daughter, not even waiting for her promise, took his hat and coat from Jerome in the hall, said good-by to his wife on the veranda, and waved to them, forcing a smile, as the motor started.

"I think it's a shame that he has to go to town to-day!" said Mrs. Forsyth, gazing after the car, with her usual placidity slightly ruffled. "And he looks so tired. He hardly slept last night. Business worry, I suppose."

Dorothy looked at her mother, with a sudden sharp feeling of pity. She was realizing what it would mean to her parents if money disaster overtook them. What would her father be like if he were bankrupt, his business gone? What would her mother do, without her possessions and the occupation these gave her? She felt they would be miserable, both of them, and she hoped ardently that it would n't happen.

After all, why should n't George help? Nobody would ask him for money, of course, but he might be able to do something. He could at least tell her what was happening. The idea of calling him up by telephone came to her, but she rejected it. She had not seen him for about ten days. He had asked if he might come down this Sunday, and she had written, putting him off. . . .

Mrs. Forsyth sighed and said:

"It's too late now for church. I suppose I might as well take off my hat."

She rustled into the house. Dorothy looked after her thoughtfully, and then her gaze wandered slowly over the carved wood and tapestry furnishings of the big hall, and the elaborate outdoor drawing-room made by the veranda behind its striped awnings. Here was everything for comfort—for this comfort her father slaved and worried, and her mother planned and watched unremittingly.

For herself—let it go. She had been honest in saying that she did n't care. She expected to be poor anyhow.

She sank down now in a hammock, forgetting everything else to read Robertson's letter again. The sentence at the end of that letter had given her some security:

You can count on me as far as you want to go.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEVERTHELESS, her need was to see him now, at once. She could not wait to write him and make an appointment for the next day. It could not hurt him, she thought, if she were seen and gossiped about—and certainly it could not now hurt her. She had an hour before lunch-time, and at this time, hot noon, there would be fewer people about. She went, therefore, to find him at his usual station.

He was lounging in the shade, on the old mottled rug that looked like a tawny tiger-skin. He was not reading, but looking out over the still, shimmering sea with a fixed, unwinking gaze. As she came up, he looked at her gravely, and put up his hand and drew her down beside him.

"Well?" he said, smiling faintly.

She sat beside him, clasping his hand in both hers, her jealous, passionate gaze resting on him.

"I've read your letter, and," she said with a catch in her voice, "I liked it. It's honest. You have n't pretended that it mattered very much to you how it came out, and—I like you better for not pretending——"

"It does matter," he said in his low, quiet tones. "I'll do whatever you want."

"Yes, yes—but you don't want, yourself! I know you will—you said you'd stand by me, and I believe it. . . . But you don't care—you don't care, yourself!"

"I do care for you," he said.

"But not as I do! . . . Can't you see? It would only be because I wanted it—just as it has been all along! . . . Oh, why can't you love me?"

"Well—supposing I did, what then?" he asked seriously.

"Why, then, you would want to be with me always, as I do with you. You would n't care about anything else, any more than I do. You'd——"

"You mean, I would divorce my wife," he said thoughtfully. "Do you really mean that?"

"Yes—for you are n't really married, as it is. You've been separated for seven years, and you don't care about her——"

"Well, I do, in a way," he said, with a puzzled frown. "And I could n't divorce her, anyhow. I deserted her, you see—that's what they call it. She would have to get the divorce, and I don't know whether she would want to."

"If you *care* for her——" began Dorothy in a shaking voice, moving away from him.

"I don't want to go back to her, if that's what you're thinking of," he said.

"I think you have no feeling at all!" she burst out.

He shrugged his shoulders and looked away from her.

Desperately, she studied his calm profile, the low brow, the clear gleam of the blue iris, the two lips closing so evenly and firmly together, the chin that balanced so perfectly, the whole harmony of his face. . . . She noticed the proportion and setting of the ear, too, close to his head, and the powerful line of his neck, and the close-clipped blond hair tinged with red, curling where it was not cut too close, instinct with life. . . . As always, the sense of his beauty tended to quiet her, and she lost herself for some moments in the keen, almost impersonal joy of contemplation. She could think about him, then, impersonally, and she wondered if the great charm of this being for her did not lie partly in just what she had called lack of feeling. . . . Was it not just this quiet and balance and absence of nervous, passionate emotion, was it not partly the fact that he did not need her, that so powerfully attracted her to him?

She noticed on his shoulder a rent in the faded orange-red bathing-suit. And by a swift transition she thought of the one passage in his letter that showed emotion—the reference to his neglected childhood. Instinctively she spoke of that, while she felt compassion for the time when he had been lonely, and a keen desire to mend that hole in his bathing-suit.

“You *were* unhappy once,” she said with sombre eagerness. “When you were a child.”

He turned and looked at her, and the frown she knew made his eyes look steely.

“I’d rather not talk about that,” he said curtly.

“But why not? . . . You won’t tell me anything that really matters to you!”

“Well, that does n’t matter now—and I don’t want to talk about it, that’s all. It was bitter, and I don’t want to remember it . . . except I’ve always been sorry for children, when they had hard luck, and liked them. . . . I suppose if mine had lived I should n’t have left her.”

He spoke regretfully, half-absently, and then said:

“But it’s all in the day’s work. I was meant to be a rolling stone, I guess. Not much on anchoring anywhere.”

Then he looked very gently at Dorothy.

“You’re a fine girl, and worth something a whole lot better than me,” he said, touching her hand lightly. “I’m not much for you, my dear. I don’t like the kind of life you do, and you would n’t like my kind. I could n’t give you anything. Your family would raise the deuce, and I don’t blame them. I have n’t any money, you know; we’d be poor. You don’t know what it is to be poor. You’d soon lose the fancy you have for me, and then where would you be? . . . Don’t you see? . . . You seem to blame me for not urging you. . . . But I think the right thing for me to do is to clear out of here, right now—and I ought to have done it before now, I suppose——”

“I won’t have you do that,” said Dorothy, in a quiet, hard tone. “I

won't drive you away from here. I won't make any more trouble for you——”

She stopped and clasped her hands tightly round her knees to control the trembling that shook her. He watched her for a moment, and then said in a deeper tone:

“If you're disturbed by anything that's happened, and if you want to take all the risks and feel it's worth it—I mean just what I said. I'll stand for everything, and I'll do exactly as you say. And I'll do my best to look out for you. But I won't urge you one more step, for I see all the consequences to you. You'll have to decide just what you want.”

Dorothy, gazing blindly out at the sea, had a feeling as though she were sinking in a quicksand, or as though the water out there had hold of her and was drawing her out, out, to drown her. To what had she trusted herself, to what blind and cruel instinct had she yielded? What force had she affronted, with such complete self-confidence? She could not control it, it was dragging her down to the very depths. . . .

She got up, white and shaking.

“Come to the house to-night, after ten,” she said. “I'll tell you then.”

“I'll come,” he said soberly, and looked after her gravely as she walked away, holding herself proudly erect. . . .

CHAPTER XIV.

DOROTHY, at luncheon with her mother, almost forgot herself for the time. All sorts of new feelings seemed to be crowding upon her. She was feeling now, really for the first time, the bond that united the three members of this family, each one heretofore so self-absorbed, so unconscious of the real existence of the others. She felt that misfortune, if it came, must unite them more closely. Instinctively she knew that she would be needed, if this blow fell upon her parents. She must, as her father had said, stand by to help.

She looked at her mother, calm, handsome, unconcerned, with a sense of amazement. How was it that such an event could be impending, and her mother have no suspicion of it? What a shock would it be to her if at this moment she could see what was happening in the lives of the two people most nearly connected with her! Dorothy felt the weakness of such ignorance in her mother, the lack of energy and of imagination that it showed. If she knew nothing, it was because she had never wanted to know. She had existed placidly, taking it for granted that things would always go on well. She was a religious woman, and did not concern herself much with the things of this world; except, of course, that a certain way of living was suitable to the family circumstances, and that it was her duty to care for this, just as it was her husband's duty to provide

the wherewithal. Dorothy's duty never had been clearly defined, but naturally would be when she married, as her mother took it for granted she would suitably.

Mrs. Forsyth's eyes were a gentle, forget-me-not blue. She had never, so far as Dorothy could remember, lost her temper. Her manners were invariably sweet and considerate. She never asked unpleasant questions, of her husband or any one else. She proceeded on the assumption, always, that other people were doing what they should, just as she herself was. . . .

Dorothy felt an immense pity for her, as they chatted over the pleasant lunch-table. She understood her father's wish to protect her, spare her, even to the last minute. To be sure, the blow would fall all the more crushingly if it came without warning—but, then, it might not come. She felt ages older than her mother, as she studied her compassionately, realizing how impossible such a life would be for herself, how impossible that *she* could be protected and spared. No, for better or worse, life would be different to her from that. . . .

They were taking coffee on the veranda, and Mrs. Forsyth was mildly complaining of the heat, saying, "It will be terrible for your father in town, and I do *wish* he had n't gone in," when a motor-cab drove up and stopped before the house. George Clayborne got out of it. Dorothy had a sudden shrinking of the heart. "It has come!" she thought, glancing at her mother.

Mrs. Forsyth rose, with a pleased exclamation, and went to greet George as he came up the steps.

"Why did n't you telephone you were coming? We've just finished lunch, but come right in—they'll get you something," she said hospitably.

"No, thanks; I've had all I want," said George, shaking hands with Dorothy and looking at her significantly. "I'll just take a cup of coffee, if I may."

Dorothy moved to touch the bell, and sat down near George, who had dropped into a low chair, wearily. His usually florid face was pale and his eyes were reddened.

"Dear me, you look fagged out," said Mrs. Forsyth kindly. "Did you come from town? Mr. Forsyth had to go in again this morning."

"Yes, I know. I saw him," said George absently.

Dorothy gave him his cup of coffee, and a light for his cigar. For the first time she wished to be left alone with him, but her mother lingered, making conversation. Finally Mrs. Forsyth, fighting against drowsiness, caught herself in a yawn, and, with a dignified apology, withdrew to her own apartment.

"Of course you'll stay overnight," she said.

"I must go back on the midnight train, I'm sorry to say," George responded.

He drew his chair close to Dorothy's, sat down, and looked straight at her.

"I've just come from your father," he said in a low voice, "and I judge from what he said that you know something about his trouble."

"He told me something—this morning—not very much in detail," she answered quickly. "He told me that he might be bankrupt."

George nodded. "He's in bad."

"Well?" said Dorothy. "What did you come to tell me? Is it certain?"

"One thing is certain," said George clearly, "and that is that I won't let him go under."

"But tell me, what can you do? Can you help it?"

"I can help *him*—if he'll let me."

"I wish you'd tell me just what that means. Do you mean you'll lend him money?"

"Yes, it means money—and a good deal. It's no use going into all the details with you—you would n't understand them. He's been speculating, of course, and has been caught short, along with a lot of other people. Some big men in the street are squeezing the little fellows, and your father is one of the little ones. Randall & Champney—that's a big stock firm—are going to fail. Your father stands to lose three-quarters of a million unless he can cover by to-morrow, and that will wipe him out."

"And he can't do it?" said Dorothy. "He said he might be able——"

"It would be a miracle if he could. . . . He's taken big chances. I never speculate myself, and I don't hold with that kind of thing," said George. "But at the same time I can't see your father smash up."

"I don't see why *you* should be responsible. . . . It seems to me that he ought n't to take your help, if it means a loss to you——"

"Well, it might not mean a loss, eventually. I merely cover his obligations and give him a chance to make good. . . . And he would be willing to do it, Dorothy—and this is what I came to see you about—if he thought things were right between you and me. In that case, it would give me a right to help him—do you see?"

"Yes, I see," said Dorothy in a low voice. "But I can't do that."

"I'm not asking you to do anything, except to let him think certain things for a time. It would n't be long. I don't ask anything of you, Dorothy, for myself."

"No—only the hardest thing of all: to take advantage of your generosity. Don't you see that I can't do that?"

"I think you ought to. You ought n't to consider merely yourself."

"I don't think I am considering merely myself. I think it would be dead wrong for us to take your help, in such circumstances. It would n't make it any better to lie about it. I think we ought to take the consequences——"

"Yes, but do you know what the consequences might be? I'd better tell you frankly. Your father has used certain securities which did n't belong to him, which belonged to his clients. If he can't make good on those, he might be liable to a criminal prosecution. Now, you might be willing to see him in poverty—and your mother—but how would you like to see him in prison?"

"Oh!" murmured Dorothy, turning white.

"You need n't think he has done anything very uncommon. It's done a good deal, I believe, and if it's successful, everything is all right. It's only in case of failure that you get found out and have to pay for it. I'm not saying that I don't think he's done wrong—I do think so. And I think if he pulls out of this he'll be more careful in future. But you can see it is n't a time to stand on small scruples. You and I understand each other perfectly. I know you don't care for me, and I'm not trying to make the smallest claim on you. All I want you to do is to help me in this one instance. Of course I know you don't want to take anything from me. But in this case you ought to. You won't be the worst sufferer if this smash-up comes."

"No, that's true," she said harshly. "I'd infinitely rather be poor than live this way—especially now I see what it means. It means stealing, really—why don't you say so?"

"Oh, it's easy for you to judge! You've never troubled about how you were living, have you? You've never wanted to know what it meant! I can tell you it is n't so easy for the men who have to fight for the means to keep women of your class in luxury——"

"They don't have to do it!" cried Dorothy. "You know—you've heard me say—I hate this kind of thing——"

"Yes, you've said it, when you felt the limitations of it. But you've taken it all your life. And most women of your class don't think about it at all, even as much as you've done. They merely take. You know that, and that's what I meant. I'm not criticising you especially, except that I don't think you're competent to judge your father in this matter. It is n't fair to stand on the outside, and merely judge if things go wrong."

"No—you're right about that," said Dorothy faintly.

"Even if he has been wrong, we've got to help him now. Lots of innocent people would suffer if he's forced into bankruptcy. I want to go to him now with word from you that I can back him up. My loss—if it comes to a loss—won't be enough to matter at all to me. I can spare it perfectly well, and, as I said, we may be able to get out without loss. Then when he's on his feet again we can drop the pretense quietly, and nobody'll be hurt. Is it a bargain?"

Dorothy sat rigid, pondering.

"He won't believe you," she said after a few moments. "This morning I told him——"

"I know what you told him," said George.

He drew a long breath, flung his cigar away, got up, and walked the length of the veranda, and came back.

"Now I want to talk to you about that," he said.

CHAPTER XV.

SHE saw that he was making a strong effort at self-control. And he succeeded, for when he spoke it was quietly, though with a deep undertone of bitterness.

"For three years," he said, "I've wooed you, Dorothy. I've loved you devotedly, I've always hoped that some day you would give me the feeling I wanted. Now I know it's hopeless. I know you can have it for another man, but not for me. I won't say what that means to me, and I hope you'll never know, never understand, all it means. To fail—like that—and to know that what you've wanted more than anything in the world you can never have—no, I hope you'll never know it. . . . But I think I could bear it if I knew you were happy, if the man that you preferred to me——"

He stopped, and struggled for a moment, clenching his hands on the arms of his chair.

"I could see, when I saw you with that man!" he cried. "I could see you giving him something—an intense interest—that you never, never gave me! And why, tell me why! You don't know him, you have nothing in common with him, he's out of your world—I don't speak of what he is, almost a menial. There's something unnatural in it, something revolting—and that it should be you, *you!* It is n't decent that you should do a thing like this——"

And now all the bitterness surged up, distorting his face, flushing it with dark anger.

"One hears of such things!" he cried. "Every now and then some silly, neurotic girl makes a scandal and a laughing-stock of herself on account of an infatuation for some—— But that you should have permitted, encouraged—you, with all your pride—— My God, Dorothy!"

Again he sprang up and walked away, struggling for calmness. He came back to say, his voice trembling:

"I did n't mean to reproach you, Dorothy. I know it's because of your ignorance of the world, it's some foolish romantic notion—you've always been protected, sheltered. You don't know what men are like, some of them—how they'll take advantage of ignorance and weakness. This man—he sees you living in a way that means to him that you are rich, and he—he——"

"No, you're mistaken," said Dorothy in a clear, hard voice. "He is n't a fortune-hunter."

"Oh, of course, you think he's perfectly disinterested—of course! But he's made a mistake if he thinks you have n't protectors and that he won't be called to account! After I saw your father and before I came down here, I engaged a detective to look up his record. Your father can easily get him dismissed here. And then he'll have to deal with me."

There was an ominous roll in the last words. George flung himself into his chair as though exhausted. The lines in his face were deepened, his lips were dry and feverish. All his look of physical well-being was gone. Suffering had wrung his face, spiritualized it, made it more vital and significant. Dorothy looked at him, wincing, her heart smitten with pity. For the first time really he moved her, for the first time she felt his appeal. All the trivial things she disliked about him were shorn away—all she saw was his deeply passionate and suffering soul.

"George," she said sadly, "you can't bully him—nor me either. You did n't need the detective—I can tell you all about him. . . . Of course I suppose you could get him dismissed from his employment, but that would n't separate me from him. Nothing can—unless I choose."

George looked at her, setting his jaw.

"No, George; you can't force me—nobody can. But of my own free will——"

A sudden sob broke her voice, and she stopped. George leaned toward her.

"Dorothy! You mean—you might give him up——"

She looked at him, dry-eyed, despairingly.

"Oh, Dorothy, if you only could do that—if you could see for yourself how impossible it is——"

At that word she sprang up suddenly.

"Yes, yes, it is impossible!" she cried, with a wild impulse of despair. "You don't know how impossible it is! *He* does n't care about me, George, *he* does n't want me—after all, after all—he does n't really want me——"

She began to laugh hysterically.

"So you see what a row you've been making about nothing. Don't look so savage—it is n't his fault that he does n't want me——"

She caught hold of the back of a tall chair and hid her face on her arm.

George got up and came toward her.

"Dorothy," he said in a deep, trembling voice, "trust me. . . . Perhaps I have n't given you much reason to-day—but the deepest thing in me is the wish that you should trust me—the wish to be of some good to you. . . . Take me as though I were your brother, Dorothy! Let me stand between you and harm. . . ."

His voice sank, became inaudible. He put his arm round Dorothy and raised her, and she turned to him for a moment, leaning her face against his shoulder, her eyes closed, breathing quickly as in pain.

"My poor Dorothy—if you are unhappy, too——"

She moved away from him gently, and looked at him almost tenderly.

"You are good to me—you are good," she said softly.

"Then, tell me, Dorothy, let me help you——"

"Not now—I must go—I want to be by myself now for awhile. . . . I'm going down to the beach. I'll be back to dinner. You go and lie down now and try to sleep—poor George——"

A quick change showed in his face.

"No," she said hurriedly; "I'm not going to see any one—don't think that. I want to be alone, and think."

"And your father?" he said then, quietly. "I want to telephone him that it's all right. Then I'll go up to-night, and to-morrow will see him clear."

"I can't say no," said Dorothy, after a few moments' intense thought.

"But there are some conditions. First, do you think he can be kept from doing this kind of thing again, from taking such risks?"

"I don't know—but I'll do my best. Naturally, I shall have some power over him, in a way. I might be able to control——"

"If there is n't a fair chance of that, I won't consent," said Dorothy clearly. "And I see that it must n't be left all to you, either. . . . My mother must know about this, and she and I must have something to say about it. . . . We must change our way of living, there must n't be any demands from us that could press on him. . . . Will you help me, then? Do you think we can do this, George?"

"I think we can, Dorothy, if you'll help work it out," he said.

"Of course I shall."

"And you won't let anything else interfere—just now——"

His appeal was hesitating, almost humble; yet now he stood upright, and held himself with new energy, and there was a new light in his face, like a faint gleam of hope, almost of joy.

"But to think of all it will cost you!" she cried. "In money and time and work—to think of your doing this for us!"

"In God's name, what else should I do with myself?" he asked simply.

"George, you're too good to me," she said brokenly. "I have to take so much from you—I can never repay. . . . I have n't deserved anything——"

"Only be right, Dorothy," he urged passionately. "Don't throw yourself away—don't gamble with your life. Think how we all depend on you—we need you——"

"Yes," she said gravely; "I see it."

She freed her hands gently, and went into the hall to get a parasol.

"Go and telephone. . . . I'll be back some time before dinner," she assured him, smiling faintly, and went down the steps and toward the sea.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE heat of the day was broken. A fresh wind was beginning to blow, at first in light gusts, then strongly, straight from the sea. The still water was broken up and darkened, and it began to flash, and farther out to show lines of foam. The tide was coming in.

The beach and the walls were dotted now with people, and more kept coming, well-dressed, quiet-voiced people, and many children with nursemaids. Dorothy, lying on the sand under her parasol, close to the water that kept advancing, breaking in little short waves, felt more solitary than ever in her life before.

The very fact that she was drawn now more than ever into the lives of others, that now she must act with them and for them, intensified the solitude in which she must decide her own problem. No one could help her there. She had to decide how she should use her will and the strength she felt in herself—whether to grasp for herself at something which would perhaps, after all, always elude her, or to turn away and go on. In any case, it could not be submission, mere yielding. She felt a passionate will to live, if not in one way, then in another. If one way was closed to her, she would find another. She would not be beaten down by anything that had happened or could happen to her. There was, for one thing, hard work ahead of her. Circumstances now had made her of definite importance in the life of her family, and she was resolved to keep this position and use it. Certain practical things had to be done. They would now have a money-debt to George Clayborne, and that debt must be paid. As she had said to him, their scale of living-expenses must be cut down—there must be no pressure on her father from that side. He must be bound not to gamble—George would help there. George's help was indispensable, and she would take it and make any return she could.

By now her father knew that he would be saved from ruin. She had got over the shock of the knowledge of the full extent of his weakness. This weakness now moved her to pity and even to a warmer, a more active, affection. She acknowledged the truth of George's reproaches. Yes, she had been stupidly ignorant and careless, but she would make up for it now, she would stand by to help with all her power. . . .

And George. . . . Humbly she acknowledged her debt to him—a debt that perhaps she could never pay. What could she give in return for such devotion? More feeling, certainly, than she had ever had for him before—warm admiration, warm affection, she felt for him now. He was stronger than she had thought him, finer, sweeter. She felt deeply the appeal of his long faithful love of her. The tears came into her eyes now as she thought of it.

He might cease to court her, and be made into a friend. This she pondered, moving back a little as a wave broke almost upon her, and saying to herself with decision:

"Anything can be done, if one makes up one's mind to it."

Even giving up may be an active thing. Having the responsibility of a decision practically involving many lives within her hand, either way it must be active. Fiercely she fought against the idea that in any way she was being forced to give up. That frightful feeling of being swept off her feet, of being drawn and driven by an irresistible power—*that* should not come back upon her. . . .

She began to think about Robertson now—not to feel, for it seemed to her that she was merely a brain, that she could see him dispassionately, with perfect clearness, and understand him and their relation. She justified him perfectly in his attitude toward her, from the start. She knew him the man of no deep passion, of many superficial relationships—rudderless and drifting so far as other human beings were concerned—therefore a danger, a derelict on the highway of the human sea. There was no deep feeling to keep him steady, never would he reach port. He would drift, drift always, before the wind and tides.

All the more dangerous was he because he was not a weak man. No one could take possession of him. He was strong and sufficient for himself, his strength was as real as his charm. He was simple, he was all of a piece, and impregnable. That was his danger to others. He was perfectly well-meaning too, he was straight and honest. There was no guile in him, no meanness, nothing petty, there was even a deep sweetness; but it was a sweetness elemental and impersonal, like that of the wind and the sea—as alluring, and as perilous. . . .

Some such thoughts as these did she think about him. . . .

Never would she regret having known him, wilfully having brought it about. This experience, even if it were now ended, would color her life always. It had been a true instinct that had led her toward him. He charmed her and moved her as no person had ever done, and the emotion did not end with him. He had quickened her life, set it to a faster, a more vital rhythm—nothing could alter that, and nothing could be too much to pay for it.

She felt now that she could let him go, and go on. . . .

And she must let him go. Almost she felt as though she had caged a wild bird for a moment in her hands, and felt its heart beating for liberty against her fingers. This was the truth of him. He would let himself be bound to her if she insisted, but he did not desire it. He did not desire her deeply, he did not need her, he did not believe she needed him.

Perhaps she did not need him. . . . She saw herself, impersonally, a creature destined to experience, in many various forms. She felt the desire for it stirring deep within her, an infinite curiosity, an infinite zest. One could go on and on. . . .

The sea wind blew strong upon her now, and again she moved back before the tide. It was rushing in strongly, the waves breaking higher

and higher, with a sharp impact and a crash of foam. The plane of the sea, from where she lay, was a tumbled mass of dark blue and green and purple, spotted with white. A few sail-boats in the distance, careening sharply, seemed making for harbor. She had put down her parasol and no longer felt the sun. Looking up, after a long reverie, she saw that it was down in the west. Hours had passed. . . .

She turned and looked up the beach, her face grave and expectant. The walk was thronged now with people, gayly dressed women, men in flannels, invalids wheeled along in chairs, babies in their white carriages. She saw him coming, far up, a gleam of scarlet. He came nearer, walking slowly, straight through the crowd. The low sunlight glowed on his bare head goldenly. He had a gray sweater over one shoulder, and he walked with his head bent slightly, as though he were thinking about something, not seeing the people about him. He passed, looking down, not seeing Dorothy. Many people, as always, turned to look after him. She saw these glances—in particular she saw one woman look after him in a way that roused a sudden fierce emotion in her. She too followed him with her eyes. And it seemed to her that he was going away, out of her life, he was going farther and farther away, and he had not seen her. . . .

She threw herself on the sand and hid her face. It was like a great wave sweeping over her, the strength of her passion for him. It was sweeping her away, breaking all her moorings of reason, making everything seem of no account beside this one desire. She could never let him go. . . .

What matter if he did not care as she did? At least, he would be near her, and he had said he did care for her, and he would perhaps love her. . . . And all the practical difficulties could be got through, they could live somehow. . . . As for other people, her life was her own, she could not give it up. . . .

She lay there, digging her fingers into the sand, suffering, in a fierce tumult of feeling. Never could she get from him what she wanted, she knew it, he had not that feeling to give. She saw torment for herself and for him. She must thrust herself upon him—and then would begin the struggle to keep him. That woman's look had shown her that there were things she could not bear. . . .

It was too strong. Once more she felt how much she had yielded, how much she had given herself. She felt with anguish that she could not control this force, that it mastered her and was sweeping her out like a weed on the water, that she was powerless, defenseless, and in danger. . . .

It was a longing that she could not fight against—a longing for his touch, his caress—for the outward semblance, the sign of something that could never be. . . .

She lay there, with the murmur of voices and passing of people about

her, sobbing under her breath. Something cold touched her foot, and she sat up to see that she must give back once more before the incoming tide. She moved back to the shelter of the board-walk, beyond high-water mark. The wind was blowing now in strength and the waves were high. She was chilled, and shivered, but she could not go back yet to the house. She clasped her hands about her knees and sat watching the sea. It was rough now, sombre in color, unfriendly, menacing. The bathers had all left this part of the beach, and the boats had gone. The sea was solitary, rolling without break to the horizon line, vast and dark under the clouding sky.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOME men passed, running toward the Casino, making a clatter on the board-walk over her head. She heard shouting far down the beach, and, looking that way, saw a crowd gathering at the water-line. In a few moments the crowd was dense, and people came running down across the walk to join it. Then she saw them give back confusedly, and a dark mass moved swiftly down across the sand into the water. It was the life-boat from the lower station being run out.

She was on her feet now, watching, with a vague sense of calamity.

The boat shot out into the water, with eight men at the oars and one steering. It tossed up and down in the surf. On the sand the crowd undulated and gesticulated. A hoarse murmur from it was borne toward her on the wind.

She began to walk toward it, at first slowly, then swiftly, her light dress and dishevelled hair blown about her. As she came nearer, the sense of what had happened became definite. Some one was drowning out there. The faces of the people were turned all toward a certain spot far out beyond the life-lines. The boat seemed now merely crawling through the water, making for that spot. The waves were high about it and foaming.

She asked the first person she came to and got an anxious shrill answer.

"Yes, there's a man or two men out there—carried out by the undertow. Two of 'em were swimming 'way out. Perhaps one got in, I don't know—they say a life-guard went after the other——"

She pushed farther into the crowd and asked again and got the same vague reply.

"They say it's a man and a woman—I don't know. The sea's running terribly strong now. I'm afraid they've gone down——"

She heard the word "life-guard" several times. Yes, a life-guard had gone out, without waiting for the boat. A few minutes ago you could see them, out beyond that buoy. Now the waves were so high——

She looked up at the bathing-pavilion, about which the crowd was gathered. At the top of the steps stood the proprietor of the swimming-pool, a stout man in shirt-sleeves, gesticulating solemnly. She made her

way up to him and questioned him sharply. He looked at her vaguely, not recognizing her in his worry.

"I don't know who it is—some stranger, went in from here. Yes, a guard went after him when they gave the alarm—not the reg'lar man from the station here—it was that big fellow from the Casino, Robertson—he just happened to be here, and he did n't lose no time—jumped in the way he was, half-dressed. It's a wonder they would n't make a little better time with that boat."

She shrank against the doorway beside him, staring out over the heads of the crowd. A black, surging mass, with pale blurs for faces, all shouting meaningless things . . . and out there the boat driving through the foam . . . and the wind blowing the salt spray against her face. . . .

Now the boat was turning, making a wide circle . . . circling, circling about. . . .

She grasped fiercely at the stout man's arm.

"What's the matter?" she cried in his ear. "Can't they see them?"

He shook his head helplessly and would not answer.

And the boat turned and turned, moving this way and that, it seemed aimlessly, at a loss. . . .

"But he could n't have gone down!" she cried, shaking that fat, puffy arm furiously. "He's a strong swimmer!"

He twitched away from her.

"I dunno," he said uneasily. "The other feller might've pulled him under. It looks bad."

She fell back against the doorway.

"There comes the other boat!" cried some one.

It was the boat from the Casino, lighter and smaller, with three men in it. And now the two boats took up the search, sweeping in wider circles, crossing and recrossing. They were barely visible now in the gathering darkness. Soon they could not be seen at all, only a tossing light marked the position of each, and the two lights wandered hopelessly. . . .

Now it was quite dark. There were lanterns, little spots of light, in the crowd, and the electric lights along the walk flashed out a blue, hard glare. Dorothy was down in the crowd at the edge of the water. She was there when one of the boats pulled in, a vague shape appearing out of darkness, and the men leaped out of it into the surf and ran it up the beach. A low murmur greeted them, and they were silent. She heard one man near her say:

"They must have gone down at once. . . . The boat's been out over an hour. . . ."

The other boat was still out there. She could see its light dimly. Stumbling along in the wet sand, she followed it. It was going slowly, away, away. . . .

Several times she fell, but always rose again and went on after the light that now was ahead of her, going more swiftly. She began to run. . . .

When she came abreast of the Casino, the boat was already beached, and here, too, people had gathered. She went up to one of the men, who was taking the tackle out of the boat.

"You did n't find him?" she said sharply.

The man shook his head.

"But are you giving up—are you going to leave him like that? . . . I'll pay you anything you want to go out again—go out—stay there all night if necessary—go——"

The man said gently:

"It's no use, lady. We'd have got 'em if they had n't been gone down before we got there. I'd stay out all right if there was any chance; but there ain't."

She began to argue and appeal. Suddenly some one came running up to her.

"Dorothy! I've been everywhere for you! Come, my poor child, come——"

"George," she said faintly, "they say he's drowned."

"I know. Come, Dorothy."

She dropped senseless against his breast.



SCENT OF CLOVER

BY ALICE E. ALLEN

WHEN the days go their ways veiled in soft midsummer haze,
 Scent of clover wafted over from the fields where cattle graze,
 Wakes a riot in the quiet of my heart's accustomed beat,—
 Oh, to follow through the hollow of the hills the river fleet!

Like a song, all day long, tripping glad and free and strong,
 In blithe measure, bent on pleasure, with me unseen feet would throng;
 Love and laughter follow after; whispers thrill me with some dream
 Long since banished, not quite vanished, from some other life, 't would
 seem.

Day far spent, in the scent of the pines I'd pitch my tent,
 Where the murmur—fainter, firmer—of the stream seemed half lament
 For that distant preëxistent life; and far-off stars would glow
 With the tender, softened splendor of dear eyes I used to know!

KIPLING'S CONCEPTION OF INDIA

By an Indian Student

THOSE who in the early nineties hailed Mr. Kipling as a second and "stronger Dickens, going forth conquering and to conquer," are heard no more. The tricks of style, and the note of blatant imperialism, which captured the imagination of the reading public, and elevated him with startling suddenness to the front rank of writers of the day, have somewhat lost their glamour, and with the march of time his work has fallen into a more proper perspective. It would be interesting to inquire into the causes which brought about Kipling's rise to fame, and to speculate upon the verdict which posterity will pronounce upon his works. But I am more immediately concerned with what he wrote about India, the land of his birth and early struggles, and I shall, therefore, confine myself strictly to a criticism of his views of Indian life and character.

It was in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century that the affairs of India began slowly to emerge from the obscurity which surrounded them, and to engage the attention of the British public. Before that, the number of those who possessed even the most elementary knowledge about her, was very small indeed. The stay-at-home Englishman was content to leave the affairs of the empire in the hands of a small band of his countrymen, who, it must be said, managed them on the whole with remarkable success; and so long as the wheels of administration ran smoothly, no one cared to trouble his head about what at best was a very complex problem. All that, as I have stated, is slowly changing, and the Englishman's interest in his Eastern possessions has ceased to be wholly detached or academical. Among the agencies which have contributed to this result, we may justly place the efforts of a long line of Anglo-Indian writers, who have striven, according to their measure, to bring before the minds of their countrymen the glamour and the glory of the East. It may be said without offense that much of what has been written upon the subject, when it has failed to mislead, has but served to amuse. But there has not been wanting work that will abide, and the names of Lyall, Mackay, Birdwood, and Meadows

Taylor, to mention just a few, will always command respect. In the very front rank of these chroniclers of Indian life, stands Rudyard Kipling.

Born at Bombay in 1865, Kipling spent the first years of his childhood in India, which he left at the age of five. He returned when he was still in his teens, to serve on the staff of one of the leading Anglo-Indian journals. His career as a journalist does not seem to have been very successful. But if he did not write leaders that carried consternation into the heart of Simla, or created a storm on the banks of the Hooghly, he certainly kept his eyes wide open, and travelled and saw a good deal. The result is apparent in the works which he gave to the world, which betray a knowledge of the habits and customs of the East, which few of his predecessors or contemporaries can be said to have possessed. The romance and beauty of the land, the strange rites and usages of its people, their ancient philosophy and their proud traditions, their patient toil and their simple lives, all these he has depicted in language by no means conspicuous for purity or refinement, but which by its rugged strength, its quaint turns of speech, and its peculiarly oriental mould, served all the better to bring home to its readers the scenes and persons described. In view of the criticisms which follow, this acknowledgment is the more readily made. However grievously Kipling may have erred when trying to penetrate beneath the surface, his pictures of Indian life breathe something of the spirit of the East. They are not the grotesque and hideous caricatures with which a later generation of writers has sought to amuse an uncritical and unsuspecting public.

How far has Kipling succeeded in entering into the real life of the people, and arriving at a correct appreciation of some of the problems of our Indian Empire? Let me begin with those famous lines which represent Kipling's views on the nature and character of Eastern and Western civilizations, and which have become almost a gospel of faith with the vast majority of those who have paid any thought to the subject.

**East is East, and West is West,
And ne'er the twain shall meet.**

The note struck by these lines suggests that some insuperable barriers divide the East from the West, and that, however intimate a connection between the two civilizations might be formed, an eternal distinction must exist between them. In other words, it is asserted that the West can have no real or permanent influence upon the East, however closely the civilization of the one may be assimilated by the other. The grounds on which this belief is held are partly historical, and partly based on experience and observation. The former I need not discuss; the latter

resolve themselves into two arguments. First, we are told that the number of those Orientals who have acquired Western culture is very small. And, secondly, the class which has adopted the civilization of the West is not Western at heart; that is, that the culture it has acquired is merely on the surface. The conclusion which we therefore are invited to draw is that the influence of the West upon the East can never be real or permanent.

Both these propositions may be briefly controverted. To say that the educated class can never be large enough to control the destiny of the country, proceeds upon an assumption which neither history nor experience warrants. It must not be forgotten, besides, that the really educated classes are always in a minority everywhere, Europe not excepted. Then, with regard to the assertion that the Oriental's culture is merely skin-deep, the underlying idea seems to be that every point of distinction between the two peoples should vanish when the civilization of the one brings its influence to bear upon that of the other. The popular mind would appear to be incapable of striking a middle path. Either Western influence must be *nil*, or it must efface every vestige of distinction. Either India must be made an exact duplicate of England, or India's progress towards Western ideals must be pronounced a rank delusion. To this line of argument, the best answer I can give is a quotation from a series of excellent articles on the subject from the pen of Mr. Edwin Bevan. Says he:

When a system of thought and life passes from one people to another, it is obvious that it does not pass in a single block, to be taken or rejected whole. It is plain that some parts of it are much more easily transmissible than others, and that among the most easily transmissible parts are phrases and catchwords. The transmission of intellectual habit is harder, and that of moral much harder still. Under these conditions, what else could take place except that the more easily transmissible parts should in many quarters outstrip the less transmissible, that there should be all degrees of imperfect assimilation between the fullest apprehension and total unreceptiveness. The fluent and superficial Oriental is a type which exists, and observers who judge things grossly and in the lump, who deal in generalizations about "the Oriental," take him for representative, just as certain unpleasing types of Englishmen are apt to be taken as representative by those who do not love us.

Further down, when dealing specifically with the charge that the Indian's assimilation of Western culture is very superficial, Mr. Bevan remarks:

No one who knows anything of the inconsistencies and fluctuations of human nature could expect that a new form of culture would advance among any people, with no revulsion, with no inner conflict, with no

retrogressions. As if there were no cases in Europe where a man's traditional beliefs subsisted illogically alongside of his acquired intellectual notions! Or, as if a doctrine once professed always in England continued to dominate every moment of a man's life thenceforward without question! But people seem to lose all their common sense and understanding of human nature where the Oriental is concerned.

The conclusion of the matter is that it is foolish to assume that Western civilization can never make headway in the East, merely because the class that has come under its sway is numerically small, and has at times exhibited a tendency to break away from its influences. Customs, traditions, and beliefs which date from hoary antiquity cannot be supplanted within the short space of a century. Nor will their total disappearance—which, however, will never come to pass—be a matter for rejoicing. The West, if it has much to teach, has something to learn. The birthplace of profound philosophies and great religions, the East can still initiate the West into some aspects of the higher life which the materialism of the latter has taught it to overlook. When the contact between the two becomes closer and more intimate, it may be that the Rationalism of the West will be tempered by the Spiritualism of the East, and out of their mutual action and reaction will be evolved a type of civilization higher and nobler than any the world has yet witnessed.

Closely arising out of this topic is that which deals with the supposed inscrutability of the Oriental mind. You will never really understand him, you will be told, if in your thirst for knowledge you attempt to fathom the depths of his nature. He is beyond you. As Kipling in one of his "Departmental Ditties" puts it:

You'll never plumb the Oriental mind.
 And if you did, it is n't worth the toil.
 Think of a sleek French priest in Canada;
 Divide by twenty half-breeds. Multiply
 By twice the Sphinx's silence. There's your East,
 And you're as wise as ever.

People who talk in this vein forget that their ignorance is due not to any difficulty which is inherent in the nature of the subject and is insuperable, but is the result of their inability to enter sympathetically into the feelings of a people whose ways of life and modes of thought are different from their own. You cannot know much of the real mind of a people if you start with the assumption of your own superiority, mental, moral and intellectual, and proceed to dub all that does not fit in with your pet notions of things as worthy merely of pity or ridicule. If you wish to learn, leave your insular prejudices behind. It is always difficult to enter into the thoughts or feelings of those whose

mental structure is different from our own. Do not aggravate that difficulty by want of sympathy, and by a predilection to be led away by the surface view of things. If you inquire in the right spirit, making allowances for differences of environment and upbringing, you will find that very often the Oriental is guided by the same considerations as those which influence the conduct of the men and women of the West. You will also probably find that "the contrast is not merely between peoples of different blood and habitation, but between peoples at different stages of development. Qualities which are ascribed with an unreflecting readiness to the Oriental often turn out on inspection to be not in the least peculiar to the East, but qualities universal among peoples at a more primitive stage. Many of them might have been discovered just as much in medieval Europe. The Crusaders would find it much easier to enter into the feelings of many Oriental peoples to-day than into those of their own descendants in France or Germany."

Turn we now to something in a lighter vein. Let us hear what Kipling has to say of the cold-weather tourist, who rushes through India with a pen and a camera, and goes home and writes a book thereon. He is immortalized in more than one place, notably in those verses which chronicle the doings of "Pagett, M.P." The last verse well expresses the feelings with which the seasoned Anglo-Indian regards the species:

And I laughed as I drove from the station, but the mirth died out on my lips
As I thought of the fools like Pagett who write of their "Eastern trips,"
And the sneers of the travelled idiots who duly misgovern the land,
And I prayed to the Lord to deliver another one into my hand.

When Kipling wrote these lines, the subject had not assumed the importance it subsequently has. The "six weeks' expert," anathematized by Lord Morley, had not yet become the familiar figure which a later generation has cause to remember. But it is a far cry from Kipling's days, and among other manifestations of the growing interest of England in her Indian empire we have now annually a large crop of cold-weather tourists, consumed with a commendable eagerness to enlighten their less fortunate countrymen at home. Strange and startling at times are the workings of their minds, and well may the dweller within our shores pray for deliverance. But while it may be legitimate to indulge in a mild chaff at the expense of itinerant politicians, and to accept their lucubrations with reserve, we cannot too strongly condemn the fashion of regarding their utterance as worthless *solely* because they are the outcome of a not very close first-hand acquaintance. Our author could never forgive them, and he has another hit at them in one of those interesting sketches narrating his travels and entitled "From Sea to Sea." He says at the end of his wanderings in India:

Then came by the person that I most hate—a globe-trotter. He, sitting in my chair, discussed India with the unbridled arrogance of five weeks on a Cook's ticket. He was from England and dropped his manners in the Suez Canal. "I assure you," said he, "that you who live so close to the actual facts of things cannot form dispassionate judgments of their merits. You are too near. Now I——" he waved his hand modestly and left me to fill the gap. I considered him from his new helmet to his deck-shoes, and I perceived that he was but an ordinary man. I thought of India, maligned and silent India, given up to the ill-considered wanderings of such as he, of the land whose people are too busy to reply to the libels upon their life and manners.

All this is very fine, and we are thankful to the poet for his sympathy. But the fact remains that not infrequently more things are visible to the fresh eye than are seen by those whose vision is obscured by disappointments or prejudices; and I would much sooner go for instruction to men like Mr. Ramsay MacDonald than to any number of old stagers who can boast of their thirty or forty years' experiences. Of course, other things being equal—gift of perception and the like—the old resident is certainly a more reliable guide. All that I say is that it is not an all-sufficient argument to advance against a writer that he has been only a few months in the country. Lord Morley, who had never even seen India, seemed to have grasped the problems of the empire with a much surer insight than have hundreds of those who have spent their lifetime in the country.

Among the many and complex problems which constantly confront English statesmen in the governance of the Indian empire, the question of the general poverty of the land stands in the very forefront. Changes in the constitution, and in the rights and privileges of the people of the country, and other like subjects, have often in the past tended to occupy the vision to the exclusion of everything else. But you have ultimately to come back to the question of the Poverty of India as the most vital to the interests of the people. Books have been written upon the subject, and more amazing nonsense has been talked about it than about any other. I was curious to learn whether Kipling had anything to say about it, and I came across his views in a corner of those sketches "From Sea to Sea," to which I have already referred. He discourses on the relative merits of British and Native States' administration, and retails to us a very interesting conversation he had with an "intelligent loafer." This is what the last-named personage told our author, among other entertaining things:

"Why, I'd undertake to raise a hundred million—what am I talking of?—a hundred and fifty million pounds from this country per annum, and it would n't be strained then. One hundred and fifty millions you could raise as easy as paint, if you just made these 'ere Injians

understand that they had to pay an' make no bones about it. It's enough to make a man sick to go in over yonder to — and see what they do. Perfectly sickenin' it is. Borrer money? Why, the country could pay herself an' everything she wants, if she was only made to do it. It's this bloomin' *Garib Admi** swindle that's been going on all these years, that has made fools o' the Guv'ment."

Our author informs us that he dissented from the speaker and the brutal cruelty with which his views were stated, but an unscientific impression nevertheless remained not to be shaken off. He goes on to tell us that one felt that across the border the country was being used and exploited mercilessly, and that "in our territories the feeling is equally strong of wealth 'just round the corner,' as the loafer said, of a people wrapped up in cotton wool and ungetatable." We may take it then that Kipling is inclined to indorse, in part, at least, what the "loafer" said about the wealth of the land. To any one who has made a study of the subject, the theory that there is money enough in the country if only one knew how to get at it, is too ridiculous for words. It is impossible in the space of this article to deal with the question, and I shall leave it where it stands, merely asking those who are inclined to agree with the views set out above to study the conditions under which the people live, their patient toil, their frugal lives, their chronic indebtedness, and their woeful plight when the seasons fail and Famine is at their door. When two-thirds of the entire population live on agriculture, and are dependent upon the caprices of a monsoon which has not infrequently failed in the past, bringing untold calamity on the land, to talk of wealth "just round the corner" is rank nonsense.

Let us hear now what the poet has to say about that much-discussed topic "the white man's burden." In "The City of Dreadful Night" he speaks of the Anglo-Indian's lost heritage :

And we, we have nothing except the few amusements that we painfully build up for ourselves, the dolorous dissipations of gymkhanas where every one knows everybody else, or the chastened intoxication of dances where all engagements are booked, in ink, ten days ahead, and where everybody's antecedents are as patent as his or her method of waltzing. We have been deprived of our inheritance. The men at home are enjoying it all, not knowing how fair and rich it is, and we at the most can only fly westward for a few months, and gorge what, properly speaking, should take seven or eight or ten luxurious years. That is the lost heritage of London; and the knowledge of the forfeiture, wilful or forced, comes to most men at times and seasons, and they get cross.

Elsewhere, the poet sings, in a less restrained manner, of the woes of his countrymen exiled in the East. The subject is delicate, and I

* Poor man.

shall handle it here very briefly. Without seeking to minimize the disadvantages and miseries of an exile from home, without attempting to ignore the splendid and devoted service which so many Englishmen have given to this country since the British empire laid its foundations in the land, I ask if it be always the clarion call of duty, and never the promptings of self-interest, that has drawn to India generations of English men and women. Has India done nothing for England that a certain section of Englishmen should perpetually prate of the "white man's burden"? India maintains an army of 75,000 white men upon whom England can draw whenever and wherever her interests are at stake. It was this very army that saved Britain's honor in South Africa, being the first to reach the field of operations. Again, India is the largest customer of Great Britain, a fact which is sometimes overlooked. In these days of keen commercial rivalry, the value of our markets to the old country can scarcely be overrated. Besides this, India offers careers such as are not possible anywhere else. Power such as many European princes might envy, and salaries often greater than what Cabinet Ministers might draw, and much else besides, are within the grasp of every youth that comes out to this country to serve his King. Is that little? Then, again, think of the vast wealth that has flowed to England from India's shores since Clive laid the foundations of British power in the East. To students of Indian politics, the "drain" theory is familiar. Personally, I do not hold fast by it "in toto." But, apart from the sum which India pays annually by way of interest on loans for productive works, consider the wealth in the shape of pensions, etc., which goes out of the country every year, and for which there is no return to her of any kind whatever. Of course, this is an evil inseparable from a foreign dominion, but there it stands. The money that is earned in this country by the Englishman—by the sweat of his brow, be it admitted—is spent in England in retirement, and is lost to this country forever. As I have said, all this is inevitable, and India in her turn has also much to be grateful for; but then why talk of the "burden"? Do we not offer you recompense enough for the sorrows and miseries of exile from health and home? It is time these facts were recognized, and the absurd cry of the "white man's burden" consigned to its proper place among the shibboleths and catch-words which pass current in our day for political wisdom.

There are many other topics of interest scattered throughout Kipling's works, but I have not space to deal with them all. The Native States come in occasionally for a flattering notice, and comparisons with British administration are drawn which ought to interest the Indian princes. In one place we are told that "a year spent among the Native States ought to send a man back to the Decencies and the Law Courts and the Rights of the Subject with a supreme contempt for those who

rave about the oppressions of our brutal bureaucracy." The Native States have certainly sinned grievously in the past, when the rulers were not enlightened and political agents not so masterful as they are nowadays; but, considering the way they have been generally treated by travellers and writers, we offer them our sympathy. The Native Press, too, may be consoled with, for it has had to live down much calumny and abuse. Our author does not spare it either. Talking of Rajputana, he observes:

A "free press" is not allowed, and this the native journalist knows. With good management he can, keeping under the shadow of our flag, raise two hundred rupees from a big man here, and five hundred from a rich man there, but he does not establish himself across the Border. To one who has reason to hold a stubborn disbelief in even the elementary morality of the native press, this bashfulness and lack of enterprise is amusing.

A little gently, O cocksure Rudyard! The native press has lived down calumnies worse than thine, and flourishes like the green bay-tree. To come down to less weighty topics, it is amusing to read that kissing is generally not known in India! Equally interesting is the statement—which, though meant as a joke, has some truth in it, to be sure—that the Indian Civil Service is a Service "that ought to be able to command the Channel Fleet or set a leg at twenty minutes' notice"! But regretfully I must take leave of these and many other statements, found scattered throughout the Indian works, dealing with the social and political life of the country. This I will add, that if Kipling were to see the India of to-day, he would probably sing to a different tune.

I have attempted in this short sketch to show how accurate or otherwise are some of Kipling's conceptions of the land and its people. Divorced from all matter of a controversial nature, his pictures of Indian life betray an intimate acquaintance with the subject, and charm one by their freshness and originality. Whether he deals with the life of the gods who dwell on the Olympic heights of Simla, or the humble existence of the toiler in the plains and the mountains, the touch is there which brings home to the reader the magic and mystery of the East. We feel somehow that India is truly a land of romance, a great and wonderful land, where side by side the highest and lowest types of civilization may be found, and which, under the Englishman's firm and beneficent sway, is slowly attaining to a greatness far transcending any her stormy history has witnessed.



THE CHILD THAT WAS TAKEN TO RAISE

By Elsie Singmaster

Author of "Their Great Inheritance," etc.

"OH, my soul! oh, my soul! oh, my soul!"

Like a crazy person—Millerstown would have said "like a schpook"—poor Lizie Schaup roamed through her mistress's house, up and down the steps, from the stiff parlor out to the spotless kitchen, then down the smoothly scrubbed board-walk to the barn, then out to the gate. She knew every crack in every board in the house, she had set out with her own hands every plant in the garden, she had washed and ironed every sheet and towel, washed and dried every dish, and never from the day that she came from the poorhouse at sixteen until the present moment when she was sixty had she broken even a tumbler. She had helped to nurse "him," her mistress's husband, in his last illness, she had prepared the bodies of her mistress's children for burial, she had been at once a daughter, a sister, and a servant.

"Lizie!"

Some one was calling her sharply; her back straightened as though jerked at the end of a string, her chin set itself. She saw Sarah Knerr peering between the lilac bushes.

"Where did she go?" asked Sarah Knerr.

Poor Lizie's back grew even straighter.

"She went off."

"Is it so that she went to the station to fetch the lawyer? Is it so that she will take a child to raise? Is it so that it will be a Diller?"

Poor Lizie's head went back another inch. It was all true, alas, alas! But Sarah Knerr's curiosity need not be gratified yet. Lizie answered shrilly:

"She does not have me to tell her business to strangers."

Sarah Knerr laughed. She had been born in the next house, she had known Lizie and her mistress all her life.

"You'll get over your ugliness when the Dillers come in, Lizie Schaup."

"Since when are the Dillers coming in?"

"Well, if it is n't the Dillers, it will be the Wagners or the Kolbs

or the Prutzmans—it has to be one of those four that is adopted. They are her only near relatives. I guess——”

Sarah Knerr's guesses were wasted on the air. Poor Lizie had vanished. She went into the stiff, grand parlor and sat down, rocking her body back and forth in her misery. She was a little, thin woman; sometimes, in moments of fanatic passion for cleanliness, when, scrub-brush in hand, she scoured the pavement or the outside of the house, she looked wild. Now, desperate, frightened, she might have been thought mad.

“The Dillers or the Wagners or the Kolbs or the Prutzmans,” she repeated aloud. “Swully Diller is as thin as a thorn—they are always ugly when they are so thin. John Wagner is fat as a pig and dull as an ox, and he would never wipe his shoes while the world stands. The Prutzmans—they are all big-feeling, and the Kolbs, they are all mean. *Ach, Elend, Elend!* why does she do it, then?”

Seeing that one shade hung unevenly, poor Lizie rose and rolled it up and down, trying to straighten it. Finally the cord slipped from her hand, the curtain snapped to the top of the window and stayed there. Each one of the four nieces of Lizie's mistress would see it when she came in. Fat Emmeline Diller would make a “tchk” with her tongue and teeth, loud-voiced Mary Wagner would scornfully direct her husband's attention to it, tall, thin Dillie Prutzman would order poor Lizie to adjust it.

“You are not my boss *yet!*” poor Lizie would answer wildly.

Already they were coming up the street, dressed in their best, stared at by the neighbors. There were four nieces, four stupid nephews-in-law, four grandnephews, all bursting with curiosity and anxiety and fear. “Aunt Mena” was about to adopt a son to take the place of the children who had died, to be given her name, to inherit her wealth, almost the greatest in Millerstown. Emmeline Diller had put the notion into her head, first by sly hints, then by open suggestion, finally by frank coaxing. “Swully”—the boy's name was really Walter; Millerstown has barbarous nicknames—Swully was the oldest of eight children, he was smart, he ought to have an education, which she and her husband could not give him. He might even make a preacher—think how fine it would be to have a preacher in the family! She mentioned even his thinness as an argument, as though she and her husband could not feed him.

Aunt Mena had made her crazy with delight. She had agreed entirely. It was true that she had no direct heir to inherit her money. It was true that she was growing old. It was true that she had recently had a long sickness, and that she might “go off” suddenly. It would be a splendid thing to take a boy to raise.

But Emmeline's happiness was short-lived. She discovered that John Wagner and Israel Kolb and Frankie Prutzman had each been offered

by his mother. She said then to Aunt Mena that it would be much better to divide her money among her four nieces. "Like the china set," she said.

A queer glitter had come into Aunt Mena's eyes.

"China sets are different," she had said. "You can't divide a house in pieces, and you can't divide a lot when the house stands in the middle. The thing is to take a child to raise."

Poor Lizie heard the creak of the gate. The nieces were at hand. She rushed wildly to the kitchen, that loved, spotless home of her happiness, and looked about. It would never be the same, never, never. The adopted son was to come there to live; whether Diller, Wagner, Prutzman, or Kolb, he would be intolerable. The house would never again be clean or quiet. Besides, they might drive her away, and she had nowhere to go. But there was no time now to think of that.

She heard their footsteps on the porch. She flung out her arms, then crazily she stooped and kissed the handle of the tea-kettle. She had grown to believe that all these things were hers.

She reached the front door in time to open it to her mistress's guests. They were all solemn, all important; since the last Weimer funeral, none of them had come to the front door. This was a great occasion. Emmeline Diller did not glance at Lizie as she stood in her blue calico dress and her white apron against the wall, Lizzie Kolb said, "Well," Dillie Prutzman smiled with haughty, twisted mouth. Swully attempted to step on Lizie's foot as he passed. John Wagner asked whether there were doughnuts to be had. She was no more to any of them than a piece of furniture. Two of the nieces had decided to keep her after they moved in—at least, as long as she could work. The other two planned to dismiss her at once.

Against each side of the parlor wall, Lizie had set three chairs, according to her mistress's directions. The Prutzmans sat to the north, the Wagners to the south, the Dillers and Kolbs to east and west. In the centre of the room stood a marble-topped table, on it were pens and paper, beside it two chairs, one for Aunt Mena, one for the lawyer who was coming from town. Aunt Mena was the most formal and exacting person in Millerstown, and she was now planning to bring riot into her house.

There was no place for poor Lizie to sit, but she did not go. She stood in the doorway, a hand on each jamb, a poor Samson in the midst of the Philistines.

The nieces paid no heed to her, their eyes were glued to the corner cupboard, where, in unbroken perfection, stood Aunt Mena's Wedgwood set. Not a piece was nicked, not one missing from the dozens of plates and cups and saucers. There were four platters, one with a deep gravy ditch, there was a great, broad-bodied tea-pot, with its attendant cream

pitcher and sugar bowl, perfect in form, exquisite in their clear white and blue. The set was Aunt Mena's most valuable personal possession, it was perhaps the most valuable possession in Millerstown. It was to be divided among the four women who eyed it so hungrily, and it was to go to their children after them. Not a piece was even to be given away. Aunt Mena had great family pride—it was that which made her adoption of a son so certain. In the eyes of each niece, her own son was a god among his cousins.

"And Aunt Mena," said Mary Wagner, giving complacent expression to part of her thoughts—"Aunt Mena will see what is best. She is pretty smart yet."

Aunt Mena might still be smart, but she was no longer either young or well. The young lawyer from the county seat put a supporting hand under her elbow as they came together into the room. Poor Lizzie, her eyes fixed watchfully and in terror and foreboding upon the nieces, did not hear them until the lawyer asked her to let them pass. Then she stepped back with a gasp.

Old Aunt Mena was white and bent, with bright eyes and a set mouth. She bore bravely the burden of her years and her many sorrows. She walked past poor Lizzie without looking at her, and the lawyer followed her. His expression was non-committal. He looked at them all and bowed, even to the servant standing in the doorway. It is probable that he had never had such a case before. He put old Aunt Mena into her chair with an air of courteous respect which made the men in the room gape at him and the boys snicker and the women sit up a little straighter in their chairs. Then he sat down beside her.

He took no papers from his pocket, he simply sat still, waiting for Aunt Mena to begin. Emmeline Diller thought she would help out the situation: she presented to the lawyer her husband and her son. Mrs. Wagner and Mrs. Prutzman and Mrs. Kolb also introduced their husbands and sons. The men said stiffly, "Pleased to meet you," the boys squirmed in their chairs. They all began to be a little frightened.

Then Aunt Mena began to speak. Her voice, tremulous at first, strengthened as she went on.

"I was eighty years old this March," she began. "I have not so many years to live any more."

"Ach, Aunty!" murmured Mrs. Diller pityingly.

"You must n't talk that way, Aunty," whimpered Mrs. Kolb.

Aunt Mena paid no heed.

"My man left me well off, and somebody must have all these things. There is this house and the lot and the barn and the furniture and the china set and the money in the bank. It is all in all worth about thirty thousand dollars."

The nieces were almost paralyzed.

"What!" cried Mrs. Diller.

"Ach, Aunty!" Mrs. Prutzman's delighted exclamation was almost a squeal.

"Now, this must be given to somebody. Emmeline and Lizzie and Mary and Dillie each think I should take a child to raise and give him my name, so that the name shall last a while yet. That is what I think I will do. I have picked out already the one for whom I will do this. It is all to be done right, and each one is to know before I die where she stands, so that there shall be no fighting. Everything shall be fixed. He"—she nodded toward the young lawyer—"he will see that everything is right. Emmeline, do you believe that I am yet in my right mind?"

Emmeline laughed in sudden, blessed surety.

"Of course you are, Aunty!"

Then Emmeline's heart sank. One by one her cousins were similarly questioned and responded as heartily. Then Aunt Mena spoke again, this time a little more sharply:

"It was a time when you did not think so, any of you."

The nieces flushed scarlet. Six months ago Aunt Mena had been ill and they had crowded jealously to her bedside. They had thought that she was going to die, they had thought for two days that she would never rouse from the unconscious state in which she lay. And they had talked and talked and talked, watching with her at night. There was nothing that they did not say. It was before the scheme of adoption had entered the head of any of them; they had divided her property among them. Then, suddenly, they had realized that Aunt Mena's eyes were open, that she was awake. But she had heard nothing—they were sure that she had heard nothing. Only now they began to be a little frightened.

"You talked when I was sick," said Aunt Mena. "You said that a man had come while I was sick and had offered six hundred dollars for the china set. You promised together to sell it to him after I was dead. Each one was to sell her share."

"It was n't me, it——" began Emmeline Diller.

"I said all along——" interrupted Mary Wagner.

"We did n't——" thrust in Lizzie Kolb.

Aunt Mena raised a frail hand.

"You need n't say what you said or what you did n't say. I heard what you said. I saw that man afterwards. I hunted him up. It is all fixed. A museum is to have the china set. He was buying it for a museum. I am going to give it to the museum. The museum does not need to pay a cent for it. It will all be kept together. It will have a name over it in large letters, 'Gift of Mena Weimer, Millerstown.'"

"To will it out of the family!" cried Lizzie Kolb.

"Aunt Mena!" protested Mary Wagner.

"But you promised it to us!" declared Dillie Prutzman.

Aunt Mena wasted no time in answering argument with fact. Afterwards, they would have time to discover the ridiculousness of their protests.

The women's eyes sought one another in dismay and anger. Their husbands stared helplessly at the floor, their sons continued the series of insane grimaces which they were making at one another after the manner of their kind. Swully Diller stretched his long legs in a vain effort to reach poor Lizzie's foot. Lizzie still stood in the doorway. She had resumed her Samson-like attitude, her eyes were upon her frail, stubborn mistress whom she loved.

Suddenly Aunt Mena turned and looked at her.

"Do you think I am in my right mind, Lizzie?" she asked.

Lizzie's hands loosened their clasp of the door-frame and clutched each other.

"Ach, Mena!" she cried. There are few titles in Millerstown, even between maid and mistress. "Ach, Mena! I—I guess so, Mena." Then poor Lizzie hesitated. There had always been perfect openness between them. "I—I am not sure, Mena!"

The nieces shrieked out their horror and disapproval.

"You'd better clear out, Lizzie Schaup," cried Emmeline.

"*You are not sure, Lizzie?*" repeated Aunt Mena.

"I thought you were, Mena," wailed poor Lizzie. "Indeed, I thought you were. But now I do not know. Don't have any Swully or any Israel Kolb come in till you are dead, Mena. Let them come in then, Mena, if you must, but not now. Mena——" Lizzie took a step forward, then stepped back again and seized the door-frame. "I must talk, Mena. You took me from the poorhouse and you gave me a home, but I must talk. Johnny Wagner, he will eat you out of house and home, Mena, and he will never wipe his shoes. And Israel will bring his dog, and Frankie says nothing all the time but 'Shut up' and 'Hold your mouth' and worse things, and whichever comes will bring his mom and his pop and all his folks and——"

There were stirrings of rage, mutterings, then a chorus of interruptions. Dillie Prutzman's voice rose to a shriek:

"Lizzie Schaup, you lie, you——"

The young lawyer raised his hand.

"Mrs. Weimer asked her to speak," he said sharply. "Go on, Lizzie."

Lizzie did not go on because he bade her, but because she could not help herself. She would have spoken though their voices had drowned hers utterly, though they had attacked her bodily. She had never said her whole mind about them in all her life; the accumulation of speech threatened to burst her.

"They sit up front in the church!" she cried. "They bake ten kinds of fine cakes for the Sunday School picnic, and they have the preacher to sit at their table, Mena. But they went through all the bureau-drawers when you were sick, Mena, they know everything that is in your house. They looked for papers, Mena, they——"

Again the tide of feminine speech swelled furiously. The wild mob at Versailles could have been no more clamorous.

"It is a lie!"

"She is crazy!"

"It is not true!"

"I was awake when you thought I was asleep," reminded Aunt Mena grimly.

Poor Lizie put up her arm as though to shelter herself from blows. She was still brave, still defiant.

"Do not let them come in, Mena," she wailed. "Swully steps on my feet now; he will step on yours till everything is at an end."

The lawyer looked at Aunt Mena, then he laid his hand on her slender arm. It seemed merely a warning gesture. In reality, his fingers pressed the vein in her wrist. Its pulse beat dangerously.

"I'd tell them, Mrs. Weimer," he said gently. "No one will gain anything by putting it off."

Aunt Mena too felt the wild racing of her heart.

"All right," she said slowly. "Then you must go quietly home and do your talking there. Half of my money will go to the church and the orphan asylum. The china set goes as I have said. The other half of the money will come some day to you four. But as long as my child that I take is living, nobody will get anything."

"Your child!" repeated the women, still confused, still furious, but suddenly restored to hope.

"Yes," said Aunt Mena; "I have already taken a child to raise. It is all fixed. The papers are already made out, and it is fixed so nobody can bother my child." Then, cutting the air like the arrows of the returned Ulysses, a single, shrill, excited sentence smote them, nieces and nephews and grandnephews alike: "The child I have taken is Lizie Schaup."



TWILIGHT

BY SARA TEASDALE

THE stately tragedy of dusk
 Drew to its perfect close:
 The virginal white evening star
 Sank, and the red moon rose.

THE MAKINGS OF A HUSBAND

By Edwin Marange

“POLLY!”—it was the voice of Mr. Gambel, from his evening seat on the porch. “Ef here ain’t thet long-legged Jim Sprouse comin’ agin!”

Mrs. Gambel came to the door, and they both looked into the growing dusk. Behind the long row of chinquapins that bordered the snake fence a slouch hat was rhythmically rising and falling in its progress toward the house.

“Nothin’ surprisin’ about thet, Dad;” and Mr. Gambel felt a hand stealing through his tousled gray hair. “I reckon you ain’t never tuk notice thet ef you hev m’lasses about, flies ’ll come to it?”

“One lass seems enough fer this immejit neighborhood, the way she keeps the flies a-buzzin’ around,” chuckled Mr. Gambel. “Whar’s she now?”

“Hus-sh! A-peekin’ out the winder in the loft.”

Mr. Gambel’s snort was muted by his wife’s quick hand.

“What’s pesterin’ me is this pertic’lar fly,” he resumed. “He’s gittin’ so frequent an’ plentiful!”

“Jim ain’t nowise bad.”

“He hain’t distinguished himself in wickedness—ner anything else, fer’s I know, excep’ sparking our Virgy. Drat the fellow; hit’s the only thing I ever knowed him to be industr’ous about. This makes the third evenin’ this week, Polly.” A vexed look of doubt crept over the old man’s face as he watched the offending hat, still bobbing up and down behind the chinquapins. “Virgy’s encouragin’ him, too,” he added testily. “She’s got nigh shet of all the rest. What ye s’pose she sees in thet young straddle-legs, anyhow?”

“The makin’s of a husband, same’s I opined I saw in Jared Gambel back in the old Haw Crik days. She’s come by her hankerin’ fer a hard job natchelly.”

By way of return, Jared Gambel made a wry face and a clumsy effort to capture the little, wrinkled brown hand which was pinching his ear. He failed, as he often had, from “Haw Creek days.” In a minute the hand came back, as if repentant, and slipped into his. This was the tableau the house-cat, coming suddenly around the corner, gazed upon

with yellow, dilated eyes. Romance not being as much in her line as table scraps, she effaced herself into the savory interior of the kitchen.

"As fer a hard job," pursued Mr. Gambel, returning from a mental trip to Haw Creek, "mebbe you think I did n't hev any? How about Polly Harkness refusin' to say 'yes' or 'no,' from spring to hog-killin' time, an' makin' believe the while she liked two or three other galoots as well? An' after that war settled, thar was your dad's onreasonable spite agin me which——"

"Hus-sh!" Mrs. Polly tilted her chin toward the loft window. At this moment the gate-bar clicked, whereupon Polly disappeared as had the cat.

"'Evenin', Jim. Hev a seat."

Virgy's sharp-set ears could extract no augury from her father's tone, but she caught the rattle of the chair he kicked toward the visitor, and its creaking protest at Jim's weight. She made no motion to descend, but stood expectantly. It was dusky in her retreat—a herb-perfumed storage place for domestic utensils and Mrs. Gambel's pickles and preserves. The window—a square opening through the logs, its batten shutter upheld by a crooked stick—looked into the antlers of a huge chestnut. Through the frost-thinned foliage the stars sparkled, and the moon's crescent hung low to the darkling bulk of the Blue Ridge. A flock of turkeys—Jim had given Virgy the eggs the previous spring—were grouped, uncouth shapes, along the limbs. Some, disturbed by the clatter below, stretched out long, inquisitive necks, peeping and muttering their suspicions.

The two men gossiped tediously. Two or three women can talk at the same time and quite understand each other. Virgy remembered that men were given to the poky habit of speaking one at a time, and not being in a hurry about that. She sighed, and listened to her mother pattering about, fulfilling the last domestic tasks. She could hear her covering the milk-crocks safe from the cat, brushing the hearth with a bunch of pine "tags," and banking the fire for the night. A little later the bed-cords would creak, announcing her retirement to the four-poster. . . . Would that pesky Jim never get to the point? She made a pantomimic little shove in the dark, as at something inert.

"Virgy?"

It was her mother at the head of the stairs.

The detected eavesdropper turned a confused face.

"Yes, Ma!"

"Come here, Honey."

Something there was unwontedly tender and caressing in the utterance of the familiar words. They seemed to reach across the room and pull Virgy to her mother's arms.

"Oh, Mommie!"

The two women stood thus clasped a little space.

"I s'picioned you'd be gittin' worried about matters, not knowin' your daddy like I do. So I kem up. Men, young or old, is jes' natchel blunder-bodies—we-uns hev to put up with them, like the Lord does. They mean well, even when they's mussin' up things worst possible. . . . Mebbe you'll hev to shed a few tears like your mother afore ye, but hit'll end in smiles, Honey."

"What's Dad spited agin Jim fer, Mommie?"

"He ain't spited. Hit's jes' the man-way of doin' things. Ef they git ideas in their heads, you jes' gotter wait till they work 'em out. Reckon I've said enough. Good-night, Honey!"

Half-way down the ladder-stairs she paused and looked up.

"Don't let yourself git to doubtin' Jim, Virgy. He ain't edzactly like most fellers, but he's sound at the core."

Wondering at such an uncalled-for admonition, Virgy stood listening to her mother's retreating footfalls till they were lost in the depths below. Her reverie was broken in upon by her father's voice rising in assertive asperity.

"Is Dad jawin' him, I wonder?" She reached the window in time to catch, "An' I don't give a chewfer for the whole outfit of yer love-feelin's. Them thar's too common to mention."

Jim's even-toned answer was too low to be heard.

"Heh? . . . Well, mebbe I did. Whut of it? I hed somethin' to offer her mother beyont a passel of soft feelin's. I hed land, a cabin, an' more yit—a habit o' diggin' in the cornfields 'stid of 'sang-diggin' an' skunk-trappin', like you-all does. . . . Whut's thet? . . . You don't? Not even *thet* industr'ous!"

Mr. Gambel's laugh was as caustic as his words. The listener above could not detect that it raised so much as a ripple on Jim's imperturbability. Still, he must have defended himself, for the old man came back at him: "Shucks! Then you must work o' nights, fer I nowise see you at it daytime! Thar's no use talkin', Jim. . . . Eh? . . . No, I ain't givin' no time-options on Virgy. She's fer the feller thet kin properly pervide fer her, whenever he may chanct along."

So, so! Virgy beat a tattoo on the puncheon floor with one vindictive little foot.

"I've said my say"—Mr. Gambel's voice came up in dogmatic finality—"an' kivered the subject. Now, I don't want ter be oncivil, but hit's my bed-time, Jim."

There were scraping of chair-legs and sounds of rising. . . . A wild insurgence of rebellion against her father's domination rose in Virgy's breast. She stiffened with "Gambel spunk"; her eyes snapped. On this hot mood Jim's cheerfully uttered "Good-night, Mr. Gambel!" as his bull-hide boots went crunching down the gritty path, fell with a chill chagrin. Supinely yielding to her father like that? Winning no con-

ditions, no shadow of a promise, yet marching off in good spirits, as if quite satisfied with affairs—was that all he cared? Her clenched little fists relaxed. She leaned a listless weight against the logs, slowly and bitterly adjusting herself to this new version of her lover. She was charged with quick courage herself; how could a man be a man and be less so? It looked as though his love were of a very tame order. Even as she discussed this with her heart, Jim's flute-like, careless whistle rose far down the chinquapins, where a pair of elastic legs were carrying him home under the blinking stars.

With a dry sob, the girl turned and felt her way to the stair-landing. At sight of it, a dilatory conscience recalled her mother's warning. That had slipped her in the tumult of her emotions. Chin in hand, she sat on the top step and thought out the matter from this fresh angle.

"I reckon Mommie knows men a heap better 'n I do. She's had a lot of experience with 'em—'cordin' to Dad, any way. . . . I 'lowed nobody could teach me anything about Jim. . . . Mommie seemed to jes' know ahead I was goin' to feel an' think this-a-way; how could she tell, I wonder? Anyhow, she's sure to be right, and I'll do what she says." Comforted with this excellent decision, she went to bed.

In the meantime, Mr. Gambel was zestfully rehearsing the late interview to his wife.

"Jim's bodaciously thick-skinned, but I reckon I pricked him to-night," chuckled the father. "Now we'll see if anything happens."

"You'll like es not see somepin' happen you ain't expectin'," was Polly's cryptic remark—one which her husband did not deem sufficiently explicit to discuss.

At noon the next day, Mr. Gambel was enjoying the solace of his corn-cob pipe in his usual seat, when the sound of an axe rang out musically from the upper slope of his farmstead. It was a heavily wooded tract, dear to his eyes. He cocked his ears in the early stirrings of ire.

"Drat it!" he ejaculated, "somebody's choppin' the bee-tree in my woods!" This remark brought Virgy and her mother to the door in prompt inquiry. The group listened with eyes fixed on the timber.

"I don't 'low thet's the bee-tree," doubted Mrs. Gambel. "The choppin' don't seem fer 'nuff to the left fer thet."

Virgy agreed.

"Don't care; hit's axe-cuttin' goin' on, anyways," snapped her father. For some time they listened to the cadence of the steel blade and its far-flung echoes.

"Daddy," exclaimed Virgy presently, extending an excited finger, "ain't the top of the tall poplar nigh the spring a-shakin'?"

"B'lieve hit is," slowly assented Mr. Gambel.

"It sure is. . . . Oh! See, hit's fallin'!"

The straight shaft, executing a graceful arc, swept its plumed top

to the earth in last obeisance. The shock of its death-throe sent a shudder through the rapt noon air. Mr. Gambel hopped to his feet in wrath.

"Gawnamighty! Did ye ever see the like? Ef I don't make thet piratin' skunk pay up fer thet! Whar's my hat?"—and with his hickory cane thumping the ground, Gambel was soon lost to sight among the brush. Virgy's heat at the despoiler was quickly merged in terror for her father as she thus saw him depart in the lust of battle. She could not account for her mother's calmness.

"Oh, Ma, ain't you feared Daddy'll git hurted?"

"No, Child, I ain't much afeared." Searching her mother's face, Virgy saw there only a look of whimsical perplexity. Still wearing this baffled, amused expression, the latter returned to her dish-washing.

An hour later Mr. Gambel's return brought both women to the door with expectant eyes.

"Oh, hit was Jim Sprouse," he announced, and, without waiting for further inquisition, abruptly turned off to the barn.

"Jim! *Jim?*" cried Virgy in consternation, appealing to her mother. But the latter only smiled inscrutably. Virgy followed her indoors, mentally groping for some key to the behavior of these people.

"What makes Dad act so queer, Ma?" she asked impetuously.

"He's het up, thet's all. Don't mind it, Virgy."

"But he didn't give us no satisfaction," she persisted.

"And he won't—if you pester him."

"What-all's made Jim ac' this-a-way?" persevered Virgy, shifting her ground.

"I don't know a mite more about it than you do, Child."

"But you s'pect something?"

"Well, s'pose you do some s'pectin' for your own self," and with a tantalizing smile Mrs. Gambel betook herself to the spring, leaving Virgy to struggle alone with this highly complicated situation in her affairs.

All afternoon long the axe made melody on the mountain-side, while Virgy's thoughts made perturbed echo. And all afternoon long the subject was embarrassingly ignored in the home. But inadvertently that evening Mr. Gambel committed the indiscretion of speaking to himself aloud. "Drat the feller!" he exclaimed. "I b'lieve he has a head as long as his laigs!"

"What'd ye say, Jared?" called Polly, from within.

"Nawthin'. The dawg here ketched a yaller hornet, thinkin' hit was a fly! Thet's all." After which allegory Mr. Gambel chuckled and lapsed again into narcotic silence.

For an hour after retiring-time that night the murmur of voices reached Virgy through the log partition—a sure symptom that domestic counsel was in progress in the four-poster. She fell asleep hoping

that—as an outcome of this nocturnal confab—the next day would bring enlightenment.

But in this she met with fresh disappointment. Nothing was volunteered. She tried to draw her mother out, but the latter was obviously under some pact of silence; she shook her head to all queries. Plainly, the edict had gone forth that the subject was taboo. What a mysterious, exasperating tangle it all was! Jim's behavior was outrageous (but she secretly liked its audacity), and her father's as unaccountable; her mother's sphinx-like attitude she recognized as necessary in the politic game of the home, but resented it in her heart none the less.

In the days that followed, Mr. Gambel alternated between an irritable grouchiness and a certain grim humor, keeping an eye of disfavor on the multiplying gaps in the forested slope, but taking no steps to stop the vandalism. Morning by morning, the challenge of Jim's axe, flung out on the crisp, early air, rang into their ears as they sat at breakfast, bringing an element of restraint over the coffee and pone. The tension, growing with Virgy, reached its climax when one day she spied the walls of a log cabin rising trimly above its wild surroundings. That day she slipped the parental leash, and, like a wild creature, threaded the brush tangle till she stood in the clearing face to face with her astonished and delighted lover.

“No, Jim, you-all stand right thar with this log betwixt us till you give account of yourself!”

“But, Virgy, I'm plumb hongry to tetch you—jest fer a second!”

“No, you won't tetch me no ways till I've foun' out a thing or two. Who air this house fer?—that's the fust.”

“Hit's fer you.”

“How come you buildin' hit on Dad's land, then?”

“It hain't yore dad's; hit's mine—or your'n.”

“Gloryful-gracious, hev you an' everybody done gone crazy?”

Jim laughed gleefully.

“Sit down on the log, Virgy, an' I'll make everything plain.”

Jim, it appeared, had long entertained suspicions that this wooded piece was a part of a “gore,” and consequently Government land. Carrying chain for a survey party two years before, he had had this suspicion confirmed, and, anticipating their action, he filed claim upon it. He had since completed its purchase.

“I did n't narywise do hit to rob yore dad, Virgy; I done hit to save him, an' I hed to ac' quick. Then when he begun to git survigrous agin me, I'lowed I'd give it to you instid.”

The mollified Virgy saw nothing to object to in the morals of this procedure. As a consequence, he was allowed to “tetch” her for a moment.

“Did Dad know about this yere ‘gore’ all the while?”

"He s'picioned; but he always held that the 'tomahawk claim' he'd bought kivered it. But that war a mistake; the law don't take account o' sich claims where thar's no record of 'em."

Virgy's vision took in the cosy log cabin, so full of promise of domestic content.

"Yore dad is mortal sot agin me, ain't he?"

Virgy nodded.

"Say, Virgy, let's light out an' git married!"

She considered this brilliant proposal with expanded eyes.

"How'd we live after?"

Jim's india-rubber visage stretched at this echo of her father's worldly prudence.

"I might dig 'sang an' trap skunks," he offered, peering out at her from beneath his hat-brim. Virgy was covered with confusion, and by way of escape slapped him.

Order restored, he took up seriously the gage she had offered.

"I hev a horse an' waggin' of my own," he began in his deliberate way, "an'——"

"Why, Jim!"

"Shore I hev, an' some money to git outfittin', besides a way o' makin' more. Then——"

"Why did n't you-all tell Dad this?"

"Because, Virgy, things hes got to be brought home to yore Dad some other way than by tellin' him."

That had not dawned upon her. Slowly she realized how astute was Jim's insight into her father's character. It was a gift, she decided, and one that her mother and Jim had in common—a sort of spirit of divination they possessed. She wished she had it. It made one feel "mortal stupid" to be with folks of so much more discernment than oneself. So there was born in that hour a new respect for this hulking, slow-spoken lover of hers, and to his plans she offered no further objection. Rather, her enthusiasm outran his. When the two conspirators parted, all details had been arranged.

"The houn'-dawg liked to hev barked his head offen his neck las' night," casually remarked Mr. Gambel at breakfast next morning. "Some varmint a-prowlin' around—smelled your turkeys, Virgy, I reckon."

She went to the door and counted them.

"All hyer, anyways," she reported.

"Won't be some night—or else thet houn' 's a-lyin'," retorted her father.

"Mebbe thet's so, Dad," Virgy smiled as she turned away. Her mother gave her one sharp, swift glance, but said nothing.

It was not yet daybreak, and only the stars were on hand to espy proceedings, when Virgy slipped from her open window to Jim's arms and

thence to the soft earth. It was therefore an ill turn of fortune that at this critical instant Jim's uninvited cur should set up a fusillade of barks under the chestnut tree, bringing the "houn' dawg" from his retreat beneath the porch with a clamor of bayings.

"Oh, the turkeys, Jim!" and Virgy vanished around the corner of the house, followed by her dazed lover. The dogs were frantic with excitement. The turkeys, equally so, were flopping down from their roosts, peeping and clucking as they scuttled away in the dark. Outlined against the dimly luminous sky was an animal the size of a bushel basket, its gleaming eyes turned downward to the intruders.

"Catamount, by gosh!" ejaculated Jim.

"An' oh, Jim, he's got a turkey! Git it away from him! Kill 'im!"

"What with?" he muttered, looking about helplessly.

"Thar's the wood pile; chunk him!"

Obediently, Jim grabbed a billet and let drive at the crouching form. A screech the next instant attested the accuracy of his aim. The turkey, released from the animal's clutches, came fluttering down. The dogs yelped their admiration of the shot. Jim turned to get another missile, and as he did so the creature whirled quickly, ran along the limb, and with a leap disappeared within the open window of the loft. The jar of its entrance loosened the supporting stick—the shutter fell to with a bang. The cat was imprisoned within! Jim gazed open-mouthed, while the dogs were immeasurably gleeful. Virgy it was who realized the peril of the situation.

"Oh, Jim! Jim! The critter's gone in effer Ma an' Dad!"

There was a concerted rush for the side-door. The older couple, roused by this time, were discussing the disturbance outside. Mr. Gambel, scantily arrayed, was in the act of opening the door when Jim and the dogs arrived with a rush. There was a hoarse cry and a thunderous shock as Mr. Gambel landed sitting on the floor. Jim himself, hooked on the old man's legs, shot, mouth open, into the fireplace. The dogs scrambled along, taking it all as a joyous part of the game. It was Mr. Gambel's voice that first rose above the bruit of the dogs.

"Darnation! Who are you?"

"Oh, Dad!" shrieked Virgy, "thar's a catamount in the house, an' hit's effer you an' Ma! Git out quick!"

"Is thet you, Virgy?"

"'Course hit's me, Dad!"

"Well, who's thet sputterin' thar?"

"Jim. . . . Oh, Ma, hurry outen here!"

"Catch me hurryin' out! I'm going to stay right here in bed, like a proper female."

"Blast ye, Jim, what made ye land on me thet-a-way?" bawled Mr. Gambel, above the dog-racket. But Jim was still spitting ashes.

"Oh, Daddy," implored Virgy, "thar truly is a catamount upstairs. He lept in the winder." As if in verification of her words, a pair of phosphorescent orbs appeared at the top of the ladder-stairs. The dogs yelped fresh defiance and plunged for the ladder; whereupon the beast turned and leaped back into the loft. There was a sound of broken ware, and the trickle of a liquid.

"Gracious! Yore pickles, Ma!"

Mrs. Gambel sat up suddenly.

"Ain't you-uns goin' to do anything about it?" she challenged sharply.

"Yes, I am, M's' Gambel," responded Jim, with recovered voice. "I'm goin' to lambast his ole hide"; and that worthy groped his way toward the stairs, billet in hand.

"Hold up, Jim," cautioned Mr. Gambel. "Thet's powerful dangerous. Wait till I git my britches on and a spit lighted."

But Jim continued to advance undauntedly. The dogs were ahead, but wasn't the "cat" up the stair-ladder? Presently, Mr. Gambel, reviving the fire, lighted a pitch-pine torch and handed it to Jim.

"Whar's yer gun, Mr. Gambel?"

"Nary good, Jim. Lock's broke."

"Well, gimme that iron poker thar." So armed, he made the ascent. The uproar began at once. The cat used up the dogs in a few seconds and sent them howling and bleeding down the ladder; but the prowler, having had a taste of Jim's militant arm earlier, was shy of his attacks. Those below could hear him talking and slamming at it all over the loft. The crash of broken articles was thrilling.

"Don't bat my spinnin'-wheel!" screamed Mrs. Gambel, in sudden fierce anxiety. As ill luck would have it, that very moment Jim landed a body-blow which evoked an agonizing screech, and occasioned the overturning of both wheel and "scutchin' horse," which came careering down the ladder, followed by the longer half of Jim's person. His bull-hide boots kicked convulsively an instant and then were withdrawn.

"Slipped on a pickle!" he explained—in a shout.

A fresh rush drove the creature down the ladder-way. The dogs made another valiant assault, and the cat leaped aside on the bed. Fearlessly, Mrs. Gambel grabbed a pillow and banged the intruder with it. Again the bewildered beast leaped, and this time landed on the meal barrel. The top collapsed, and the cat descended within. Before it could come out, Mr. Gambel, with sudden agility, seized the pillow, threw it on the furry back, sat himself on top, and yelled for somebody to "fetch a board!" The barrel shook as the caged and meal-blinded creature raged to get out, but Mr. Gambel's two hundred was equal to the situation. The catamount betook itself to a paroxysm of sneezing.

Jim arrived. "Whar's the animal?" he shouted.

"In hyer, in hyer!" bellowed the old man. "I 'm holdin' him down! Dum ye, git a lid, quick!"

But nobody was quick enough, for the next instant with a yell Mr. Gambel shot from his seat, with a long slit in his trousers. If any further explanation had been necessary, the upthrust head and paw of the bob-cat would have furnished it. The cat blinked a fatal moment—just long enough for Jim's poker to descend. After that the stunned creature was dragged forth and despatched to the joyful pæans of the dogs.

These lively exercises completed, Mr. Gambel faced the two young folks with a stern countenance.

"Now, thar 's jes' one thing I wanter know, an' thet is, how you two-uns come to be rompin' 'round in your good duds this yere time o' the mornin'?"

"I was runnin' off with Jim," said Virgy stoutly, taking the initiative. Mr. Gambel glared.

"Polly"—turning to his wife—"d 'ye hear thet? They was runnin' off!" From beneath the up-drawn counterpane, Polly looked placid and silent.

"Whar was ye *runnin'* to?" he further catechised.

"To the preacher—to git merried."

"The tarnation ye was! What was yer objections to gittin' merried here?"

Jim and Virgy looked at each other in eloquent silence. A light of understanding began to play in Jim's eye.

"We thought you was puttin' up the objections," he offered finally.

Mr. Gambel laughed lustily and slapped Jim on the back.

"I reckon you hev the makin's all right, Jim. I ran away with Virgy's mother myself!"

"I knew ye did," said Jim, grinning.



CALIFORNIA SUNSHINE IN MIDSUMMER

BY OLIVE B. READ

THE sun shines dizzily, busily on.
 The thirsty, parched ground burned brown,
 Hillsides green all scorched to gray,
 By the burning kisses of the sun of day
 As the sun shines dizzily, busily on.

A PRINCESS IN CALICO

By Hapsburg Liebe

IT was n't until the regiment had landed in the Philippines that I found out just what Tom Patterson had in view by cultivatin' my friendship so diligent. He seemed to have me singled out from the very minute of his arrival in Fort McPherson, where we was made up. Tom was a mountaineer, and he had come from the Ho Knob section, which same is next-door neighbor to that wild place in East Tennessee knowed as Jeffrey's Hell; and as for a description of Tom—well, I guess he was a good deal like other mountaineers.

Our company had been dropped off a *Campania Maritima* steamer at a little town on the upper west coast of Luzon. Aringay was the name o' the town; it was sleepy and lazy in the daytime, and full of mosquitoes, stingin' ants, and villainous drinks after night. I was layin' out in the shade of an ylangyang, restin' up after a stint at helpin' to clean up the streets, and was almost ready to go to dreamin', when up walks Tom Patterson with his most beguilin' smile and sets down right at my side.

"Dink," says he to me in his slow drawl, "me and you is the only two fellers in this here comp'ny from old Tennessee, hain't we?"

I felt that the secret was about to be revealed at last. I sets up eager and bends an ear.

"Sure," says I. "What 's comin', Thomas?"

"But, then, I 'm from away back in the mountains, while you hain't," Tom goes on, his face beginnin' to turn a little red.

"Well, I reckon so," I agrees.

"I 'm a' ign'rant mountain man, while you, Dink, are a person of eddication, and can read and write," pursues my bunkie.

I admits it all mighty solemn; and then Tom lays the great secret out before me.

"Dink," he says, his face now as red as a turkey-gobbler's nose, "I 've got a sweetheart back at home, and I can't read nor write a darned word!"

I sets up straight. So he had long been layin' his plans to make a sort of amanuensis o' me! I was to do his letter-readin' and letter-writin' for him! I lays back my ears like a Balaam, opens up my head, and begins to heehaw. Tom looks at me like he thinks I 've got bats in my loft, turns pale, goes to his feet, and stalks off with his head as high as a young buck's.

"Hold on there, bunkie!" I yells. "Come back here, you great big boob! Of course I'll do your private secretary work for you, and be glad to help. I could n't help laughin', Tom, honest—you see, you said it so funny."

Tom turns. He seems a good deal mollified. He comes back to me and sets down at my side under the shade o' the ylangylang; then he fishes out of his blue flannel shirt a roll o' checkered Chino paper, some envelopes, and a pencil already sharpened to a needle point. Oh, he was prepared!

"Light in," he grins, and lays the paraphernalia in my lap. "Make it a reg'lar rock-bottom, all-wool-and-a-yard-wide love-letter, Dink."

"What's her name?" says I.

Tom did n't want to tell me, and would n't 'a' done it if I had n't convinced him that I had to know if I was to act as his private secretary.

Believe me, I reelly wrote Tom's Hallie a love-letter there under the shade o' the ylangylang. I had read half a dozen paper-back love-stories on the transport over, and I was still soggy with about a thousand of them novels' pet phrases. And as I'd write, I'd stop and read passages aloud to Tom, who was layin' flat of his back and starin' straight up at nothin'; and Tom he'd laugh and kick at the daylight moon like a man possessed of a devil. You see, Tom had that there love disease bad.

"I guess that'll hold her for me, all right," grins Tom, when I'd sealed the first letter to Hallie. "Dink," he adds, pattin' me on the back, "you're sure a jim-dandy."

That's just the prelude. The real yarn will now commence. Two years has passed by, with their snows and their sunshine, their smiles and their tears—as them paper-backs says—since I was appointed private secretary to Thomas Patterson of Ho Knob. Tom he's now a corporal, if that won't jar you, made that because of his distinguished service as a sharpshooter and a scout. And durin' them two years I had improved consid'able at my job—in fact, I had got to be a perfect amanuensis, as was attested by the character of the contents of Hallie's scrawlin' but faithful letters to Tom.

We was in Catbalogan, Island of Samar, restin' up from a hard campaign in the interior, and we was to go home in a short time.

Well, the little gunboat *Petrel* happens in one day about noon, and drops off a bag o' mail for the company. I did n't have nobody much to write to me, and therefore was n't expectin' anything I did n't get; but Tom had mail—Tom always had mail when anybody else did. The little gunboat brought three letters and a photograph for Tom this time. Me and him slides off to ourselves, with him huggin' the mail like it was a peck o' diamonds. We found a cocoanut palm, and decided that the shade of it would do for our shrine of worship. We sets down. Tom, all smiles, breaks the twine from around the photo, and takes off the wrappin'. The comin' o' the picture was n't no surprise to us: Tom he'd had his picture

took in Manila a few months before; he'd sent one to Hallie, and asked her to reciprocate by return mail, which same she had sure done.

I was a little anxious myself to see the picture; I wanted to know just what Hallie looked like. You understand, I'd wrote letters to her, and read letters from her, for so long that I felt like I deserved at least a brother's interest in her. I leans over close to Tom, and looks eager-like. Tom, his big, brown hands shakin' bad, moves the picture about a quarter of an inch towards me, so 's I can see better.

"That 's her—that 's Hallie, Dink," he says; and bless me if his voice was n't tremblin'!

I sure was n't anyways prepared for what I seen. I'd sort o' got Hallie figgered out as a slim little Indiany thing, all fire and tow and sharp-featured. This face was sure a fine one; its eyes, big and as clear as a bell, was all smilin' and seemed almost to want to talk and say that they loved Tom with all their might. The mouth was dainty, and it was smilin' too; and behind the lips there was two rows o' the evenest teeth I've ever seen. Now, it was n't because I'd seen so few women durin' the last two years that I was so tickled with Hallie's looks; it's been ten years since I set with Corporal Tom Patterson under the cocoanut palm and looked at the photo, and I still hangs to my first impressions. Hallie she was simply a world-beater, that 's what she was, and no mistake.

"Tom Patterson," I says, "you're the luckiest man this side o' purgatory. How long has it been goin' on?"

"Ever since three days afore I left home for the army," says Tom, powerful solemn. "I'd done enlisted, or I shore would n't 'a' come off and left her. Her folks had jest moved into our section."

"You sure like her, don't you, Tom?" I mutters, somehow feelin' a little lonesome.

"Like her!" blurts Tom, eyin' me with his big brown eyes. "Lord!" he says, sort o' in the tones of a prayer, "how much—how much I *do* like her!"

"Don't blame you," says I, real earnest. "If I was to meet one as fine-lookin' as her, she'd sure get the chance to change her name to Mrs. Dink immediate."

Tom seems mightily pleased, and takes up the three letters that had kept the picture company—at least, from Manila.

"Look at the postmarks, Dink," says he, "and read 'em in their proper turn."

The first letter did n't seem as good, somehow, as the others before it had been. I gets a strange feelin'—a sort o' premonition, you might say—which I tries hard to hide from Tom. I hands him the letter, and takes up the second epistle; the second epistle rambled a little, and then said that she'd got his picture, and was sendin' him one she'd had took at a show in town shortly previous. As I hands Tom this, he takes up

the third letter, and begins to turn it over and over in his big hands. I seen that it was sure thin and lean. I looked under Tom's battered hat-rim, and if there was n't the shadow of torment in his eyes, may I sink!

Finally Tom he thrusts the lean letter towards me, and drawls shakyl-like: "Open 'er, Dink. But—but I cain't believe that thar's good news in thar."

I takes it, and tears off one end o' the cheap little envelope. There was only one sheet o' paper inside. The scrawlin' handwrite seemed even harder to read than it had been before. 'This is what I seen:

Tom paterson kind frend it aint no use for me to go on a foolen
you like ive been a dooin i feel meen about it but i caint love you and so i
think weed better quitt dont rite to me no more yore frend hallie.

I tell you, that scrawlin' letter jabbed into me like a bamboo spear, for Tom's sake. I had come to think a sight o' Tom Patterson. He was a man, Tom was, even if he could n't read nor write—a brave man, a fightin' man, that's what he was! And I knowed that them was the kind that feminine faithlessness hit the very hardest of all—it's human nature. I raises my eyes to Tom's; his was as dry and as hard as the steel o' the rifle he loved next to Hallie.

"Tell it, Dink," he whispers, plumb hoarse. "I might 'a' knowed it. I might 'a' knowed that I could n't never have no sech happiness."

Well, to save my life I could n't tell Tom Patterson the naked truth!

"She says, Tommy," I mutters, "that her maw is powerful sick, and that she jest don't know when she'll have the chance to write again."

Of course I knowed he'd find out the truth some time; but I thought even that would be better than to put it to him, brutal and cold-blooded, right then.

Patterson takes the letters and the picture, and shoves them inside his blue shirt without a word. Then he goes to his feet like a man with stiff joints, and for a minute stands and looks lonesome like out across the bay.

Before he walked off, he turned to me and said sort o' strange like, "Much obliged to you, Dink, shore."

After a few minutes spent in thinkin', I follows Tom to the row o' nipa huts in which our company has its quarters. But in some way he gave me the slip, and I did n't see him for several hours.

Time for evenin' retreat drawed high, and still Patterson had n't come in. I becomes uneasy, and goes to the top sergeant about it, openin' up my heart plain to him after his promise to keep his trap shut. The top, too, seems uneasy, because he had liked Tom Patterson almost as much as I had. Him and me we sets out for the Chino store section o' the town, and makes a clean search; but all our huntin' don't reveal hair nor hide o' the troubled mountaineer. Then we went to the captain, a big, whole-hearted man, and laid our tale of woe into his ears.

The captain smiles sort o' weak-like. "Boys," he says, "Patterson come to me and asked me to read the thin letter for him, and I done it without thinkin'."

So my lie to Tom had n't been of any use. I had n't fooled Tom a bit.

The captain goes on: "Lucban's men have got it in strong for Corporal Patterson, and we must n't let him wander out of town. I——"

What caused Captain Lyerly to break off abrupt like that was the suddent sound o' six rifle-shots comin' from towards the interior: *Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!*—just that way, as regular as the firin' of a Gatlin' and not much slower.

Almost before the company commander had ordered it, the trumpeter begun to sound the call to arms, shrill and quick. The company tumbled out o' the nipa huts, some of 'em barefooted and others bareheaded, and begun to form a skirmish line without bein' told. For a few minutes we works our way towards the point from which had come the sound o' the shootin', keepin' to the cover o' rice-paddies and cocoanut palms; then Captain Lyerly he sings out down the line to Lieutenant Prayther:

"Lieutenant," says he, "that was a Krag rifle that done the firin'. It must 'a' been Tom Patterson. We 'd better break cover and double-quick out to his aid."

Which same we did.

Close up against the foot o' the hills that lays back o' Catbalogan, there is a fine grassy dell surrounded by palms and bamboos. Standin' in this dell, leanin' on the muzzle of his rifle, we found Corporal Tom Patterson. He did n't seem to notice us at all as we went up to him. And we seen that his eyes, steely hard, was riveted on somethin' that set at the root of a palm some thirty yards from him—he was starin' at the photograph of his Hallie, in which there was six round bullet-holes.

We stopped, and all become as still as the grave. The whole company seen the bullet-torn picture, and guessed right well at the cause of Tom Patterson's abstraction; and to their everlastin' credit I want to say here that not a man smiled or seemed anything but downright sorry for old Tom. Then the captain strides up to the grievin' man, and says in a low voice:

"Corporal Patterson—attention!"

Patterson straightens slow-like, with his gun's butt swingin' mechanical to a place beside his right foot.

"About face!" says Captain Lyerly.

Tom turns obedient but in his own time.

"Join your company," finishes the captain, easy in his talk.

Patterson come into our ranks, and we marched back to Catbalogan and had roll-call.

That night Tom he sneaks out to the dell at the foot o' the hills and gets the shot-up photo; and the very next mail carries it back to Hallie.

I addressed it myself—no, Tom did n't think hard o' me for tryin' to tell him a lie to save him from knowin' of the falseness of his sweetheart.

From that day on, much and manful as he tried, Corporal Tom was n't the same fellow; and none of us, even me and the officers, could n't offer a word o' sympathy. If ever I seen a man suffer under the burden of life, and yet smile and smile on the outside, that man was Tom Patterson, that splendid nobleman o' nature's own.

Neither Tom nor me reenlisted, but come straight home after the regiment was mustered out in 'Frisco. I lived tol'able close to Tom's mountains, and as I had n't no people much to be glad to see me, I decided to accept Tom's pressin' invite to go home with him and spend a week. For another thing, I had a feelin' that my friend would need me; I was afraid that he'd do somethin' he'd regret all the rest of his life when he seen his Hallie with some other fellow—because I'd reached the conclusion that there was another fellow, of course. Also, I'll admit that I wanted to set my eyes one time on the girl that'd turned our Tom down.

It was along in the middle of a bright autumn forenoon when we stepped from the train at a little way-station some twelve miles from Ho Knob, Tom's home mountain. We hit out, walkin' rapid, across the lowlands, makin' for the dim blue hills; and as we went we kept step like the soldiers we'd so lately been, and talked over old times like a pair of twenty-year campaigners. At the foöt o' the first mountain, we struck a narrow, crooked path that run like the track of a great snake right up to the crest.

As we drew nigh the top, I happened to see a calico sunbonnet, strangely animated, bob down out o' sight. Tom he'd seen it, too; but he did n't say nothin' at all about it, and I did n't neither. But I could tell right off that my comrade had been affected by it, for his laughin' got nervous and his line o' talk become plumb foolish.

When we'd reached the spot where we'd seen the sunbonnet disappear, which was the extreme crest, Tom he halts. His eyes, now hard and yet sort o' pitiful, begins to search the ground about us. I was n't slow to see what had caught his gaze: there was a bushel or so o' stripped ferns layin' here and there.

"Tom Patterson," says I, "there's sure been somebody doin' a sight o' waitin' and watchin' from this here spot!"

"I reckon maybe it's been my sister," growls Tom; and he looks at me like he just double darés me to disagree with him.

"But your sister surely would n't break out and run when she sees you comin'," says I, lookin' back at Tom. "Say," I continues, "how far is it from here to Ho Knob?"

"'Bout six miles," is the reply I gets.

"Then, whoever that is that's been waitin' and watchin' here has

been walkin' twelve miles a day for weeks. Sisters is usually lovin' folks, Tom," I says; "but they ain't like that."

My friend gives a snort of unbelief, and walks off toward Ho Knob, with his shoulders squared and his head high.

When we'd covered another mile, which we done with mighty little talkin', I caught a glimpse of the calico bonnet again; it had dodged down behind a clump of laurels about a hundred feet off to our left. But it had n't dodged so quick but that I seen that the face inside of it was the very face o' the photo Tom Patterson had shot almost to pieces!

Tom had seen it too—he always seen anything anybody else seen. My, how he strutted, not deignin' to turn his head! But neither one of us did n't say a word to the other.

We had n't gone more 'n ten minutes further when we meets Hallie in the little, laurel-bordered path. She was barefooted, and her dress was blue and dotted with white; she was walkin' slow, with her head down, and her little, sunburned fingers was playin' nervous like with the end of her long, thick plait of black hair. It was plain to me that she was tryin' to make out that she did n't know Tom was anywhere within a thousand miles of her.

When she had come up close to Tom, she steps out o' the way, looks up, and smiles a smile that I just don't know how to describe. It seemed at first that Tom was goin' on without so much as noticin' her; but he suddenly stops and begins to stare straight into Hallie's big, clear brown eyes. Hallie's face goes sort o' pale, but her smile stays right there; she begins to return Tom's hard look with the gaze of a martyr—and then she gets my whole brother-heart on her side.

"Tom——" she begins, and then chokes up. She bends her head, and drops her plait o' thick, black hair.

Patterson took one quick step towards her. She puts up her arms, as if she's afraid. Tom takes her wrists in his big brown hands, one in each, and I could see that he was holdin' 'em so tight that her little, sunburned fingers stood straight out and apart from one another. And then Tom Patterson, as white as a ghost, and with the savage stickin' out all over him, begins to press the girl down towards the ground; and Hallie—Hallie continues to look up into his white face with her pale smile.

Well, blast the lights o' me, it got me all over. I steps up and takes Tom's shoulders in my hands, and pulls him back—Tom was sure a big man; but, then, I'm no little fry myself.

"Don't!" cries Hallie—and it was plain that she was not talkin' to Tom, but to *me*.

But I did n't quit a bit. Hallie had me, sure. I jerks Tom back, and he lets loose o' the girl's wrists. Like a man in some terrible dream, he faces me.

"Look here, Tom Patterson," I says, meanin' every word of it, "you

can't play the cave-man and kill the little woman before my very eyes. I'll give you an arm, or a leg, or any number o' years from my life that you happen to want; but I'll be blessed if I'm goin' to see you hurt your Hallie. Now, there's been a mistake somewhere, Tom, and you'd better inquire into the matter a little."

Hallie, seemin' too happy to live in this mundane sphere, gives me a glance o' gratitude, and I begins to feel that my buttin' in had brought big returns already.

"What made you write me them last three no-'count letters, Hallie?" asks Tom in a pinched, dry voice.

Hallie did n't seem to be listenin' to him. She was busy takin' from the bosom of her calico dress a photograph full o' round bullet-holes. First she looked at the picture, and then she looked at Tom; and then she begins to cry without makin' a face, or sniffin' at the nose, or whinin', like people ought to cry.

"What made you do this, T-T-T-Tom?" she says.

Tom Patterson takes from his clothes a bundle o' letters—letters which, while he could n't read 'em, he had n't been able to destroy. He takes from the pack a thin, lean letter, and spreads it out before Hallie.

"And what made *you* do *this*?" he growls like a tiger.

"What does it say?" asks Hallie, her eyes wide.

Tom he hands over the "Kind friend" dope, readin' the letter from memory alone.

Hallie she straightens up like the little mountain princess she is. "Tom Patterson," she says, "I hope to die right here in my tracks if I done that!"

"Hush!" roars Patterson. "I can't read nor write"—and here he turns a little red at havin' to own up to it—"but I shore know yore handwritin' when I see it."

Hallie puts out her hand toward Tom, and in her clear brown eyes there is the light of a great understandin'.

"Tom," says she, powerful sweet-like, "I—I did n't want you to know it—but I cain't read nor write neither! And so I got Lizy May Burkett to read and write my letters for me—and when she seen yore picture, so fine-lookin' in uniform, why—why, she—the *mean* thing—she laid plans to break you and me up and get you for her own self!"

"That's the answer, Tom!" I bellows until I frightened every squirrel within a mile. Take it from me, I was glad.

And Tom was n't two seconds in believin' it. Did he take the girl's hand in his, and go along up the mountain trail that way, with me taggin' along behind? He did not—he certainly did not. He takes Hallie up into his arms, just like she was a child, and marches off homeward with her—that's what he done. And me—well, I tags along behind, and wishes that I could find somebody like Tom's Hallie.

SELLING THE SECOND-HAND CAR

By C. L. Edholm

“THIRTY-ONE dollars and fifty cents,” said the dealer.
“But,” I gasped, “the accessories alone are worth more.”

It was the first time I had tried to sell a second-hand car, and I was appalled at the cruelty of a \$31.50 offer on a machine “that should fetch two hundred and fifty dollars—easy!” That’s what I had been told by the man who let me take it on an old debt. It was a 1905 Kazoo. The debt was a trifle older. I believe that the man (who shall be nameless) went into debt to buy that Kazoo.

So I explained to the dealer in used cars, with a calm and assured manner, what the person who let me have it had said: “It should fetch two hundred and fifty dollars—easy!”

“That’s not my name,” remarked the dealer, with ill-timed jocularly.

He went on to observe that his name was William Smith. Also, that he was not buying the car, but the accessories. “No call for Kazoos nowadays,” he explained around the dead cigar that was partially interred in his face. “I’m offering thirty-one dollars and fifty cents for the speedometer, wind-shield, and lamps; you throw in the remains of the engine, crank-shaft, and toggle-joint as a bonus.”

I told William Smith that I would consider his proposition, and drove out of the garage with hauteur and difficulty, owing to a misunderstanding with the reverse that wrecked the tail-light.

In spite of my assured bearing, I was depressed. The worst is now to be revealed. In my shed and amateur’s workshop in the suburbs were three other used cars. I was the owner of not merely one second-hand car, but four. There were a 1908 Zip, a 1903 Thresher, the 1907 Kazoo, and the other Kazoo I was trying to drive through the traffic, a relic of 1905. Of course there was a certain antiquarian value attached to the collection. It showed the wonderful progress made in car design during a period of restless and daring experiment with the motoring public. As vehicles, they were of less value. As mountings for accessories, they were worth \$31.50 each. And I had taken them for six hundred dollars’ worth of bad debts.

In order to keep this from being a sad story, I will omit my early

efforts to dispose of the Zip, the Thresher, and the two Kazoos for cash. Not wishing to shake anybody's faith in human nature, I will omit the offers of unlisted mining stocks and equities in submerged real estate which my "For Sale" ads. in the Sunday papers called forth. There are but few commodities less salable than a second-hand car, and I could have exchanged for all.

Several months went by, and then I had an idea. I had a vacation about the same time; several weeks on my brother's farm near Litchfield, where I met the best people at Sunday school picnics and strawberry festivals. These kindly people received me as a promising young financier high up in the Life Insurance Trust, although the adding machine I punch is really only twenty-four stories above the street. The fact that I owned four cars was referred to frequently by my brother, but in the most casual and perfectly refined manner. No ostentation.

Oswald, the youthful heir of Butternut Farm, showed immense interest in me from the first. Oswald had come into his property but recently, and his socks were almost silk and quite purple. Speed was his ideal; speed coupled with a loud splash. His rubber-tired buggy passed everything on the road, and now he was thinking of buying a regular red devil of an automobile. In the days of parental repression, he had held the tiller of a curved dash Oldsmobile just once, but the fumes of the deadly gasoline had entered his blood.

I told Oswald that I knew where he could pick up a used racer, already tuned up, for the price of a very ordinary new car, and as I described the roaring, flame-spitting monster, belching smoke from its exhaust, I saw clearly what I was to do. It was then that I got the idea. It is The Big Idea: the secret of selling second-hand cars.

Even for an amateur mechanic, it was not very difficult to transform my 1909 Zip into a racer. The process consisted mainly in taking away. The heavy swelling tonneau came off first, and the front seats were lowered and set at a rakish angle. A huge tank and a pile of all the spare tires from my other cars adorned the rear of the chassis, and a big racing number on the hood gave a clue as to what it was all supposed to represent. As four-inch pipe is cheap, I soon had an exhaust as large and noisy as anything on a Vanderbilt Cup winner, and by applying an excess of lubricating oil I could make it belch rich blue smoke like a dragon.

The car, or what was left of it, was then painted a bloody red, with the racing number in yellow, and as I surveyed my work, I knew that Oswald was my meat.

When I smoked down the village street after a brief absence, I invited that flattered youth to jump in and let her out until the speedometer, when it was visible through the smoke, showed a seventy-mile clip. That can be done if you don't mind ruining a second-hand speed-

ometer, and, what with the fog and flame and noise, thirty miles an hour seemed like seventy to Oswald.

When the young heir of the Butternut Farm learned that the speed devil was his for \$985.00 he wanted to kiss me, and he could hardly wait to get the money out of the bank. Before I said good-by, I cautioned him about the speed laws and made him promise never, never to make more than sixty miles an hour on a clear road, and as that would be just legal speed, with the revised speedometer, my conscience is clear.

Now that I had hit upon the right idea in selling cars with a past, the rest was easy. Give the dear people what they want. Precisely that.

For instance, the 1903 Thresher was readily adapted to the prejudices of Deacon Asbury, also of Litchfield, whose carry-all had finally collapsed after the manner of the "one-hoss shay," which broke the heart of the faithful Dobbin.

I sympathized with the deacon, and told him of a gentle family motor-car that I knew; sound in wind and limb and warranted not to kick or bite. When he showed genuine interest, I went home and remodeled that ancient Thresher until it looked like a half-brother of the departed carry-all. It was better suited to that purpose than the two Kazoos, as it had carriage-wheels and solid rubber, narrow tires to begin with. I added a mohair top with a jaunty fringe hanging down all around, and replaced the acetylene headlights with kerosene burners. The springs were tinkered with until they let the body roll like an old-fashioned stage-coach, and I even screwed a holder for the buggy-whip on the dash.

Where I really won the Deacon was at the start by saying, "Giddap!" as I threw in the clutch. It seemed like the dear old carry-all to Deacon Asbury from that moment, and as I drove at a six-mile gait, an easy jog trot, down the maple-shaded street, he never thought of being frightened. In fact, when he got out, the deacon walked around the machine, running his hands down its spokes, and I believe that if I had carried out my original intention of putting blinders on the headlights, he would have tried to feed it a lump of sugar.

I gently explained the mechanism in horse-and-buggy terms as far as possible, and when they gave out I used such familiar machinery as the lawn-mower and coffee-mill for comparison. In that way it is easy to teach and pleasant to learn. I am sure that he would have become suspicious if I had displayed all my knowledge of differentials, planetary transmissions, and magnetos after the manner of the indiscriminating demonstrator. Surely he would not have written a check for four hundred and fifty dollars, nor would I have left him gently rubbing the radiator and purring, "So-o, Dobbin. Good old hoss." He would have always been afraid that a differential might bite him or strike out with its fore hoofs, doing him an injury.

By this time I was reduced to the two Kazoos, each of which had its good points, though both had pretty rotten ones. Fortunately, the parts were interchangeable, being of the same make, so I removed the defective crankshaft with the cracked casing to the 1905 Kazoo, which had a wornout engine. In short, the older model was not much better than junk when I had replaced all the defective parts of the 1907 model, but, on the other hand, the latter was a good, serviceable car. I became so genuinely attached to it, that I was quite regretful when a man who understood cars offered me \$250.00 and I could not resist. This sale gave me less pleasure than the others. It was business, but it was not Art.

My remaining possession, the last of the Kazoos, was barely able to limp around the block without something rattling loose, but it was certainly strong on accessories. All that was left over from the other three cars, such as the acetylene lamps from the Thresher, was tacked upon the 1905 Kazoo till it fairly bristled. I remember that it had two auto-clocks, for instance; one slow and the other permanently stopped. But I polished them nicely; polished all the brass of all the accessories until it shone like gold. Then I ran the car cautiously until within half a block of the garage of William Smith, when I cleverly brought up the speed to ten miles an hour and drove through the wide doorway. Something rattled ominously as I slowed down, but William Smith failed to hear it. He was looking at the lamps.

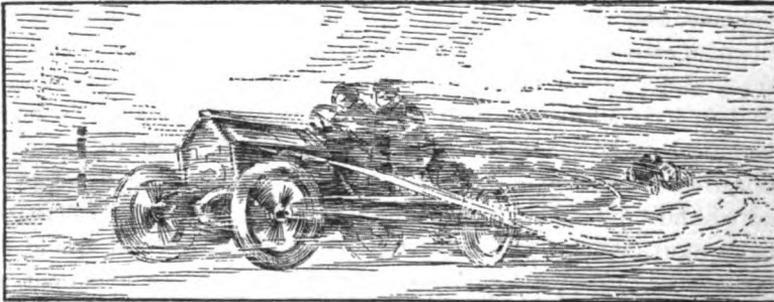
"What's the best offer you can make on this nifty little Kazoo?" I asked, jumping lightly to the floor.

"I thought you'd be back," he remarked, bringing out the words from around that same dead cigar. "There's no call for old Kazoos, but I'll give you thirty-one dollars and fifty cents for the accessories."

"There are two new headlights," I observed. "Make it an even thirty-five."

"Done!" exclaimed William Smith, and reached for his check-book.

There was really forty dollars' worth of lamps and fixings on the wreck, but I thought that under the circumstances I could stand a five-dollar loss.



CAPTAIN MATT

By William R. Lighton

AS a rule, Captain Matt's channels of thought and speech were mere dry gulches, sandy, arid, and unprofitable, or at best carrying only a sluggish dribble of turbid commonplace. But sometimes, when there had been a generous outpouring of good liquor, these channels would run a bank-full freshet, seething and foaming; then there would be washed out of the captain's intellectual sand-banks an odd miscellany—a vast quantity of bright-hued pebbles of thought, with a rarely occasional rough gem. He had an inexhaustible fund of unreliable information upon every impractical subject. It was only at these times of spirituous inundation that he repaid the labor of an attempt to cultivate him. When he was entirely sober, the officers of the mess shunned him as an insufferable ass; when he had been properly stimulated, he was welcome in any group in the club-rooms.

There was a select company in a corner of the billiard-room. Captain Matt had absorbed a rapid sequence of five small glasses of cognac. With the third glass, he had begun the telling of a story—a story which then threatened to drag its way wearily for many minutes over the dead level of tedium. But with the fourth glass he had warmed to his work, and put into the story a few master-strokes—a gorgeous bit of love-making, and a dramatic heart-break. Now, while his voice carried a liquid intonation, due to the last drops of the fifth glass, he was bringing the tale to a perfect finish:

“So she married the man who had written the poem. And as he was a philosopher, it follows, of course, that they lived very unhappily ever after.”

It had been a very good story, illustrating a knotty problem in life. Its finest points had addressed themselves particularly to the older men—which is always the distinguishing mark of a good story, well told. The cavalry major and the post surgeon, grizzled and habitually firm-lipped, had grown very serious and rigid in every facial line as the tale drew to a close. But the post adjutant was a very young man, with red lips still suggestive of mother-kisses. He had not yet grown to an understanding of life's finenesses; so he was disappointed at the story's abrupt ending, which left so much to the listener's ripened intelligence.

“Of course they lived very unhappily ever after?” he repeated in vague inquiry.

“That’s what he said,” returned the cavalry major shortly. The major wanted a few minutes of unbroken silence for the story’s proper assimilation.

“Well, but,” the adjutant went on stubbornly, while he reached for the electric push-button which was to summon the genius of the club-steward’s room, “I don’t quite see the force of that.”

The adjutant’s fingering of the push-button meant another round of drinks: this made Captain Matt tolerant of the youngster’s dullness.

“That’s right, Billy,” he said, while with his finger-tip he traced geometrical designs in the scattered drops of liquor upon the polished table-top. “The only perfect happiness in marriage comes when an unphilosophical fool of a man marries an unphilosophical fool of a girl, and neither ever wakes to wisdom. That’s self-evident, to a philosopher. It’s in the very nature of the case.”

The steward’s boy stood awaiting orders.

“Gimme a cigar,” the post surgeon said, as he drew his cape over his shoulders.

“Here, too,” the major of cavalry ordered. “I’m going home.”

“Cognac,” Captain Matt said briefly.

“I want a claret float,” the adjutant added to the order; whereat the major smiled in grim pity.

“It’s perfectly futile trying to rub that moral into a boy who drinks claret float,” he suggested; but the remark did not balk the adjutant’s insistence.

“How could philosophy spoil a happy marriage?” he asked of the company at large.

“The only way for you to satisfy yourself on that point is to go and marry a female philosopher,” the post surgeon said rudely—an unseemly rudeness, considering that he was lighting a fat black cigar for which the adjutant was signing a check.

“Is n’t that proposition a little faulty?” queried the major. “Do you suppose Billy *could* marry a woman who was enough of a philosopher to make the experiment convincing?”

Then the two older men went away, and soon afterward Captain Matt became maudlin.

A woman does not like a dull man, even when his dullness is the inevitable result of so large a virtue as sobriety; she is hardly more tolerant of the intellectual fire kindled by alcohol. Between these two states of fact Captain Matt hung suspended, a bachelor of thirty-five. This was due for the most part to his own good judgment; and yet it was largely too bad, for he had a gentle heart, which loved all womankind.

Sometimes, when his condition had been very pitiable, the bluff old

major of cavalry would take it upon himself to protest. The major liked his young captain: he told himself that his regard was that of a father for a son. He flattered himself that he read the young man "like a book"; which only shows how little wisdom we get as we grow old. No one knew Captain Matt; least of all did he know himself.

On the morning after the meeting in the billiard-room, the young man was trying to wash away, with brandy and soda, the unholy marks of a lamentable night, the while the major was talking, in his fat voice—and talking against odds, for the captain's headache made his attention waver.

"Look here, Matt; this ain't right. You ought n't to do it. You can't live up to your capacities. Every man owes it to himself to do that, you know."

"Strikes me I rather overestimated my capacity last night," Captain Matt returned wearily, as though the effort of speech nauseated him.

The major grinned appreciatively; the sentiment was so wholly borne out by appearances.

"You don't half appreciate your condition," he urged. "You're wasting a lot of dynamic energy. Brace up. You'd be eternally grateful to yourself for it."

"I hate debts of gratitude," the other said; "they're so impossible of payment. So I avoid incurring them, even to myself."

"It don't do any good to turn words wrong side out," the major returned. "You ought to look at it sensibly. Just see what you'll be after a while, if you keep up these—debauches." The last word came after a doubtful pause, as though he feared to offend.

"Go it!" Captain Matt said. "You can't use as hard words as I've used, in my little private conversations with myself. I've fairly insulted myself, calling hard names. But they don't do any good. Keep on, though, if you like."

"Well, then," the major summed up, "I wish you'd sober up."

"Damnation!" Captain Matt exploded. "What a speech to come from you! You know you don't wish any such fool thing. You know if I'd sober up finally, you'd be the first to quit me. You know you like to have me drink, for the same reason that I like it myself. When I'm sober, I'm as narrow as a baby's teething-ring; when I'm drinking, I'm as broad as the undetermined orbit of a new comet. That's why I drink."

Faulty logic, doubtless, but the facts were irrefutable. The major had been wrinkling his fat forehead perplexedly through this speech. He knew it to be wholly true. He would not have enjoyed, he could hardly have tolerated, an hour's converse with Matt sober. The mere possibility of such a calamity made him temporize weakly.

"Maybe I ought n't to talk so plainly, Matt; but I do it from a sense of duty. You appreciate that."

"Oh, sure! Only, this 'sense of duty' business has sent more men to blazes than it's ever helped out. There ought to be a law against 'sense of duty'; or else the man who's afflicted with it ought to bear the consequences himself, instead of unloading them on other folks. 'Sense of duty' makes me as uneasy as toasted-cracker crumbs in my bed when I'm sick—and don't do any more good."

"Well," the major protested, "brandy is n't the only aid to self-forgetfulness. I've thought about it for you. I'll bet I've given it more thought than you have yourself. You ought to marry."

Captain Matt's lips drew into a distasteful grimace under the protection of his mustache.

"I'll not forget myself so far as that," he said curtly. "If that's the sum total of your thinking, you'd better quit thinking. Evidently you're not cut out for it."

The major took the rebuff very kindly. He had disturbed Captain Matt's usually placid and unruffled surface—a feat not often accomplished; therefore he was well content to bear the slight and harmless marks of the young man's displeasure. He kept discreetly silent for a time, knowing that his silence was likely to be the most successful provocative of speech on the part of his companion. It was a situation in which some one had to say something: so the major lay in ambush, and waited for the other to expose his position.

"I'd cut a nice figure, would n't I, as the responsible head of a family?" Captain Matt blurted. "Hop-o'-My-Thumb trying to play Atlas!"

"I'm not joking, Matt," the major contented himself with saying.

"Are n't you?" returned the captain. "It would be more of a credit to your intellect if you were."

"All I say is, you'll be humiliated some time by having to confess yourself mistaken," the major commented placidly.

"If I make a mistake in staying as I am," said Captain Matt, "I'll at least have the satisfaction of knowing I'd have made a bigger mistake the other way. Why, Major, just suppose for argument what's inconceivable in fact—suppose I should marry: what would it amount to? Take your own warning: what'd I be ten or fifteen years from now, if I should keep on drinking enough to make me entertaining company for my wife? I'd be like old Starr, or Blackmore, or Dowd, or any of those old bucks—just drawing my pay and waiting for death. And that would be pretty rough on the girl, would n't it?"

"You don't catch the idea," the major urged. "I mean a wife would do away with your need of drink."

For once, Captain Matt was stunned into silence—a silence of blinking eyes and hanging jaw—a silence which he held for a long time, letting the idea filter slowly through it.

"You mean," he said weakly, "you mean she'd take the place of cognac as a stimulant?"

"Exactly!" the major said. The notion had come into his own brain upon the heel of the moment, but he was delighted and vastly pleased with himself over the dazzling surprise it had given his companion. The notion offered so much to the explorer that it held the captain entranced for a while longer, his glass poised before him and his eyes full of lively thought.

"No good, major," he said at last decisively. "I've just completed a canvass of the girls I know. There's no such girl in the list. Some of 'em might do, in a measure, but the very best of 'em would have to be supplemented with brandy. Try again."

"You get the right one, the one adapted to you, as I've got, and you'll find I'm right," the major persisted.

Captain Matt's grin was wicked.

"What's that you're drinking, old man?" he asked.

The major flushed hotly as he glanced at the glass of rye whiskey on the table before him. But his recovery was prompt.

"I've got to drink a little once in a while, Matt, to subdue an excess of vital enthusiasm."

"And to take the edge off your sensibilities," Captain Matt added. Then they turned to a game of seven-up.

It was not many days after this that the major met his captain upon the parade-ground one evening at the breaking up of dress-parade. The captain's face was heavy and drooping. The major interpreted it as merely the inertia of sobriety until the younger man spoke.

"Major, I want to talk to you."

The major laid his hand in the crook of Captain Matt's elbow.

"Not here," he said; "come along. I'm too short-winded to walk and talk at once." He led the way to the seclusion of the reading-room at the officers' mess, and called for Captain Matt's habitual tipple.

"In theory, Matt," he said unblushingly, "you ought to keep perfectly sober; but in practice—you just take two good drinks before you say a word."

Captain Matt took the proffered glass and held it before him, looking at it with doubtful eyes. It was an unusual action: he was not given to dallying or to tickling the sense of sight with a glass of good liquor. By and by he drank the little portion at a mouthful, and paid no heed to the dewy decoration of his mustache until he had followed the first drink with the second. Then he drew the long damp strands of his mustache into nice order, and began beating upon the table with his finger-tips a little prelude to his speech.

"I was already quite full of brandy," he said; "not literally, but as

a mere figure of speech. I mean I've been thinking about it a good deal." Then a short silence.

"Well, what of it?" asked the major.

"I think, Major, I may have found the substitute we were talking about."

The old major had a shock of joyful surprise, such as always comes to the prophet when he finds his prophecy fulfilled. But as yet there was nothing for him to say; so he waited.

"Frankly," Captain Matt was compelled to say, "it's Madeline Owen." And the major grinned. Most of the unmarried men of the post, and many of those not so circumstanced, were in love with the commanding officer's niece, a rose-tinted visitor from Virginia.

Captain Matt was quite calm and unruffled as he proceeded—as calm as he might have been over the solution of a problem in engineering.

"Of course," he said, "I knew her pretty well when we had our talk the other night, but somehow she escaped my memory just then. But after that, involuntarily, when I found myself in the company of a nice girl, I thought about that proposition of yours. When I next met her, it was at the Friday hop. I'd taken two or three drinks, as I always do, to brace me for the ordeal of talking to the women. But when it came time to talk to her, after the waltz she'd given me, why, hang it! I could n't talk. I just drivelled. I tried to say something, but when she looked at me, the best I could say sounded like the rattle of shot in a dried bladder. And I could see that she was very tired before it came time to hand her over to her next partner. I'd never noticed that before when I was with her. And all the time she was so cool, and so perfectly poised, and her eyes——"

"Say, Matt," interjected the major, "if it's all the same to you, just skip that, will you?"

"I'd be almighty glad to skip the whole miserable business, if I could," Captain Matt returned ruefully, "but my intellectual legs are n't equal to it. I ain't so good a skipper. I've got to face it, until I find some way of getting over it, besides skipping."

His face was drawn into the downward tending lines of depression, and his eyes were heavy with thought. The major was jubilant, for it was not often that any one was privileged to have Captain Matt hipped.

"Well, trot along, sonny," he said grimly.

"Why, confound your athletic spirit!" Captain Matt blurted. "Trotting's no easier than skipping. The fact is, I'm just about at a standstill. I've never found myself in a situation where cognac was n't perfectly efficient. Now I've come to it, and I'm dazed."

"Well?" the major said with heartless brevity, when the other seemed inclined to withdraw into himself.

"Well!" Captain Matt exploded. "Next day I took her out wheeling. Did n't touch a drop all day, and was just about as entertaining as a

mud-turtle. Oh, I cut a fine figure! And she—why, confound it, Major: when I looked at her I felt as though I had an absolutely new thirst and did n't know what to take for it! And I'd flattered myself that I knew all about every sort of thirst there was. I tell you, it was humiliating to a club member in good standing."

"Well?" the major was forced to interrogate again.

"That's just the situation as it is," Captain Matt jerked. "It's a problem which must be solved. Now, Major, will you help me work it out?"

The major got to his feet, slowly stroking his yellow helmet crest into shape.

"No, Matt," he said; "I won't do it."

"I knew you would n't," Captain Matt said, picking up his gauntlets and preparing to follow the major downstairs. "That's why I asked you. I don't like a man who's always poking his advice into things which don't concern him."

But at his dinner the gray and stout old major was very thoughtful, dabbling his spoon idly in his soup and paying small heed to the dinner's sequence; all of which was very unlike him.

"Poor Matt!" he was thinking. "I wish the boy might have her. But how's it going to be done?"

Twice or thrice he glanced doubtfully across the table at his wife, a bland-faced, fat old lady. But if he was ever tempted to a division of his confidence, he changed his mind in good time. Only once, when the serious work of the meal was done, and there was leisure for it, he ventured a very broad expression of wonder whether a man, if compelled by stern necessity to choose, might be most perfectly happy with brandy and no wife, or with wife and no brandy: to which the placid old lady, accustomed to her lord's vagaries, paid only light passing heed:

"Why, Major! Of course he'd be most perfectly happy with whichever he had n't got."

Meantime Captain Matt, in his perturbation, had abandoned all thought of dining, and was passing the hour, instead, in tramping up and down the veranda in front of his quarters, smoking, and cursing the futility of good intentions. And so he swore, the words coming smothered and half-broken between teeth gripped tight upon his amber pipe-stem.

Then more measured pacing up and down, with wrinkling of forehead and burning of black tobacco. And in a moment the amber pipe-stem snapped sharply in two, sending the bowl rattling upon the veranda floor, while the captain stood over it, holding the mouth-piece idly between his lips. He stooped slowly, picked up the bowl, and, with that infallible human instinct, fitted the broken edges together.

"Never before in my life have I bitten a pipe-stem in two," he said. "I wonder if a man in love might do a thing like that."

And thereafter the steady tap of his boot-heels grew less emphatic and resolute, as he took up his interrupted walk.

"There's no way for it," he said at last, "but to go and see her. I can't pick out the tangle; maybe she'll help me."

And so it came about—never mind the preliminaries—that on the next afternoon Captain Matt's yellow-lined cape was spread upon the ground in a beautiful spot in the October woods, with the commanding officer's niece sitting upon the cape, Captain Matt near her, his campaign hat drawn low over his face and his fingers locked tightly about his bent knees. His hands were almost bloodless, but the veins at his temples were turgid.

"I want to ask you something," he said, after a lapse of contemplative silence. "Do you like a perfectly truthful man?"

On the ride from the post, he had been in a very light-headed and irresponsible humor; now he was grown suddenly serious, and the girl was puzzled, though without showing it.

"How can I say?" she asked in return.

"You mean you've never known one?" he asked.

"Have you?" she parried.

"Well," he said, with heavy effort, "you shall have the novel experience, then, of talking for a few minutes with a man who for that length of time will guarantee to be perfectly and unreservedly truthful. I'll convince you of that by owning that before we left the post I drank a half-pint of brandy to put me in condition for what I have to say."

This was growing very serious, and the girl's eyes were shadowy with apprehension. Not that she was a love's novice; but there is always, even with the hardest veteran campaigner, which she was not, a certain breathlessness in such situations, not at all comfortable. So she tried to have her face express discouragement for the captain. But he did not look at her face; he was looking at the litter of brown leaves at his feet.

"Don't get frightened," he said. "I'm only dealing with generalities. You're a sensible woman, and I thought you might help me. In the last fifteen years," he went on deliberately, "I've swallowed on an average a pint of brandy every day. Let's see; that's forty-five gallons a year; say even seven hundred gallons in the fifteen years. I've come to depend on it. You see, I took to doing this to get away from my sober mental self, which I despise. The fact is, I'm like two men occupying the same quarters, and finding one another very uncongenial and hateful. Do you see? You have cause to know what I am in a natural state—I mean, in a sober state. I was perfectly sober the day we went wheeling. And at such times I'm no more entertaining to myself than I was to you. That's why I drink brandy. It sets my thoughts in motion, and makes me congenial company for myself, at any rate, and for the boys too, I reckon. Bad state of things, isn't it?"

The girl had lost her embarrassed apprehension; it had been covered up and smothered by vague wonder at the captain's strange speech, while she regarded him intently, with wide, surprised eyes. One might have doubted, looking at her, whether she wholly relished the new experience of meeting a truthful man.

"I know what you'd probably like to say," Captain Matt pursued; "at least, I know what ninety-nine women in a hundred would say; but maybe you're the hundredth. They'd say that the virtue of sobriety ought to be its own sufficient reward. But it is n't. The trouble is that when I'm sober—perfectly sober—I have n't sense enough to realize that it is a virtuous condition."

He paused, looking at her doubtfully, while his fingers toyed with the dry leaves. There was a quaking fear in his heart that she would not understand, or, understanding, could not appreciate. And all he saw in her face did not reassure him, for she seemed only troubled; not sympathetic, nor anything like it.

"Well?" he asked, when she did not speak. "What do you think of that? Don't be afraid to speak your mind; that's what I want."

"You ask a very strange thing," she said slowly.

"Oh, of course!" he assented eagerly. "That's natural. When a man says just what he means, he always says strange things. Now I want you to say just what you think, please."

"Tell me the rest," she said simply, "for of course there is more, is n't there?"

"Yes," he agreed; "there's a whole lot more. But the fact is, it's in a very chaotic state in my own mind. You see, I have n't wasted much time in thinking about it, until a little while ago. What was the use of thinking, really? There was no promise of anything to be gained by it. I've told you before that when I did n't drink, I could n't think, and when I'd take a drink or two to stimulate my mental processes, somehow the stimulated brain was never able to find consistent fault with itself. But somehow—I can't account for it wholly—somehow, within these last few days, I've got a shock of appreciation of the qualities I really lack. And I seem, when I look at it, to lack about every essential quality of manhood. And now that I've come to that state, brandy does n't help me; it only wakes me up to a fuller understanding of what I am, and what I ought to be. Well, that's about all, unless I undertake a moral homily on the facts. And confound all moral homilies! *Now* what do you think?"

She spoke readily enough, and very quietly, as though the matter were not new to her.

"It is a sad thing," she said. "It is always a sad thing to have a man fail of living up to his destiny. No man has any right to fail in that."

"What do you say a 'man's destiny' is?" he queried dubiously, for

her counsel promised, from its constrained beginning, to yield little more than the moral homily which he had derided.

"Why," she answered sharply, "a man's mission is to be a man. What else would you think? I'm afraid you'll think you've made a mistake, Captain, in coming to me for the usual run of womanly sympathy. But you *have* chosen to come to me," she went on, with a certain tense eagerness, "and I'm going to make use of the chance to say that I have no sort of soft sympathy to give to a man whose only claim to it is based upon his own deliberate, or at best unreasoning, squandering of his manhood."

Here was helpful counsel with a vengeance. Captain Matt took it in wide-eyed astonishment.

"Go it!" he cried involuntarily. "Say, I like that! It's different. It makes me feel as I've felt when I've run across an unexpected bottle of good stuff in a little frontier post sometimes. I mean, I did n't think you'd have the nerve to say such a thing. Women are n't nery, as a rule, you know. Only, this is n't altogether satisfactory, my lady. Look here; a clod lying in a furrow has abundant virtue—all that ever was. So has a dog, stretched out in the sun."

"They fill their places," she returned. "You can speak of them lightly, but they certainly fill their places, and fill them better than many men fill theirs—if men's places are the places of lords of creation, as they say of themselves. And a man is neither a clod nor a dog; you have to think of that, too. He's a rational creature; or he says he is. That ought to make it all the harder for him to justify his failure to live up to himself."

Captain Matt's lips were puckered, and his brows drawn close over his eyes. He was enjoying, in his turn, a novel experience.

"That's a very strange thing for a woman to say," he said slowly. "I always thought that a woman was fulfilling her mission when she was hard at work justifying a man's faults and shortcomings." It was a deliberate thrust, deliberately calculated to spur this companion to further frank speech.

"That's shameful!" she answered, with a dangerous light in her eyes. "Your notions of women must have been gotten from the study of very poor models. I know women go to very great lengths of forgiveness. But that's only to give a man another chance. It is n't justification. No woman ever justifies a man's shortcomings."

"Then, the corollary is that there's no justification for mine?" he said.

"Certainly not," she answered. "You know that. If you don't, you're hopeless. I know you did n't expect this," she went on, just a little bitterly, "but we ought to be honest with each other—I mean, men and women generally. So long as neither pretends to speak honestly to the other, are n't they bound to remain strangers—in effect? And that's

a pity. I think the trouble with you is—you've put the discussion on a personal ground, so I'm licensed to say this—you've not been honest with yourself. You've deluded yourself in a very irrational and unmanly way. I should be very sorry to find any excuse for it. The only excuse possible would be a very uncomplimentary one. You're going to pardon such plain speech, I know. I speak so plainly because it's a subject on which I've felt very deeply."

Captain Matt's astonishment was so genuine and so filled him that he had had no thought of taking offense at the hard, sharp words. His surprise was not so great at the words as at the woman. He could hardly think that this was the same creature who, in airy ball costume, had danced with him a week ago, and who had talked little nothings with him afterward, through five slow minutes. The face was the same. Hardly, either: it was now a transformed face, with strong lines about the self-possessed lips and the round chin, and a very clear light in the blue eyes. He confessed that he liked it better now. His heart was knocking strongly against his ribs, while he came to a slow realization of what a sorry spectacle he was making of himself. He confessed to himself that he had expected to find her much like other women. And he also confessed himself glad, in the midst of his shock of surprise, that he had been so mistaken.

"You—you've put it all very straight and plain," he said weakly, not knowing quite what to say. "I've been an egregious ass. I suppose when I own that, it's a step in the right direction?"

"Yes," she assented, with uncomplimentary readiness. "You said a while ago that you'd waked up to a sense of what you ought to be. Now there's nothing for it but to go on. I think a man can be just about what he wants to be. And I'm not sure—I'm going to use your comparison—I'm not sure but that it's better to be a success as a clod than to be a failure as a man."

Then a strange thing happened. A mist came over the blue eyes, and a weak trembling took possession of the firm lips. Then she bent her face into her hands and cried.

Now, it is very hard upon a man to have a woman cry when she talks to him; particularly as she may cry with equal propriety from any one of so great a variety of causes. He never knows whether to interpret her tears as a good or bad token. To know this, he would have to combine the qualities of man, prophet, demon, and angel, and be divinely inspired into the bargain. Probably even then his best effort would be but a rough guess. Being only mortal, and feeling the dead weight of his mortality as he had never felt it before in all his life, Captain Matt did not pretend to understand. He could do nothing but stand by in silence and let the girl cry. Once he lifted his nerveless fingers and lightly touched the loose waves of her hair, then set his teeth grimly and waited, paying no heed

to anything but the knocking of his heart, as it beat out the slow seconds, which threatened to lengthen well out into eternity before Madeline made a poor show of composing herself, and quavered :

“ Now please take me home.”

It was a day out of many, set apart and glorified. Yet on the ride homeward, Captain Matt saw nothing of this. He saw only what such a man may see when he looks fearlessly inward.

When he was in his own quarters, he walked straight to the sideboard in his dining-room. A decanter stood ready to his hand, with a glass beside it. Slowly he filled the glass, brimming full of the dusky liquor, then stood irresolute, looking at it. What he had drunk in the early afternoon had died out of his blood. He felt very inert and helpless, and his throat and lips were parched. He had no power to think, and he knew that the brandy would give him that power.

He took the glass in his hand and walked with it to the open fire, crackling in the grate. The firelight shone through the liquor, as he held it before him, the flames dancing lightly in it, making it glow and sparkle as though it had life of its own. Its rich odor was strong in his nostrils, tempting him.

With shaking hand, he tipped the glass over, letting the brandy fall, drop by drop, upon the fire, which leaped to meet it, sending it back into the air in curling flames of vivid blue.

And then the days were turned to slow dull torture, and the nights to slow dull pain. His brain was no more to be quickened into life; its only office seemed to be to show him what a sorry piece of abject misery a man may grow to be. His eyes were dull, seeing nothing beautiful; his ears were dull, hearing nothing beautiful. His hand was the weak, nerveless hand of an old man. Words were almost strangers to his lips, which were drawn into a thin, straight, colorless line.

He was so dull, so very dull, that he was well let alone; that was a great comfort to him. His brother officers talked, of course; they were bound to talk. Only the major of cavalry refrained from joining in the chorus of biting comment. The major held his peace, waiting.

Captain Matt's feet remained his friends. They walked with him—walked, walked, walked; miles, miles. He came to measure the passing of the sluggish days, not by hours, but by miles. Sometimes he thought dully of death, and dully envied those who had honorably gone through it. Yet, in spite of all this, he let his cognac alone, as though he had wholly done with it.

In all this time he did not see Madeline; he made no effort to see her; he seemed rather to avoid any possibility of meeting her.

After a fortnight of this, one slow night he walked, as was his constant habit, before his quarters. From the elm at the corner to the end of the gravel walk near the guard-house, seventy paces; back to the elm at

the corner, seventy paces. Time for the round trip, three minutes; twenty trips to the hour. How well he knew it!

The night was balmy, moonless, and cloudless. The leaves which yet clung to the trees were few and dry, and rustled a protest when the wind disturbed them. It was a night full of soothing and healing. No man has measured life at its broadest part who has not lived through such a night out of doors, with all his senses broad awake.

The sentry at the guard-house started the familiar call: "Post Number One! Two o'clock, and all's well!"

Captain Matt listened to the call as it passed from one to another of the sentries on post, growing faint and fainter, then swelling nearer, until its round was complete, and Number One made his report, in softened tones, "All's well!"

A light sense of peace came upon the tired listener—an indefinable lifting of the weight which had borne him down. It was as though the words were not a mere perfunctory expression of guard duty, but a specific message to himself. He lifted his cap, and let the air touch his hair and forehead.

He heard a door open and close in one of the houses down the line, followed by the sharp crack of a match. He could see the fitful glare of the match's light on the veranda of the quarters of the major of cavalry, and knew by the intermittent flashing and dying down of the flame that the major was lighting a cigar. In a moment he saw the old man come down the steps, into the dim light of the open night.

The major was the only man in the post for whom Captain Matt cherished a close regard. He offered no resistance to the impulse which led his feet in the direction the major was taking.

The older man paused when he heard the footfall, and knew it was not the regular step of a sentry.

"Oh! It's you, is it?" he said in recognition, when the captain was beside him. "Hang these sleepless nights! I'm getting old, I reckon. Have n't slept a wink, and thought I might get sleepy if I walked and smoked a little. Have a cigar?"

In silence Captain Matt lit the proffered cigar; then fell into slow step with his companion.

"Not much inducement to sleep, such a night as this," he said, with a final effort. "You don't see such nights in November anywhere but here in this valley."

"Oh, the night's all right, I reckon," the major assented. "But there's a time for everything. Two o'clock in the morning ought to find a healthy man with his eyes shut and his mouth open, snoring. Where you been hiding? You missed the best billiard tournament we've had in years. Billy took first place; I suppose you heard. That's because you were n't there. Have n't been sick, have you?"

This was with malice aforethought on the part of the major.

"No," Captain Matt said; "you've seen me on parade."

"Oh! So I have," the major returned. "Of course! Well, you have n't quit us, have you? We've had no end of a good time, with the boys here on duty on this last court-martial. Have you seen the detail? Some of 'em came from little Montana posts, and had n't had a chance to let themselves go loose in a big post for Lord knows when. Bully fellows, too, most of 'em. Don't know what you've missed."

The impulse was strong upon Captain Matt to talk—to open up his heart to the fullest. He knew he could find in the major deep sympathy, though it had to be dug out laboriously from beneath a crust of inconsequential levity.

"Major," he said, acting upon the impulse, "I told you once, a couple of weeks ago, something about a—girl. Do you remember?"

"Did, eh?" the major said dryly. "You've thought better of it, and want to buy me off from giving anything away?"

"No," Captain Matt said tersely; "I want to say something more."

The major relieved himself of a thick chuckle as he flicked the ashes from his cigar.

"Say," he said, "can't you come in and sit by my bed while you do your talking? I reckon maybe I might get to sleep."

Captain Matt paid no heed to this, but laid his hand upon the major's stout shoulder, and kept it there while he talked.

"I took her out with me one day," he said, "and I just let myself go and told her everything—everything about myself, I mean, and what I'd made and failed to make out of myself. I did n't say a word about my—about what I thought of her, of course. I told her just what I was, and how I'd lived, to get her idea on such things. And I got it, Major; oh, I got it! I thought she'd talk as a woman mostly does, so as to give a man a chance to dodge when something threatened to hit him. But she talked like a gatling gun. There was nothing for me to do but sit there and take it, until I was riddled through and through. Might as well have tried to dodge blue lightning. And then, just when I began to think I'd struck one of these unnatural freaks in womanhood, why, she broke down crying, just as any woman might. I've been sober ever since."

"Very affecting," the major commented heartlessly. But his cigar betrayed him. It was glowing in a succession of short, fierce puffs, and it shook as though the lips which held it were not altogether firm.

"And now, I suppose, if I'd let you, you'd say that you are very unhappy?"

"Likely, if I had the heart to say anything at all," Captain Matt agreed. "I *am* unhappy."

"Of course; of course!" said the major, but as though his thoughts were not much concerned with what he said. "Well"—after a pause—

"what business have you to concern yourself with happiness, any way, Mr. Philosopher? Don't you know happiness is only the rightful property of blind fools?" Then another very smoky interval of silence.

"Look here, Matt; you did n't tell her anything about what you thought of her?"

"No," Captain Matt said. "I thought that would n't be fair then, until she knew more about me, and I knew more about myself. Would it?"

"And she *cried*?" the major went on heedlessly. "What did you do when she cried?"

"Nothing," Captain Matt said. "Only waited until she got through and then came home. What was there to do?"

The major threw his cigar into the roadway and spat after it scornfully.

"Matt," he said, "if happiness is the reward of the darned fool, you certainly ought to be happy. I've got nothing more to say to you." And he stamped stoutly into his quarters.

For the rest of the night, Captain Matt walked, walked. To be called a darned fool may be to a man the elixir of life. The curt words had jarred Captain Matt broad awake, and set his thoughts flowing straight forward. It was as though the obstruction to their flow had been suddenly taken away, and the pent up flood loosed. But it was yet the middle of the night, and he had to wait for morning. So he walked, walked, walked; studying himself, and studying the line of the east for the long delayed, gray dawn. In those hours he seemed to take his first firm hold of a man's life, and found it to have three dimensions—to be something tangible and substantial. Such a man does not often pray; at least, his prayers seldom take wordy form. Captain Matt came as near prayer as he could, while he walked and waited for day, and with the first gleam of gray light his "Thank God!" had a very genuine ring in it.

He was far out upon the hills back of the post when he caught the notes of the bugles at reveillé, and the throbbing boom of the sunrise gun, rolling away and dissolving into faint and fainter echoes. "Thank God!" he said again. Never before had reveillé carried such meaning.

When he returned to the post, guard-mount was just over, and a few spectators lingered upon the sunlit benches around the parade ground. Madeline Owen was one, and she sat alone. Captain Matt walked to her side, and spoke before she knew of his presence.

"Madeline, I've something to say to you. May I sit down here?"

A wave of warm color came to her cheeks as she raised her eyes to his face. It was a strangely altered face, pale and tense with the strain of mighty self-suppression. Life and love and their full fruitage were to be won or lost; yet he did not hesitate, but plunged straightforward into the thick of hot speech.

"I've spent the time since two o'clock this morning thanking God

that I'm a man. It's true at last. I'm a man. I know it because I love you as no one but a whole man could love such a woman. And loving you has made manhood attainable to me. You need have no fear in letting me say this, because I'm not afraid of myself any more."

The eyes which looked into his were very clear and sweet and beautiful.

"No," she said quietly; "I'm not afraid."

"Say, Matt," said the post adjutant on the morning of the wedding, "what was it you said once at the club about unphilosophical fools——"

"Hush, Billy," Captain Matt cautioned. "Don't you know that one of the fixed habits of the true philosopher is to shed his outgrown ideas? It's only when a man is poverty stricken in ideas that he hates to give one up."



LATENT

BY KATE PUTNAM OSGOOD

WITHOUT the garden wall it grows,
 A flowerless tree,
 Wrung by the restless blast that blows
 Across the sea:
 Forgotten of the fickle Spring,
 The scanty leaves droop, withering:
 Scarce would it seem—poor, sapless thing!—
 A rose to be!

Yet must the frail and faded spray
 A rose remain,
 Though bitter, blowing winds to-day
 Its growth restrain.
 Somewhere, however these deny,
 The color and the fragrance lie;
 Somewhere the perfect flower its dry
 Dull stalks contain!

If in a kindlier soil perchance
 The root should grow,
 Where dews would fall, and sunbeams glance,
 And soft airs flow,
 Fair as the flower the garden shows
 The leaf might spring, the bud unclose:—
 From out the calyx of a rose
 A rose will blow!

HIS MOTHER

By Ina Brevoort Roberts

AS she prepared the room for their arrival, she puzzled a good deal over the fact that they were coming. They would start as soon as they were married. She could not understand. She had never before heard of a case like it. Coming to spend the first days of their married life in the home of the bridegroom's parents!

She and his father had talked it over when the telegram came, and had agreed that it certainly was strange. They had also been a good deal surprised at the sudden wedding, too hastily arranged to allow time for them to get there. So they, his father and his mother, had not been at their son's wedding. They had confided to each other their disappointment, but not the secret fear each held that perhaps the son's feeling was that his country parents might be out of place at a fashionable city wedding. For the bride and her family *were* fashionable; his letters had told them that, between the lines.

On the very day of the wedding had come this telegram:

Married at noon. With you for supper. Put us in my old room.

HARVEY.

His old room! They would be far more comfortable in the guest room, which was large. But Harvey loved that room he had slept in as a boy; he always insisted on sleeping there when he came on visits, though the room was hot in summer and cold in winter. Luckily this was spring—April.

While she cleaned the room, and then, after her husband and the hired man had moved the shabby furniture out and the guest-room mahogany in, straightened and arranged the place to the best advantage, she puzzled over their coming. But the more she thought about it, the less could she understand.

When everything else was ready, she brought in a big bunch of yellow flowers and placed them in a glass pitcher on the dresser.

"They will seem like a welcome in case I freeze up," she thought. "I'm going to try not to, try my very best, but I don't know. Sometimes I wonder if even God knows what a mother suffers when her only son

marries; for God is n't a mother. There, this place looks about as well as it can be made to look, all except that bare space on the mantel. I wish I had something handsome to put there. Yet, if he did n't marry, there could n't be grandchildren. Perhaps there won't be, any way. Most people don't want them nowadays."

These thoughts continued while she dressed in her best black cashmere. Her husband had brought the material for this dress on his return from one of his rare trips away. He had not known that cashmere is out of fashion, but he did know that the best was none too good for her; so the quality of the dress made up somehow for its lack of style, the soft, rich goods fell so gracefully and shone so.

She was going to lose him; he was lost already. He was married, and a son married was sometimes almost worse than a son buried. These thoughts, while not cheerful, crowded out others too bitter to be borne—thoughts of the injustice of it all, the portion allotted to a mother—a laurel wreath for her brow, loads for her tired back until she felt like a very beast of burden, and for her soul, self-sacrifice, always self-sacrifice.

She was fastening the bar enamel pin Harvey had sent the previous Easter when she heard the sound of old Legislature's footsteps and the familiar roll of carriage-wheels.

She descended the stairs, resolutely clutching at the courage that seemed to be departing with the haste and enthusiasm of a runaway child.

They came into the hall, her husband, her son, and his wife, and she was gathered into Harvey's arms. A moment later she was shaking hands with a woman who had not left girlhood very far behind her, who *was* fashionable—oh, yes, very fashionable—and not beautiful, but good to look at.

His mother's first feeling for the bride was a warm one—it was a sense of gratitude because the new arrival had not offered to kiss her. She *could* not kiss people she did not love.

Supper was got through without awkwardness; it was even a cheerful meal. His mother realized that her son's wife was to a marked degree what he called "well-bred." He was always using the word on his visits home. Doubtless this was one of the qualities he had admired in this woman he had married; certainly she had it, in full measure.

As they rose from the table, the aspect of the situation subtly but unmistakably changed. Until that moment the bride's part had been—not passive; she was not the type of woman to whom that word applies, for even in response she suggested activity—not passive, but acquiescent. She had been the well-bred, receptive guest. Now it was almost as if they had all been driving together, and she had said in smooth, gentle tones, "Let me hold the reins awhile."

Before supper she had refused the mother's offer to go upstairs, saying they had bathed and made themselves tidy before leaving the train,

and the drive had seemed short. Now she turned and smiled into the eyes of her husband's mother.

"I should like to go to my room," she said. "I want to unpack some gowns that crush easily. Will you come with me? I have an idea Harvey gets his fondness for an after-dinner stroll from his father. Perhaps we can get rid of them for a time while I show you my new frocks and hats."

Silently the mother led the way upstairs. Silently she took the chair her daughter-in-law drew forward, and watched and listened while wonderful hats and gowns came forth from the trunk.

The bride lifted a creation of a marvellous shade of blue, the silk so soft and shimmering that it seemed shot with silver.

"I thought I'd wear this to church Sunday," she said. "It's the one I like best, and I do want to shine on my first appearance among the people who have known Harvey all his life."

The mother's silence deepened till it left her dumb; she could not have spoken if she had tried.

They were going to stay almost a week, then! She had never before heard of such a thing; she could not understand it.

"Are you going to spend your honeymoon *here*?" she found herself asking. Perhaps the question was rude, but it seemed out of her power to keep it back. She must get at the bottom of this mystery. Perhaps already there was something wrong between her and Harvey.

The bride left her unpacking and came to stand directly in front of her mother-in-law.

"Not quite all of it," she answered. "We're going away for just a few days before we come back to settle down."

"Come back! Settle down!" echoed his mother.

"Yes. I'll get to that presently, but first I want to ask you something——"

His mother realized that this woman's eyes looked right at you.

"Did you think it very odd, our coming here now? Because I just had to: I wanted you so. I even wanted his old belongings, because they seemed part of him, too. But most of all I wanted you. I've loved you ever since I first began to love him, almost more than I love my own mother. She gave me life, but you gave me him, and what would life be worth without him? I said to myself that perhaps we should not understand each other just at first, that possibly we would close our hearts as people so often do just when they ought to open them. But I promised myself always to remember that anything I did n't like in you was just on the surface, that under it all you were *him*. I felt that if I came to you to-day, I should n't mind so much leaving my own mother. You see, we were going to wait and have a large wedding, to please my family, but suddenly we realized that it was *our* marriage, and our right was to have it as we chose, and that life spent apart from each other was not living in

the fullest sense of the word. So we just got married and came here. You don't mind our having come, do you?"

"Mind! But most people want to get away quite by themselves for their honeymoon; they cannot seem to be alone together enough."

The bride shook her head. "We cannot be like that; we're too happy. We mortals cannot stand more than so much happiness; it would kill us. When I've been alone with Harvey for awhile I just cannot stand any more joy; I have to get away and get rid of my happiness by trying to pass it on to other people. Of course each one of us can give joy only to a few, but by turning the joy into comfort, or counsel, or inspiration, or cheer, or whatever the individual to be helped needs, it can be made to go a long way."

His mother returned the gaze of those candid gray eyes with one quite as direct.

"You are different from other women," she said.

The bride smiled, and a lovely color stormed in her face. "That is what Harvey says," she replied. "After a few days here, we'll slip away, and then we're coming back to set up housekeeping and Harvey's going to start to practise."

"Here! Give up his city practice and be a doctor here?"

"Why not? Here in his own home town, among his old friends. Surely he'd rather cure them than strangers! Of course a man who wants to grow must not vegetate, he needs the city, but we shall go there often. We're going to roam around a good deal. As Harvey says, 'A rolling stone gathers no moss, but what good is moss to a stone?' He also says that when you visit the city it gives to you; when you live in it, it takes from you. I mean to find out whether he is right. I've never lived in the country."

"But your people—how will they get on without you?" The mother was feeling swept off her feet. Her son would come back and live near her, stay close where perhaps she could see him every day! It seemed incredible.

The bride's gay laugh made a girl of her. "Oh, my people!" she cried. "I shall have them visit me in and out of season. Almost every married woman keeps her house full of her relatives, but I think a man ought to be able to go to his, so that they can sometimes have him to themselves. So when Harvey feels that he's getting more of my people than he likes, he can just run away here."

The speaker had been arranging her belongings on the dresser.

The mother was beginning to discern what the other woman had meant by saying one could have too much joy. Instead of taking her son farther away, marriage would bring him nearer. Even *this* day she had not been alone, and on the first Sunday, that she had dreaded because of its memories of a sweet-faced boy in a white sailor suit holding up his mouth

to be kissed before he hurried away to recite the Sunday-school lesson she had put into his clean little heart—this Sunday was not to be a lonely Sunday at all, but a proud day on which she would proceed up the church aisle and sit in the pew with her son and a radiant vision in moon-kissed blue. And afterward she would introduce— “This is my son’s wife; they’re spending their honeymoon with us.” Oh, it was all *too* wonderful!

The bride was taking from her trunk a good-sized, very flat package.

“I *received* so many, many lovely wedding gifts, I felt I must *give* one,” she said, “so I have brought you a present. I do not have to say, ‘I hope you will like it’; I *know* you will.”

The unwrapping disclosed a photograph of Harvey, one of those exquisitely-toned modern portraits that bring out to entire satisfaction the character and personality of the person pictured.

The mother looked long at the picture of her boy; then she laid it carefully down and went and put her arms around the other woman. They stood silently, locked in each other’s embrace. As the mother lifted her head to wipe her eyes, her glance fell on the space on the mantel that lacked something; she knew now what.

Still without speaking, she hurried away, returning in a moment with a picture of a baby. This she put into the hands of the bride.

She had its duplicate in her own bedroom, but there had never been any one to give this picture to who would care quite enough for it. So she had just kept it put away. She knew now for what purpose it had been made and saved.

The bride had forgotten her presence. She was talking to the picture, calling it foolish, loving names and now and then kissing it.

While she waited, the mother unconsciously moved toward the bed and turned down the covers and placed the pillows as she always did when Harvey was at home. When she had finished the bride was still absorbed in the picture.

It was then that inspiration came to his mother. “I’ll go down and send Harvey up,” she thought, and started on her errand, but met him just outside of the door.

“What have you done with my wife?” he asked laughingly, and would have put his arms around her but she pushed him away.

“Go in,” she said. “Go quickly; there’s a tableau you’ll want to see.”

He obeyed, and she went on downstairs and threw herself, sobbing, into her husband’s arms.

He tried to soothe her.

“Don’t, Mother; don’t. It will be easier after you get used to it. They all have to go that way. We did. And she seems pretty nice.”

“Used to it! Nice!” she repeated. “Why, John, you don’t understand. We haven’t lost him at all, and she—why, she’s the daughter I’ve always wanted!”

INCORRIGIBLE

By John Kendrick Bangs



THE Poet of Cheer sat in his library, deep in thought, while his poor wife was wrestling after the fashion of Eve with the serpents of domestic cares.

"Really, Wadsworth," the good woman said as she entered the room timidly, "I hate to disturb you, but you must do something about the coal. There is n't a scuttleful left in the cel——"

"Ah, Maria dear," said the Poet, looking up from his work, "you are just in time. Listen to this, dear:

"Now, what care I for winter's woe,
And what care I if coal be low?
I find my warmth in yonder skies,
And soothe the chill of winter's guise
By gazing into Susan's eyes,
So lustrously aglow!"

"That's very pretty, Waddy dear," said the poor woman, "but just at present there are more pressing things than poetry that must be attended to. Cook has just left us because her wages were not paid prompt——"

"That reminds me," said the Poet, smiling sweetly: "I have n't read this little thing to you that I dashed off last night:

"What though my friends have passed me by,
And left me stranded here?
What though my hearth is cold, and I
A hopeless wreck appear?
'Mid all the dread of loneliness,
And all the woes that round me press,
There's rare felicity
When Polly's smile,
So free from guile,
Like sunshine shines on me."

"Rather nice, eh?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Jinx; "but really, Wad dear, I can't smile on you with the cooking to do, and the children to wash and dress——"

"Ah, the children!" cried the Poet ecstatically. "There you hit the supremest joys of life. O ye kiddies, chickabiddies, full of joyous play! Though skies be dark, and care and cark shall linger on my way, no plaint of mine, no grievous whine, shall ever come from me whilst I can hear their laughter clear up in the nursery."

There was no answer. Mrs. Jinx had disappeared, and the Poet resumed his work. When two hours had passed and the pangs of hunger had begun to make themselves felt, the Poet rose from his desk and called:

"Maria!"

There was no answer, and the Poet repeated the call:

"Oh, Maria! I'm ready for my lu-unch!"

Still there was no reply, and the Poet walked out into the kitchen. There pinned to the icy range was a sheet of paper on which were written, in his wife's handwriting, the following lines:

Now, what care I for cark and care,
 And unpaid bills 'round everywhere,
 And life domestic with its snare,
 Or woe that courage smothers?
 When dark and dreary is the sky
 I shall not weep, nor shall I sigh,
 Because the Kids, and also I,
 Have gone back home to Mother's!

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" said the Poet, as he read this effusion over. "For general irresponsibility of conduct, give me a woman!"



COUNTERPARTS

BY ALICE WELLINGTON ROLLINS

"I CANNOT lure them!—I, who cannot fly!"
 With listless petals on the summer air,
 The drooping flower breathed a quivering sigh
 For dainty butterflies that would not care.

Upon her breast a touch of velvet wings:—
 Even as on the air her sigh arose,
 Had come to her the restless, fluttering things,
 Lured by the loveliness of her repose.

BENTLEY'S TIGER-SKIN

By Charles Wharton Stork

OF course everybody at Harvard knew it was a joke, Bentley's being hard up for money, but, then, he was constitutionally fond of jokes, and this was merely his latest. Bentley was the spoiled only son of a widowed and well-to-do mother. No doubt he *was* in debt, had anticipated his allowance, and could not for the moment borrow from any of his particular set—a very particular set it was, too, by the way. At all events, this was why Bentley, to add one joke to another, had decided to meet his pressing needs by auctioning the splendid tiger-skin given him by his maternal uncle, Major Archibald Hetherington, an officer of the English army in India. Bentley had been named after this uncle, and hoped to be remembered when the rich old bachelor should come to divide his fortune.

Such an exclusive event as the auctioning of Bentley's tiger-skin was not supposed to be announced to the general herd of undergraduates; nevertheless, Henry Dain got wind of it. To be sure, Dain was far from being of the general herd, but, on the other hand, he had failed to gain entrance into the famous Pentagram Fraternity, of which Bentley was a leading light. Furthermore, it happened that Dain had learned just why he had not been admitted: Bentley, who had not the slightest personal knowledge of him, had strongly opposed his election. Dain must have learned this through his friend, Chris Fallon, another paladin of the Pentagram, who had tried to get him in. Perhaps it was also through Fallon that Henry heard of the auction. At any rate, he turned up among the crowd at Bentley's room in Dunderley Hall just as the affair was beginning.

Just after lunch had been the time selected, and Gus Hawley, Bentley's room-mate, was the auctioneer. He was standing in the middle of the room, beside the famous tiger-skin, which was draped over a morris-chair. It was a superb specimen, nine feet from nose to tip of tail, of a soft golden brown color shading to pure white at the edges, the whole enhanced by thin, sharp slashings of black.

"Fifty, I am bid," Gus was saying. "Fifty dollars, gentlemen, for this magnificent tiger-skin. Sixty, did you say? Very good. Sixty! Oh, this is ridiculous, gentlemen, sixty dollars for such a skin. Feel it, gentlemen. This is no mangy Princeton tiger, but a royal Bengal, with

nine hundred and ninety-nine stripes on his body and one on his tail. Count them for yourselves if you don't believe me. Come, gentlemen, you have never seen such a skin—not a blemish on it. Shot clean through the heart the first time—you can't see the mark because the animal's heart was in his mouth at the moment.”

“Sixty-five,” said Dain. Several fashionable fellows looked at him in surprise, perceiving that he was not of their set; others, who knew he was not wealthy, were equally astonished at the bid. The auction continued, and Dain hung on till, after the hundred mark was passed, the advances became very slow. Even at Harvard a hundred dollars seems like a good deal of money.

“One hundred and ten! Going—going. One hundred and ten, for the third and last time.”

“One hundred and fifteen.”

“One hundred and fifteen! Some life in the old brute yet! Who'll make it a hundred and twenty? Going—going. Last call, gentlemen. Going—going—and gone to Mr. Dain at one hundred and fifteen dollars.”

Dain handed over the results of two months' tutoring and threw the enormous hide over his shoulders, feeling that he had made something of a fool of himself. His had been the rashness of the conservative man, which breaks out the more violently from having so few opportunities. He could not have spared himself that moment of triumph over the insolent Bentley. As he went, Gus was saying to his chum:

“There's one good thing, Archie; you can buy it back any time you like. He'll always be glad to get the money.”

Some months later, not long before Class Day, Henry Dain received his long-expected visit from Bentley. Truth compels us to say that Dain was somewhat disappointed in the other's manner; it was not nearly so overbearing as he had expected it to be; indeed, it was not overbearing at all. Bentley's heavy blonde handsomeness was confident but not aggressive. Strange, the mistaken preconceptions men form of each other. At the same time, the visitor was wondering at Dain's refinement. He had a lean, scholarly look, but not the least trace of the “greasy grind.” The object of the call, however, was not conducive to developing friendship.

“I dropped in to see if I could get back my tiger-skin,” Bentley began, glancing to where it hung on the wall between Rembrandt's “Night Watch” and Hals's “Laughing Cavalier.”

“Well, I've grown quite fond of it,” Dain answered guardedly.

“No doubt. But, you see, I want to have it back for Class Day. What will you take for it?” The visitor had not meant to be rudely abrupt; he had been driven to it by a certain feeling of awkwardness under the steady eye of Dain.

“What will you bid?”

"Oh, make it a hundred and fifty: that ought to be a good return on your money." Bentley was now sure the purchase had been merely a speculation.

"I won't accept it."

"Oh, come, now."

"No. On the whole, I've decided not to part with it."

"But as a favor."

"I'm not sure just what favor a man owes to another who has kept him out of a fraternity from sheer caprice."

"What do you mean?"

"You did n't even know me by sight when you opposed my election to the Pentagram. If you did, you may have your skin."

"Confound it all, Dain, I give you my word I had nothing personal against you!"

"That's just what I thought. And yet you kept me out. Now, if you think it's fair to make a special point of keeping a man you don't know out of an important club—you did n't just vote against me, you gave the impression of having a particular dislike for me—if you think that's fair, why, you can have your tiger-skin for nothing."

Bentley was completely discomfited. He felt that he was being treated hardly, yet he could not defend himself. He had not thought he was showing any rancor against Dain at the election; he had merely had a candidate of his own to propose for one of the limited number of vacancies, and had wished to keep a place open. Things were often done that way. He was not used to being called to account so strictly. It did sound mean the way Dain put it. Some such muddle of ideas was in his head, but he had never been very good at expressing himself, and the relentless logic of his host was not encouraging. He longed to cut the Gordian knot and beg pardon for having behaved badly, but the coldness of Dain's manner checked him, and the best he could say was, "If you feel that way about it, I guess I may as well go." And he went. It may perhaps seem odd that after this interview each of the two had a better opinion of the other. Such impressions come apparently from the sixth sense; whatever the cause, the result was undoubtedly as we have stated.

One afternoon in the week before Class Day a cheerful, elegant-looking youth was pacing about in Dain's little study with very evident impatience. It was Chris Fallon, one of those fortunate fellows who are clever as well as stylish, and who therefore are on the best terms with both the intellectual and the fashionable elements of the university. Just now his attention was divided between the street below and the tiger-skin, which he seemed once or twice on the point of carrying off bodily. At last, however, his waiting was rewarded, and he called out, "Come up here quick, Harry. I've been waiting for you an hour." A few moments later Dain hurried in.

"What's doing, Chris?"

"It's about that tiger-skin of Bentley's, old man. Gus Hawley told me at lunch to-day that the uncle who gave it to him is coming to his room to-day. He's an English major or something, I believe, and Bentley thinks he'll be simply wild if he finds out the skin's been sold. He's a rich old dodo, but peppery as the mischief. Archie is his favorite nephew, but there's no knowing what the old boy would do if he was offended. That was the biggest tiger he ever shot."

"Wish he'd told me that before," said Dain thoughtfully.

"Who?"

"Why, Bentley. He came here to buy it back about a week ago."

"Well, it may not be too late yet. You're here just in time. Come on, let's take it over."

"All right. Down she comes."

"That's bully of you. I didn't think you'd let the Pentagram stand in your way in a case like this."

By this time the skin was detached from the wall, and the two lost no time in piling it on their shoulders and rushing down into the street. As they ran along with their conspicuous burden exposed to the public view, they soon found themselves at the head of a procession. Small boys, starting up from nowhere, yelled, "Gee! Get on to de tiger!" Idle freshmen dashed out to laugh at them, fair maidens followed at a distance, even a white-haired professor diverted his stroll to see the upshot of the matter.

"Suppose the Major sees us coming," panted Harry, as they hove in sight of Dunderley.

"Have to risk it now," snorted Chris, over his shoulder. "I told Gus to be on the watch for us."

As they neared the door in the midst of their troop, a large carriage was driving away.

"The deuce! We're too late, after all!" exclaimed Chris as they stopped at the entrance. Gus was waiting in an agony.

"Too bad! He's just gone in."

"That is hard luck. We came as fast as we could. Dain only got back five minutes ago."

"See here, fellows," Harry struck in, "can't we get it up yet? His window's open. Yell to Bentley to drop the rope of his fire-escape."

"That's an idea!" Gus chuckled. "The uncle only went in this minute, just before you came round the corner, and the elevator's sure to be at the top story."

"Hello, Archie-ee!"

"Yes. What is it, Chris?"

"We've just brought your skin over. Drop your life-rope and pull it up before you let your uncle in."

Though awkward of speech, Bentley, as a foot-ball man, could think and act quickly. In two seconds the rope was lowered, the skin was inserted in the loop, and half a minute later it was pulled up, flapping and dangling, amid the cheers of the delighted, though mystified, populace.

Almost immediately afterward, Bentley was apologizing to his uncle for keeping him waiting at the door. "You see, Uncle, I was just fixing up the room a little." Major Hetherington, assuring him that it had n't been a minute, entered in high spirits, followed by Archie's mother and his younger sister, Grace, whose presence in the party no one of our actors had yet seen fit to mention.

"Ah, there he is!" exclaimed the Major, going to the tiger-skin the moment he entered the room. "How well I remember the night I potted him! You don't usually keep him on the floor, I hope?"

"Oh, dear, no, Uncle. He's never been there before to-day—for your visit, you know."

Major Hetherington was a typical specimen of the handsome British officer, red of face and hearty of manner. His volubility suggested a temper sometimes choleric, but at present he was the soul of good humor.

"So friendly the boys are here!" he remarked. "I heard them cheering outside just a moment after I arrived. I'm afraid our English lads would n't have been enthusiastic enough for that."

"You see, Uncle, we don't often have a chance to cheer an English officer," explained Archie.

When the Major looked out into the street, where most of the crowd were still loitering, his imposing presence elicited another cheer, which made him beaming more than ever.

Ten minutes later friends began to arrive, including a chaperon and several girls, for Archie had arranged a moderate spread for the occasion. Among the rest was Chris Fallon, who soon contrived to get a few words aside with the host.

"Do you know, Archie, I think it was pretty decent of Dain to bring around that skin. It was his idea, too, about pulling it up from outside."

"It saved me, all right. I hate to think what the Major would have said if he had n't seen it. That certainly was decent of Dain. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll run over and ask him in, Gus. You can look after things here for a minute."

The result of this was that in about ten minutes Bentley returned with the owner of the tiger-skin. His mission had not been achieved without opposition, but the genuine good-comradeship which had made him so widely popular soon prevailed over Dain's reluctance. The new arrival was promptly presented to Major Hetherington and the ladies, and was made to feel as much at ease as possible. It thus happened that he found himself seated on a sofa beside a slender, quiet-looking girl, who had been introduced to him as Miss Bentley.

"Are you the Mr. Dain who writes for the *Advocate*?" she began as soon as they had gotten settled.

"I'm afraid I must plead guilty. None of the other Dains go in for verse."

"Oh, but I'm sure you ought to be proud of 'Leander.' I thought it was charming, so picturesque and musical."

"Well, I think 'Leander' was better than most of my stuff."

"I wonder Archie never spoke of you. The last time he was home I mentioned your name, and he knew at once who you were, but I did n't gather that you were at all intimate."

"Well, the truth is, we have n't been intimate very long. . . . Bentley is your brother, then?"

"Why, of course. Don't we look alike?"

Dain observed her more carefully, finding it incidentally a very pleasant process. Her white dress and delicate features stood out against the dark furnishings of the room. It mattered little to Harry that they were surrounded by a jostling crowd: he had always the poet's power of isolating anything that interested him from everything that did not.

"Yes, you do look like him," Harry said at last, suppressing the most important part of his conclusions. The fact was that, though pretty and of a blonde complexion, Grace was very different from her brother. In contrast to his air of physical superiority, she had inherited from her mother the subdued voice and repose of manner of an English girl, which did not, however, prevent her from having the sparkle of an American debutante. Harry found her charming, especially her sincerity and easy directness.

"I'm glad you see it," she continued. "Archie is exactly my ideal of one kind of man. Of course I'm just the opposite myself. He likes athletics and society, and I'm fond of nature and music and books. I really did n't expect to meet any literary friends of his."

Harry did not explain how recent the friendship had been, and Grace came back to the subject of "Leander." What compliment is more irresistible for an author than to have his favorite poem cited with praise? Soon these two, oblivious of the rest, were deep in discussion over all the important things of life. They discovered that neither of them cared for society as an end in itself, that both were devoted to music, that both believed poetry should be uplifting and not merely beautiful, that both were firmly convinced that only those congenial in tastes should marry. This was doing pretty well for a first conversation, but of course they did not realize the logical conclusion toward which their thoughts were travelling.

When at last, after the fifth description of how he shot the tiger, Major Hetherington insisted on departing, Dain quickly arranged to see something of Miss Bentley during the approaching festivities. He took a

most cordial farewell of Archie, and went back to his room, inwardly revolving many things.

Mrs. Bentley and Grace remained after the Major's departure, as the family had arranged to dine together at the Union. It was then that Archie first had a chance to say a few words to his sister.

"Well, Gracie, which one of the fellows did you get along with best?"

"Oh, I was talking nearly all the time with Mr. Dain."

"Really! What did you make of him?"

"I think he's the most interesting man I ever met," she replied thoughtfully.

"He's a very *original* fellow, I dare say," proceeded Archie, giving a peculiar accent to "original," as if it were a rather dubious quality.

"Oh, extremely. I wonder a little how you happened to be intimate with him."

"It was partly an accident." At this moment he was regarding the tiger-skin at his feet, but he did not explain further.

"Well, anyhow, it was a very *nice* accident," Grace concluded; which was undoubtedly true.



LORDLING LOVE AND LADY FAIR

A MAN is known by the company he keeps; a woman, by the company she avoids.

Jessie E. Henderson

A GIRL of twenty judges a married man by his treatment of her; a girl of thirty by the way he treats his wife.

Ann M. Walker

A WOMAN may be a mystery to a man and to herself, but never to another woman.

A. C. Dixon

SMART people never entertain angels unawares: they ask a few friends to meet them.

R. G. Sutherland

THE road to the graveyard is paved with successful operations.

R. N. Price, Jr.

THERE is no discount on the cost of experience.

L. B. Coley

THE BOOK OF HIS YOUTH

By Harriet Joor

THE chill of early morning yet lingered in the high, breeze-swept scriptorium, though April sunshine wrought pale arabesques upon the gray, flagged floor, and Brother Francis shivered as he waited by the cupboard of supplies for his allotment of parchment and colors, and his hand shook as it drew the fallen cowl more closely about his throat.

Those long, nervous hands, deep-veined and shrunken like rose-geranium leaves, always trembled now, save when brush or pen lay in their clasp to steady them; and the covertly watchful faces of the men about him changed subtly, like running water under shade and shine, as the tall, spare form made its way to the table by the window,—pity, and fear, and sullen malice for that one moment peering out all unabashed from the lattice of the soul. For to-day even the dullest might see that Francis was growing old, and the exigent master-illuminator was more feared than loved by his fellow workers.

Nathaniel, alone, smiled greeting, noting, as the elder man paused at his desk, a strange, absent look in the sunken eyes that were wont to gleam so sharply from their shadowy caverns; but when he would have spoken the old artist had slipped on silently to his own place.

As the morning hours wore on, Francis, with the habit of a lifetime, bent patiently above his parchment sheet, while the shrunken fingers, unflinching, drew fine vermilion lines about a foliated capital, and washed in the shimmering background; but far-away voices, that his brothers could not hear, were calling to him from green sunlit ways, and the lure that had quickened his boyish pulse lay once more upon his spirit.

For in the night, as sometimes happens to the old, his boyhood had come flooding back from the hidden places of memory, blurring the later years with all their pride of achievement, and dimming the faces of his brothers.

Feverishly he paused, drawing an unsteady hand across his sunken temples, then resolutely dipped his brush once more into the color-box. But memories kept tugging at his heart.

He was a boy again, gathering bramble-berries with his sister at the

edge of the stubble-fields, and a sparrow-hawk was wheeling and dipping in the blue sky, while the sound of sheep-bells came faintly across the downs, and the scent of bean-flowers drifted by on the warm air.

There must be strawberries ripening in the copse beyond the village, and his sister—— But it was too early for berries, and his sister—an old, gray woman, heavy with years—had died last Michaelmas!

Suddenly he thrust the painted sheet sharply from him, and stepped to the mullioned window. A young vine-spray had wandered over the sill, and his fingers caressed it absently as he gazed across the sunny meadows.

Then, with unseeing eyes, unconscious of the startled glances that followed him, the old man went slowly from the room, and down the stone stairs hollowed by a century of passing feet.

Dimly, as sounds heard in a dream, the voices of the novices at school in the eastern cloister came to him, as he crossed the open court; then, with the closing of the wicket, came silence once more, and sunshine, and the long shadows of the limes, with the green of blossoming pastures stretching beyond.

For so many years the old craftsman had bent, self-centred, above the painted flowers on his page, that he had forgotten how God's flowers grew; and now, as pictures of his boyhood came drifting back with the sunshine and the April winds, he looked out on earth and sky with a child's new-washed vision, while deep in his soul there awoke a hunger for the old lost fellowship with his kind.

There were children at play in the abbey meadows—little, brown-limbed peasant children, who looked askance at the brother's wrinkled face, and shrank from the hand stretched out to them in wistful overture.

Many of the monks they knew by sight: sharp-visaged Anastasius, whom they feared, and Nathaniel, whose smile was like the coming of the spring, and gaunt Jerome with the tender voice, whom they loved, in famine-time, to find as almoner at the gate.

But to Francis, living his life of dreams, the existence of the poor without the abbey walls was as some jarring tale read long ago, that he would fain forget, lest his vision of the beautiful be dimmed; and when it came his turn to give out alms at vesper-time, he had shrunk from the hungry, insistent faces at the wicket, and withdrawn into the shadow of his cowl, so the children who had peered from their mothers' skirts knew him not; and now, when he sought gropingly for his lost share of the old warm human heritage, these little ones looked on him with stranger-eyes.

But his hunger would not be denied, and he wooed them cunningly, with wonderful tales that his mother had told to him long ago, while the flames made elfish shadows in the dusk—tales he and his

sister had whispered over again, with delicious tremors, as they huddled close in the creaking truckle-bed. Not classic legends of knight or saint, such as he had set in frames of jewelled color through all the years of his manhood, but bits of pagan lore, treasured in the memory of the common folk, and that he had long forgotten, but which came singing back to him, to-day, with the touch of the crisp spring winds and the sound of children's voices.

Then shyly the little ones drew near, confiding to him their names for the flowers at their feet—and they were the very same names that he and his sister had called them by of old!

To these children, too, the daffodils that overspread the meadow with cloth-of-gold were "golden-candle-sticks"—candlesticks more beautiful than the precious seven-branched one of the Hebrew temple, the old monk thought, as his eyes, new-opened, dwelt upon their swaying grace; for them, too, as for the little lad and lass of long ago, cowslips grew in all the marshy stretches to be bound into fragrant balls; and for them the bowl of the buttercup was freshly varnished and glistening, as if continually wet with dew, and for their delight the tiny blue speedwell shone under the hedges, whose buds even now were swelling toward their blossom-time.

The sun was mid-high in the cloudless April heavens, and the shadows of the limes had shrunken to round dark mats about their roots, when Francis returned to the unfinished page on the desk beside the window—that beautiful deep mullioned window, in whose carven cornice, his quickened vision noted now, sparrows were already beginning to build.

Because he had glimpsed once more his long-lost portion of the common life, it was to him as though all things were made anew. Yet, strangely, he now first realized that he was growing old, so that he toiled the more eagerly to complete this task and begin another that was calling insistently upon his hand and heart.

So many books he had made for others—let him make one, just one, for the satisfying of his own soul, ere the brush slipped forever from his grasp, the old artist prayed—forgetting the power and the glory that were his—that queens shrined his painted Psalters in velvet and pearl, and kings bartered their jewels for his handiwork.

Day after day he labored tirelessly on—through early mornings, when the dawn shone red between the wet grape leaves, and through long afternoons when the shadow of leaf and stem lay sharp upon the stone.

Yet, afterward, the other workers remembered an unwonted patience in the master, even in this time of breathless haste, and those who had used to cringe under his glance marvelled to find a yearning gentleness in the sunken eyes that scanned their work, and marvelled yet more at words of kindly encouragement.

“That is good color, lad—clean, and pure, and jewel-like;” or, “Thy stroke is growing more steady, Brother, thy eye more true.”

For it was no longer Francis, first illuminator in the kingdom, intolerant of the least imperfection, who gazed on their crude attempts—but a wistful old man, whose youth had come drifting back to him from some far, mysterious port of the soul, and who saw again in their unskilled efforts the blundering essays of his own boyish endeavors—the tentative gropings of a spirit that outsoars the untutored hand.

The young leaves of the vine were yet ruddy and touched with down when Francis began his labor of love—a Book of Hours, on whose broad margins glimpses of his long-lost boyhood and youth were to shine forth in radiant beauty.

As the volume slowly grew, the monks about him were amazed to see upon the painted page no symbol of the saints—no lion of St. Mark's nor crook of the Shepherd of men, no miniature of the Coming of the Magi or of the home at Nazareth, no sign of Virgin or of martyr. And some were dumbly troubled to find gleaming there naught but vistas of lowly peasant life, and homely country happenings; and others, seeing, dreamt again, they knew not why, of far-off homes and friends, and walked more softly after, and spoke more gently, for the message of the painted page.

On one margin, in a mesh of sea-weed, curved the fair volutes of an ocean shell, pink-lipped and delicately arched, such as the boy Francis had held to his ear to hear the mermaid's song. On another, a whirl of blue waters gleamed, with a drift of white blossoms upon its breast—a memory of far-off springs, when broken fruit-flowers drifted by on swollen meadow streams.

Here a tangle of hawthorn wreathed in a glowing letter, and the monk's lips smiled, as his pencil wrought, at thought of the Mayings long ago.

On one page spears of golden wheat glowed against a purple ground, and a wistful look crept into his sunken eyes as the brother bent low above the parchment—for it was the shining cornfields of his home that he saw swaying in rhythmic waves before the wind.

On many a margin wild grape-stems twisted like writhing serpents beneath a canopy of leaves and purple fruit; and again and again, about title and border and tall capital letter, he drew the wistful out-reaching tendrils of the vine. Such had he seen of old when the grape-gatherers, with joyous vintage songs, plied their happy task on terraced hill-slope and low-lying meadow.

There, too, upon the mellow parchment glowed the flowers he had known and loved of old—homely cottage posies. Mary's golden flower, many-rayed like the sun, and tall foxgloves where the bees had hummed through drowsy far-off summer noons, and scarlet poppies with petals

of crumpled silk that the boy Francis had used to smooth between finger and thumb, as children fondle a velvet fold.

There shone round-eyed, pink-tipped gowans, like the chubby faces of children, and dog-roses, red and white, that grow on wayside briars, and trailing sprays of crumpled blackberry bloom, the blue of the periwinkle and the fringed corn-flower, and the wild strawberry's coral cone.

And amid all the intricate tracery, in fine-wrought miniatures, with background of purple, or blue, or gold, the old craftsman portrayed the story of the year, month by month, as the country boy had seen the seasons unfold—a painted calendar of simple homely happenings.

Pictures of sowing and reaping, of threshing, and gathering in of the harvest—of hawking and hunting of the wild boar—of Maying and Yule-tide festivals, and feasts of sheep-shearing and vintage-time; in quaint vignette the life to which his boyish pulse had thrilled of old lived again in deathless beauty on his page.

All was fair in that earlier time as the old man lived it over again; the bitter things had been washed away by the tender years, and the pain that had driven the young soul to this quiet haven was long since forgotten—it was of the pride and the joy and the strength of youth that the old man sang, as old men must ever do; of its big dreams but not of its big unrest.

Had his brothers known it, his very heart lay bared upon the parchment—the sensitive heart of boyhood with its passionate hopes, and dauntless courage, and deathless loyalties; but the men who gazed with puzzled eyes upon the shimmering leaves breathed in, unwittingly, the fragrance of childish memories and the swift-fleeting gossamer visions of youth, and knew not the message they brought.

“T is but the common life of man ye have painted, and in such, surely, is no profit to men's souls,” the armarian protested in blunt disappointment, voicing the unspoken thought of many of his fellows.

“But was it not the common life of man Christ lived while He tarried here?” Francis gently questioned.

But when Nathaniel, whose spirit was nearest akin to the master's, stood alone at his side, the old man turned to him with a passion of futile pain and yearning.

“T is the Book of my Youth, lad, and they sense it not—the Book of my Youth—that fairest thing God ever gives to man!”

The Easter season was at hand when Francis began his Book of Hours, and the autumn days were nigh when he drew the last finial.

Pondering wistfully with what words he should write “finis” to his task of love, he went softly forth into the twilit garth, where a mavis was faintly chanting its fitful autumnal note among the darkening cherry boughs.

The old artist smiled up at its shadowy covert, his heart a-brim with new-born tenderness for all young things and their joy.

"Dost thou, little brother, serve God with thy song of gladness, even as I lay at His feet the book of my youth?"

Then, stooping, he stroked the dim faces of the ragged October blossoms at his knee.

"And you, my brothers, is your fragrance the gift you send to God, even as I would bind into a sheaf for Him the fragrant memories of youth?"

Two monks shuffling down the dusky walk saw him bend above the flowers, and paused to wonder at their brother's foolish ways—then, smiling indulgently, pattered on along the darkening path.

That night, in the half-waking between two sleeps, the motto he had sought came to the old artist:

"Finis succrevit, manus et mea fessa quievit."

"I will write it in the morning," murmured the old craftsman drowsily, as he turned, smiling, on his pallet.

But ere dawn the Angel of Life, whom men, mistakenly, call Death, wrote "finis" in the Book of the Earthly Hours of Brother Francis.



AS DAYS GO DOWN THE WEST

BY MARION MANVILLE

AS days go down the west, and tender stars
 All rimmed about with heavens blue come forth
 And set their light-ships in the trackless sea
 Whose highways stretch away from south to north,
 I think how days have risen in the east
 And flashed like meteors from hill to hill,
 Set full of sunny hours, till evening came
 To close them like rose-petals soft and still.

And that my work but poorly hath been done,
 And that my day in idleness hath set,
 With saddened eyes I look into the west
 And watch it pass away with keen regret.
 Those precious moments lost in dreaming mood,
 Those perfect hours forever past me by!—
 Small wonder that new stars are blurred with tears,
 And old days wafted heavenward with a sigh.



WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

THE THIRD ITALY

THROUGH patient centuries Italy has permitted herself to be exploited by all the nations of the world for their education in the arts and the sentiments. But she has tired of the interference of sentimental foreigners who seem not to know that there is a third Italy to succeed the Italy of the Cæsars and the Italy of the Renaissance. The men who are working out the destinies of a great people are not pleased that fifty years after her redemption Italy should still be the land of blue skies and nightingales, where Baedekered travellers may brood in reverie over vestiges of Roman walls and mediæval monasteries and Renaissance churches, with a vague regret that they had not applied themselves more vigorously in the days of passionate hatred for the dates and names that were History. Some time ago, the militant Mayor of Rome, undeterred by the aura attaching to the names of Maurice Hewlett and Vernon Lee and Edith Wharton and Arthur Symons, wrote an open letter to the Director of the British School of Archæology at Rome, in which he uncorked the vials of his wrath at writers whose noses are buried in the thirteenth century, and who refuse to listen to the bell of a trolley-car in the ancient and hilly cities of Umbria. To them whatever is mediæval is beautiful. They have drunk lightly at all the magic sources of history and art, and their esthetic souls bleed when they see *l'antica madre* answering the calls of the twentieth century. To them, all the social and economic achievement of a new-born nation is neutralized by the crime against Art of putting statues of Cavour and Garibaldi

in bronze and unspeakable trousers on all the piazzas of Italy, within sight of the sacred sculptures of Mino da Fiesole and Nicolo Pisano.

Like their romantic friends, Italians admire what was admirable and beautiful in "The Venice of the Doges" and "The Tuscany of the Strozzi" and "The Rome of the Borgias," but they are not blind to what was ugly and detestable in tyranny and superstition and cruelty. They too find beauty in their handsome ancestors, posing perennially young in graceful doublets and varicolored hose in the foreground of Renaissance frescoes. But they consider that the demands of a different day are better fulfilled in the less artistic sack-coat and the prosaic but democratic trousers. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the seal of the famous publishing house of Zanichelli of Bologna bears the motto *Laboravi fidenter*, and the figure of a man sowing the fields under the rays of the rising sun. And though he sows by hand in the ancient fashion and shows a motto in the ancient tongue, he is dressed in the manner of the twentieth century. The third Italy has discarded the outworn garments of mediævaldom and has woven herself new garments of new fabrics fit for the use of as lively and stimulating a nation as any the world has ever known.

BEULAH B. AMRAM

MORNING EYES

WHEN one rides in the elevated and looks across the car at a miscellaneous row of his fellow men and women, the conclusion is forced upon him, that the world, once so fresh and young, has become middle-aged; for upon no face along the line is contentment impressed, unless a child be present—and of him you see only a rear view. He alone is looking delightedly out upon the world to see what's a-doing. Every one else is dull, or bored, or anxious.

By middle age, contentment has become an ancient virtue, as much to be cast off as last year's clothing. In the general hubbub and hurry of effort and strain the good old virtue has become threadbare. Getting and spending, between them, grind away its shining freshness as remorselessly as the upper and the nether millstones deal with the grain between. Time was when contentment was, indeed, both shining and fresh; but it was morning then, when we looked out fearlessly and without prejudice. By noon our eyes have grown weary; their zest has flown. They are dulled with much sharp peering, with questioning, ennui, distrust.

May not a virtue grow old and worn with honorable service? Surely. But that it should go out of fashion is unforgivable. There are so few virtues, at best—only seven according to those who would offset each of the deadly sins and have nothing left over—that it is hard to spare one.

But if rapid progress is the end and aim of being, what so shabby as contentment, which does indeed hinder that end and aim? Dekker sang of Sweet Content, rhyming it neatly with the *punishment* of the restless spirit that never knew the *jam satis* feeling. Shakespeare, too, was of the opinion that "our content is our best having." Poor simple belief of past generations! And there's Charles Lamb, chief exponent of contentment, who, climbing down at the day's end from his office stool and wending his way home to a quiet evening at cribbage with his faithful sister, finds so warm and serene an atmosphere there, so restful and unhurried, that he must needs voice his quiet satisfaction. "I would be content to go on in that idle folly forever," he says half-apologetically, and doubtless smiling whimsically to himself. "The pipkin should be ever boiling to prepare the gentle lenitive to my foot, which Bridget was doomed to apply after the game was over; and as I do not much relish appliances, there it should ever bubble. Bridget and I should be ever playing." Was ever such an old-fashioned fool? Alexander, weeping for more worlds to conquer, was infinitely more modern than this.

And yet, what is contentment but the viewing of the world with morning eyes? Lamb had such eyes, happy and unspoiled, to his death, and peradventure beyond. Shakespeare is unthinkable without them. What of you? You have not forgotten, have you, the days when the snail was a dragon and the yew tree's whispering was thick with wizardry? When a broken prism filled the world with rainbows? When every pink-eyed rabbit popped down a hole into Wonderland? When summer, brimming in the poppy's cup, stood at lip-level that your thirsty soul might drink and be satisfied? When a thousand mysteries, yet fresh with dew, hung within eye-compass? When you had upon the tip of your tongue the *open sesame* to a myriad marvels? When you stood heart-deep in a divine contentment because "the world was so full of a number of things"? Wonder, and worship, and a simple joy, were yours when you looked at life. But now the rainbows, broken and confused, lie on a bargain-counter; and the rabbits, hutch-bound, can do no more than eat and breed. The charm is gone; the *open sesame* lost. Our noonday eyes, restless and peering, are ever on the search for something we have n't got!

Browning, being impatient of many things, cried, "Had I God's leave, how I would alter things!" Yet he knew very well he had n't God's leave. Omar, too, would gladly have remoulded this sorry scheme of things nearer to his heart's desire. Omar, too, recognized the impossible when he had stated it. But there is a possible. By God's leave, we may continue to look through eyes that, being content with the glory of the sum of things, demand no alterations beyond our reach. By God's leave, we may carry our morning eyes into noonday, into twilight—into the very Dark.

HELEN COALE CREW

"THE FIGHTING EDGE"

THE phrase from which our title springs sticks persistently. By "The Fighting Edge" is meant, of course, aggression—the get-it-all-anyhow habit. That men who lack this quality are the losers in life, many declare—but more deny. According to one's viewpoint, one measures values and distances. If in business and the crafts, eternal aggression is needed, correspondingly is the absence of that quality—beatific in equally vital things, like love, marriage, and motherhood.

To be too keen-set invites suspicion. Not only does the chance-grabber at once become his own handicap, but through hurry he often loses a cause or an opportunity that might have been his, had he adopted smoother tactics.

History teaches us that tact and warfare are ever at dagger-points. If Aggression has had her victories, Tact has doubled them, and more. To become one's "own man" is strong; to assert oneself without wrath is fine; but to refuse to profit at the price of another's rightful due is big.

Honors deserved rarely are delayed in transit. In spite of cynics, this world is quick to give merit precedence. A man who fears to speak when his principles are being vilified, or in behalf of one maligned, or for his own just due, is a spineless creature, pitiful to watch.

Self-appreciation and egotism are not even foster-kin. No horn is so tinny as one blown by an egotist, and to pull a verbal trigger before the hat drops is crass, if not knavish.

Though the rich man may, the Big man never crowds the little fellows. and the Great man is quickest to uncover before others whom he rates as "Big."

If it takes a malefactor to catch his kind, equally canny is greatness to discover its peer.

More Waterloos have come from too much than too little self-confidence. An inflated ego soon bursts, for it is a bubble that lacks substance, and hence cannot endure.

Nothing is more impressive than modesty in a Great Personage; and a Great Personage is nothing if not Modest. Supermen alone can bear their own banners. Those who lag behind in the Marathons of Goals care little for Place. Power to them spells anything but place. Others are better pleased to do their little well, than to do big things badly.

The danger of the "Fighting Edge" is, it cannot be left at the office or in one's locker. It must be worn at home, because it is not a garment, but a habit. Hence those who are least able to carry its scimitar thrusts suffer most keenly.

Its verbal manifestation is known as a chronic grouch. In the presence of the august Fighter, words must be measured, children hushed, phrases edited, and laughter stilled. Hence what might have been "The House of Fineness" becomes the dwelling of an Autocrat whose edge will not come off. Whether worldly Success pays for an aggressive habit, is a question purely personal or—marital.

MINNA THOMAS ANTRIM

UNMORAL AND IMMORAL

ARE you unmoral or immoral? Do not answer too quickly, for if you are only unmoral, we may be able to overlook it. Unmoral stands to immoral in much the same relation as unregenerate stands to degenerate. If you commit some act of which the arbiters of ethics disapprove, the category that you go in all depends on whether the arbiters have previously brought the ethical constitution and by-laws to your notice. If they have already told you that a certain thou-shalt-not exists, then you are immoral if you disobey it. If, however, you are still in an untaught state of sheer savagery, then you are merely unmoral, and, instead of being the victim of execration and contumely, you are entitled to all the emoluments and perquisites of any other savage. Ignorance of the civil or criminal law excuses no one, but ignorance of the moral law does count for a little these discriminative days.

E. O. J.

CASH AS A BIOLOGIC FACTOR

THERE is always something to worry about—a condition evidently designed for some beneficent purpose. As Father Gregory once hinted, "Peradventure this world here is made troublesome unto us, lest we be delighted by the way and forget whither we are going." At all events, a present cause for worry is the evidence presented by unshakable figures that the birth rate of civilization is steadily going down. Just now the chief excitement on this score centres in Germany. Germany has long been distinguished as the most prolific of nations, but recent statistics show that the birth rate there is now declining so rapidly that by 1920 it will fall below that of France.

Of course the wiseacres are ready always to tell us why this is thus. City life, economic stress, equal suffrage, and several other latter-day conditions are ascribed as the cause. Incidentally also, by way of confirming our pessimism, we are assured that at the present moment there are in the United States more than seventeen million men and women

of marriageable age who are not married. Altogether, the prospect is extremely gloomy.

A century ago the gloom was on the opposite horizon. Mr. Malthus and his disciples had at that time convinced the timorous world that population was increasing so rapidly that within a few generations there would be more children than the earth could support. And all sorts of measures—some of them most unholy—were seriously recommended as a means of checking the increase.

To-day the chief business of those who believe themselves commissioned to assist the Almighty in regulating the affairs of creation is to devise plans for increasing the birth rate. A tax on bachelors appears to be the most popular suggestion, and the most likely. It stands to reason that a man would rather marry and make some woman unhappy than pay ten dollars a year into the state treasury. It is a well known biological fact that a man will do anything to avoid the payment of taxes; and why should not a shrinking community avail itself of this natural law for the purpose of repairing its population?

Then, there is the premium on motherhood. This has many earnest advocates. Already Colorado, France, Australia, and several other commonwealths are preparing to make actual trial of this often-urged expedient. The theory is that for a money consideration the married women of civilization will be more willing to bear children than they appear to be at present. Australia proposes an allowance of twenty-five dollars to the mother of every new-born baby. France is considering a proposition to give the mother one hundred dollars for each child in excess of three. This is equivalent to twenty-five dollars apiece for the first four.

The thought of bringing babies into the world for cash does not, of course, lend itself to poetry or lullabies. And it is not intended to. This is a serious, practical matter. At the same time, however, when it is remembered that the decline in the birth rate is confined almost wholly to the intelligent and the comparatively well-to-do, it may be questioned whether twenty-five or even a hundred dollars will prove sufficiently attractive to overcome the scruples of such families against a numerous progeny. It may, perhaps, prompt the poor and inefficient families to a more industrious compliance with the Biblical command to be fruitful and multiply, but is this the sort of multiplication we want to encourage?

There is, indeed, a growing sentiment that if the State is to meddle in affairs of this kind, it had better confine its energies to the enacting of laws designed to secure the breeding of only healthy, normal, and efficient children. Society is now rapidly reaching the point where human quality is immeasurably to be preferred to human quantity. And, moreover, if the declining birth rate is an indication of the approaching extinction of the human race, no cash bonuses will suffice to thwart the intent of Providence.

CLIFFORD HOWARD

LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER, 1914



THEIR PRINCESS OF STARS*

BY

JULIUS W. MULLER

Author of "The Ranch of the Blue Sea"

CHAPTER I

"YES, Professor," said Richard Selfridge; "I'm busted again. I don't suppose you'll consider that sensational news, exactly; but it's why I'm here. Harding thinks he'd better quit college and get into business."

"I don't want to be a burden on Dick—Mr. Selfridge—any longer," said Harding.

"So!" The Professor looked reflectively at young Mr. Harding's admirable form. "Ha! Of course! Still, there have been men who worked their own way through college, without absolutely fatal results."

Mr. Harding flushed slightly; and Mr. Selfridge coughed.

"No." The Professor spoke placidly, impersonally, as if he were demonstrating. "You are a great fool, Richard. You let our young friend have too much money. It is as well that he goes. He wants to bite into the world-apple. Let us hope that it will well become him."

Selfridge squeezed the old man's arm affectionately. "I'm sure he'll do you credit. More than I've done, that's certain, Professor."

The Professor gazed at the crowded campus, and nodded his shaggy head at it. "Who can tell? There it is, out there! Earth-material, star-material." He opened both hands, and stretched them out. "Always, always, Richard, we must wait till fire smites the mass before we know into what it will fuse."

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When they were outside, Selfridge looked at Robert Harding with puckered eyes—eyes so quick and attentive that they dominated the whole attentive, weather-beaten face. “Great old man!” he remarked. “Just the same as when he used to talk to your father and Onslow and me. But he used to think a lot of your dad. He did n’t seem quite so—so——”

“Appreciative of me, you mean?” Young Mr. Harding did not try to conceal his wounded dignity. But he added something almost instantly that made Selfridge glance at him with eyes more puckered than before. “I’m afraid that you’ve wasted your money on me, Dick,” said Mr. Harding.

“Lord! We’re getting modest!” laughed Selfridge. “Never mind. I guess, though, that it’s true enough that you were n’t exactly intended to be a great light of science. So, my son, you just sit tight, and I’ll go and see Elmer Onslow. I’m sure that he’ll be the same old Elmer, even if he has got richer than those well-known old dreams of avarice since I saw him last. And if I don’t telegraph you in a few days that you’ve got a commission as High Admiral, or Brigadier-General of Finance, you can cast me off!”

“They tell me you’ve become a tremendous, great big animal since we last met,” said Mr. Richard Selfridge to Mr. Elmer Onslow next day.

It was a long time since Mr. Onslow had been addressed thus familiarly by any except the world’s greatest. But he looked at Selfridge with a smile. “Oh, I’ve done so-and-so, Dick,” he assented. “And you?”

Dick shot a glance at the exquisitely attired Onslow, and another downward over his own inelegant full-length. He waved an arm grandly. “Me? I’m simply loaded down with possessions. There’s an assortment, various, of promissory notes. There’s a collection that would do any man’s heart good to see of shares in concessions, mining companies, and other fabulous monsters.” He checked the list off on his fingers. “There’s a schooner full of trade-stuff, reclining just now about three hundred fathoms deep in the South Pacific. That was my last great industrial exploit. It cleaned me up very nicely, with no trouble about receivers and that sort of nuisance. And I’ve come to you, Elmer, to be helped out.”

Mr. Onslow’s prosperous rosy jaws stiffened the least bit. His genial eyes hardened just a trifle. But it was only for an instant. He felt that he could not refuse Dick Selfridge anything. It was a feeling that was partly unpleasant and partly almost delightful. It impelled him back to an improvident youth when he had not acquired the art of saying, “No.”

Selfridge smiled at Onslow quizzically. “Don’t be scared, Elmer. It’s about Harding’s boy. You remember, don’t you, that when he died he put it up to us—you and me—to do what we could for the kid? I have n’t needed to bother you till now. The lad’s been in college a couple

of years. But that little schooner affair—well, it's your turn. You've got to start him in business."

"What kind of boy is he?" inquired Onslow cautiously.

"He's got a dandy punch," explained Selfridge, "and he's a great oarsman, and he can ride, and he's rotten at foot-ball. And—oh, yes—he can fence like a good one. And I believe that he can read and write."

Onslow lay back in his chair and surveyed Selfridge.

"Now, Elmer," exclaimed that gentleman, "don't you look at me as if I were a brother-capitalist! You've *got* to do this! See here! Joking aside, he's a fine fellow, a great big, handsome six-footer, that you'll take to on sight, like his father. He has n't done a fearful lot in the examinations, but what are examinations? You put him in here"—Selfridge waved his hand largely to indicate the sumptuous offices—"and teach him your business."

Onslow grinned. "The same old Dick! What business do you s'pose I'm in, any way?"

Dick scratched his head. "Well, what business *are* you in?" he demanded.

"The same business you appear to have been in, Dickie. You invest, and I invest. Only, I know how to do it, and you don't. If everybody could learn it, there would n't be any good investments left. I could n't teach it to Robert Harding's son. It would have to be in him, by instinct. What are you looking so huffy about?"

"Seems to me you're trying to back out," said Selfridge frankly.

"No! Honestly, no!" Onslow showed that he was in earnest. "Think I'd go back on our old chum's trust? Not much! I only meant that the youngster would n't get much good out of coming in here with me, before he's broken in to business routine. But I'll fix him up, all right. Let's see! Yes, old Lawler, the President of our Allied Traders' Syndicate, needs a young chap as secretary. It's a branch corporation, you know, of our big Commercial Products Company, that you must have read about. This Allied Traders' Syndicate is——"

Elmer Onslow bounded into the saddle of his golden hobby, and into Selfridge's ears poured the thousand and second tale of the American Days wherein Aladdin Smith needs merely to stumble over a financierable idea to gain more than if he rubbed a hundred magic lamps.

Selfridge tried painstakingly to follow the ingenious plot of companies and underwritings and debentures and certificates; but after a while, though his eyes still gazed attentively at the eloquent financier, he saw objects most unfinancial. There was an empty sea, with slow swells lifting. There were far headlands, a-smoke in golden sun-dust. There was a coral road, vivid white, between coral walls, where there were palm-fronds, and crimson flowers flaming, and between them a girl's face, smiling down with bright lips and eyes that glowed.

"You aren't listening to me!" said the girl—no, it was Onslow. He had an injured expression. "I bet you don't even know that I was trying to make a business proposition to you!"

"Of course I heard!" answered Selfridge indignantly. His subconscious mind recalled the words that had struck on his ears like idle splashing of water. He put a brown hand affectionately on his friend's knee. "Elmer, old man, it's lovely of you. And I can see, of course, that you're holding out a great chance to me. But—no! I can't buck against your crowds. I'm off again. I'm a vagabond, and I've got to stick to it, because it's the only trade I ever learned."

"And where to now?" demanded Onslow, still injured.

Selfridge laughed. "To take possession of an island of asphalt. Oozy, rich, sticky asphalt!"

"Hey!" Mr. Onslow became a concentrated Onslow. "Are you fooling?"

"Probably," said Mr. Selfridge cheerfully. "Fate's full of jokes. It's this way. There's a friend of mine, Jose Valdez. He trifles around the Pacific with a schooner, picking up what he can find that's portable. Now and then, like every business man in these days of paternal laws, he finds himself in disagreement with prejudiced governments. So, once, when they were garnishing an Ecuadorian jail for his reception, I kept him out by putting up a certain immense sum of money. It was two hundred solid silver dollars—and I tell you what, Elmer: it was a prince's ransom to raise at that politico-psychological moment in that flea-bitten town, where the biggest capitalist was an Indian who owned three mules and a brass water-jar."

"Old Dick!" chuckled Onslow. "So you've been partners with a pirate!"

Selfridge looked at him with dignified disapproval. "Our relations were purely social, Mr. Onslow. He is a charming fellow, with qualities of heart and mind—but that is n't the point. The point is that he has tumbled across an island, or islands, near the Patagonian coast, and he writes to me that they are simply busting with the asphalt aforesaid. And because he is a helpless prey to the great vice of gratitude, and because his popularity with the Chilean government is not such as to encourage him to hope for concessions, he has kept the secret of those smelly islands, and proposes to take me to 'em and endow me with 'em."

"And can you get concessions?"

"Just this minute, I'm *persona grata* in Chile, reason unknown to deponent, unless it's my hanged fascinating manner," said Dick. "So I'm going down and have a good look and get horribly rich, unless—unless," he added, becoming business-like, "something goes wrong. Mostly always it does."

Onslow spoke decisively. "Let me get in on this!"

"Sure, Elmer!" said Mr. Selfridge, as a matter of course. "I'll go look, and if the stuff's there, you can have as much of a share as you want, bless your old carcass!"

Onslow lay back again and surveyed his friend, not inquiringly this time, but with the frank respect that every appreciative man accords to wonders of nature. "How is it that you manage to keep the clothes on your back?" he inquired solicitously.

Dick threw his head back and laughed again. "Oh, blazes, Elmer! I suppose business sense would be to get you in first and let you find out afterward whether you're stuck or not. But, you see, I'm not a good business man—not in your New York way of business. You make a business of business. I make a business of living. And, old man, except in dollars, I get a whole lot more returns out of my business than you fellows do out of yours."

"Well, I don't know," began Onslow. But he did not continue. He did not feel nearly so well satisfied as he had felt before he saw Dick. Dick made him think of their youth, and it was a bright thing of bright, tall banners waving and wild, brave music calling.

However, asphalt is tangible, and dreams of tall banners and wild, brave music are not. Onslow's soul hovered over the memory, a butterfly looking in the season of frost for flowers; but Onslow's disciplined brain did not hover. It alighted.

It alighted on something real, something solid, that would wonderfully fortify a paper fortune—a sultanate of asphalt, covering the world with asphalt rivers.

He tried to describe the sultanate to Selfridge in terms of dollars. Selfridge's mind, triumphantly figure-proof, failed to grasp it.

"Are you talking millions or single dollars?" he asked, surrendering frankly.

"Millions!" declared Onslow, but first he drew a long breath of resignation. "Don't be an ass, altogether, Dick! After all, the only reason you're going to look for this asphalt is that you want to make money, isn't it? Then, in Heaven's name, devote some little intelligence to the necessary procedure for making money!"

"Honestly, I try to," protested Dick. "But your hocus-pocus about stock and bonds and holding-companies and felonies, or whatever it is, makes my head buzz! Don't get mad, Elmer. The truth is, I can't follow you any more than I can follow the hand that shifts the little shells over the pea."

"Come on!" decided Onslow. "Come on! We'll go out to lunch, and while we're out my people can draw up the papers."

On their return Selfridge gazed at the little hillock of papers. He looked at two or three. Then, with a guilty side-glance at Onslow, he pushed them away.

"Say, Elmer," he ventured, "these things—I've got only a normal human mind, and it can't eat lawyers' English. I tell you what let 'em do. You read 'em, and if they're what you want, I'll sign 'em till the ink in this shebang gives out."

Thus simply, like all great things, was created the great "Magellan Asphalt Company."

Before the shocked eyes of Mr. Onslow, Mr. Selfridge thrust his copies of the agreements into an outer coat-pocket, crumpling them in with a penny newspaper.

"Do you realize that those papers are worth something to you, Dick?" he demanded. He tapped the papers that lay on his desk. "Here I've got your power of attorney, and your signatures to everything, all your rights in those concessions. And all you've got to show for it are those papers in your pocket."

Mr. Selfridge shook hands gayly with Mr. Onslow. "Don't be an old woman, Elmer," he advised.

CHAPTER II

MR. HARDING graciously accepted the interruption of his collegiate career as an interruption of a pleasant adventure by another adventure that promised to be equally pleasant.

It was made pleasant for him. Elmer Onslow and his golden fellow-Conquistadores had no time or desire to watch over 'prentice lads and guide their young feet in ways of thrift and sober but slow toil. Conscript armies of clerks were to hire for the bidding. Onslow knew no better way to serve the memory of Robert Harding's father than to drop the son into a comfortable berth.

Mr. Onslow was not old. Less than twenty-five years before, he himself had been dropped into New York, like young Harding. And New York had put him on its pay-roll at the not extravagant rate of five dollars a week. But in New York, Lethe comes to flood many times in twenty-five years. Mr. Onslow's humble start was dismissed from Mr. Onslow's memory, if not forgotten. He put Mr. Harding on the pay-roll for a sum apportioned not according to the minimum that he might be worth, but according to the maximum that he should have to live like a gentleman.

It was a happy time. As the king salmons stream inland reckless of foes, so mankind streamed, just then, to the exchanges and bourses, reckless that they were awaited there by creatures as hungry and greedy as the grizzlies and eagles of salmon rivers.

It was a trustful Golden Age. Minds altogether too skeptical to believe that Mars might be inhabited opened themselves gloriously to the belief that total strangers behind brass lattices would take their money, increase it three- and four- and ten-fold, and return it all with generous joy. The

domestic virtues and the vices of Babylon conversed fraternally over the stock-ticker. Each day anew, with noble stampings and shoutings, men assaulted the walls of gold. And nobody could (or would) see, behind in the shadows, the waiting forms of the policeman and the undertaker.

Young Mr. Harding beheld New York's naïve splendor, and liked it. He liked the barbarous, wild days where work was done as in panic. He liked the flaming, laughing nights, where pleasure was as fiercely hurried as the winking of the fiercely impatient lights.

After a few months he deemed that he was playing no inconsiderable part in the daily sack of Troy. The great Allied Traders' Syndicate was a battle-ship of the line. Its broadsides of ledgers, its rapid-fire typewriters, its raving telephones, were in merciless action all day long. From office boy to President, everybody bustled desperately, the President most desperately of all.

Before his first year was ended, Mr. Harding had discovered that Mr. Lawler, though he held the stage so noisily, was prompted from the wings by men who rarely appeared in person. On the few occasions when one of these illuminated the offices in the body, the President of the Allied Traders' Syndicate ceased astonishingly from bustling and became anxiously attentive, listening with eyes that said adoringly, "Here is Wisdom!"

When he offered a reply, he did it flutteringly. His young secretary compared him to a hen trying to cross a puddle.

When Robert Harding had achieved the point of despising his chief, he became very well satisfied with himself. In fact, he became a pious convert to the conviction that he was managing the corporation; and as the army of clerks managed the details well, and the great ones in the wings pulled the strings smoothly, he never had an opportunity to find out that he was not a perfectly admirable executive.

The air of calm assurance, not to say impudence, that sat on him was by no means unattractive or unimposing to the great ones in the wings. There were many affairs to be attended to, not in offices, but in clubs and hotels; and a young gentleman, smart to behold and utterly untroubled by bashfulness, was a valuable intermediary for Elmer Onslow and his associates in affairs wherein they were not always prepared to appear in person.

In the imperially luxurious gathering places up-town, fenced outwardly by forbidding exclusiveness, and inwardly so happy-go-lucky, a bewildering number of friendships sprouted from meetings that would have made only cool acquaintance in any other world, less emotionally drunken with success.

The game of life was played with magnificent candor. Greed sat at the board, but not in its traditional ugly guise. Greed was discursive, genial, and magnificently extravagant. It laughed like Homer, whether

it lost or won. It did not remotely recognize itself as greed. Rather, when it looked at itself in the glass, it hailed its own face as the face of achievement, of patriotism, of family love, of industry and philanthropy.

Every man was at his best, even though the best sometimes was a little flamboyant. Bull-shouldered giants from the iron-country descended on the civilized East, and fell affectionately on the world's neck. The kings of mineral and oil and machine swarmed in, with hands still calloused. Swarthy from labors that had spanned all human activity, from conscientious industry to arson, they came with bags of gold, and wept, quite sincerely, over the sorrows of the poor. They chanted quaint war-boasts in New York's leagues of dazzling, tapestry-hung hotel corridors, while their wives sat splendid along the walls, exhibiting every precious spoil, from Siberian furs to equatorial orchids.

There was much talk, in the warrior-chants, of a thing called "the public." It was spoken of impersonally, as engineers might refer to a mountain that was being blasted for its ores.

Robert Harding fell most serenely in with this attitude. "The public" to him was something that crowded him on the streets, made street-cars impossible, and lived in districts objectionable to the eye.

The spoil-decked ladies, lonely in their splendor, made advances, timid but eager, to the sprightly young gossamer that drifted so confidently and arrogantly through their sumptuous, strange world. And because Mr. Harding and his species were frankly arrogant, the women, with the climbers' universal sure instinct, saw in them the first rungs of New York's social ladder. When they succeeded in grappling a youth, they grappled him with hooks of gold. The gossamer whirled through New York in elephantine motor-cars loaned to them by ladies whose names they did not always bother to remember. The gossamer sat in opera-boxes and dined and danced at the expense of ladies whose blunders in English or in etiquette made joyously received stories later in club smoking-rooms.

The ladies liked Robert Harding. He was of the age that aged poets make their heroes. Modesty did not confuse his eyes or tongue. They spoiled him, and he took enthusiastically to spoiling.

And because the truly great ladies of the town, though they were sacredly exclusive, still were as curious as all ladies, and liked to hear sprightly, wicked tales about the poor, rich barbaric ladies, Mr. Harding became interesting to them, and he was asked to houses so great that a mere bowing acquaintance with the butler would have been sufficient social glory for most gossamer.

There the ladies would beckon him to their sides in shaded corners, and say, "Now tell me."

And the men, because they are as curious as most ladies, took him up because they wanted to know who the devil he was.

Sometimes Mr. Onslow, beholding the jaunty progress of his dead friend's son, felt a troubled stirring of that conscience that he inherited from sober ancestors who had held fast to sober virtues. At such times he tried, somewhat vaguely, to be philosopher and guide. But it was a decided strain, and he relapsed, always, with a sigh, into the easier way of letting things go on, temporarily.

He meant by that, till Margaret should come home. Then they would take Robert in hand.

Margaret was his only child. He was counting the days till she should return to him. He was a widower, and Margaret was all that he loved, and all that he thought of, except business. Mr. Harding had grown a little tired of hearing her name. He had more interesting things than unknown young girls to think of.

CHAPTER III

WHEN American business had enjoyed the assistance of Mr. Robert Harding for a little less than two years, Richard Selfridge returned with an asphalt crown. He had found enough asphalt to make real Elmer Onslow's dream. The Magellan Asphalt Company's stock-holders talked asphalt, not in square yards, but in square miles. Before he left the unctuous domain, engineers hurried down by Onslow were exhuming it, ships were loading it, and town-councils and legislatures were beginning to reek with it.

The land where the asphalt had been stored by the primeval years was a primeval land, a black land and a sad. Dead peaks on an empty mainland stared across bitter sea at islands as dead as countries of the moon. For one time in his life, Selfridge snuffed civilization's air and saw its troubled greatness with delight.

They made him President of the Sardanapalusian corporation that they formed. He began his duties thriftily by giving a Sardanapalusian dinner to all the mighty men who were interested with Elmer Onslow, at which dinner everybody spoke exclusively in millions and glowed patriotically about This Broad Land of Ours—when properly asphalted.

For a whole endless month Mr. Selfridge toiled daily in the office. He put all his earnest temperament and spirit into his labors. But his figure-proof mind, unshaken by its master's serious intentions, continued automatically to repulse everything that had to do with arithmetic.

They brought him balance-sheets and the other terrifying paper machinery of finance. He chewed lead-pencils over them, but he could not chew the figures. He went to see Onslow at the end of the month.

"Get another president, old man," he said casually. "I'm going to quit."

Onslow whirled his chair around and stared at him. "Are you clean

crazy?" he demanded. "D' you mean to say that you'll chuck twenty thousand a year, just because you happen to feel like it?"

"I don't feel like it—that is, not exactly," said Dick. "But it's not square for me to play at this job that you chaps gave me. So I'll just be content with my dividends, and let somebody else be president."

Onslow's temples flushed. He looked angrily at Selfridge. "That is what I get, then, for putting you into a good, big thing!"

"Rubbish!" retorted Dick. "I can't do it, and that settles it. I don't know any more about bookkeeping——"

"Good Lord!" Elmer Onslow leaned back with great relief. He laughed, and slapped Selfridge on the knee. "Is that all? Why, you great, big donkey, we don't want you for a bookkeeper! We want you to keep things all right with the Chileans, to watch South American politics, to do things like that. You're our watch-dog over the concession, you chump! Bookkeeping!"

"The deuce with it!" Mr. Selfridge stretched himself. "I'll do all those things for you, just as a stock-holder. But this job—well, the truth is that I don't want to see another row of figures as long as I live. It's unhealthy."

"Tell you what, Dick," said Onslow quickly: "I'll give you Harding. We'll elect him secretary of the company. And I'll let you have a shrewd chap out of my office to act as manager. His name's Portchester. He'll furnish all the business knowledge. But you must, absolutely must, stay in as president. Suppose that they heard, down there in Chile, that you had resigned——"

"All right, darn it! I'll stay!" sighed Mr. Selfridge.

When Mr. Onslow mentioned the episode a little later to two of his fellow directors, Uncle Chicory and Abner Lootzak, Uncle Chicory nodded his head in deep satisfaction. "He's just the kind of man we want at the head of this thing," said he. His tone became mournful. "It's queer, but the public seems to prefer an unknown but poor man to a known but rich one."

"A known *and* rich man, you mean," Abner Lootzak suggested. But Uncle Chicory remained blandly insensible to the point.

As soon as the oppressive sense of duty ceased to sit on him, Mr. Selfridge resigned himself with ever-increasing cheerfulness to ever-increasing non-interference with affairs that he could not understand. He regarded Harding with admiration, and said proudly that he was a secretary worth having.

Robert Harding thought so, too. He secretaryized royally.

Having sufficiently beheld these masterful activities, Mr. Selfridge had a master-inspiration. "That's what he needed," he reflected. "Responsibility. And now that he's got it, he's one of those chaps that grow up to it. I can't do better for him than to leave him alone."

Thereupon Dick, with a guileless, child-like conscience, went abroad in the gay land of town, and helped in his merry way to increase its gayety. Dick could live happily on biscuits and cheese, or biscuits alone, or bananas in an Indian hut. But he could live happily also on pheasant and Burgundy. Dick lived in a tall hotel, Dick kept a yacht, Dick laughed at himself almost as jovially in his wealth as he had laughed at himself in his poverty.

The islands spewed asphalt. Into the offices of the Magellan Asphalt Company poured money until the brilliant young secretary considered all matters involving mere single thousands as being trifles belonging to the domain of petty cash.

Soon, the sum total of his official acts became so great that he could not carry more than a fraction of them in his mind. He was proud of his mind, and could not afford to suspect it of being in a tangled condition. He decided that the trouble was caused by the fact that he was entirely too overcrowded with details.

Fortunately, it happened that the invaluable Mr. Portchester had a genius for details.

So it came about quite normally, and, in fact, scientifically, that the President of the Magellan Asphalt Company leaned on the Secretary, and the Secretary leaned on Mr. Portchester, and Mr. Portchester bore the super-incumbent mass with respectful patience.

CHAPTER IV

THE sunny land around Vesuv shook one day. It was a little rumble that checked the dancing feet and the laughter for only an instant. Some small banks here and there went quietly out of business. Half a dozen brokers' offices closed, and a man who had been nearly prominent quietly cut his throat while shaving. Then the dance went on. The little rumble left nothing behind it, except a new look, as of overwork, on a few faces, like that of Elmer Onslow.

In that time Robert Harding got his first hint that the broad high-road of success that he trod so easily had some defective places in it.

The faithful Portchester laid before him a voucher for some hundreds of dollars, that he had signed many months ago. "The bookkeepers," said he, "want to know if it's to be charged up, and against what."

Robert rubbed his head, but failed to rub any distinct recollection into it. "It must have been all right," said he, "or I should n't have signed it. I suppose it's one of those things that Mr. Selfridge or Mr. Onslow passed on to me."

"Well——" Mr. Portchester remarked doubtfully. He walked to the door, opened it, stood for a moment, and returned. "I've been wanting to say something to you for some time, Mr. Harding. You're letting

yourself in for a good deal, you know. Onslow orders this, and Selfridge orders that, but on the records it's all signed by you, and their names don't show at all. You know you've no legal right to do half the things you do. To be sure, that sort of thing goes on everywhere—but I just want to tip you off, as manager. If anything goes wrong, Selfridge or Onslow could just deny all responsibility and let you in beautifully.”

It happened that Mr. Harding's head was aching slightly. There had been a protracted session the night before. It had begun, quite calmly, with a discussion of the relative merits of two bull pups then present, and had passed, in what seemed to be the utmost logical sequence at the time, to the question of whether a gentleman could continue to call himself a gentleman after wounding another gentleman in his holiest, personal feelings.

He lavished a black scowl on Mr. Portchester and said, “If you ever talk like that again about those two gentlemen, I'll kick you into the street!”

Mr. Portchester scowled back, but remembered that Mr. Harding had won some reputation in an art that may accurately be termed the hand-maiden to kicking. He scowled a little more truculently and stalked out.

Thereafter he kept Mr. Harding filed away snugly in the niche of his mind labelled “Revenge.”

As for Robert Harding, he forgot that night that there was such a creature as Portchester in the world. He saw Margaret.

She stood before him, and he trembled.

He looked at her, and it was as when he had stretched out childish arms to the starlight in longing that he did not understand. Now he understood—and was afraid, almost, to see what had waited, patient, behind the curtain of the years. Now the starlight's passionate mystery was mystery no more. It was something more wonderful than mystery. It was Margaret.

She moved toward him, and it was like a fair flower swaying in dusk. Shyly, gravely smiling, her face was young, and yet as old as all the stories in the world. This was the Margaret of all the days! This was she that had stood, invisible, beyond the silver distance of the long, brave, boyhood dreams. Knights and gentlemen had gone forth to fight and search for this, and this alone!

Had he been snatched away in the moment, never to see her again, he would not have been able to describe her in words; yet she would have stood before him, ever. Her hair, pale gold like the wild sun of the short-dayed north! Her eyes, so kind, so proud! The glory of her smile, and the glory of her mouth!

She was Margaret. Never, never, had there been one like her, and never could be again. And Ilium had fallen for a Helen!

What ugly world was this that clamored under tawdry lights and

jostled around him, vacant-eyed, when he left her house? This gross, tarnished thing—was it the great Broadway that drew men from far ends of earth? These glaring places, filled with gaudy creatures—were these the places where once he had been royally pleased to spend his nights? He drew himself away from contact. He passed into lonely side-streets. And when he stopped, it was before the house that sheltered her!

And what was this that sat beside him when at last he lay in bed, and said to him, with a sour, gleeful smile, what a fool he had been! How he had blushed like a small boy, and stammered, and stumbled! And oh, prosaic thunderbolt! How he had dropped his fork when she spoke to him! And so at last he fell asleep, and in the morning wondered, when he looked into the mirror, that he was quite unchanged.

He looked at himself with something like dislike. Yet only twenty-four hours previously he had smiled at himself in the same mirror quite approvingly; for he had been thinking of a lady—not a barbaric lady, but a very great lady—who had tapped him with her fan and told him that he was an impudent fellow. “And a dangerous one,” she had added, looking at him from under veiling eyelashes that had drawn a royal prince over sea, once.

He sneered at his clothes. “Cursed tailors’ display!” he growled. Still, he removed his scarf and replaced it with another that he selected after deliberate thought; and when he thought he was all ready to depart, he turned back and changed his entire costume. It had struck him that possibly he should be compelled to go up-town in the afternoon, on business.

His suspicion proved to be correct. The business obliged him to loiter at the corner of the street where Margaret lived, until she came out.

“Why!” she said, extending her hand. “What are you doing up here, at this time of day?”

Mr. Harding, being a person of experience, and no fool, had his answer ready. Also, he was a poker-player, accustomed to gaze with innocent serenity into other people’s eyes. But Margaret’s eyes were like the sky whose clear color they wore. He said nothing. He blushed.

It was a long time since Mr. Harding had blushed before the gaze of any lady.

He walked by her side, and tried, desperately, to remember one poor single one of all the many words that he had intended to say. He checked himself, barely in time, from making a remark about the weather. Had he made it, there would have been nothing left except to bolt and seek everlasting oblivion.

Margaret stole a glance at him, and smiled. He caught the glance, and nearly stumbled. He became oppressed by the horrible discovery that his feet were mammoth.

“Did you say anything?” asked Margaret at last.

"No—a—I was just—thinking," said Mr. Harding the glib, the dashing, the distinguished.

"You must n't let me keep you from your business," said Margaret.

"Oh, that's all right!" replied Robert. "At least—to tell you the truth——"

"Yes?" suggested Margaret helpfully.

"I'm waiting for a man," he murmured.

Miss Onslow stopped, with a look of real concern. "And here I'm letting you wander on and on—look! We're seven blocks away from where you were waiting!"

She held out her hand.

Mr. Harding felt the mounting heat behind his ears, and knew that they were turning crimson. His usually resourceful mind was as helpless as a landed codfish, and, like a codfish, it was gasping for air.

"Good-by," said she, and turned into the side-street.

Mr. Harding watched her, with a bitter sense of her cruelty, and a still more bitter sense of the cruelty of his luck.

He turned into a gold-and-ivory hotel to drown his humiliation in a drink, and was hailed shrilly by a crony.

"Have one on me," said the crony. "Say, Harding, who's the new girl? Gee! What's her name?"

Mr. Harding set his glass down without drinking. He looked at his friend. "Nobody you know," he answered, with a threatening lift of his jaw.

The crony was amiable. "What the deuce, Bob?" he asked, in his conciliating way.

"Good-by," snapped Harding, and swung out.

"Common little hound!" he muttered. He did not endeavor to recall that only a few evenings before, the common little hound and he had agreed on most things below the heavens, and especially about women. "Women," the common little hound had said, under Mr. Harding's sage approval, "are divided into two classes—those that you can kiss and those that you can't." "Or those that you don't want to," Mr. Harding had amended, to the great admiration of all the other wits.

For the first time since his triumphal entry into the city, he walked down the avenue of women without looking at them. For almost the first time, he was not concerning himself with any thought that they might be looking at him. He took no pleasure in his lovely raiment. He took no pleasure in himself.

His thinking apparatus, which had been an amiable valet so long, suddenly climbed on his back and put its grip on his neck. Those on the avenue who noticed young Mr. Harding noticed merely a particularly elegant young person swaggering gayly. In reality, the young person was being ridden.

He looked at his watch. It was nearly five o'clock. Hitherto, whenever he found himself up-town near closing time, he had telephoned to the office to ask if there was anything sufficiently important to demand his important attention. To-day, for the first time, he permitted himself to consider the fact that not once had the Magellan Asphalt Company's staff needed a single word of advice from him.

He turned homeward without telephoning.

As he entered the portals of the rather ornate establishment in which he lived, he wondered what he was doing to earn it.

He sat down before his window, elevating his glossily shod feet to the sill, and looked into the dusk, pondering.

The things which he pondered were such as once would have caused him no regret, but rather would have brought to his face a smile—not to say a smirk—of gratification over wisdom merrily acquired. They were those things that a young man learns and does, in the business of beholding a city, how she is made, from her gem-sprinkled coiffure to her dragged skirts.

He was thinking of hours not spent at his desk; and of hours spent at his desk writing letters—on thick note-paper—to persons who never, by any stretch of even the most optimistic commercial imagination, could be imagined as being possibly interested in asphalt—at least, in this life.

He was thinking of pretty ladies; and he wrinkled his nose.

Richard Selfridge, entering quietly, looked at him as he sat there, with the last glimmer of day shining on his face. With a great glow of affection, he thought that this worldly, elegant Robert was, after all, still very like to his Robert of the far past, whose dark eyes had been so deep and so innocent.

CHAPTER V

THE blossom storm was sweeping him. It came with darkness of clouds and mourning rains. It tore down the overbright burst of early bloom and hurled it far.

It was a splendid storm, but it interfered seriously with his chastened, novel desire to learn something about the asphalt business. Asphalt is a matter demanding cold, hard scrutiny; and cold, hard scrutiny was rather difficult when a slim, bright figure insisted on appearing before eyes that were striving to examine balance-sheets.

Sometimes the balance-sheets were gardens, and she stood there, smiling, with inviting eyes. And often the rows of numerals were forbidding aisles, and she stood there, frowning. That was when Mr. Harding, despite the blossom storm, had found old habits still strong, and had lost his way into old accustomed bypaths of tiger lilies and sirens.

Once it had been a not unpleasing affair for him to confess such little

lapses into pretty, eager ears. In fact, he had played the game of confession with true zest, never suspecting that it was not original, but as old as mankind. There was no zest in it when he had to face Margaret.

Then he was not audacious or glib. He could not invent Byronic cantos. He was helpless in her presence, under the gaze of her that was so unsophisticated and yet not ignorant, that knew the world and yet was so bravely innocent.

When he looked at her, wild nights were stripped of glamour, and remained only things of whirling brains and bloodshot eyes.

He could only stammer, "I'm not worth it, that you should let me come to you."

Margaret did not smile or frown or speak. She just looked at him, with eyes calm and attentive.

"Oh, whenever I see you," he cried, "I know, then, what a beastly fool I've been! If only I had known you long ago!"

She laughed at that. "Silly boy!" she said. "Don't talk like an old, old man!"

"I *am* old!" he insisted, with majestic gloom. "When I think! Why, if you knew what—a fellow does in a town like this—you'd——" He stopped. She waited, and then, at last, asked:

"I would what?"

"You'd never want to speak to me again!" he burst out.

Margaret rose. She laid both hands on his shoulders. "Then don't tell me," she said.

He caught her wrists. "Margaret! I'd keep straight—quick enough—if I had—if you—do you think you could—care for me?"

She stepped back. Submissively he released her hands. She retreated, blushing.

He sprang up and advanced. She thrust out her hands. "No," she said. "I don't want to hear any more!"

A hot pain choked him. "Then, what's the use?" he exclaimed. "If you throw me over, I might as well——"

He stopped. Her eyes were flashing, wide and angry. "Coward!" she said.

He scowled.

"Yes, coward!" she repeated. "To put the responsibility for yourself on me! Robert, listen! If you are the kind of thing that needs somebody to reform him, you must seek further!"

His scowl darkened; and then all at once it fled. He felt thrilled as by a trumpet. He stepped toward her, and she, looking at him, did not retreat this time. She let him hold her hands and draw her to him.

"You're right," he said. "I have been acting the boy. Margaret, I'll not speak to you like that again. Let me come to see you, as before, and I'll never say a word—a word—you know—not till I've straightened

out, till I've cleaned up, and get my grip on things. And then—then—Margaret——”

“Good-night, Robert,” she whispered, and slipped from him. But she stopped between the lustrous curtains of the doorway, and smiled at him.

It was as if on him a light shone greatly, in sudden, azure glory. It was as if the figure, standing there, were far above the earth. It was as if he must kneel.

He did not move or speak, but stood all breathless and adoring. He watched her go and scarcely dared to stir, as one who fears to mar a holy silence.

Very often in the next days and weeks, he was on the perilous margin of astounding the staff of the great Magellan Asphalt Company by singing aloud, while he bent his conscious self to the task of penetrating through the mathematical jungle that surrounds modern industry.

He found it a dense jungle indeed, now that he looked at it with humble mind. At last he sought Dick.

“I really never did understand this business,” he confessed. He went on, undeterred by the sudden twinkle in Dick's merry eyes. “I only went through the motions, while somebody else pulled the strings. But now I mean to get it all straight. I won't depend on that fellow Portchester! So I wish you'd come down and see what you can do to help.”

“All right,” assented Dick. “But, my dear young friend and secretary, you're going to have a queer guide if you depend on me. Fact is, if this world were arranged right, I'd be a sandaled pilgrim or some other virtuous thing that would keep me moving. But I tell you what: I know a poor devil, an expert accountant, who swears by me, because—well, just because. He was horribly down on his luck when I met him. I'll have him come in with me, quietly, and study things out, and explain 'em to us after he gets 'em lined up nicely. I'll begin to-morrow.”

It was high time.

That morning Elmer Onslow stepped out of his house into a wintry fog, and it was to him as if he had left spring behind forever. He touched his eyes softly, where that spring had kissed him. He looked up at the heavy sky, and whispered something like a prayer for her. Then the steady roar of the town took him in. Little by little the creases around his eyes deepened. Little by little he passed into the labyrinth of work-streets, and the labyrinth of his own cares.

All day he trod the windings, in and out. More than once he shrank from certain dark corners that frightened him, as if he had not made every inch of the labyrinth himself.

A few days later a fat man with a face that was unhealthily mottled and looked careworn, but still attractively good-natured, stood in an incon-

spicuous corner on the after-deck of an unhealthily mottled ship that was bound for a land where there were no extradition treaties. His name, as registered on the passenger-list, was Norman French.

The next morning Vesuv began to speak.

With type that sprawled as once did a certain handwriting on a certain wall, the newspapers announced that Norman French was Abner Lootzak.

The exchanges became red communes.

Had it been only one Abner Lootzak, fleeing from one poor trouble, the reign of terror might have continued merrily, since there are easy pickings for the strong when the red commune is in charge. But even the smallest intelligence knew that this was something more; and the greater intelligences knew that it was the first boom of the clock, making ready to strike a long-feared hour.

They knew that they could not turn back the hands, but they tried, since there was nothing else left for desperate men to do. So the next day the exchanges were placid, though ill. Stocks rose a little. The newspapers announced, modestly, that the slight disturbance had passed.

A few days went by, and Mr. Lawler, a gray Dobbin with all his bustle gone forever, confessed before Elmer Onslow and his fellow-directors that he had lost a certain sum of the corporation's money in private speculation. Then he looked around the circle of silent men and cried passionately that they knew that his stealings were only a drop compared to what had been taken from the company in other ways. They remained silent.

He fell on his knees and implored them to bear him out in his assertion that whatever he had done (except for that private venture of his) had been done under their orders.

Heavy-faced, impassive, they looked on the gray old Dobbin. They retired to whisper among themselves; and returned to the sobbing, huddled thing to offer mercy—the mercy of flight.

Mr. Lawler went around their circle slowly, and grasped tremblingly at their hands, and prayed God to bless them for saving him from prison. Then he crept out of the door. When it had closed behind him, each man arose, heavy-faced, impassive, and departed, casting no look into another man's eyes, saying no word to another man.

Passed some hours, some days, enough for fast trains to bear Mr. Lawler far. Then the newspapers were informed, and told the world that the President of the Allied Traders' Syndicate had robbed the company of all its assets; and that the public-spirited directors were devoting all their ability to the work of reorganizing the concern. And Mr. Lawler, reading the papers in exile, stared over a dusty land with dim eyes, and comprehended dimly that he had been thrown to the wolves as mysteriously as he had been hoisted into power.

CHAPTER VI

THAT night Robert Harding walked the streets moodily. Once he stopped before the Onslow house. It was dark, and his heart was heavy. The dark mass seemed to him like a destiny that was about to fall on those he loved. Everywhere the great things that had stood so bright and solid were tumbling. He had left Selfridge only an hour before, and Selfridge had gone to meet Onslow at a club, to show him an ugly tangle that the confidential expert had found. Trouble, black like a black storm, was closing in.

There was another lonely gentleman wandering in New York, in need of companionship if that companionship had the price of a drink. He was a fat little gentleman, dressed in gorgeous beauty, but temporarily penniless.

He and Harding came face to face on a dark street near Broadway. He fastened to Robert with exuberant affection, and prescribed the drink as the one delight still lacking in the delightful moment.

Overwhelmingly genial, with a flow of speech that precluded reply, shrewdly clinging to his tall friend's arm, he dragged his captive to the glittering glass doors of Paddy Burke's restaurant, that was just off Broadway, just off-color, just off everything by a little.

It was at its gayest when they entered. Glaring through strata of cigar-smoke, the lights, multiplied wildly by walls of mirrors, seemed to dance in swift time with the noise—a many-tongued clamor like the wind, of men out-shouting each other and the shrill mirth of women.

Crowded between the men, they made groups of eight and ten at tables where four could not sit in comfort. Through the smoke their faces, daubed red and white, burned spots, ghastly-bright.

Paddy Burke's was no strange scene to Robert Harding; but he had not been within the doors since he first saw Margaret. Repugnance shook him at sight of the medley of faces—the laughing, desperately gay faces that implored behind their painted masks.

He drew back, to retreat. From a table near him a hand, wavering, uncertain, held a glass toward him. "Have a drink, Harding, have a drink!" said a voice that he knew. It was that of Portchester, Portchester the correct, very drunk, and leering at him with a foolish, challenging sneer.

Robert shook his hand off roughly. Liquor splashed over Portchester's shirt-front. He threw the glass into Harding's face promptly.

"You pup!" he said. "You secretary pup!"

Before he could check himself, Harding struck into the middle of the drunken face. The face vanished. A mirror shivered into zigzag lightning.

"Good boy! Hit 'im again!"

The yell came as from immeasurable distance. He heard a swelling roar.

"Hands off! Hands off, Paddy!" It was the same voice that had applauded his blow.

Paddy appeared before him, snatched at his coat-lapels, and jerked downward violently—the deadly trick of the rough-and-tumble fighter for bringing his victim's face down savagely to meet his own hard skull as it drives upward to butt and crush.

An ugly sound, as of a board striking flesh, sickened him for an instant, as if it were the impact of the black bullet-head. But he staggered back, unhurt, released, to see Mr. Burke topple to hands and knees, at the feet of an immense stranger with a huge nose.

Paddy looked up with eyes wide open, turned his face slowly, conscious and quite helpless, and let himself collapse into the fighter's nirvana.

"I hated to do it, Paddy," said the stranger, looking down regretfully. He spoke apparently oblivious to the fact that a waiter was striking viciously at him from behind. "I hated to do it, but I had to see fair play." He turned suddenly and smote his assailant with a back-handed slap that whirled him over a table and into the bosom of a gentleman who had been waiting eagerly for a reasonable excuse.

Somebody struck at Harding, and he struck back. A bottle hurtled, and a white face, with blood running jaggedly, stared for an instant through the locked crowd. As fire through stubble, fight ran from table to table. Robert, penned in a corner, and pushing, rather than striking, at men, was aware only of a struggling mass, swaying, toppling bodily this way and that. The uproar had ceased. In its place were only yelps of pain or coughing grunts of satisfaction, and now and then a high-pitched shriek from a woman.

"The cops!" cried a shrill voice.

A smashing impact rammed the fighting mass. Blue shoulders drove into it, like the shoulders of swimmers. A gong clanged. Before he knew what had happened, he was being snapped and flung toward the door, out into a street of staring faces, and into a wheeled cage that filled till men were too close for breath.

They were unloaded and herded into a police-station, where a bald-headed policeman behind a railed desk looked up quizzically.

"You got quite a swell party, Jim," he said to the ward-detective. The latter whispered to him, and the desk-official nodded, with a wink.

"Well, gents, I'm sorry to trouble ye, but business is business. It'll be only Drunk and Disorderly, annyway, hey, Jim? Unless—unless Paddy waps to——"

"Paddy don't make no charges!" exclaimed the detective hastily.

"Well, then, gents," the official addressed the prisoners, "you can just make yerselves comfortable in the captain's room, and in court in

the mornin' a five-spot 'll cover it. I 'll be wantin' your pedigrees first off, though."

He betrayed no surprise when his guests, with strange unanimity, announced themselves as "John Smith" and "John Brown." He chuckled once or twice, and he laughed appreciatingly when the broken-nosed man said, "My name, Bill, is John Doe. Be sure to spell it right."

"You certainly give that feller a soak!" said John Doe to Robert Harding, alias John Smith, when they shuffled into the captain's room. "Who was he? Too bad he ain't among us. I 'd like to see just how wide open you busted him."

Harding did not reply.

He went to the window and stared out at the dingy street. The room was loud with laughter and curses and obscenity, but he did not hear. He did not move from the window till the dawn spread, slow and white, behind the black roofs, and the foul streets grew softly gray, and early risers began to stir.

Their eyes were heavy with sleep, as they went shivering through the streets; but they were pristine compared with the hot, weary wakefulness that flamed in the fevered, rimmed eyes around him.

Under rain-clouds hanging low, the dawn widened and grew large.

A few hours later, while Harding was trying to repair ravages and recover self-respect under an icy shower-bath at home, the gorgeous little fat gentleman who had kept himself safely apart from the fight went down-town and entered a tall building, where an elevator spat him forth into a room that was littered, not as if rubbish had accumulated, but as if it had been hurled in armfuls over floor and desks and chairs.

Coatless men sat at typewriters, tearing sheets out almost before the flying keys ceased, or driving pencils by main strength over such a variety of manuscript as a waste-paper cellar might have sent forth.

They scratched, they dug, they snatched, they impaled, they threw paper to the floor in handfuls, and ever it kept mounting up before them.

Shouted orders, shouted questions, shouted information, crossed and recrossed, incessant as the clicking of the telegraph keys along the wall, and apparently as certain of its destination, for only those paid heed to whom it was addressed. The others wrote, dug, and impaled without the quiver of an eye.

Everything was desperate, furious hurry, a great turmoil driving furiously to some vast issue.

The vast issue was the first edition of the *Evening Messenger* going to press.

A man projected himself from a tomb-like monster of desk in the corner. He had a great mass of printed streamers in his hand, and waved them at the roomful.

"Why don't you just send the waste-baskets up to be set?" he de-

manded, almost with a shriek. "Do your copy-readers"—he indicated the drivers of pencils, who continued to drive without looking up—"always cut out the news and leave in the slush and the libels? Is this a newspaper? Or a Daily Miscellany of Unimportant Facts Erroneously Stated? Who, *who*, WHO is the flashing, scintillating, corruscating winged-victory of a genius who wrote this head-line? And what immortal cog in the mill of the gods was it that had the insight, penetration, and inspired grandeur of intellect to send up a thrilling, thunderous, never-to-be-sufficiently-admired weather article on a morning when a state bank closes its brazen doors and every inch of paper is yelling, whimpering, under the pressure of live news? Mr. Hartliffe," he shouted across the room, "let me congratulate you on the acumen, the knowledge of life, the profundity of thought, and the deep, earnest, amazing insight into the tastes of evening newspaper readers that impelled you to write your mad-dog story in the style of Sartor Resartus. Now, boys, what are you going to give me for the next edition? This one is going to be punk."

He glanced around with eyes that conveyed an extraordinary suggestion of hot wrath and spontaneous good nature.

"Can't anybody on this staff get something *human* into this sheet? Our readers want to read about men! Give 'em that! Get hold of something Personal!"

An assistant hurried to him. "Got a good story, Mr. Bowring." He motioned a thumb at the gorgeous little man. "That's Westbands, a sort of a society hanger-on. He wants twenty-five dollars for the tip. That stickful that we put through for the first edition, about a drunk row in Paddy Burke's——"

"Yes! Quick, Mr. Lee!" said Mr. Bowring, scanning a proof.

"It was n't just a little bum row, the way the police put it in court. It was hot stuff, and Jack McNally, the Green Goods King, was in it, and Sam Green, the heavyweight champion, and a lot of others, all good names. And the thing was started by a chap named Harding, the secretary of the Magellan Asphalt Company, punching the company's manager half to death."

Mr. Bowring flung the proof to a desk. "Elmer Onslow's gilt-edge company!" His face, white from nerve-strain, flashed like the pale, bright flash from a heliograph. "Hustle! Hold down everything for a spread!" he roared at the copy-readers. "Get out the record of Paddy Burke's!" he shouted in another direction. "Dig up a picture, Denison, quick! Hartliffe, bite off that story you're on, cut her right off, and take this for a spread from Mr. Westbands, here! Mr. Westbands, I'll give you eighteen minutes to get in the main facts. Lee, send somebody to hunt through the clippings on the Magellan Company. Crowd back! Crowd back everything. This is the stuff. Mr. Graham, play up big in the headlines on Green Goods King and Corporation Officials! Four-column

heads. Mr. Forrest, hustle through the obituary for Mrs. Delande's costume ball, when we ran a page of pictures, and see if we had Harding's! Hustle!"

When Mr. Westbands, the richer by twenty-five dollars that made him glow with the consciousness of a good deed well done, sauntered across Broadway to buy for his King Charles mouth the best cigar that he could find, a taxicab nearly knocked him down. He looked up to curse the chauffeur, saw the face of the passenger, and exchanged his curse for a genial "Howdy, Bob?"

Robert Harding did not heed. He was looking with heavy eyes on the accustomed turmoil of the accustomed streets, and he saw it with a curious sense of newness, like a sick man venturing out for the first time after long illness in a silent room.

He looked at the jostling, struggling, driven thousands, most of them spent, shabby, futile. And he realized that he was one of the helpless multitude. He realized that the whole gigantic, raving dollar-machinery of the city was a tangle inextricable. It swept around him, it roared around him, it thrust its temples into the air around him, and he knew that he had survived in it only by favor.

CHAPTER VII

"MR. SELFRIDGE wanted to see you as soon as you came in, sir." The elderly clerk who delivered the message to Robert stared at him.

In Selfridge's room sat a man so disordered, so haggard, that Robert had difficulty, for a moment, to recognize that it was Selfridge himself.

"At last!" said he, without rising from the desk, which was heaped with papers in confusion. "I've been——" He broke off. "What's the matter with you?"

"Been in a nasty mess," answered Harding. "I'll tell you about it later."

Selfridge sank back to his former position in his chair. "Come here," he said. "Sit down close."

He drew a sheet toward him. "This company has made big profits. Its books show big profits. They're gone! Where to? To all sorts of other companies and syndicates and what-not, that surround us, seems to me, like a band of crocodiles. We signed all sorts of contracts over to 'em in good faith, because we were told that it was good investment. Maybe it is. It's legal enough, any way. But I—since last night, I call it loot, larceny."

Harding knitted his brows. "But Mr. Onslow always said that it was the best thing to do—to go into these construction companies and selling agencies and things."

Selfridge arose and laid both hands on Harding's shoulders. He

looked steadily into his face. "Yes, it was Elmer who advised those things and authorized those payments. It was Elmer Onslow—he and his gang!"

"It can't be!" Harding threw up an arm, instinctively, as if he had to ward off a blow.

"It can't be?" said Selfridge. "That's what I keep telling myself. That's what I said to myself last midnight when he sat beside me—and told me. It is true."

He walked to the window and looked out. Then he returned, speaking low and fast.

"In these last few months things have been caving in on him from all sides. He fell back on this company of ours that was producing the only real money in sight. Those concerns that he advised us to invest in—they were practically all Onslow. But don't forget this, whatever happens: Elmer swears that every one of those investments will pay in the end. All he needs is time, to tide over the present tough period, he says."

His voice became weary, and when he spoke again it was like a man forcing himself on. "This was all legal, any way. If it came out, the stock-holders might make a fearful hubbub, but they could n't do anything more. But——"

He pulled another sheet of paper toward himself. Fluttering it in his hands, he said, with sudden sharpness: "Eight times in the last few months, Robert, you filled out checks that I had signed in blank—like a careless devil. You filled each one out for three thousand dollars, and drew the cash yourself. Those twenty-four thousand dollars are charged to the Southern Cross Reducing Company. What was that?"

Robert moistened his lips with his tongue before he could speak. "You don't think that I——" he began.

Selfridge checked him. He drew a breath that was like a groan. "Onslow told me himself last night," he said. "He told you that the Southern Cross Reducing Company was a new big scheme that he wanted to keep secret for a while, and you, like an ass, got the cash and gave it to him. Onslow—he was desperate, more than desperate, these past few months for cash. He thought it was only a matter of a few days. But—the cash has gone into their bottomless pit down there." He pointed into Wall Street. "Elmer!" he exclaimed. "Old Elmer that I loved ever since I was a kid. Yes, by God! that I love to-day as much as ever before!"

"But I don't understand," said Harding. "If this Southern Cross——"

Selfridge glanced at the door. He leaned over Harding and spoke hoarsely. "Good heavens! don't you see? Robert Harding, there is not and never was such a concern under heaven as the Southern Cross Reducing Company!"

Selfridge raised his hand. "If he can have three months, he can

repay the money. We can let the entries to the Southern Cross name stand, and there will be no danger of inquiry, if the stock-holders are n't stirred up to investigate the books, and there's nothing just now to make them want that. But it all depends on things remaining quiet till he can get money. A word of rumor or gossip now—Robert, you and I must stay on guard. We stand between Elmer Onslow and—prison!”

There was a knock at the door. At Selfridge's "Come in," the grinning face of a newsboy appeared. With a deft flip of his wrist, he shot his early consignment of afternoon papers on the desk and disappeared.

Harding, white to the lips, trying to formulate some words to say in reply to Selfridge's disclosure, looked at the uppermost paper mechanically.

He heard Selfridge exclaim, "Good Heaven!" even as his own senses took in the headlines that stared at them both.

CORPORATION OFFICIALS FIGHT WITH FISTS
SECRETARY OF MAGELLAN ASPHALT COMPANY STARTS BATTLE
IN PADDY BURKE'S
SOCIETY MEN, GREEN GOODS KING, AND FINANCIAL
LIGHTS IN RIOT

CHAPTER VIII

ELMER ONSLOW, entering his house quietly, saw his daughter sitting before the fire. Its light flushed her hair and face, and they shone against the gloom as in a rich old painting.

He stood still, holding with one hand to the portière, and gazed at this that was his dearest.

The young face, so steady, so untroubled, made him tremble. He stepped softly backward into the gloom.

He stepped backward into shadow, and it closed around him. But blacker than the shadows of any dusk that ever fell were the shadows that had started from the labyrinth at last, and were closing around him fast.

He was greatly weary all at once. His knees wavered. He felt a creeping numbness that he had felt, vaguely, very often in the last few days. Suddenly he knew that he must fall. He snatched at a couch and sank to it. He heard a clear, thin bell ring, short and quick. It seemed to peal over boundless distance; yet it seemed, too, to have rung in his brain. Then the weariness fell from him. Around him there was nothing but a bright, blessed emptiness of space and time.

How long he lay thus, he never knew. He knew only that the weariness came again, and the shadows.

"Lord God!" he whispered. "Lord God! For her sake, not for mine—for her sake, avert the blow!"

He pressed his hands to his temples. He knew that what he had begged from Heaven was a miracle. The stock-holders, startled by the tale in the *Evening Messenger*, had formed a committee that afternoon, and to-morrow they would meet in the Magellan Asphalt Company's office to examine the books. And before Elmer Onslow lay Prison or Suicide.

He had asked for a miracle, and he knew that miracles are no more. Yet when he gathered strength and resolution sufficient to arise and go to her, and saw her looking tranquilly still into the fire, his soul clung to the hopeless petition.

As men long for an agonizing operation to rid them of an incubus, so he longed for the agony of confession. He knew, as surely as he knew that there are life and death, that she would love him none the less. None the less? She would love him the more for that, by his side, she would have to go into sorrow and disgrace.

"Not to-night! Not to-night!" Elmer Onslow snatched at respite. "To-morrow she must know, for to-morrow the shadows will stand forth in mid-day, for all the world to see. But let me save her for one other night, let me have this one last evening with her!"

He went softly upstairs and shaved—not without looking at the bright razor with a face suddenly awful. When he returned downstairs and went to her, he was almost rosy, certainly smiling. He hummed a gay, young air. His rosy good humor became almost mirth during dinner; and afterward he sat on the floor by her side, and gazed into the fire with her, and, resting his head against her knee, did what he used to do many, many happy, happy years ago. He made believe that he was an enchanted king, and she an enchanted princess. He weaved a laughing, rollicking tale, while she laid her hand on his dear head and was happy as when she was a child with tousled yellow hair and eyes so bright that her young father called her his Princess of Stars.

But after a while the tale died away. Youth went back into the fields of the dead. Reality stood behind him, and laid a hand on his shoulder, commanding. He knew that he could control himself no more. He murmured something about an appointment, and took the hand that lay on his head, and kissed it. Then he arose and went out, to make one last hopeless attempt to fend off the morrow.

As he emerged, a figure standing before the house stepped swiftly back into shadow. It was the figure of a man in rough clothes, with a shabby hat pulled over his features.

Presently the figure began slouching down the street, eastward. Elmer Onslow, going westward, turned several times and looked after the other man, dully, but with a struggle to recall a memory. Suddenly he realized that the man, despite his rough clothes, had looked like Harding.

He turned again to look, but the figure had disappeared. He continued, slowly, westward.

The shabby figure went eastward, steadily. It passed the aristocracy of private dwellings, and the Aztec temples of apartment-houses, and the outworks of wealth, and went on to the tawdry streets. Then it turned south, and then eastward again.

Though the man went so steadily, bound so plainly on a set route, he walked as if he were blind and deaf. He passed brawlers and crowds, and gave them no glance. Only once did he hesitate, slightly, when a policeman, sauntering toward him, shot a professional glance at his face.

When he reached the river, he turned south again and went swiftly till he reached a pier where lay a pot-bowed, derrick-armed, ugly steamship, breathing heavily. A man met him at the entrance to the pier, stooped to see his face, and said: "All right, my boy. Come along. I'll pop you right into my cabin, and before sun-up the *Falmouth Belle* will be off."

They hurried down the pier. At the ship's side, Robert Harding stopped for one moment, and looked around. Behind him, lightless, the sky-scrapers blackened the black sky, like monstrous extinct things in an extinct world.

Flood tide was storming in, hidden by the black night, but tumultuous. It needed not eyes to know that the rivers were rolling high and fast, that around the man-made city the eternal mystery was fulfilling itself once more, the waters of the sea treading, unfettered, along their ancient path.

They spoke with voices that arose afar and passed, with ever more voices afar, like eternity come to speech.

So thought a man staring down from the end of a wharf where the beams from a red lantern made a trembling blood-stain on the racing current. All the more deadly was the water for that drowning light, as wave after wave rolled into its circle and disappeared, always with a tossing as it looked backward, beckoning.

"If one obeyed that beckoning!" The man on the wharf spoke, nodding at the river. "You would be fearful, but not cruel. You would not torture me with crowding recollections, with hopes that cannot be realized, with remorse that is only a black-capped Judge saying, 'Too late!'"

"You would be quick. One step into the air, and debate will be ended. There will be no tormented brain trying, like a hunted thing, in every direction for escape, and finding none.

"One step; and there will be no faltering, ever again!"

He moved nearer to the edge. This was a strange figure to stand there with such a purpose. This was choicer food than that which came to river normally, nightly, unreluctant. This choice body shrank, even while the mind within it longed for the great nothing that could be bought for the price of a momentary pain.

The timid body shivered backward from the black water.

Elmer Onslow turned away; and left one answer to his question behind him.

He turned away and faced the other.

His footfalls in the deserted streets echoed from the shut, empty buildings. He fell into the mood of every anguished man, and read a word into their loud monotony. He heard it yelling from all sides in the echoes: "Pri-son! Pri-son!"

He thought he must run, as if the stones of the city had sprung into the sudden hideous life that makes clamoring mobs.

At the corner he stopped to look where he was. It was a street far down-town, and he knew that he had wandered many miles without conscious note. He took out his watch. It told him what the eastern sky told him: that it was nearly morning.

Slowly, irresolutely, he turned south, forcing himself to think clearly, forcing his mind away from the dinning word. How to escape? Over and over, mechanically, he recited to himself the names of banks, trust companies, friends, to any of whom such a sum as he needed before noon would have been a bagatelle—until now. Now, when he needed cash as never he had needed it, there was none. The flow of gold had stopped; and he stood still in the empty street and raised his helpless hands and despairing face to Heaven. The speculations of himself and his kind had brought down the curse, and it was falling on him.

He emerged into the Battery Park, that place of sea perspective and rusty iron pillars, of grandeur and sordidness, so typical in its perplexed jumble of the perplexed strivings of the city. Wearied, he plodded to a seat that faced the bay.

It was lighting under the dawn. A steamship moved slowly past, close to the sea-wall, heading for the ocean. She was pot-bowed, stub-masted, paint-smearred, an ugly thing; but to Elmer Onslow there came a picture of the free, open world into which she was bound. With the curious intentness that a tortured mind devotes to little things, he noted her name. It was *Falmouth Belle*.

Trolley-cars began to pound down Broadway. Far and near the iron wheels clamored. Whistles awoke. A ferry-boat came grinding in, and discharged the day's first detachment of conscripts. The battle line began to roar.

Elmer Onslow had heard that roar through all his fortunate years and taken joy of it—a chief of the army, watching the struggle unmoved, knowing that from it he should wrest victory. Now, suddenly, he could see only the struggle; and there was no victory shining behind.

He made his way sluggishly to the gold and marble business cathedral where he had his offices. The arched corridors were deserted save for women with mops and scrubbing-brushes, who looked curiously at the

early arrival. He let himself into his suite. Everything was orderly. The desks gleamed bare. He shivered. It was horribly like a house stripped of the warm disorder of the living day for a death.

He had bought a newspaper, and he read it from beginning to end. When he reached the last column, he was as ignorant of its contents as if he had not unfolded it. "I must stop! I *must!*" he said.

It was almost time for the arrival of his employees. He hurried to the door, and fled. He could not face them.

He went straight to the offices of the Magellan Asphalt Company, hoping that he might find Selfridge, for he knew that Dick, like himself, had intended to spend the night searching for some method of escape.

Selfridge was there. He leaped toward Onslow with hands clenched and face white and shaken. "Elmer! I've looked everywhere for you this last hour!"

Onslow faced him with a wild hope that died again at once.

"No," said Selfridge thickly; "it's not that! I've found no way to get money for you!"

Onslow groaned, and supported himself by leaning against a desk. The numbness stole on him again, but he fought it off. "Nor I," he said. "I've been turned off everywhere. It's ruin!"

"Ruin!" repeated Selfridge. "Yes, but not for you! Elmer, you're saved! You're saved, but——" He held out a sheet of paper.

Onslow reached for it with fingers that trembled so that it eluded them and fluttered to the floor. Selfridge led him to a chair and put it into his fingers again. Then he went to the window, and kept his back to his friend.

Onslow saw that the sheet had Robert Harding's handwriting. He drew a long breath, and read:

DEAR DICK:

I've written to the stock-holders' committee that I took the twenty-four thousand and lost it, speculating. Don't try to find me.

Onslow dropped the letter. His heart leaped. But it was for only one moment. Then he spoke, with a voice that trembled no more. "No! It shan't be! I'll—Dick—I'll tell them——"

He stretched his hands out, frightened. The air was air no longer, but a rushing blackness.

Selfridge snatched him as he slipped from the chair. His face was wax to the stiff lips. His eyes, half open, were set. Selfridge chafed hands and temples, shouting the while for help.

He held him, looking down at him who had been his generous friend, his idol, his Jonathan.

A doctor appeared, and sent fingers fluttering over the unconscious form. "He will recover—this time. You know what it is?"

"A stroke?" inquired Dick.

The doctor nodded, and murmured a few technical words. "Has n't he had symptoms before this?"

Selfridge remembered that he had complained once or twice of an evanescent numbness. "That's it," said the doctor. "It's been coming on. With prudence, and especially all avoidance of worry, he may escape a recurrence for years. But any sudden shock——" The doctor snapped his fingers.

As they laid him on a couch, Robert's letter rustled under Selfridge's foot. He walked to the gas-logs with it and burned it, watching till its last shreds floated upward into nothing.

He was turning away when a clerk announced the arrival of the stockholders' committee. Selfridge went to the couch, stooped to Onslow, and laid a hand softly on his forehead. Then he turned and walked slowly to the committee-room.

While he spoke to them, telling of Onslow's illness, and while he stood listening to their replies, only one thought was in his mind. It was there like the incessant intonation of a waterfall. Elmer Onslow's lips were sealed by Heaven! And it was left for him to tell these men that his friend was a thief!

He could not do it.

He stood there, silent, while the chairman of the committee read the letter that had been delivered by messenger that morning. He merely shook his head when they asked him if he had any idea in what direction the stolen money had gone. He said no word when the committee assented to the chairman's suggestion that they must offer a reward at once for Harding's arrest.

"And now," said the chairman, "I propose to you, gentlemen, that we have an expert examination of the books, to see if this Harding has taken anything more. But as to the other matters, let us wait for Mr. Onslow's recovery. There are many things that he understands and can explain better than anybody else. Mr. Selfridge, pray tender our deep sympathy to our friend, and beg him not to trouble himself about anything till he recovers."

They filed out. Selfridge went back to the room where Onslow lay, struggling slowly back to the world of men. There was frightened, tormented inquiry in his eyes.

Dick leaned down and put his mouth close to his ear. "It's all right, Elmer, old man, all right."

An hour afterward, as the motor in which he was taking Onslow home passed Park Row, he spoke fast and loud, to drown the shouts of the newsboys. They were shouting, "Extra!" and he knew that Robert Harding's name was blasted.

CHAPTER IX

SELFRIDGE brought his friend home, and faced Margaret bravely. Despite his grief for her, he was able to look into her eyes without faltering, and tell her the truth about her father's condition.

But when it came to his next hard duty, he turned coward.

Long ago, perhaps even before Margaret herself knew it, he had seen her heart go out to the gay youth to whom he had been a father. And if, when he realized this, it meant that Richard Selfridge had to put aside a poor little dream of his own, he did it cheerfully enough. If, whenever he looked at her, he only longed for her the more, he gave no sign; and if there was a pain in his heart, it made him only the more tender toward them both.

And now into his hand that hardly dared to touch the hem of her garment Fate had thrust a dagger. Whether he told her the truth about her father to shield her lover, or whether he upheld the lie and shielded her father, his hand would drive the dagger home.

He had staked his fortunes, and even his life, more than once on quick decisions, as lightly as if he had staked them on a tossed coin. He could not decide in this that concerned those whom he loved.

He muttered an excuse, saying he would return soon. He meant, when he went out, merely to walk a few blocks, to regain his nerve. His walk lengthened itself into a mile and more.

When he returned he knew that she had learned the news. He would have known it from her face, without the evidence of newspapers lying on the floor.

"Dick! Dick!" She cried with a lost little voice, and dropped her head on his shoulder.

He did not reply. Had he spoken in that instant, he must have told her the truth.

He looked down on her and stroked her hair. "My poor, poor girl!" he said. "Come!" He led her to a chair.

He waited for her to speak again, but she only kept her eyes on his, wide and bright. His own sank. He was trying to bring himself to lie, and it made him cower.

"You've—seen it?" he said at last.

She did not speak.

"Good heavens!" he burst out helplessly. "I can't tell you more than that!" He stamped away from her, to escape from her eyes.

He was cursing himself.

She stood up, straight and tall. "So that"—and her hand pointed contemptuously at the newspapers—"is all that you have to say for him—for Robert?"

Denial stormed furiously within him; but he set his lips and remained

silent. He remained silent, though her glance at him was like the lash of a whip.

She spoke, in a strange, low voice: "If they have such a letter from him as they say, he did it to save somebody else. He is like that! You might have believed in him a little better—you whom he admired and loved beyond all men. But I shall believe in him. I shall believe in him, whatever may be, until he meets me face to face, and himself tears my belief out of my heart."

Selfridge bent his head, under the weight of her proud, brave young scorn. Without looking at her again, he went slowly from the house.

When he returned next day, it was with the craven hope that Onslow himself, when he recovered, might speak and thus take the burden of decision from his shoulders.

But Onslow, feeble, shaken, frightened, was unable to summon resolution. And during the next days, while he lay, recovering slowly, and marked her tender care, her love for him, everything in his mind became subservient to saving her from shame.

He convinced himself at last that he was keeping silent only for the sake of Margaret. He came to believe it with all his soul. He believed it so thoroughly that he even yielded to sensations of relief as time passed, and all the zealous hunt for the fugitive remained unsuccessful.

He had feared, shrinkingly, that she might touch on the subject that haunted him, but she did not approach it. She chatted with him about all the amusing trivialities of life, and, except for anxiety about him, was so thoroughly the same happy Margaret as before, that he became gratefully content, that on her, at least, there lay no shadow of sorrow.

This, more than anything else, enabled him to get up and reënter his accustomed life down-town, looking, except for a little uncertainty of limb, very much indeed like the same old Elmer Onslow. He did not quite retain his unconcerned expression when he met Selfridge. In fact, these two, whenever they met, looked at each other awkwardly. A suspicious mind, studying them, might even have seen guilt in one face—but it would not have been Onslow's face.

They did not, however, have much time for confidential speech. The piper, who had played so long for the merry dance, presented his bill just then.

The dancers felt in their pockets and looked at each other, astounded. Surely all this money with which they had gambled and feasted and pelted each other, had only passed from hand to hand! Somebody must have it!

But nobody had it. As in the fairy tale, the gold for which they had pledged their souls had withered into dry leaves.

The Golden Horde stood aghast for an instant. Then it whirled into the exchange-arenas, raving.

For a fortnight it destroyed and slew, bushwhacking chiefs, comrades, and brothers. Then, bit by bit, how no one knew, the pack-discipline came back; the self-destroying mêlée snarled and whimpered itself to an end; and presently the tattered survivors turned all their eyes, as if by command, to a certain office in Wall Street.

It had gone abroad that the man in that office held the gold that meant life to gamblers and workers alike.

Calm, dispassionate, Julian North, with a visage as unruffled as a minted Cæsar, gave quarter.

It was iron quarter. Men stripped vaults of a world's treasure and carried it to him, as if the world were a starving camp and he had bread.

They looked at the new king astounded. But he was not astounded at himself. He had sat, in contented patience, while the world went mad over paper fortunes. While the exchanges made millionaires overnight, he had sat in a library calm as a cloister, studying solid, dull, dogmatic volumes. But they were volumes dealing with the history of gold.

Having played his cards and taken the stakes, he went back, placidly, to his customary routine.

Part of that routine was the task of looking into the affairs of the Magellan Asphalt Company.

As a matter of fact, except to discover details, Mr. North did not need to do much investigating. He knew that Onslow and some of his associates had very thoroughly caught away the profits. And he knew, too, from his many sources of knowledge, that they had lost those profits again in other directions.

He dropped in to see Onslow one day, and said bluntly: "You're in deep, Elmer, I know. And I suppose you're worrying, just when you ought to think of your health."

Onslow looked at him suspiciously. "What are you driving at, North?" he asked.

"You helped me out, once, years ago," replied North simply. "I propose to help you out. Your associates in the Magellan Asphalt Company are pinched for ready cash. Get them to sell their holdings to me, and I'll buy enough other stock to give me control. Then I'll squelch the stock-holders' smelling committee, and things can be straightened out quietly."

Onslow surveyed North with pinched eyes for a moment. He saw that in his friend's face which showed him that the offer was made in perfect frankness.

"How about my own stock?" he asked.

"Keep it or sell it to me," answered North, "whichever will pay you best."

Onslow went home that night almost gayly. So great was the relief that for the time it almost made him forget his secret guilt; and when

it did enter his mind he told himself buoyantly that he would find a way, when he had wealth in his hands again, to clear Robert Harding and yet save himself.

So great was the reaction from tension, that after dinner he told Margaret, for the first time, all about his speculations, how they had involved him, and how long he had stood close to utter poverty. And then he told her how, when all was lost, Julian North, the new ruler of the Street, had come to his rescue, quietly, unselfishly.

Margaret felt the first bit of happiness that she had known in many long days, when she looked at her father and saw that to-night he was the father of the dear old, peaceful days. And she, too, felt a thrill of thankfulness for the man who had brought it about.

"I wish you would arrange a little dinner and invite him," said her father. "He is a lonely man, for all his wealth. Lives in a great house full of the art of all the world, and—nothing else."

North and she never had met. When he arrived at their house on the night appointed, and saw her waiting for him to advance, he thought with a little tremor of delight of an angel figure, greatly wrought in azure and amber light, that he had seen on the window of a Florentine cathedral.

He spoke little during the dinner, or afterward, much to Margaret's disappointment, for North's art in conversation was famous, and, as a rule, he dominated conversation wherever he might be, whenever he felt that the occasion was worth the effort.

This particular occasion was particularly well worth the effort; but with Margaret sitting opposite him, he discovered that his mental processes were directing themselves, almost without his will, into new channels, wherein there were emotions and thoughts hitherto unknown, that disquieted him, and yet were distinctly interesting.

After that evening, Julian North became helplessly subject to a quite extraordinary interest in his friend Onslow. He dropped in every few evenings, to inquire solicitously after his health. He became unusually punctilious about social affairs also, and managed to appear, quite unobtrusively, at those where Miss Onslow might be found. He developed in himself an ardent love for walking and riding in the Park, though he limited his love to those parts of it where she walked.

During this time, he considered this new matter in all its aspects, and, beginning by asking himself, "Shall I?" he progressed to, "Why not?" and ended by concluding that it was good. He decided to marry her.

He did not, perhaps, sing the High Song with Solomon, but he saw in her, with a thrill, the rare elements that he demanded of all life, of his collections, of his pictures, of his books—a many-faceted character, that maintains its own beauty immutably and still responds to each new light with ever-new, exquisite reflections.

He was not, perhaps, a lover who would have swum the Hellespont;

but with a delight that satisfied all his refined appetite for sheer beauty, he delighted in her face.

He did not write poetry to her; but he laid out for her inspection, with faultless tact, all his possessions: knowledge, power, capacity for life wide and deep, a far horizon of ambitions high and noble, and, finally, flung in only as a make-weight, wealth that was imperial.

It did not take Julian North long to assure himself that he had impressed her. His cool mind perceived it clearly. But his cool mind told him, also, that he had failed to arouse any more important feeling.

He was astounded at himself when he realized that this discovery made his heart beat dully, and that the passion-veins on his temples became swollen.

He knew then that his desire for her was more than the desire for possession that had controlled his life hitherto. He wanted this woman, but he did not want to buy her.

He took mental stock again of all that he had to offer her, apart from wealth. He even went so far as to examine himself critically in a full-length mirror.

What else did she want?

He set himself to the work of finding out. But Margaret Onslow kept her secret well.

CHAPTER X

ALEXANDER HINCHCLAW sat at his desk in the offices of his company whose assets were hunted men and whose profits lay in fugitives captured. He was looking at a visiting card that had just been brought in. The name on it was "Miss Margaret Onslow." "I wonder what Onslow's daughter wants here," he thought, and added aloud, "Show her in."

She came in, timid, apprehensive, expecting to see the formidable, mysterious detective of fiction. The man who rose with an ungainly bow presented the slow, untroubled, kindly face of a man who has grown old in unpractical, unworldly reveries.

Margaret's world was so desolate, the reaction on seeing a sympathetic face instead of the expected harsh one was so great, that her trust went out to the man at once.

He waited for her to speak, but not with an air of watching. His eyes were on her attentively, not scrutinizingly.

She felt the attitude, and it warmed her to speak straight to the point. "I know that you are retained by the Magellan Asphalt Company," she said, "to—to search for——"

"Young Harding?" he helped her out.

She nodded. "Mr. Hinchclaw," she said, "I know that he never did it! He could n't!" She laid her hand on his arm. "He took it on himself to protect somebody else!"

Hinchclawe knew that only one emotion could possibly prompt her. "Have you any suspicion as to who it could be?" His tone expressed full interest, almost belief.

She shook her head. "I only know that it must be something like that. Mr. Hinchclawe, if you knew him, you would know it, the way I do! And I have come to ask you if you will take a retainer from me to look for proof."

"Miss Onslow," said Hinchclawe, "you know that our duty to our clients is to find him, and if we find him we shall take him. But, thank Heaven, our duty does not limit us to hunting for proofs of guilt! I shall take up this thing for you, myself. So, now, don't be alarmed if you should hear, in one way or another, that we are hard after him. Quietly, we shall be just as keen in our hunt for proofs of his innocence. But you must make up your mind to wait, perhaps, for a long time."

He waved away her shy offer of money. "We'll wait till we find something worth paying for," he said. To the amazement of his staff, he escorted her all the way to the elevator.

When he returned to his desk, he rang for the Harding memoranda, and studied them carefully, with a brow that became knitted more and more. Then he sent for a special man. "I want you," he said, "to size up the Magellan staff. We've got a tip—only a rumor, mind—that somebody else took the money. Of course, it would have to be some great friend of young Harding, to make him take it on himself. See what you can find."

"I'm afraid there's nothing in that, sir," said the man. "Do you think so?"

"I want you to see," repeated Mr. Hinchclawe. He was rather embarrassed, and he would have been more so, had his assistant known why he was doing it.

It was not because Margaret was beautiful. Into his clearing-house for crime there came every year many beautiful women, good and bad, and he marked their beauty only for purposes of analysis and identification. But Margaret was loyal, and true, and in love.

"Poor girl! Poor girl!" he said, when he was alone again. "Well, I'll let her hope for a time. That won't hurt; and she'll find out, soon enough, when he's taken. And that boy could have had her! Poor, blind fool!"

As Margaret emerged from the Hinchclawe Building, she saw Julian North. She tried to escape, unobserved, to her cab, but it was too late. He was bowing before she was well clear of the doorway.

"And what brings you into this house of crime?" He indicated the building with a smile. "I hope you're not thinking of becoming a detective!"

She tried to answer him lightly, but her eyes fell, and she knew that

she was crimson with embarrassment. She murmured something unintelligible, and hastened to the curb. "Good-by," she said, almost brusquely.

He was hurt. As he walked on, the hurt made him wonder why she had been so confused when he asked her what she had been doing in Hinchclawe's office. Her mere presence there seemed preposterous. It occupied his mind.

All at once, like a great light, came the thought of Harding! There sprang into sharp outline in his memory the recollection of little things that he had not understood at the time—her troubled eyes whenever conversation happened to touch on criminals; her swiftness in turning aside any talk that threatened to drift toward the affairs of the Magellan Asphalt Company. He had set these impulses down to a mere natural objection to discussing the young fellow who had betrayed their friendship and hospitality.

He had known Harding. He had even used him for some of his and Onslow's purposes. But he had appraised him, and dismissed him from his mind long ago, as merely one of many idle, drifting, unimportant youngsters.

Now, instantly, though only a chance suspicion had flamed in him, the flame illuminated Margaret Onslow's indifference toward him; and he felt sure, deadly sure.

At first incredulity struggled in him against the conviction—amazed incredulity that the woman who was worthy of being loved by him should love a poor, wretched, petty thief! He winced, sore with indignation.

Then his fires of wrath and hatred flamed out.

He raged against Providence. It was a diabolical trick to put this insignificant creature into his path.

But after he had walked himself tired, his cool brain took control again. It did not try to quench the fires, but it made them labor.

"He must be caught!" said rage and reason together. "He must be caught, and sent to state's prison, to stripes!"

He sat down, coolly enough, at his desk, and thought it out. "Will it make him a martyr?" he muttered. "No! Not to one like her! Let him stand in court, handcuffed! Let us drag from him the tawdry story of the tawdry theft! It was avarice or woman! Let it be either, and he will stand in her eyes for what he is!"

He reflected a little longer. Then he reached for the telephone instrument. "Give me Hinchclawe," he said. "I want Mr. Hinchclawe, himself."

"About the Harding business." He spoke in a matter-of-fact voice. "I've taken over active charge of the Magellan Asphalt Company, Hinchclawe, and I want to make an example of this case, to prevent any others. Increase the reward offered for his capture, Hinchclawe! Get

him, no matter what it costs. Get him, if you have to hunt him 'round the world!"

"We know where he is now," came Hinchclawe's mild, deliberate voice. "In fact, I was pretty sure all the time; but just now, not five minutes ago, we got a cable from our agent. The night Harding disappeared, a tramp steamship, the *Falmouth Belle*, sailed for the Caribbean. The police did n't pay much attention to her; but my men discovered that her captain, a man named Coffin, was an old friend of Harding's father. So we put all our work on the *Falmouth Belle*. Her first stop was a little logwood shipping place 'way down south in Mexico—a place called Frontera. We've found out that a ranch-owner, Julio de Castillio, who is a friend of Captain Coffin's, had a young American next day as guest, and kept him mighty dark. Since then they've gone on, inland."

"When will you get him?" demanded North.

"Mr. North," Hinchclawe's quiet voice responded, "unfortunately Castillio is a rebel sympathizer, and a few days after Harding was passed on to him, the government troops descended on them. The two have fled and joined the rebels. A warrant won't carry to——"

But North had slammed the receiver on his desk with as near an oath as he could command.

CHAPTER XI

A SPADE-SHAPED head, with little eyes glittering, slipped slowly, almost imperceptibly, along the thick branch of a wild mango tree, and looked down. Half a dozen soft, shapeless masses that had hung baggily on various boughs undulated glossily and became a tense, glowing, un-wrinkled whole, the burnished body of a boa-constrictor, watching the jungle below.

A little red deer broke out of the thickets and raced away.

There was a belt of disturbance in the jungle, a line of disturbance that advanced invisibly. The invisible thing made no sign of its own. It caused no tremor of a leaf. But overhead its advance was advertised. Hood-beaked blackbirds lurched from bamboo clumps, croaking. Green parrots burst out of trees like winged shrapnel. From a water-hole rose, silently, the white angel-shapes of egrets.

The line of disturbance moved slowly, steadily, to the edge of the jungle. Then it stopped. The jungle-beasts disappeared again. The boa-constrictor relaxed. The boughs shook a little as it withdrew into thicker cover. That which it saw below was not for it.

Behind the jungle the sun's disk appeared. In a moment the Mexican dawn was great as northern day.

Half an hour passed. There was no stir in the jungle.

High in air, very high, black things soared in concentric circles, ever

sinking lower, till at last, with a rattle of dry, coarse wings, they dropped, one by one, to trees and sat huddled, with heads of red, bald flesh drawn close to their ugly turkey-like bodies.

Suddenly, from a ravine beyond, came the sound of many hoofs. A band of Federal cavalry appeared, carbines in their hands, swords and machetes slapping the leathers noisily. They trotted into the trail that led by the jungle.

Two by two, they came on, peering to all sides. Two by two, till six, eight, ten, had passed.

Then the bush burst. It spouted a sheet of fire. Horses toppled like wooden things. Others screamed and rolled. Still others swept away, dragging uniformed shapes that pounded limply through the dust like huge dolls.

In the narrow road packed the cavalcade, those in front backing on those behind. From the bush blow on blow struck into the mass. Even through the voices of rifles and men and beasts could be heard the squeelching impacts as the sweet-singing Mauser bullets went home.

Out of the forest at one end of the jungle came a roar, a vast whirling of dust, a thunder of horses. The government troop, huddled, went down before the mounted rebels, who struck them like a storm.

"*A mè! A mè, Señor Mallory!*" cried one. The man addressed as Mallory, packed tight in the dust-wreathed mass, struggled to gain the side of the man who called him. He saw him go down, sucked in instantly, as under a whirl of thick water. His eyes closed before a red flash as a Federal soldier fired a revolver almost into his face. He struck hard with his machete and saw a white countenance sink away with a slit opening horribly across it, that turned red before it disappeared.

He felt suddenly sick. But something bright whirled at him, and he parried mechanically. His unseen opponent's weapon glanced off, he struck again, blindly, and drew back his blade splotted. He carromed into a horse, and saw that something under the beast was being trodden into hideous red ruin.

Shot and cry and blow were in his ears. In his eyes were dust and smarting smoke, and all around a snarled, tangled pack of men and horses.

The man at his side screamed, and tore at his breast. He turned on his saddle, hung head-down for a moment, and disappeared under dirt and hoofs.

Something stung the American's cheek. He brought his fingers back sticky with blood.

He smelled it, he tasted it. His whole being revolted. But this was no time to reason, this was no scene to think like a human being, this was no place like human earth. Here there was no man who had anything remaining in him of mankind except hate. Around him were men who

had welcomed him to their houses, who had been friendly, kindly, gentle. Now they were staring with strained faces, jaws working convulsively, their eyes the eyes of devils.

He was conscious that always the knot of men around him forced itself on and on, and that the Federals were fighting now not for victory, but for bare, pitiable escape.

Weapons raised high in air appeared before him and struck, struck, till they were struck down themselves, the faces of the wielders drowning in a cascade of fire and smoke.

The revolver fire ceased, almost suddenly. No man had time or chance in that close grip to reload. It became a bodily wrestle of men and horses, where none had breath to shout, where only the gasps of strained lungs broke the silence, except when one screamed or whimpered as he died.

Again and again horses' heads thrust at him, and he hacked at their riders for self-preservation. But he fought with a weird sense of impersonality—as if this were another Time and Planet, and he, Robert Harding, were watching from afar while a man named Mallory battered and cut and slew.

As the grapple closed, he saw a dark, bearded face appear before the others of the Federals—a face striking even in that sense-destroying place, a face bright with courage and terrible as the face of a Cortez. Again and again this man charged into the rebels and sabred men, bridle to bridle. Again and again he was forced back, but always unwounded, always with dead to mark his assault.

Now the brave, menacing face appeared again. There was a momentary gap in the rebel band. He charged through it, and rode at Harding.

The American shrank back for a moment. Just in time, he gripped his horse mightily with his knees, whirled it around, and heard the Mexican's sword whistle past his head. He snatched at his foe's sword-wrist and got it. His own machete fell. With his free hand he struck into the dark face with all his might.

The man tottered. Both horses, swung around side by side, started on a tearing gallop. Their bridles, hanging loose, trailed under their feet, but they won clear of the mêlée. Then, a few yards down the road, just as the American gripped the Mexican's throat, his horse fell and rolled over. He pulled his enemy out of the saddle and the two came to the ground heavily.

Harding, shaken and dizzy, raised himself to his hands and knees, and looked, panting, at the Mexican. The latter lay still, without a groan or sign of life. He crawled over to him, and lifted his head. He looked around. A dead horse lay near by, and he spied the gleam of a tin canteen.

He began to bathe his foe's head, and forced some water down his

throat. The man's eyes opened. He smiled, showing beautiful white teeth.

"*Gracias, muchos gracias, Amigo,*" he said, with gratitude in his handsome eyes.

A bugle sounded. Harding stood up. Rebels were running toward him, waving their hats. A torn, trampled little area of earth, a small throng of ragged, dirty, bleeding men, and objects that lay spread out in grotesque attitudes, were all that remained of the delirium of the last half-hour.

As he looked, men ran around, striking with hats and machetes at the vultures that were dropping down to the grotesque objects.

CHAPTER XII

JULIAN NORTH had played his game carefully and wisely. Such cards as he had, he had used well. But now he was guilty of a blunder.

It was not a tactical mistake. As a tactician, he was altogether too skilful to make such a mistake. In fact, it was not actually a mistake, at all. It was merely an emotional accident.

It happened one evening when he was sitting with Onslow, after Margaret had retired. Onslow had not been feeling well for days. "Lately," he said to North, "I've been feeling those little attacks of numbness again. And it worries me, North. Not so much on my own account, but on account of my daughter. You know my affairs pretty thoroughly; and you know that I can come out all right if I can have another year or so. But if anything happened to me now——"

On the impulse, North spoke, not even waiting for Onslow to finish. "I've wanted to say something to you before," he said. "Onslow, I want her for my wife."

Onslow's face became illuminated. "North," he said, "if I could see that! But I never dreamed! Margaret has n't given me a hint."

"That's the trouble," said North. "I am afraid—well, I can't say that Miss Onslow would have me, to put it straight. And yet——"

"Suppose I sound her?" suggested Onslow.

North had a keen sense, then, that they were blundering. But he was not of marble, though he was so much more intelligent than passionate. His desire had grown to something that filled his waking life, and stole a good deal of his sleep. He assented, his judgment yielding to his hunger.

The very next afternoon, Elmer Onslow, eager and hopeful, came home early and called her to him. Sitting with her arms around his shoulder, as in the days of childhood, she heard him tell her that Julian North had asked for her.

Her father did not plead the wooer's cause in words. His every tone,

his expectant eyes, did that; and the love of the daughter for the father who had been saved from ruin spoke almost as loudly.

She did not love North, and she had no intention of so wronging herself and him as to become his wife. But her great, generous soul did not measure out gratitude with a huckster's measure. For the service that North had done her father, for his noble, unselfish help, she would have paid, gladly, with anything, however precious to her—anything but this, which was impossible to her clean heart.

Had her father opposed her; had it been necessary for her to strive against him, it would have been easier for her. But he sat there quite silent when she spoke. And she saw how pale he was, how gray his hair had become. She had known long that he was a breaking man. All the light of joy faded from his face, and she knew that with every word she was taking from him a great, freshening hope.

She sank to her knees before him, and cried, holding his hands and kissing them.

"Dear, dear hands," she sobbed, "that never touched me but in gentleness and love! Dear, dear father, who never looked at me or spoke, except to bless me! That I must disappoint you now——"

"Don't, sweetheart! My Princess of Stars, don't, don't!" said Onslow, with shaking voice. "Some day, when the right man comes——"

She lifted a face to his, so miserable, so wretched, that he stopped, frightened. Then it burst from her. She had to speak, it would not be denied, her very life demanded it. It came from her, wildly. And at last Elmer Onslow's eyes were opened, and he knew that she loved Robert Harding!

His heart checked. He felt the stunning, numbing sensation creep over his nerves. He fought and beat it back. She was crying and laughing, and he rang, panic-stricken, for help.

While they were waiting for the doctor, he clenched his fists to force back the numbness. "Only an hour!" he muttered. "Only an hour! God, grant me that space! Till I do what I have to do!"

When the doctor had reassured him, saying that her attack was only nervous and a little hysterical, he went slowly to his library. He had to set each foot down painstakingly, to make progress; and when he sat down at his desk, he had to brace every muscle and nerve to command the hand that held the pen. But he wrote steadily, without pausing. In half an hour his task was done. He folded the sheet and sealed it in an envelope, which he addressed slowly.

Then he sat thinking for a moment. He took up the telephone and called Julian North's house, not without difficulty, for his tongue was strangely clumsy.

"Is—it—North?" he asked thickly. "Onslow. I have—just—written—something—you—and—Selfridge—give—to—Hinchclawe——"

"Hello! Hello, Onslow!" North shouted into the instrument.

There was no reply.

North rang furiously. "I can't raise the party," reported the operator. "He must have gone away and left his receiver hanging down."

CHAPTER XIII

NORTH cried to his man to order the motor. "Top speed!" he ordered. "To Mr. Onslow's!"

The servant who opened the door told him that Mr. Onslow was in the library. He brushed the man aside and ran up. Elmer Onslow was lying on the floor, under the dangling telephone instrument.

He ran to the door and called help. They carried him to a couch. His eyes, wide-open, were conscious; but the nerve-lightning had left him unable to stir a muscle or utter a word.

North, learning from the servants that Miss Onslow was ill, warned them to keep the news from her. The doctor, who arrived soon, took him aside and whispered: "His death is only a matter of a day, or perhaps hours. Certainly not more than a day. Unless there is a miracle, he will die as he is now—conscious, perfectly conscious, but unable to move or speak."

They propped him in a great chair. From the soft pillows and cushions that surrounded him, his face looked out, strangely diminished. The play of life was gone, leaving the features still and aloof like a winter's horizon when the light is failing fast. Only the eyes were alive with the life of quick mortality; and they were fearful.

Incessantly they roved. They besought. They were trying, terribly, to tell something.

"Is it what you telephoned to me about, Onslow?" asked North. "The writing? You want me to find it?"

There was assent, plain to see, in the wild eyes.

North looked around the room. He walked to the oaken table. He saw an envelope, addressed:

ALEXANDER HINCHCLAW

He returned and sat down before Onslow.

"Be easy, old man," he said, with his own eyes fixed on Onslow's. "I am sure that I understand. You want Selfridge and me to take this"—he held out the envelope—"to Hinchclaw. Yes, I can understand you. I see that is what you wish. It shall be done."

Now there was something in the eyes that he could not understand—a great relief, and yet a great fear.

He put the envelope into an inner pocket and spoke easily: "You may depend on me. And, Elmer, I'll look after everything for you while

you're ill. Don't worry. And now—yes, I know. You want to see your daughter. I'll go and tell her. Yes. Don't fear. I shall prepare her."

He went downstairs and sent her maid in to her. She came out, white and trembling; and, gently as he broke the tidings to her, she tottered, so that he had to support her. For a blessed moment, he held her in his arms and passion swept him, tumultuous. Then she regained her strength. He released her, kissed her hand again and again, and left her.

When he was in his own house again, he took out the long envelope, and wondered what Elmer Onslow should have written to Hinchclawe. That it was something gravely important was evident from all the circumstances. Though he pondered long and earnestly, he could not even guess at anything that seemed plausible.

His concern was altogether for Onslow. But while he sat looking at the sealed document that lay before him, his mind reverted to Margaret's visit to Hinchclawe. He had ascertained, long ago, that she had gone there to ask his aid. Although his reason dismissed it as unlikely, his jealous hatred insisted on suggesting that Onslow's message might have some bearing on Harding. Suppose Onslow had written, asking that the pursuit be stopped! Selfridge, he knew, would indorse the request. And he would be forced to accede, or else occupy the position of refusing a dying man's last request! The thought was intolerable.

North lit a cigar and smoked it, slowly, with the envelope untouched before him.

Then he went to the door and locked it. He returned to his desk and called Onslow's doctor on the telephone. "Doctor," said he, "Onslow, of course, has many affairs that should be settled. It is important that I should know something positively. Is there any chance, even the most remote, that he will recover sufficiently to speak or write?"

There was a brief pause. Then the doctor spoke decisively: "One chance in, say, a million; and hardly that."

"Thank you," said North.

He hung up the receiver. Without another second's hesitation, he took up a paper-knife and slit the envelope.

He read Elmer Onslow's confession.

His first emotion was one of boundless pity for Margaret. In that unselfish emotion there was no flaw. He had no thought other than one of thankfulness that he had read the document and that he could suppress it and save her father's name.

And then a sudden rage overwhelmed him, and took him almost physically in the throat, as he realized how Margaret would glorify the young cub if she knew. "The fool!" he snarled. "The maudlin, sentimental, melodramatic fool!" He struck the paper with his fist.

He took up the sheet to destroy it. But he paused, with eyes pinched. He had seen the unaccountable freaks of chance too often to commit

irrevocable acts lightly. "I'll think it over!" he muttered. He replaced the paper in an envelope, addressed it as before, and locked it away in his wall safe.

And all evening Elmer Onslow sat waiting. All evening the longing to atone wrestled with the longing to protect. All evening and all night the living intelligence in the dead body strove frightfully. And always, unceasing, there was the terror of a great empty noise in his ears, like the blowing of a wind, far off, coming, coming.

Through the disorder of the restless brain there ran, under all the other thoughts that thronged, "What if the spirit remains alive like this after the body is gone?" And Elmer Onslow's mind wept wildly, a sinner in Hell.

Richard Selfridge, sitting by him, read the terror of the moving eyes in the stone face, and clenched his hands till the nails bit into the palms. He forgot the wrong that had been done. He stooped to his friend's ears and whispered the words that men say to men when God's face is very near.

And ever and again Elmer Onslow's tormented mind tried to force the bonds of silence, and beg him to protect Margaret, to carry her away, before the law came to take him.

The night moved westward. A gusty, rain-laden wind came with the dull light of another day. Elmer Onslow heard the wind that had been rushing toward him. It was near. It was on him. A hoarse cry came from him, and he died.

CHAPTER XIV

ONE day, when that troubled bit of earth that had been Elmer Onslow had been lying for more than a month in its final little estate of other earth, Margaret sat in her drawing-room to hear from Selfridge and North what they had to tell about her father's business affairs.

It was little, though it had cost long days of search through intricate transactions. Onslow had died before he could recover his old position, and his daughter would have barely enough to live.

Before they had quite finished, the servant brought a card. "Major Rene Toral," read Margaret, puzzled.

A tall, bearded man entered with a bow, ceremonious, yet with a certain dashing, romantic quality like a cavalier of a bygone day.

"Señorita," said the stranger, "your pardon for intruding. I have some information for you—from Mexico."

She looked at him, her brows knitted.

"It is from an American that I bring news—an American *caballero*, of the name Mallory."

The wonder in her face deepened. "These gentlemen," said she,

introducing them, "are kind enough to manage my affairs. Perhaps they may hear this?"

Major Toral bowed. "You know this Señor Mallory?" he inquired. He showed his surprise when Margaret shook her head. "He said your name many times. See!" He drew out a note-book. "When he spoke—in the fever—he said this name again and again. I wrote it down with a carefulness, Señorita. Also in time I gain the knowledge that you dwell in the city of New York."

Margaret regarded him with lips half open, but still there was nothing but wonder in her eyes.

"Perhaps it will be well, Señorita," suggested Toral, "that I shall tell you the beginning?"

Margaret bowed.

"I am Major in the Army of Mexico," he began. "Pardon that I name myself. It shall be not much. Three months ago I take out a troop and we ride into—what do you name it?—oh, yes! Ambush! It is very bad. It is not for you to hear of the fighting, Señorita. Only this: twice, three times, many times, I behold a man among the rebels, and he is not Mexican. I think he is *Americaño*; and I try to get at that men."

He glanced at her apologetically. There was a dawning realization in her fixed gaze.

"We meet," he continued. "We encounter. He is young, but he is strong. When I come to my senses, I am prisoner. They ride into the bush, and take me, tied to a horse. The American Señor, he rides near me, and many time on the march he brings me water, and he bathes my hurts. The rebels are going to kill me. I know. It is the custom. It is war. Thus I tell myself that before the next evening I shall be dead. But in the night, when we have camp, creeps Señor Mallory to me, and cuts the ropes where I am tied, and shows me a horse waiting, and the next day I am in my city."

He paused a moment, and went on: "Many times I think with a much gratefulness about him. Then comes a day when we surprise a band of rebels. They get away, but my men fire, and one falls. When we ride to him, Señorita, I behold——"

Margaret sprang up and advanced toward him, wide-eyed. He advanced too, and lifted his hand. "Señorita, no!" he exclaimed. "He has a deep wound, but he is alive!"

Selfridge was by Margaret's side and had his arm around her. "Where is he now?" he asked.

"Señor," answered Toral, "he is our prisoner, you understand. But when my *commandante* learns that he is the *caballero* that has saved me, he permits me to keep him in a ranch-house in the country, where the air is good for him. And we heal him. But he is very much weak, and he gets fever. And then he does not get better, which is of wonder to me

till our friend the surgeon says that it is because he will not care for to get better. I am troubled very greatly for this man that has saved my life. I think, then, how he has called always, in his fever, for this Señorita Margaret Onslow, and sometimes he says that she is sitting by him, but mostly he says that he must die and she must never know—but what it is that she must not know, I cannot tell. So at this time come orders for an officer to proceed to the United States for try to buy arms; and what better, I think to myself, as I shall apply for the duty, and so perhaps serve this man that saves my life with so great nobleness?"

He stopped. Not until then did Richard Selfridge realize that this story of Harding's whereabouts, told before North, had delivered Robert into the hands of the police.

He glanced at that gentleman in alarm. But Julian North was looking at Margaret.

He was looking at a woman whose eyes gazed straight at them all and yet looked far beyond them. He was looking at Margaret, with Love so bright upon her that she stood as if wings expanded around her.

"I am going to him," said Margaret.

Julian North made a little, unconscious motion with his hands, opening them as if he were tossing something down. Without a word, he slipped out.

CHAPTER XV

WHEN Julian North walked through the streets after he left Margaret's house, he was as dignified and calm, outwardly, as usual. He bowed to acquaintances, and smiled to those who were worthy of that favor. But inwardly he had a shamed feeling as of being mired.

He went straight to his library, unlocked the safe, and took out the sealed envelope. "Now," said he, "if I keep you, what then?"

Without it, he knew, the world would have only contemptuous incredulity for the true story, even if anybody told it.

But there had come a subtle loss of value to the possession of that signed paper. The world's organized opinion, its social and legal power to make or destroy, had seemed satisfactorily formidable only an hour ago. Now they seemed dwarfed by something whose greatness he could perceive though he could not understand it. Before him he saw Margaret, contemptuous of all the world, transfigured.

Again he made that little motion of his hand, consciously this time, as if throwing down useless cards.

He telephoned to Hinchclawe. "I wish," said he, "you'd get Selfridge to be at your office at ten to-morrow. I have something important."

Dick appeared at Hinchclawe's ahead of time, expecting confidently that North intended to discuss Harding's capture. Instead, North pro-

duced the sealed envelope, and handed it to the detective. "Here," said he, "is something that was given to me by poor Onslow, to be opened, as he wished, in the presence of Mr. Selfridge and myself. I put it away and—forgot it."

Hinchclawe opened the envelope. His mouth puckered for a whistle, but produced no sound. Without a word, he passed the paper to his visitors.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed North, with magnificent astonishment.

The three sat silent for a while, looking at one another.

"Well," said Hinchclawe, at last, tapping the paper with his pencil, "what shall I do with this? The man's dead."

"I suppose the only thing to do is to give it to the authorities," said North reluctantly.

"Hum!" Mr. Hinchclawe drummed thoughtfully on his desk. "The young fellow's in Mexico, where he can't be reached. Maybe he's dead, too. Unless he turns up, what's the use?"

"We know how to reach him," said Dick. "Found out yesterday."

"Yes?" Mr. Hinchclawe raised his eyebrows. "That information would have been of considerable interest to my men, eh, before this was opened?" He tapped the paper again. "But now we don't want him! And there's a question in my mind: does he want us?"

Selfridge brought his hand down on the desk with a tremendous thump. "You're right!"

Hinchclawe nodded. "So I should say. He chose to do a certain thing—for reasons of his own, that, no doubt, struck him as sufficient. What right have we to undo it?"

He opened a box of cigars and passed it around. As he looked up and watched the smoke float slowly to the ceiling, a pleasant light came into his old and somewhat weary eyes. He thought that this was a pretty thing to come into his hands, a thing of love, young and bright, spinning its golden web like a fairy tale where so many sombre webs had been spun by him.

He smiled up into the floating, circling smoke, and, still smiling, he turned to his visitors. "Gentlemen," he said, "why not play a little at Providence, since the threads have come into our hands? The young fellow is alone in the world, and there are no relatives crying to have a family name cleared. He is entitled to play his own hand. As to the public—what difference does it make? They'll forget. Now I can pass the word quietly among the police that the reward is withdrawn, that, in fact, the man is emphatically not wanted. I can vouch for it that the hunt will stop. Practically, except for our own men, it has stopped already. And as to the indictment—let it collect dust for a while, and then we'll get it quashed some day. There's only one difficulty." He turned to North. "The consent of the Magellan Asphalt Company."

"I'll arrange that," said North.

He said it stiffly. Selfridge regarded only the words and not the manner. He jumped up and seized both North's hands, shaking them enthusiastically.

North's eyes shot fire. Then he arose, nodded coldly, and stalked away, to return to his old life, and, in time, to forget, or, at least, not to remember, the chapter in his career headed "Margaret Onslow."

But first he wrote a letter to Mr. Selfridge. He had intended to do it, but he had not intended to do it quite at once.

So next day Mr. Richard Selfridge read a short note in which Mr. North, as owner of practically all the Magellan Asphalt Company's stock, indicated to him in strictly parliamentary language that his resignation was desired. Then followed an expression of thanks for his services, neatly compressed into one line. And there was a postscript suggesting that Mr. North would be pleased to buy Mr. Selfridge's stock for fifteen thousand dollars.

Dick dropped the letter to the floor and rubbed his boot on it. Then he stepped to the window and looked out. He knew that North could make his stock worthless, if he chose. He knew that there was no chance for Richard Selfridge in a contest with Julian North. He shook his fist at the city. "You big stone and iron devil!" he said. "There you stand, insulting the sky! And, by God! you chew men up as savagely and uselessly as ever Aztec idol did!"

He breathed deep with desire for the open spaces where men were sufficiently rich if they had food, where lives still were ruled by rain and wind and sun instead of fire and steam.

"Why should I care," he said, as if he were addressing a sentient thing, "that my boy's name is disgraced in your iron streets? Why should any man care what that horde down there, running around like bewildered insects, thinks of him?" He made a motion of his arm like sweeping the whole mass of city out of his way.

The longing for freedom swept him. A shouting trade-wind called him. He scrawled a note to North, accepting his offer and inclosing his immediate resignation. Then he swung through the crowded streets, and for the first time in many months he felt that his head was in clear air. The city was furious around him, its houses thrust themselves appallingly into the sky to shut it out, but when he looked straight up his glad eyes saw one blue, blue strip of heaven with an edge of white cloud flying. And he knew that soon he should see all of the sky, north, east, south, and west, the wide, wide world, the old, old road, the old clean, large life.

He swung along as if a marching song were wild before him. More than one of the city-worn multitude turned to look at him as he passed, stirred as by the blowing of a sudden, fresh, glorious wind.

CHAPTER XVI

THE cold seas of the gray north disappeared behind the ship, and the bright south took it. The blue wonder of the Gulf Stream undulated vastly between vast horizons, where spirit clouds hung, never moving. The yellow Sargasso weed tossed, cloth of gold on sapphire crests and turquoise troughs. The painted sea darkened into living purple; and there dwelt Spring—eternal, half asleep, breathing in endless content.

Over the painted sea trod painted days, unchanging. They touched Margaret and blessed her with something of the kingly repose of the royal ocean. To her there came the benison that awaits all who pass those vernal gates—the long, waking sleeps when trouble, though it has not perished, closes its eyes and rests, and to-morrow is far off, as to-morrows were in the world's innocent youth.

She was content to watch the great days move, to see dawn swing wide from the circle of the sky, bringing no indignity of life, and to see the nights that brought no end, but only a richer beauty.

On her soul lay peace as great as that which lay upon the poppy sea. As she dreamed into the round horizon, her spirit was as wide as it, stilled and steadied like the steady sky, and her mind, like the trade-blown clouds, was high above the little travail of the man-made world that she had left.

The emerald-flashing Bahamas' reefs blinked, and let them by. In bird-swarms, the flying fish burst out of the sapphire to weather and to lee. Through the vivid wake flung dolphins, like flung swords. The Tropic of Cancer took them in, and tossed them through a world that was charmed into a sleep broken only by the charioteer trades.

Then the purple windward seas shouldered vastly from their lonely circumference, and smashed silky white, milky blue, on coasts of smoky headlands.

It was the Caribbean. There were wild roadsteads, profoundly deep, and coastal mountains helmeted in clouds. Banana-bowered locketts of small bays were there, and crocodilian jaws of coral sand where stood tall, naked, feather-headed palms. Sleek, hushed plains of aerial liquid were stirred by the ship's entrance into slow, sliding upheaval, and shivered into water-splinters, whose cleavages flashed cat's-eye, peacock, and cerulean.

And one day, Major Toral, standing at the bow, swung his hat and said: "*Salve, salve! Mejico hermosa!*"

On the tropic land lay the translucence of late afternoon, when the day's trade-wind has dropped, and night's land-breeze has not yet begun. The jungle held up all its growths, entranced. The palm-fronds hung like heavy plumes of bronze.

A little cavalcade of three trotted silently through the high grass into a little clearing. At its farther edge, against a great ribbon of breathless color in the west, they saw a squat ranch-house of pink limestone, palm-thatched, and at one side, outlined black against the wide, wide sky, they saw a figure sitting, all alone in the immense land.

Selfridge spurred his horse, raced headlong across the clearing, and had his arms around Robert Harding.

Then he fell back, frightened, and said, "That's a devil of a way to fall in on a sick man!"

The sick man's cheeks were wet with tears. "Dick! Dick! God bless you!" He snatched at Selfridge's hands, too overjoyed to be amazed.

Selfridge forced him back into his seat, patting him on the shoulder gently. "My boy! My dear boy!"

For a space, neither could say more. Then Dick hurried into narrative. Swiftly he told Harding all that had happened—Onslow's death, Toral's arrival, their suppression of Onslow's confession—everything except that Margaret had accompanied him, that even then she was riding toward the house.

Harding drew a long breath when the tale was done. He did not answer at once. He reached across to his friend and took his hand again. "Poor old Dick!" he said. "I know what all this meant to you—to keep your lips shut, to be between the devil and the deep sea! But it's all turned out right, has n't it? Do you remember, Dick, what the old Professor said to us, when I was such a cub? 'Star material, earth material!' I know now that I'm not much good; but, at least, when the test came, thank God, I was n't altogether base! And—and—though I'll never see her again—oh, Dick! Dick!" The thin face that had been a man's became all helpless boy again. His head dropped to his hands, and his body shook to sobs.

Dick, looking through his own wet eyes over his boy's shoulders, saw Margaret and Toral disappear behind the house. "Brace up, Robert! Brace up!" he said sharply. "Listen! It is for her—for her you must think now! She believes in you! Do you know what she said to me, when the papers placarded you as a thief, when your own written confession was flung into her face?"

Harding looked at him, bewildered, incredulous.

Selfridge stood up, his head bowed, his voice low and trembling, as in worship. "'I shall believe in him,' she said. 'I shall believe in him, whatever may be, until he meets me face to face, and himself tears my belief out of my heart!'"

The western sky flamed suddenly. Its light, ruddy on the lad's face, was less radiant than the joy that flamed there.

But the eyes lost their joy again. He arose, staggered, and leaned

against the house. "Even so—and oh, Dick, I don't want to live without her! I can't. God help me! But even if I were willing to tell her the truth—to rob her of all that was dear to her and then to say, 'Now that I've broken your heart, take me!'—even then what good would it be? Do you think I'd let her marry me—a thief in the eyes of the world—when the only way to clear my name would be to go back and shout that the guilty man is her dead father?"

Behind him, close to him, was a great, quavering cry. He turned to see Margaret standing, horror in her face. He sprang toward her, but she warded him off with outstretched hand.

"You," she gasped—"you—you dare to say that my father—you accuse my father!"

Robert Harding turned away, with lowered head. Selfridge went to her, and put his arm around her, to support her, where she stood, all swaying. She gave way, and clung to him, sobbing weakly.

"Margaret! Margaret!" said Robert hoarsely, not moving from his place. "I would have given my whole life to spare you this! Margaret! Dear Margaret! Your father's name never shall be shamed by any word from me!"

She looked up at Selfridge, with the horror still white on every feature. But he returned her gaze with eyes that were suddenly masterful. All indecision was swept away. His voice rang strong, commanding. "Thank God that you heard!" he cried. "Margaret, Margaret, it is the living against the dead! Go to him!"

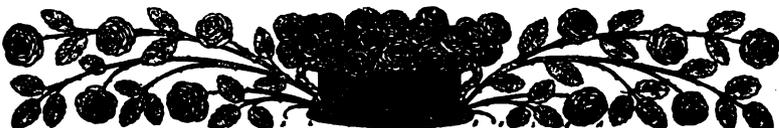
And Margaret went.

She went to him, and put her arms around him, and kissed him. "Robert!" she sobbed. "Sweetheart! What you have done for my father, for love of him and me, I accept! I accept it, Robert, oh, with what love and pride! Let them think what they will, let them say what they will, in the world we have left behind! I throw away that world, so gladly. And you and I—we will make our own world!"

He looked at her through hot tears that did not shame him. He did not speak. He could only lift his hand and smooth back the bright hair from the dear face and look into the dear, brave eyes.

Richard Selfridge held his arms toward them for an instant, and stepped softly backward into the house.

The red sun disappeared. The waking land breeze stirred the pillared palms, and on the land the tropic night set her glorious crown.



HIDDEN WATERS

By Katharine Metcalf Roof

I

ALTHOUGH he was in the act of formulating his excuse for escape, Paul's wandering perceptions were caught by the vivid quality of the not especially young woman who had just greeted Camilla in passing. So definitely indeed did the woman's personality arrest and hold him that he became aware that the topic of conversation had shifted and progressed when his attention returned to it.

"The successful wife of a genius," Camilla was characteristically attaching her label for the benefit of her companions—a short young man and a tall young woman.

"His inspiration!" exclaimed the last, with the emotion with which the sentimental can voice the trite. Camilla adapted the sentiment in accepting it.

"The substantial background of it. Keeps his house wonderfully, hides the sordid and disturbing from sight, is always charming to the right people without really infringing upon her own sincerity. A kind, well-balanced, maternal type. The ideal wife for a genius."

"Admitting that genius can be happy housed and tamed," Paul observed, to which Camilla retorted severely (she was Paul's cousin):

"Somebody has to take care of the creatures."

"And what," the other man conjectured, "at your reckoning, does *she* get out of it?"

"Why"—the intense young woman's eyes widened at the possibility of question—"to know what she *is* in his life!"

At that point Paul inquired, "By the way, who is the altogether admirable lady we are discussing?"

"Mrs. Gilbert Standing, the woman you were just staring at." It was Camilla who answered him.

Paul smiled. "I should n't have characterized her as so entirely complementary. She has, has she not—sufficient personality of her own to go on?"

"She *has* personality," Camilla then conceded, "without being in any sense a creature of extremes."

"If she were," observed the other man, "Standing would probably

not occupy his present proud position—or they would not have the same address.”

Paul laughed. “You assume the artist’s success to be the united gift of God and woman.”

Classified in the ranks of his profession, Paul Ferrier was a poet and a writer of excellent fiction. Yet something about him suggested that he was capable of doing something more individual than anything he had as yet accomplished. Although not a dilettante, he had perhaps failed to take his work with sufficient seriousness, the spectacle of life entertained him so much. Without lacking masculinity, he had that vein of the feminine that is in all artists, a quality most evident in his perceptions of women. He had the faculty, Camilla explained, of seeing women almost with a woman’s eyes, detecting their foibles and dissimulations, which was only to say that until a woman had actually taken possession of his imagination he could see her without the distorting illusion of sex. He had, therefore, never idealized the tawdry or commonplace. His emotions so far had not proved lasting. They had at their most potent in the end crystallized into poems.

Their group dissolved. Paul caught Camilla on the point of unceremoniously leaving him. He had changed his mind about going.

“Before you tear yourself away, why not present me to Mrs. Standing?”

Camilla consented with her competent social executiveness, and while the two women talked, Paul, with the writer’s impersonal passion for analysis, watched the painter’s wife said to be so successful in her profession of merely being a woman. He had remembered her first indefinitely as “not young.” Now he judged her as younger than she had seemed at first, as approximately his own age. Paul was over thirty, but women always spoke of him as a boy. In reality, Alice Standing was his senior by several years, yet there was no sense of fading charm about her—not even that haunting suggestion of the last fleeting moment of youth. She was slender, for one thing, and light of movement. There was a certain clear magnetism in her eyes. It occurred to him that they had moments of inscrutability scarcely indicative of a character so uncomplexly feminine as Camilla had described. There was a peculiar charm in the play of expression about her mouth. It was a large, kind mouth, moulded by life, yet retaining the warmth of youth. Paul decided that her husband was still in love with her, and that there must have been other men of the same mind. He said little in their triangular conversation, yet he was aware of her as a woman both of reserves and eliminations. It would take time to know her, Paul decided, yet one would not waste time on conversational non-essentials. She was a very real person. That was the keynote of her.

Camilla, finding herself drawn elsewhere, left them after a while. Paul lingered. But as he started to address Alice Standing with his charming, if rather assured, smile, he became aware of another presence behind him, and, turning, discovered a tall, abstracted man beside them, as though he had always been there. That was characteristic of Gilbert Standing. He was a man who gave out little of his personality—that Paul felt in the moment of their introduction—self-absorbed without suggesting the egoist, concentrated, withdrawn. Paul realized a change—it might have been defined as a greater seriousness—in Alice Standing's face as she looked up at her husband.

"Do you want to go?" she asked him, instantly disregarding of her new acquaintance.

Standing's face brightened at the prospect of release. "If we are to catch the five-thirty——" he began. His wife rose upon his words, but a vivacious woman passing thrust out a detaining hand in the direction of the painter, and Paul in the interval addressed himself to Alice Standing in a more perfunctory fashion than he had anticipated:

"So you live in the suburbs?"

She nodded. "We call it country. My genii"—she characterized it with a light affectionate mockery—"prefer it."

"Genii!" Paul echoed. "Is there more than one?"

"Husband and son."

"So you have a child."

She laughed. "He is a great thing seventeen years old—almost as tall as you are."

That required a readjustment. "And he is a painter, too?"

"No, indeed. He is some sort of a mechanical genius. Invents things—goes around in a trance like his father—when he is n't playing football."

Paul considered her with deepening interest. "Did you transmit the mechanical genius?"

"Do I look as if I had? No; I am as unmechanical as I am in-artistic. He has inherited his father's imagination turned into another channel, I suppose. Sometimes I am not quite sure that he is my son."

"You, I am sure, are not lacking in imagination."

"Upon what do you base that supposition?"

"Your gown, for one thing."

She smiled. "I am a painter's wife."

Standing was gently but firmly making his escape from his voluble admirer. Some social promise of vague outlines was being consummated.

"If I take advantage of the invitation wrung from you to visit Mr. Standing's studio, does that mean an excursion into the country?"

"He has a studio in town."

"When are you there?"

She smiled into space—a trick of hers. “The pictures are always there.” Then she added while he was speculating upon the intention of her reply, “There is tea on first Fridays and most of the others. Come any Friday.”

It was almost more impersonal than the most casual invitation needed to be, Paul reflected afterwards. He stood looking after her as she made her way to the door, Standing’s loosely hung figure in her wake. Paul was still conscious of the touch of her hand. It was kind and maternal, belonging to that phase of her that Camilla had described, yet he had felt in it the communication of the magnetism that was in her voice and eyes, the thing that gave an odd charm to her pungent habit of speech. She did not seem like a woman with a boy seventeen years old. And Standing . . . seemed inconceivably detached, even for a domesticated genius.

Paul went to their studio with Camilla the next Friday. Although they were late in arriving, the rooms were full. Yet every one seemed to melt suddenly away at the last, and Paul found himself alone with Standing and a substantially built lady of fashion before a recent canvas.

“I think it must be one of my successes,” Standing admitted. “I was doubtful at the time, but Mrs. Standing assures me that it is, and I believe her.”

“I am sure she is your best critic,” the fashionable philistine formulated, with the evident agreeable consciousness of having made a distinguished and original speech.

Standing insensibly addressed himself to Paul. “It is curious: she is not what one would call artistic—my wife—yet I find that the painter’s judgment invariably coincides with hers.”

Camilla came up, and the other guest made her adieus. Paul withdrew to examine a portrait of Alice Standing and her son on the other side of the studio. He was startled by her voice at his side:

“How do you like it?”

“I should never have recognized it.”

She studied the canvas a moment. “I was several years younger then.”

“I don’t believe it ever looked like you. How extraordinary and how interesting—a Standing to miss fire like that!”

She lifted her eyebrows. “You are frank.”

“One can afford to be with a Standing. Why, it is scarcely the shell of you!” He looked down, meeting her eyes an instant; they had an expression that puzzled him.

“It is excellent of Bertie, in any case. I hope he will come in before you go.”

It occurred to Paul that she responded less to his obvious apprecia-

tion than any woman he had ever met. He turned from the canvas, glancing around the large studio. "Is there any other portrait of you here?"

She hesitated a moment. "Two, I think."

"May I see them?"

She led him up to a good-sized canvas not very well lighted at this hour. He moved about to find the best viewpoint, but, having found it, shook his head. "How curious! That is n't you, either. But I have heard painters say it is often harder with a face that is very familiar."

"This was done ten years ago. The dress, the hair, everything, is different from the present fashion. Those things make so much more difference than men realize."

"It never was you," Paul insisted. "And the third one?"

"It was the first." She crossed to a corner where a number of canvases stood face to the wall. She drew it out with his help and turned it to the light. She smiled. "It is dusty."

He stood before it in silence. When he looked up he was conscious of her eyes leaving his face. "That is you," he said.

His remark, he felt instantly, had some effect on her. "Impossible! I was young then."

"It looks like you to me," Paul Ferrier said. She flashed a vivid, indescribable look at him. It was like a curtain lifted and dropped again too quickly to permit a glimpse of what was within. She turned the picture to the wall, ignoring his protesting hand.

"Was it really done so long ago?" Then, as she did not answer directly, "No, don't tell me—I will tell you: it was soon after you were married."

"Yes, the first year we were married," she said. "But I practically told you that, so you can't lay any claims to clairvoyance on *that* score."

He stared at the canvas. "Yes, but that is in it."

She turned upon him quickly, speaking as an older woman to a boy. "What nonsense! You talk like a sentimental art student—a"—she smiled—"female art student."

He met the light mockery of her eyes with a sense of pleasure in the superficial sense of intimacy it implied. As he stood frankly staring at her, he saw her face change. He turned and saw a tall boy coming toward them. Bertie greeted her and acknowledged the introduction courteously, yet with an unresponsiveness that seemed partly the egoism of the boy concerned with his own affairs, partly a reflection of his father's characteristic detachment. Paul studied his face curiously; it was a curious composite of his father's and his mother's features. One resemblance after another played as it were in counterpoint across his face. It occurred to Paul that such an absolute intermingling of types must have been the result of a great mutual love, a perfect union

of flesh and spirit. Yet the boy seemed to him unhuman, like his father—self-sufficient, unyielding. As he watched them, he saw Alice Standing's hand slip down the boy's arm with a mother's irresistible expressive impulse. There was no response in Bertie's face or manner, and in a moment he withdrew quietly from under her hand. He had no dependence upon his mother's sympathy, apparently, no habit of referring his interests to her. Glancing at Alice Standing, Paul caught a look in her eyes that caused him to wonder if she consciously missed anything. The next moment a sudden flood of questions and requests betrayed the boy's frank habit of counting upon her for his material comfort and convenience. If that was all he gave her out of his self-centred boyhood, she with the divine unselfishness of motherhood was perhaps sufficiently happy in her ceaseless giving.

Bertie slipped away imperceptibly, like his father. Camilla and Standing came toward them slowly, Camilla expounding. Alice Standing looked at her and smiled. "Camilla and her theories," she apostrophized.

"Youth is the theoretical stage," Paul replied.

"Octogenarian!" She laughed at him.

"I am not any younger than you are."

"A cruder form of flattery than I should have expected of you."

"Not flattery—fact. Although you are a woman with her fate settled and so obviously fulfilling her destiny—it is youth that I feel in you."

She gave him a quick look, glanced away, and laughed. "So I am fulfilling my obvious destiny—that, at least, is reassuring!"

"Forgive me. I have a habit of analyzing—like a female art student."

"You imagine yourself competent to analyze a woman? You are too young, and of the wrong sex."

He laughed. "You challenge me! I *will* analyze you. I will tell you why your destiny is obvious: you are the sort of woman men fall in love with and stay in love with, so that matrimony is your obvious destiny. You are fulfilling it because you are unselfish and understand without being tormented with futile longings for a career."

"How do you know they would be futile?" She was smiling—he could infer that from the visible corner of her face, which was turned away from him—so he ventured to proceed.

"You are a wonderful housekeeper."

"You don't know. You have never been in my house."

"I am positive of it."

"Any woman can be that."

"Not in the way you are. What I mean is, that you are an artist in life."

"The apotheosis of the *Hausfrau*. Now you do not flatter me, at least."

Then Standing and Camilla joined them. Standing addressed his wife anxiously: "I can't find the Tangiers sketches. Does n't she understand that she is not to move anything?"

"Yes, she understands. The men were painting in that corner. They are behind that curtain there." She included Paul and Camilla in her explanation: "A new charwoman—the villainess of all painters' lives." There was no practical detail relating to his comfort, Paul reflected, that was not her personal care. Then he noticed that Standing was showing some kind of an elaborate easel to Camilla, with more than common pride of ownership. Alice Standing explained: "An invention of Bertie's."

Standing included Paul. "We did n't know at first whether it was going to be mechanics or music. He has talent for both. We are working out together a theory of the relation between colors and music." They had, then, the father and the son, a life together in which she had no part, Paul decided, and began to wonder if they were conscious that she was the foundation of their happiness, their ability to work.

He heard Camilla say, "We must go, Paul." He turned to Alice Standing. "Forgive me if I was the fool that rushes in."

She looked at him a moment, almost, Paul imagined, as if she speculated concerning his possible inferences; then she smiled and put out her hand, holding his an instant cordially, simply, as might the mother of a son.

"You are a nice boy, any way," she said.

Again he felt in her touch that quiet quality of motherhood combined with the sense of a more vivid magnetism. "I shan't undertake to tell you what I think you are," he said.

"You have done that rather elaborately already."

He pondered while Camilla chattered on the way home. Had he glimpsed something the world did not see? Had he stumbled possibly upon the doorway to her inner temple of sacrifice, or was he—a frequent accusation of Camilla's—over-subtilizing his impressions? The story of the portraits—that first was of a woman the painter loved—and possessed; and the others, perhaps as he saw her now—without illusion. Was it the inevitable difference that must come with years? Did she love him still in that other way? Did she miss anything out of her life that it had once had? He turned the question abruptly upon Camilla. "Is she happy, do you think?"

"Alice Standing? How could she help but be when she has so much?" But had she, Paul began to wonder. He heard Camilla's patronizing tones: "People are so much simpler than you think them, Paul."

II

ONE Friday toward spring, following an impulse, he sent her some narcissus. She wrote him a brief note of thanks, which he did not destroy. The next time they met, she referred to the flowers, speaking of her fondness for them. "We had a bed of them in the garden, but Mr. Standing stood in them too late in the spring making a sketch, and the poor little things never came up. But it was an excellent sketch," she added.

He smiled while he resented Standing's act with a fantastic sense of its possible symbolism. If he were the juggernaut that men of genius are supposed to be, had he possibly been trampling the flowers in Alice Standing's soul all these years of their married life? How far, Paul wondered, did the fact of the man's being a genius compensate to the woman? It was an old subject that seemed suddenly vital.

The flowers suggested an opening he had wanted. "I am not certain whether I have ever been invited to call or not."

"The uncertainty has apparently not incommoded you." Her voice and smile gave a paradoxical charm to the lack of concession in her words.

"I mean in your home."

"Oh!" She did not concern herself to answer further at the moment. Paul began to feel constrained, a little unhappy. But when he took leave she said casually, "Come out any Sunday. Come for supper."

He went the next Sunday. He had not intended to respond to the invitation so promptly, yet why, after all, should he not? There were so few places one wanted to go. He found her alone on the veranda, sewing. "Breaking the sabbath," she explained, "but every one is out, so I can't set a bad example."

He sat down on the steps, studying her in this new aspect, the white summer gown, the feminine bit of sewing. She looked like every man's ideal of home.

"I believe you are always doing something, yet you are so peaceful," he said.

She answered simply: "I like to do things with my hands."

He watched her a moment. "I am afraid you have too much the habit of service. You have forgotten how to rest."

"I don't need to." She changed the subject before he could answer. "Bertie and Mr. Standing have gone for a long tramp, but I expect them back any minute."

"You are not fond of walking?"

"Yes, but some one had to stay home and keep the house from catching fire."

"I was right. You *are* too unselfish. It is a feminine fault." He

sat up and clasped his hands about his knees. "It is more than that. You are like some one who is spending her principal. I feel that you live so utterly in other people's lives that you are scarcely conscious of your own."

He realized when he had said it, in spite of the superficial intimacy of their bantering personalities, that he had gone too far. When she spoke it was without emphasis, but also without smiling: "If it is your amusement or your art to study people under a microscope, don't you think that you should at least keep the result of your researches to yourself?"

"Forgive me——" His tone changed. She turned a seam deftly, without looking at him.

"You are an impertinent boy. But I suppose women spoil you outrageously."

It rushed over him then as their eyes met, and the realization struck him dumb. He had not recognized the symptoms before; it had come so differently this time. She talked, and he answered at random until she stopped short and said, "Your mind is evidently wandering."

"You snubbed me. I deserved it, but it has made me timid."

She laughed: "*You* timid—you humbug!"

He left soon afterwards. She asked him to stay to tea. "Stay to see Mr. Standing and Bertie," she said; but Paul refused.

At the station he met Richard Ashton. The older writer greeted the younger one cordially. "What brings you here?" Paul explained where he had been, and Ashton smiled. "Oh, yes, the Standings. We are old friends. I knew them both before they were married."

How much that Paul cared to know Ashton could tell him, yet he could not ask. Ashton continued: "Gilbert has n't changed; his success has n't spoiled him—he is too real for that. But Alice"—he mused a moment—"Alice is different."

"She must have had a lot to do with his success," Paul managed to get out.

"Ah!" Ashton's smile was significant. "It lay quite in her hands. How many of the boys go down with their message half said! It is nonsense to suppose that genius will out. It can be smothered, choked, starved to death." Ashton glanced up. They had begun to pace the platform. "What I mean is that Alice has given Standing's genius every opportunity. We were all in love with her, you know. As for Gilbert—he was mad about her until he had her and for a time after. Then he settled down into that absolute absorption in his work that you see now. Sometimes it has seemed to me as if Alice must feel that she is married to a paint-brush." Ashton broke off there, as if recalling himself, and reverted to the more impersonal aspect. "But her effect upon Gilbert's artistic development was most interesting. At first he was

like an illuminated being—then he began to do such work as he had never done before. It was as if that flame had been necessary to kindle the fires of his genius, then died down when it had done its work.

“And Alice——” Ashton’s pause seemed to cover a long retrospect. “I often think what she meant to us—her sympathy with all our egoistic young interests and ambitions. She gave us everything but the kind of love we all wanted—the kind she gave Gilbert. We all took our stuff to her. And it is a curious thing—her tastes are not what you would call literary, yet her opinion of what one wrote was invariably right.”

Paul smiled, recalling Standing’s comment: “She is not what one would call artistic, yet her judgment always coincides with that of the painters.” To Camilla, she was the “kind, maternal, well-balanced type.”

“And how she worshipped Gilbert!” Ashton recalled. “Poor child! She was so young and loving when she went into that frozen, puritanical household.”

“You mean that she had to live with his people?” Paul put his question with averted face.

“Forever and ever. When some of them died the survivors came to live with them——”

The approach of the train interrupted Ashton’s recital. Paul caught only the cheerfully touched-off conclusion, “All dead now—home to themselves,” before Ashton dashed off to greet his arriving guest. So that had been the history of Alice Standing’s married life. It did not surprise him.

The next Sunday he did not resist the impulse to go again to see her. He found her about to start out for a walk alone. Standing was painting, she explained, and Bertie was in his laboratory.

About half a mile down the road they met a runaway horse with a frightened child alone in the half-overtaken buggy. Paul leaped into the path and caught the horse’s bridle as it passed.

He opened his eyes to find himself lying on the grass, and Alice Standing bending over him.

“The child,” he recalled—“was it hurt?”

“No. And you?”

“I am all right. Something knocked the wind out of me, that’s all.”

“Nothing went over you. You stopped the horse. Does it hurt anywhere?”

“No.” He looked around. “Where are they?”

“Two men ran out from the farmhouse across the way. One has taken the horse, and the other the child. They are coming back presently for you.”

"I am all right. But you look white."

"You frightened me almost to death—that's all."

He sat up with his back against a tree. "I'm sorry."

"Yes, you certainly owe me an apology for having saved a child's life." His eyes closed with a momentary wave of weakness. He was conscious of her hand touching his hair. It was thick, boyish hair, not too closely clipped. "You look like Ophelia," he heard her saying; "not only straws, but kindling wood and things." She exhibited a large twig and put up her hand for another, but he caught it, pressed it to his face and lips, then put it from him.

There was a silence before she said, "Has your fall affected your brain." He put his head down on his arms, turning his face from her.

"Don't laugh at me." He rose unsteadily and leaned against the tree. "I must go. I ought n't to have come."

She rose also, looking concerned. "Don't be a foolish boy. You must n't try to walk yet."

"I am not a boy, and you know it. You may not take it seriously, but you ought to."

Her face was turned from him, but her voice was placid. "I had thought you were beyond the melodramatic stage."

"I love you," he said.

Then there was a silence. When she spoke it was seriously: "Perhaps I ought to be very angry with you for that, but I am not, because"—he caught the waver of a smile upon her face—"because I am so very familiar with the vagaries of what is known as the artistic temperament."

"I know how many of them have loved you!"

"I did n't say that. Dear boy—for you are a boy, after all—don't you know that real love is something very different?"

He had a tormenting vision then of the big, real thing that she must have in her life to speak like this. Jealousy stabbed him sharply. He saw himself cruelly as a small thing in her eyes compared to that large, simple man of genius. His imaginings of her unhappiness seemed suddenly ridiculous.

"Forgive me," he faltered. "I could n't help it."

"I forgive you. Boys and geniuses—I understand them so well."

"I don't come in either class." He walked a few steps, then paused, looking wistfully at her. "You are not angry at me?"

"On the contrary. I am flattered to find that I can still inspire such sentiments. I had supposed I was too old."

He answered passionately, "You are cruel."

She put her hand on his arm then a brief instant. "No, dear boy, I am not. You will understand some day, and thank me. There are a great many things in this world that it is a mistake to take seriously. With the boy and the genius, love—or what they call love—is so

ephemeral." He glanced at her quickly, and she repeated, "What they mistake for it." Her clear eyes rested upon him an instant. "Put it in a sonnet," she twisted it into lightness again, "and dedicate it to my initials."

"I dare say you are accustomed to inspiring sonnets as well as pictures."

"I am no judge of poetry," she replied, "any more than I am of pictures, although it has been my fate to be associated with both."

"The pictures were not like you—except one."

"Neither were the sonnets! This emotion which you call love is something that occurs with men of your type for the purpose, I suppose, of lighting the fires of inspiration."

She turned and looked at him. "Stop and rest a moment." Her tone was peremptory. "You look badly. I am afraid that was a hard blow on your head."

He sat down on the stone wall. "The hurt is not in my head."

She looked away from him, over the emerald fields to the cloud of vaporous green in the woods that bounded them. "Shall I cure you? Suppose there were no Gilbert Standing, and I was here—free. How would you like the picture of me—with Bertie looming high in the background?"

"Don't—that has n't the effect you intended."

"There comes Bertie now," she said. He detected a note of relief in her tone. He glanced in the direction she was looking. The thing that had struck him at their first meeting—that mysterious compound of the father and the mother in the boy's face—struck him again sharply.

"The Clarks' motor is at the top of the hill," he heard Bertie saying. "I'll help him up."

He turned from the boy's outstretched hand. "I'm all right. I don't need any help, thanks."

He sat quietly on her veranda while she made tea for him, taking advantage of the excuse of his accident to be silent. When he rose to go he said, "I am not coming again until I can be sensible—and that may be a long time."

"You are not fit to go," she said. "You could hardly walk alone, although you would n't let Bertie help you."

He glanced at her, then turned away. "It was because I could n't bear to look at him just then. He is so terribly like you both."

Then he saw that her expression changed. "You certainly must not come again until you are sensible," she said.

As he walked home to the station in the haunting beauty of the spring twilight, he was sure of two things: he could never love any other woman so much, and she loved her husband.

III

He did not go to see her again until the day before his departure for the season, then he went early in the evening and unannounced. The air was full of the damp scent of syringa; the robins were singing in the trees about the house. The evening was soft and warm, yet the veranda was empty. As he mounted the steps, he caught sight of her sitting inside by the lamp, and he went to the half-open French window, intending to knock. He saw that she was alone—so much alone, he realized the next moment, that he had no right to be standing there looking at her. She had a magazine in her hand, but she was not reading; her eyes were looking straight ahead in his direction, yet without seeing him. What did she see that brought that look to them? He drew back appalled, feeling all at once an eavesdropper, an intruder upon that inner self which it is every human being's right to protect from the outsider; for in that moment Paul knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that the woman he loved, about whose heart's secrets he had speculated, was a lonely woman. The question he had so often asked himself was answered. It was no mood that he had surprised in her eyes—it was the naked soul of the woman, and she was alone; alone with that inexpressible isolation of the life lived in the midst of close human relations. Intensely alive, yet denied the fulness of life—a woman with a loving heart, subdued to the service of art. He started to draw back, feeling that he had no right to see her, after this. Then, fearing that she might have seen him, he knocked upon the glass.

She turned and saw him. Several swift changes passed over her face before it achieved its normal welcoming smile. She rose and came to the window. "Come in, long-expected burglar;" but he returned, "Come out," and she stepped out upon the veranda.

"Take me down to your garden. I can smell it from here. And the moon is rising."

She hesitated. "Bertie and Mr. Standing are not back from their tramp. They will come in hungry."

"Don't they know how to forage?"

"They are not very clever about it, but they will probably find me." She stepped down into the path.

"Do you ever think of yourself," he asked suddenly, "or do you just spend your life living other people's lives?"

"Other people—my husband and my boy!" she said. He felt the reproof and was silent.

"You have asked me that—or something like it—before, but don't you know that is a woman's life: to live other people's lives?" she said. Her low voice, always magnetic, seemed to have taken on the quietness of the summer night.

Rashly, impulsively, he broke the bonds of conventionality. "You were surely made for a more personal life," he said, then wondered if she would ever forgive him. But she answered with her wide, kind understanding.

"Yes, but I have had all that, and now I have come to the other part that is a woman's portion, too. One should not expect the happiness of one stage of life when you have passed beyond it into another."

"But *have* you passed beyond it?" He ought not to have said it—he had not intended to. Again he trembled lest he had offended her beyond pardon, but again she understood.

"You cannot understand it, naturally, because you are a man and an artist and must keep on loving something new."

"No," he said; "you have shown me something that I will not find again, and, having known it, I cannot accept anything less."

"You will meet something else that will attract you more."

He looked down at her. She looked less reserved, less calm, younger than he had ever seen her, in the light of the fading day and the rising moon. He lost his head and caught both her hands. For an instant she did not withdraw from him, but stood, as it were, arrested. There was no consent in that moment, no faintest pressure of her hand; only the warm beat of her pulse with his, only his throbbing consciousness of her as a woman still alive to love and loving. He felt it was an ascent to the stars, a wild, indescribable moment of communication without words; then a voice broke the silence—clear, young, imperative: "Mother!"

She drew a long breath and released herself. The voice came a second time: "Mother, are you there?"

"Yes, dear; what is it?"

Bertie came down the path. "We have been looking all over for you. We are awfully hungry. The dining-room is dark, and there is nothing on the table."

"Your supper is all ready, in the pantry. Light the light. Tell your father I am coming."

He heard Bertie going into the house. They were alone again. He caught her hand. "You must n't," she said, but he kissed it. She drew it from him.

"You know I am sailing Saturday," he said.

"Then I won't see you again." It was not a question.

She began to walk quickly up the path. His moment was gone irrevocably. She paused at the steps. "Good-by," he said.

"Must you go now?" But there was no invitation to remain in her voice.

"I shall never forget you," he said.

Then she said again, "Put it in a sonnet."

A selfish bitterness rushed over him. For the moment he did not care how he violated her inner sanctuary. Alas, he was not able to preserve the divine ineffable moment untouched.

"Is that form of love more satisfactory to you?"

He was ashamed when she bent her clear eyes upon him in her utter honesty, scorning the subterfuge of denying the thing he had divined. "I am by nature a simple, selfish woman, as you have seen, who wants nothing so much as to be loved more than art or life or anything else in the world; but"—she paused an instant—"life has given me something bigger in spite of myself, and I am at least able to appreciate my privilege."

"Are you so sure," he cried, "that it is bigger?"

He heard her draw her breath. "Yes, I am sure," she said. "Good-night."

He saw her an instant, a white figure between the vines, then she opened the door and the inner light swallowed her.



A COIN OF LESBOS

BY SARAH M. B. PIATT

I THINK how long she held it with a smile
 (Her jealous lyre complaining on her breast),
 Dust thick on everything, and she, the while,
 Forgetting it and Phaon and the rest.

With those great eyes, that had not longed as yet
 To lose their tears in kindred brine, ah me!
 Fixed on its precious glimmer, "It will get—
 What will it get?" she murmured. "Let me see.

"Some jewel that will more become my head
 Than withering leaves of laurel? Nay, not so.
 At least, I think, some lovelier robe," she said,
 "Than any woman weareth that I know!"

So, years ere that deep Glass wherein she gazed
 With her last look had flashed it to the sun,
 So mused, I fancy, the most over-praised
 Of women who have ever sung on earth—save one!

INDIAN TRAITS

By Charles Warren Currier, Ph.D.

NO other race has had such strong friends or such bitter enemies as has the American Indian. Both the pen and the sword have been wielded for and against him, yet to-day, centuries after he first encountered the white man, the most varied opinions are expressed and the most diverse sentiments entertained in his regard. The poet, the novelist, and the philanthropist have frequently raised him to an ideal pedestal, upon which he stands a hero, while for the old frontiersman, the man who has actually come in contact with him, who has faced his weapons of death, who has beheld him relentlessly slay women and babes, there exists only the bloodthirsty savage, the squalid, ferocious red-devil, of whom it might in truth be said that "his hand is against every man and every man's hand is against him." It is the place of the historian to show the American Indian in a true light, to eliminate exaggerations, and, without palliating his vices, to reveal his redeeming features. In justice to the red man, it must be said that writers who have lived with him, who have shared his wigwam and listened to his fireside tales, are not as a rule found among his worst enemies. Some of his staunchest friends have been army officers who fought against him.

When the first colonists landed on the shores of North America, they found numerous Indians there; and as they penetrated further inland other natives were encountered, until they reached the waters of the Pacific, and northward far up into the Arctic Circle. Roughly, the Indians of that early period may be geographically divided into the Algonquins, whose territory extended from Kentucky to Hudson Bay, and from the Atlantic to the Mississippi; the Iroquois, who lived within Algonquin regions; the Southern or Mobilian tribes, namely the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles, who dwelt east of the Mississippi, from the Tennessee River to the Gulf; the Sioux, to the West of the Mississippi; the Columbians of the Northwest; and the Californians, on the Pacific to the Southwest. This distribution has been practically destroyed by the tide of white immigration that has spread over the land, yet, like the crumbling ruins of some ancient city, lingering remnants of tribes mark the spots where

once their fathers fought and hunted. Many tribes have completely vanished, others are fading before our eyes, while most of those remaining have been moved from their original habitat. The Algonquin race is still represented by the Passamaquoddies in Maine, the Chippewas, Menominees, Sacs and Foxes, and many more scattered throughout Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and other Western States. The Sioux dwell west of the Mississippi, on reservations, as do their brethren of the far West, the Blackfeet, the Flatheads, the Cœur d'Alene, and others. The scattered Californians have still their dwelling places in their ancient regions, while the Mobilian tribes have nearly all been gathered into Oklahoma. Other Indians of the Southwest, such as the Pueblos and the Navajos, are where they were when the Mexican War ended with an increase of territory for the United States. The descendants of the terrible Six Nations of the Iroquois confederacy live mostly on reservations in New York State, while the Hurons and the Indians of the Atlantic seaboard have almost disappeared.

Although the Indians of North America belong to one ethnologic division of the human family, and have much in common, it is impossible to predicate the same thing of all, so marked and so great are the differences that exist among them. The northern Algonquins differ greatly from the Indians of the plains, while the Iroquois were far from being in all things alike to their neighbors who surrounded them. Still, there were certain characteristic features common to all, or nearly all, of the tribes that have inhabited, or still inhabit, our territory.

In the first place, the Indian is a born fighter. This race may be said to have revolutionized war. The approved tactics of to-day are those which the Indians developed, and which the whites learned from them. They took the horse and the gun from the white man, and soon almost equalled him in their management of them. They were superb individual fighters, beautifully drilled in their own discipline. The forest was their castle, their strength was principally in their tactics. Theodore Roosevelt writes: "Their discipline in the battle itself was very high. They attacked, retreated, rallied, or repelled a charge at the signal of command; and they were able to fight in open order in thick covers without losing touch with one another—a feat no European regiment was then able to perform." Most Indians had a system of retreating when they were losing greatly, as they were loath to behold the diminution of their numbers. The Wyandots were an exception; with them it was a point of honor not to give ground. The retreat of the Nez-Percé chief, Joseph, before General Howard, is regarded as unparalleled in the annals of warfare.

Although the physical strength of the Indians is not so great as that of the whites, they have much power of endurance and can put up with great hardships. They do not, however, seem able to stand

manual labor to any marked degree. It was the labors and burdens put upon them by the early Spanish colonizers that exterminated them in the West Indies. Yet some remarkable instances of extraordinary muscular strength on the part of Indians have been known. They pass easily from one extreme to the other, without any visible inconvenience, and recover quickly from wounds and diseases.

One of the most marked qualities of an Indian is his reserve: a certain apparent coldness and stoicism, coupled with great taciturnity—a habit inherited, perhaps, from remote ancestors, but also greatly due to education and training. But this outward appearance is by no means an index of the Indian's true character; on the contrary, it is a mask that conceals it. Beneath his assumed coldness, he hides the greatest extremes, and the most striking contradictions of character. We find in him the noblest resignation, the purest courage, absolute self-possession, together with the basest thirst for vengeance, the deepest treachery, the most barbarous cruelty, and the most unrelenting malice. Ambition, revenge, envy, jealousy, are his ruling passions, while an unbounded love of liberty is at the basis of his character.

The Indian may appear indifferent, yet be consumed by curiosity. In fact, curiosity is one of his marked traits. He wants to know all that is doing, and he knows how to scent it, for he is a good reader of character. You may never find him out, but, as Lummis remarks, if he sits beside you only five minutes, his keen powers of observation will pierce you.

Colonel Dodge, who knew the Indians well, writes that reserve and dignity are affected in the presence of strangers. In his own camp the red man is a noisy, jolly, rollicking, mischief-loving braggadocio, brimful of practical jokes and rough fun of any kind. He loves to boast of his exploits, for modesty finds no place in his make-up. Still, he knows quite well how to control his tongue, especially in the presence of strangers, and he has the wisdom not to speak when he has nothing to say.

An Indian on the war-path can be practically noiseless. The forest may be full of them, yet the silence of the tomb may prevail, save for the sighing of the wind, the creaking of the branches, and the sounds of nocturnal animal life. When an Indian arrives at his village or council with a message of the greatest importance, even with intelligence of the most imminent danger, he never tells it at his first approach, but sits down in silence for a minute or two before he speaks, that he may not evince fear or excitement. Between individuals, great license may be indulged in; but the dealings between nation and nation must be characterized by the utmost dignity.

This taciturnity is no bar to eloquence, with which nature seems to have endowed the Indian to a high degree. At a meeting of the

Catholic Federated Societies, held at Indianapolis a few years ago, I listened with the greatest pleasure to the speech of a Sioux Indian, a delegate to the convention, although I did not understand a word he said. He discoursed in his own language, which was afterward interpreted by a missionary who accompanied him, but there was that in his whole attitude, in his polished gestures, the tone of his voice, his accentuation, pauses, and general delivery, which, as far as action went, made me conclude that his was one of the best orations delivered on the occasion. I was carried away with admiration for this Demosthenes of the plains.

The language of the Indian is filled with metaphors and flowers of speech, for poetry is inborn in him. Nature has strongly affected this her child, and everything affords him a figure or a comparison. Nature, animate and inanimate, speaks to him the language of metaphor and has trained him in its use. These metaphors all serve their purpose; they are not for mere oratorical display. His speech is to the point, nor are useless words indulged in. When he has finished, he puts a period to his discourse with the sentence, "I have spoken."

Another Indian characteristic is the power to endure pain, which is greater, perhaps, than that of any other race. Subjected to the most inhuman tortures, he reviles his persecutors, mocks them, and boasts of his victories and the pains he himself has inflicted. No infernal ingenuity could break his fortitude, and death alone could silence his words of contempt. If torture and death found him invincible, it must be remembered that time and again he had had similar examples before his eyes, and that he had often witnessed the indomitable obstinacy of his own victims. This characteristic still endures, even among the children. If an Indian boy is whipped, tears may be forced from his eyes, but he will make every effort not to cry.

The athletic sports of the Indians have greatly contributed toward their strong physique and manly bearing. Wrestling is of comparatively recent introduction. Dancing is a well known Indian amusement. Some dances were indulged in for pleasure, while others formed part of a ceremonial, or served to celebrate an important event. The war-dance was a preparation for a campaign. The Sun Dance, a superstitious rite, is frequently permitted among the Arapahoes of Wyoming. During one night of the dance, known as Wolf Night, all rules and customs are suspended, and general license prevails. It is useless to state that this practice is the occasion of grave disorder.

Games of various kinds served to fill up the time in the intervals of war and hunting. These differed according to tribe and location. Among the Ojibways, ball-playing was especially popular, and sometimes the entire village would join in the game. The men and women are provided with sticks, of which one end is bent, and to which a

network of rawhide is attached, two inches deep and large enough to admit the ball. Two poles are driven into the ground at a distance of four hundred paces from each other, and these serve as goals for the two parties. Each one tries to take the ball to the hole, either by running with it or throwing it. The one who succeeds in striking the pole wins the game. The play is exceedingly rough, but whosoever should become angry would be regarded as a coward. Different bands or villages are accustomed to play against each other.

Foot-racing and jumping over a stick are also popular; the former is greatly in vogue among young people; but the latter is forbidden to young women, who are also not allowed to use the bow and arrow. The girls have a game of their own called "Maiden's ball play."

Horse-racing is another favorite amusement of the Indians, and the winning horse is an object to be coveted. In general, the Indian is much inclined to gambling. There are also games for rainy days and the wigwam, such as the "tossing game," in which an effort is made to hit a certain stick; the "moccasin game," and the "bone play." To be appreciated, these must be seen.

Indians have never been laborers, unless they were forced to become such. Among them labor devolves on the females, while the men devote themselves to the chase. The Indians were nearly all a race of hunters, living entirely, or in part, on game. The buffalo, when it roamed the American wilds; the deer, the rabbit, and other wild animals, constantly replenished their larder.

In its classification of the North American languages, the Bureau of Ethnology has enumerated no fewer than fifty-three linguistic families, while the single dialects run up into the hundreds. The Ojibway of the Algonquin stock was perhaps the one most widely spoken in North America. Three or four hundred years ago one might travel nearly a thousand miles from the head of Lake Superior, and still remain within the sphere of this dialect. Kindred dialects were spoken from Hudson Bay down to the Carolinas, and from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, while in the midst of the Algonquins the Huron-Iroquois family possessed their own dialects, entirely distinct.

To communicate with those whose spoken languages are not familiar, the Indian employs the language of the hands, a system of signs and symbols by which he is enabled to interchange his thoughts with members not only of his own tribe and race, but of other families as well. He has also his calls and his whistling, while the Indian war-whoop still sends its fearful echoes to us through the lapse of time.

A system of hieroglyphics, or picture writing, also exists among the Indians. The pictures are conventional and full of meaning. By means of these pictures, an Indian could send a communication to another, and render himself as well understood as we can by letter, and

they serve as a channel through which traditions are handed down from one generation to another. The chiefs were the depositories of the history of their ancestors, while the approbation of the oldest chiefs and wise men was one of the criterions for the veracity of traditions. It is remarkable that for more than sixty years the Cheyennes and Arapahoes were firm friends, living in the same camps, their children playing, fighting, and hunting together, yet not one in ten of the members of the tribes could hold even the most ordinary conversation in the language of the other.

In religion, if there really be such a thing in the forest life of America, the Indian seems to have been a dualist, believing in two opposing forces, good and evil. Some of them, like the Ojibways, believed in a good spirit, an evil spirit, and a host of other deities. The good spirits were by the Hurons named Okkis, and by the Algonquins, Manitous. Dodge says that the Indians appear to have no knowledge of the moral law and of conscience. According to some travellers, they have in their primitive condition scarcely any notion of chastity. It is likely that the truth of the matter is that the women of one tribe may be chaste, while those of another may be of loose morals.

Intimately connected with the religion of the Indians is their folklore. Many of their tales have been collected by Schoolcraft and others. These vary according to the race whence they spring. The Ojibways possess a vast fund of stories and legends, the relating of which affords much amusement winter evenings in the wigwam. Nearly every lake and mountain, every beast and bird, has some legend attached to it. Necromancy and witchcraft, men transformed into beasts and beasts into men, animated trees and speaking birds, form the subjects of Algonquin tales. Kah-ge-ga-Bowh, who treasured them from childhood when he heard them in the wigwam of his fathers, writes: "Some of these stories are most exciting, and so intensely interesting that I have seen children whose tears would flow plentifully and their breasts heave with thoughts too big for utterance."

On the other hand, the legendary lore of the Iroquois is as black as his primeval forest. Monsters and prodigies, shapes of wild enormity, giants cased in armor of stone, horned serpents, and other weird and fantastic creations of the brain, figure in the tales of this warlike and ferocious people.

The domestic life of the Indian could in itself furnish an inexhaustible theme to the student of ethnology. In spite of the fact that most of them were nomads, from choice or necessity, the Indians have the strongest attachment for home and country. Humble though his wigwam is, he loves it with all the ardor of the savage heart. Indians are said to possess the greatest tenderness for their offspring, which they even carry to dangerous indulgence; but the affection is not always

reciprocated, though great respect for the aged exists. No special indulgence is shown to the prospective mother, and except on the occasion of a first birth, when the young mother calls in the assistance of a matron, the infant comes into the world without a witness or aid of any kind. The event does not interrupt the mother's activity; she bundles up her newly acquired treasure, and proceeds at once with the routine of her daily labors. This, of course, holds good only for the Indian woman in her savage state, untouched by civilization.

The naming of a newly born Indian is a very important matter, upon which much reflection is bestowed. The name must always have a meaning, in some way appropriate to the child. Sometimes the first object seen after birth suggests it. Some of these names are of great length, and for us unpronounceable. It took me some time before I had mastered that of a young Choctaw friend of mine—Wa-shak-shi-ho-ma Onon-tub-be. This youth, a full-blooded Choctaw, died, alas! too soon. He had been adopted by the Rev. William H. Ketcham, Director of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, and the pains taken for his education had not been in vain. As a student at Georgetown College, he gave much promise. A composition of his, published some years ago, on a Choctaw chief who died in Washington, and whose monument is in the Congressional cemetery, makes very good reading.

An Indian boy was picked up on the field of Wounded Knee, on the occasion of the Sioux rising in 1890, in which his father was killed. He was adopted by a Washington lady, and became an accomplished violinist. But consumption, that bane of the Indian when he is removed from his natural surroundings, took young Herbert Zitkelaasi away, in spite of all the care that was bestowed upon him. A number of Indians have become ministers of various denominations, and there is to-day among the Catholic clergy in Oklahoma a full-blooded Pottowottamie who was ordained some years ago in Rome.

Among some tribes, an Indian mourns the loss of near relatives from six to twelve months, by neglecting his personal appearance and by blackening his face. Some disfigure themselves, slash their bodies, or cut off joints of the fingers. Their respect for the resting-place of their dead is unbounded, and they have the gravest horror for its violation.

Characteristic of the American Indians is their tribal organization. Each family is split into tribes, and the tribes are divided into bands or villages, frequently far removed from one another. The tribe was regarded as sovereign, the Indian putting his tribe before his race. As we pride ourselves on our nationality, and as the Spaniard takes especial pride in his province, which for him is his country, so the Indian is a Menominee or an Ojibway before anything else. In an

Indian community, before it fell under the power of civilized man, each one was his own master, for the Indian abhors restraint. Yet this condition was far from being anarchic; for though there were no laws, and the chief depended on the popular will, having no power to enforce his demands, such was the respect for ancient customs and traditions that obedience was willingly given, and the moral power of custom served as a basis for authority. The chief advised, but did not dictate, though by his own personality he might acquire great influence with the tribe.

When the so-called civilized nations were governed by their own laws and executed justice, they had no prisons. After conviction, the culprit simply submitted to his punishment, whatever it was. To have acted otherwise would have entailed disgrace upon his family, and the Indian fears dishonor and consequent ostracism. If the death sentence were pronounced, a date was set for the execution, and in the meantime the condemned man was free to roam the world. But at the appointed time he was invariably at hand to pay the penalty. I have heard of the case of one man who had been sentenced to die in two years. In the interim, he travelled around with a baseball team, but returned home in due time and was executed. This Spartan resolution is one of the most marked characteristics of the American Indian.

Each tribe has its sachem, or civil chief, an office generally hereditary. Among many tribes, notably those of the Huron-Iroquois stock, the succession passes through the female line, so that the brother of the incumbent, or his sister's son, succeeds him. Should the hereditary successor be judged unfit, the old and subordinate chiefs elect another, generally from one of the relatives. The civil and military authorities were distinct, though both might be united in the same person. Any one who, by prowess or reputation, had acquired sufficient authority, might be a war-chief.

This tribal organization was independent of totemism, or the division into clans, and it must not be confounded with it. The one might be called political, the other social. The institution is quite general, less perfect in some, more complete in others. It consists herein: that a race is divided into certain divisions or clans, the members of which are supposed to be united by the ties of kindred. Each clan has an emblem—the figure of some bird, beast, or reptile—and each is distinguished by the name of the animal of its device. In the Algonquin language, these emblems are known as totems. As the members of the clan are supposed to be related, intermarriage in the same clan is forbidden, and, consequently, the wife is of a different clan from the husband, though she may belong to the same tribe. The children generally follow the clan of the mother. The members of the same clan, though they may speak different dialects, are bound by the closest ties.

Each must avenge the killing of the other, and the lodge of an Indian is always open for a clansman of whatever tribe.

The Indian is by no means averse to adopting people of other races as members of the tribe. On one of the visits of Father de Smet to a tribe, a prominent Indian offered his services as interpreter. The missionary expressed his surprise that the man could speak English so well, and on asking where he had learned it he received for reply, "I learned it in th' auld counthry, yer Riverence." The Indian happened to be an Irishman who had taken up his abode among the Indians, married a squaw, and, to all intents and purposes, become one of the tribe.

Hospitality is one of the Indian's virtues, and there are quite a few instances to prove this in the colonization period and after. F. B. Head, an English writer, says that "wherever he has been unruffled by injustice, his reception of his white brother is an affecting example of that genuine hospitality which is to be met with only in what we term savage tribes." If his object in visiting the Indian country be unsuspected, the stranger's life and property are perfectly secure. There are, however, various opinions regarding the honesty of the Indians. It is highly lauded by some writers, while, according to others, it is greatly circumscribed. Colonel Dodge says that they are very honest with regard to their own band, but of great thieving propensities where outsiders are concerned. It is quite possible that in honesty, as in morality, tribe may differ from tribe, and thus the varying experiences of writers may have produced contradictory assertions.

To return to the subject of the Indian's hospitality, it must be remarked that, as he gives hospitality, he also expects it to be given him. He makes himself perfectly at home, without any invitation—for instance, in the house of a missionary—if he is permitted to have his way. A story is told of a lady living in Michigan in pioneer days, who frequently had Indians as visitors. They always had access to her home, and she never locked her door, for fear of wounding their feelings. They would make themselves perfectly at home, and it sometimes happened that she would awake at night to find two or three Indians asleep on the floor. On the other hand, they showed their kindly feelings by keeping her supplied with meat all winter. This recalls to mind a somewhat similar anecdote. On the spot where Wellsville, New York, now stands, in the early part of the nineteenth century, there lived a Mrs. Hill, some of whose descendants are related to the writer. One afternoon, to her consternation, an Indian suddenly entered her cabin and looked around as if seeking something. His eye fell on a rifle hanging against the wall, he pointed to the gun, and with the words, "Me do no harm," unceremoniously took it down and went off with it. Of course she did not venture to try to prevent him.

It was not long before the whole affair was made clear. The man had seen a deer, and, not wishing to lose his chance of a shot, he took the first gun he could find. When his object had been attained, he not only returned the rifle, but brought the lady a piece of venison as a recompense.

Before the introduction of fire-arms the deer was killed in different ways. One method was a snare formed of a rope of wild hemp, and so placed that when the deer's neck was caught his movement only served to tighten the rope and choke him to death. Another was that of driving sharp spikes of wood into the ground, on the other side of a log, over which the animal was expected to jump. In springing over the log, he would fall upon the spikes, which would pierce him to death. Sometimes the deer were driven by dogs into the water and thus easily captured. Finally they were shot by arrows. The bow was generally made of iron-wood, red cedar, or hickory, and it was very strong. The arrows were sharpened at the points, bone and shell being used for the tips.

Before the Indian completely vanishes as a distinct race, it is to be hoped that what we have learned about him will be preserved. Many Americanists have carefully labored in this field, and the Bureau of Ethnology in Washington is doing excellent work in this direction. Thus, long after the red man has vanished from the continent, his memory as the first American will remain with his white successor.



THREE WISHES

BY MINNA THOMAS ANTRIM

“ONCE aloud, and twice in silence, shalt thou wish, and thy best wish I will give thee.” So spake Destiny.

The moments ticked eternityward. The silent wishes were made, but the other—frantically the Woman stared at the face of the clock.

Vainly she prodded her mind, but five minutes—four—three remained—two—one—— “Oh!” wailed she aloud. “Oh, could I but choose!”

Solemnly the Hour struck. “Thy wish is granted thee: the sovereign gift of Surety—a greater lies not upon the knees of the High Gods. Beside thy two first (for beauty and love), the power to choose aright is as gold to clay.”

And the future proved to this Woman that Destiny's choice for her had indeed been right.

WANDERIN' JANE

By Nan Maury Lemmon

THE Very Young Man came out on the porch for the fifth time and gazed anxiously up toward the south-east bedroom window. In this room his yellow-haired cousin had indignantly locked herself on account of his impetuous behavior, and now refused to respond to ardent entreaties that she come down and receive apologies.

A little distance out on the lawn, pretending sleep in his wheelchair, Uncle William lay watching, with the keen enjoyment of the deaf and very old, the comedy before him, while Cindy, supposed to be keeping flies off with a bunch of peacock feathers, took a no less vivid interest.

"Law, Marster, she ain't even done peep thoo de blin's at him yit," she confided, in a voice loud enough to reach and embarrass both parties. "But las' night I seed——"

To prevent further confidences, the Very Young Man came hastily out and joined his great-uncle, seating himself in a willow chair facing the fatal window.

"Swimming was pretty cold early this morning," he opened the conversation casually, looking toward the mill-pond where the boys "went in."

"Yes, women are pretty cold early in the morning," agreed the old man pleasantly; "but they're mighty apt to change by night, Son." And Cindy, who had been sent upstairs with a penitent note—and returned with the same unopened—tittered.

"I said *swimming*, sir."

"Yes, I heard you," answered his uncle contentedly.

The Very Young Man picked up a newspaper and for a few minutes endeavored to read, but soon glanced up with a question:

"Uncle William, is Cousin George coming over to County Court in July?" This in the tone usually adopted at Niagara.

"I never tried it," answered the old gentleman, "so I can't say. But I reckon courting in July is no worse than any other month. Love is different from what it was in my day, though, and life—well nowadays it's like catnip tea compared to muriatic acid! Don't agree with

me, eh? Of course not! But, then, *you* can't remember Wanderin' Jane and the night Old Marshall turned loose the bloodhounds!

"Jane's father was an artist with the consumption, and she lived on a little strip of poor land the other side of River Bend—Eugene Fontaine's plantation. When he died Eugene paid for his funeral, settled up his debts, and brought his child home to River Bend to live."

"Law, Marster, you done tolt dat ol' tale forty-'leben times befo'," Cindy broke in with scant courtesy. "Go on, though. I ain't list'nin'," she added, as the old fellow continued without hearing her.

"Jane was about fifteen when she came there. She'd been allowed to run kinder wild till then, and it looked like she just could n't get over it. They tried to make her like other people, too—sent her to Sunday school, and gave her pretty clothes. But the child did n't seem to care about clothes—she'd put on her little ragged dress and go straying 'round the fields all day long—that's how she got the name of Wanderin' Jane. She was curious other ways, too. Old Jake, the coachman, said there war n't nobody too high fer her to sass nor too low fer her to be kind to. I reckon that's how she came to look after Runaway Billy when he was 'most starving and came hanging around Dilsey's—his sister's—cabin at night, and in the end she persuaded him to go back to Old Marshall and go to work."

"Was Old Marshall cruel to his negroes?" shouted the listener, slightly interested.

"No, indeed, Son. Billy was just sorter half-witted and triffin'. Old Sam Marshall was the best-natured man living when he was n't in a rage. Why, even if he had a slave whipped, he'd likely turn right 'round and give him a ham or a turkey to carry back to the quarters. I reckon he whipped his darkies when they needed it or he lost his temper—just like you'll do your own children later on."

The Very Young Man turned a guilty scarlet at the bare suggestion of his ever becoming a parent, and glanced toward the window as though the mention of this possibility might forever ruin his already slim chances.

"Was he the Marshall that owned Toddsbury?" he hastened to change the subject.

"Yes, and he owned more bottom-land and oxen and niggers and mules than any man in the county; but all he cared about 'em was to will 'em to his son. Yes, he had one boy—Spottswood—and he thought the world and all of him. Turkey-liver itself was n't good enough for him. Why, Old Marshall would have taken the heart out of his own body and had it roasted with stuffin' and gravy, if the boy had asked for it. It's a wonder the young fellow was n't spoilt clean rotten—but he seemed well-mannered enough. I recollect being down there once soon

after he'd gotten back from London with his tutor, and he and I went fishing together.

"It was one of those early spring evenings toward sundown, with the young frogs hollerin' and trees just buddin', and you could hear the cow-bells tinklin' goin' up at milking-time. We were sitting on the bank, drawing out a catfish now and then, when I heard a splashing sound, and Wanderin' Jane came wading up the creek. She had on a little red dress—torn from traipsing through the briars—and a wreath of buddin' pussy-willows 'round her hair—slight as a branch of willow herself and just as limber! She stopped a minute and stood looking at us, with the water rippling over her slim brown feet—I declare, Son, she had the prettiest little toes and ankles you ever looked at!—and then went on out of sight between the grape-vines hanging on either side of the creek.

"That boy looked after her with his mouth wide open; and, though the fish were biting mighty lively after that, I noticed he was n't watching his cork.

"Well, the next time—which was three weeks later—we were sitting on that same bank, and she came along carrying a bucket of wild strawberries and her lips stained redder from eating 'em. Why, just as she went on past us, Young Marshall waded right out into the water—shoes and all—and followed her clean out of sight!

"And that was the way they kept on the whole summer through—he following and she ahead—looking back maybe, and smiling, with a will-o'-the-wisp light in her eyes, but always keeping just out of his reach, so he can't quite catch up.

"There was n't a day passed but saw him over there—nor a night either, for Jane was above all else a night-bird. The river and creek were their highways, for Jane had a passion for walking in the water—said she never could see why people used a hot, dusty road instead. I remember one moonlight night seeing 'em come wading along—with patches of light in the shallow pools between the sycamore trees, the thick, sweet smell of flowering grape heavy through the night air, and a whip-poor-will calling on the side of the bank. Lordy, it makes me want to be young and in love once more to think of it!"

The Very Young Man heaved an audible sigh and gazed miserably toward the window, where, all unknown to him, a pink ear was listening to every word.

"Eugene and I used to laugh over how Old Marshall would r'ar and pitch if he knew his son—that he'd planned to marry off to the niece of the Lieutenant-Governor—was courting Wanderin' Jane. It was clear as day Jane loved the boy, too; but she would n't own it because she'd heard his father had called her 'a po'-white.'

"Well, she *is* white, and Lord knows she's poor enough,' Eugene

said; 'but, Gee! how she does keep ahead of that boy!' At last, though, one day towards the end of summer, young Spottswood Marshall caught up.

"It was a Saturday evening, I recollect. Old Sam Marshall and I came riding up the road together. He was mighty pleasant company—weighed nigh on to three hundred, and had a laugh—at nothing—you could hear half a mile, and when he got mad you could hear him holler a mile and a quarter. He'd just been saying it looked like that boy of his had gone clean crazy about fishing—and did n't seem to have any luck either. I told him to wait awhile, maybe Spottswood would catch something 'sho nuff' presently. He said he thought it probable his son inherited that love of fishing from his great-great-uncle, Philip Lightfoot, who was a grea-at fisherman, and I said I thought he inherited *that* love of fishing all the way back from his great-grandpa, Adam.

"Just then we rounded a bend in the road, and there were the boy and the girl right in front of us in the creek. They had been gathering a bucket of fox-grapes along the banks. As usual, she was a little ahead of him—then she looked back and said something and stood waiting in the rapids for him to catch up—and all of a sudden he dropped the bucket—which went floating down the stream—and grabbed both arms around her and kissed her like he would eat her up!"

A hastily smothered scream of protest came from the window.

"Before I knew it," Uncle William continued, "Old Marshall was clean off his horse, hanging 'way over the edge of the bank, holding on by a sapling. 'You young fool!' he shouted, and you could have heard him two miles and a half. 'What are you thinking about—you, a gentleman, with three thousand acres of land and two hundred niggers standing in the river kissing a po'-white! Wade after that bucket this instant, sir, and come straight home with me!'

"The boy turned the color of a red geranium. He was mighty young, and he could n't go on kissing the girl with us looking at him; so from pure embarrassment, I reckon, he started to obey.

"But Jane turned on the old fellow like a little spitfire. 'Don't you *dare* call me a po'-white, you mean old thing!' she screamed. 'Something's goin' to happen to punish you for all your devilment—just wait and see if it don't!' and she slipped into the bushes on the opposite bank.

"Well, by night young Spottswood Marshall was over at River Bend begging to see Jane; and it looked as if he could n't get half way home before he'd turn around and ride back again. But though we'd hear her sobbing herself to sleep of nights, she never would come out and

speak to him, and after about a week he gave up and was sent off north to college by his father.

"After he left, Jane was like a flower somebody'd taken out of water and forgotten to put back in the glass. And other people's troubles seemed to hurt her as much as her own. Often she'd sit up all night at the quarters helping to nurse some sick baby, and then go looking after Runaway Billy, who'd been whipped and had run away again.

"Eugene knew Billy was hanging around somewhere, and used to leave things open at night to 'save that nigger the trouble of breaking in and stealing 'em;' and when the snow came and he'd see Jane creeping out past Dilsey's cabin with a ham-bone maybe, he just smiled and asked no questions.

"Old Marshall did n't bother to hunt for the nigger—said Billy could just stay out there and starve. But then the old fellow was feeling powerful bitter. After his son left, it looked like he picked a quarrel with everybody, so that when the fires broke out 't was hard to tell which man was his worst enemy.

"Yes, I said fires. Why, the whole country was clean crazy with excitement about 'em. Friday night, the twelfth of December, the first one broke out. Old Sam's body-servant was roused by smelling smoke and went out and found the barn on fire. They put it out before it did any damage, and the overseer called all the niggers up and cussed 'em for being careless, and thought no more about it.

"Then, three nights later, Old Marshall was riding home about eleven o'clock, and looked up, and there was his barn just starting into a light blaze! It was burning in exactly the same place, and there was every indication that the fire had been set.

"Well, as soon as it was put out, they sent for Jack Bane's blood-hounds, and put 'em on the scent. The dogs made a bee-line for the river, crossed on the foot-bridge, circled up to the left into a clump of pine woods, then down by Dilsey's cabin, and lost the scent chasing up and down the flat below Eugene's house.

"Of course everybody had a different opinion as to who set the fires. Some said it was the po'-whites Marshall had cussed out for hunting on his place; others declared it was Runaway Billy; several people were plumb certain it was Jim Bailey, who had quarrelled violently with Old Sam the week before, and a few fools actually suggested Wanderin' Jane or Eugene himself.

"Things were so upset that I decided to go down and spend the night at River Bend. It was the week before Christmas, I recollect, and just before I started the stage from the North drove up and young Spottawood Marshall climbed out of it into the Marshall family carriage and was driven home.

"That night Eugene and I were drinking apple toddy before a hickory fire, when I went out after my saddle-bags and saw Wanderin' Jane come creeping, kinder panting, up the steps, carrying a bundle. I asked where she'd been and she said, 'Down to Dilsey's after clean clothes,' and hurried past me into her little room on the porch. When I got back inside, Eugene was standing by the window calling, 'Great heavens! Look there!' and I looked, and saw *another fire across at Sam Marshall's!*

"Well, by the time we got over there the building—it was the corn-house and full of shucks—was burnt to the ground. Half the neighbors were there and the other half coming, and they were bringing out the bloodhounds to put 'em on the scent. 'If it's a nigger, I'll hang him before daybreak!' Old Marshall was shouting, and just then they loosed the leash and the dogs sprang forward, the whole crowd following—white men on horseback and niggers afoot—yelling and crunching across the frozen snow.

"The dogs made a bee-line for the river foot-bridge, crossed, and circled up towards the clump of pine woods, just like they did the first time. There Eugene and I cut across at a gallop to the house, to keep his wife from getting scared. As he went inside, the hounds came out of the pine woods down past Dilsey's cabin, and when they reached the spot where the scent was lost my heart stopped dead-still with dread—for this time they did not slacken up a second, but came straight up the hill. The leader sprang to the porch, made one bound to the very door of Jane's room, *and bayed!*

"It was Eugene who dragged the dogs away and called to the girl, and by the time the crowd came up she was standing beside him—a little trembling shadow on the porch.

"'Jane,' he said quietly, 'tell these people this is a mistake.'

"'It is a——' she began, but Old Marshall broke in:

"'If it had been a nigger, I'd have hung him before daybreak; but jail's good enough for a po'-white.'

"As he spoke, the girl stopped trembling and stiffened with anger. 'Jane,' Eugene repeated, trying by his own composure to quiet the crowd, 'tell them you did n't do it, Child.' But now she refused to speak a word.

"'She did n't do it—it's utter nonsense! Those durn fool dogs!' Eugene exploded, suddenly losing his temper. 'Why, the girl can prove an alibi—she has n't been out of her room to-night!'

"'I'm goin' to tell——' a voice began somewhere.

"'Dilsey,' Jane said sternly, 'be quiet.'

"'Y-y-yas, she w-w-wuz out,' Stammerin' Jim put in, 'caze I seed her comin' down the paff by Dilsey's jes' befo' I seed de fire.'

“‘That’s not true!’ Eugene shouted; but his nerve was gone completely now, and when Jane just said, ‘Yes, it is true,’ stubbornly, he leaned against the wall and muttered, ‘Lord help you, then. I can’t.’”

“But even as he failed her another figure pushed through the crowd, and young Spottswood Marshall cleared the steps and stood beside the girl.

“‘Jane——’ he said, and reached for her hand. She drew it away, but after that she stopped, standing rigid. Why, it seemed like his touch sent life running through her down to her very toes and fingertips.

“‘Come down from there, you young fool!’ Old Marshall’s voice boomed out. He had n’t been really mad till then; the fires were as nothing compared to his son standing up publicly beside a po’-white.

“Well, from then on the scene was worse than one of these melodrama things you see on the stage. There the old fellow stood, gasping out his threats and commands, and looking like he’d burst with rage every time his son answered him.

“‘Come down from there,’ he thundered, ‘or you’ll never get a penny, nor a nigger, nor an acre of land, from me as long as you live!’ . . . ‘I’ll do without ‘em then,’ says the boy. . . . ‘You believe that girl is innocent?’ . . . ‘I’ll stand by her—innocent or not.’ . . . ‘You’d follow her *to the penitentiary?*’ . . . ‘I’d follow her,’ the young fellow says, in exactly *that* tone, ‘to H——!’”

“Old Marshall put his hand on the man nearest to steady himself, and stood shaking hard from weakness, while his red face paled to gray. He mumbled something finally to the sheriff, and the man stepped forward; but before he reached the girl Dilsey stopped him with a scream, and struggled to the steps.

“‘Stop, marsters! She never done it!’ the woman cried out. ‘It was my brother—Runaway Billy! He’s been kinder crazy-like lately an’ out o’ his haid. When he come to my cabin to-night to hide, I knew them houn’ dogs would track him agin an’ t’ar him all to pieces. Jes’ then Miss Jane come in ter fotch her clean cloze. She tolt me to take off his coat, an’ I han’ it to her, an’ she drag it away from thar quick.’”

“But before Dilsey finished speaking Jane had run over to Old Marshall and caught him by both shoulders. ‘Don’t you *dare* hang Billy!’ she cried, shaking him. ‘He ain’t responsible—he’s out of his head from fever an’ starvin’. It’s all *your* wickedness! Don’t you touch him—I can’t stand it!’”

“And the old fellow looked at her for a full minute dazed-like. ‘So you took the blame to keep me from hangin’ a nigger?’ says he, at last. ‘Why, child, I won’t touch a hair of his head if you ask me.’ He kept

on staring at her as if he was half waked up, and then began muttering to himself, his lips trembling. 'My wickedness! A girl—a little slip of a girl—and I was going to have her put in the penitentiary!' And all of a sudden he broke down and sobbed like a baby.

"Presently, when he could steady his voice again, he said proudly, 'And my son was the only Marshall man enough to stand by her.' And then, 'Son, if you ever persuade that little spitfire to marry you, bring her right spang over to Toddsbury to live with me!'"

Before the tale was quite completed a befrilled, switchy little personage had tripped into the yard, flounced haughtily past her cousin, whose dog-like eyes implored forgiveness, and seated herself with her back directly to him.

"And the girl," questioned the Very Young Man miserably—"did she ever forgive him? Did they ever make up again?"

"Oh, yes," answered his great-uncle with a sniff. "From what I saw take place around the corner of the house that night, they made up exactly where they left off when he dropped the bucket in the creek. They always do."



UNREST

BY A. LAMPMAN

ALL day upon the garden bright
 The sun shines strong,
 But in my heart there is no light,
 Nor any song.

Voices of merry life go by
 Adown the street,
 But I am weary of the cry,
 And drift of feet.

With all dear things that ought to please
 The hours are blest,
 And yet my soul is ill at ease,
 And cannot rest.

Strange spirit, leave me not too long,
 Nor stint to give;
 For if my soul have no sweet song
 It cannot live.

THE SECOND WILL

By *H. P. Holt*

I

TWO men bent over the couch where the dying squire lay. There was grim silence for some minutes, save for the stately ticking of the grandfather's clock; then the man on the couch opened his eyes.

"Robert," he said feebly, "I have left two wills. As you know, I cut you out when you married Mildred, but I have forgiven you. Stanton & Burt, my solicitors, have that will, but I made another a month ago. You two nephews are all the kith I have in the world. People have called me mean and miserly, but I've left nearly half a million sterling."

He paused to breathe, and Robert Chatterton's professional skill told him the end was near. The face of the third man, Douglas Foster, was curiously twisted, as if with fear. He had not seemed keenly concerned when his uncle collapsed, but as the story of the second will was told he moved uneasily.

"In the first will," went on the dying man, his voice only just audible, "Douglas gets it all. In the second you divide it."

Again he paused to rest.

"The second will you will find—you will find—in—in——"

He struggled to speak, but words had failed him. Robert forced a few drops of brandy between his lips. For an instant they roused the man on the couch.

He raised his arm and pointed to Douglas Foster.

"He knows," said the dying man, and then he sank back.

Robert saw that the end had come. He looked across at his cousin, and was startled to notice a saturnine smile on his face.

"His mind seemed to wander a bit at the finish," said Foster.

"What do you mean?" asked Robert, his face unusually white.

"His talk about the second will," replied Foster. "Of course I know nothing about it, my dear fellow."

Robert Chatterton had spent ten years of his life studying the human eye. He was an ophthalmic surgeon, and already he stood high in his profession. Perhaps it was this which helped him to detect the

treachery in the glance of Douglas Foster. Slowly it dawned upon Robert that the treachery was intended to rob him. His thoughts were confused, and he did not speak until the village doctor entered the room.

"He has gone," said the medical man gravely.

Robert Chatterton hardly heard the words. Gradually his brain was growing clearer on the subject of Douglas Foster.

A quarter of a million sterling! Only one living man knew where was the document which, as the last will and testament of this dead uncle, entitled him to that sum. If Foster found an opportunity of destroying it, the whole of the estate would fall into his hands.

As naturally as possible, Robert managed to spend the rest of the day in Foster's presence. That night he took up a position in the corridor upstairs, from which he could watch his cousin's bedroom door. In all probability, the second will was somewhere in the great, rambling house. Not until after the funeral was Foster to have a chance of destroying it. After the funeral—— Robert's jaw set at the reflection. If his cousin refused to divulge his secret peaceably, there were other methods. For the present, all Robert had to remember was that two hundred and fifty thousand pounds was hanging in the balance. It would cost him just that sum if his vigilance were slackened in the slightest degree.

The following day the head of the firm of Messrs. Stanton & Burt arrived to clear up the dead man's affairs. Robert sought an opportunity of questioning him on the possibility of a second will existing, but he knew nothing of it.

"I have reason to believe that there is one," said Robert Chatterton, "so I beg of you, in going through my uncle's papers, to exercise the greatest care in trying to find it."

"Naturally, naturally," replied Mr. Stanton, with his dry legal air, thinking he fully understood Chatterton's point of view, as he was not mentioned in the existing will.

"By the way, you have the keys giving access to all my uncle's private affairs?" added Chatterton.

"Yes." Mr. Stanton was beginning to resent this attitude, but he tried to hide the fact.

"Then, I must impress upon you the urgent necessity of not handing one of those keys to anybody until you have made thorough search. Later, probably, you will understand better why I tell you this."

Mr. Stanton coughed, but he offered no comment.

Robert managed to keep a constant eye upon his cousin, without the latter actually suspecting. He talked on every subject which he thought would interest Foster, induced him to take walks with him over the wolds, and sat up late at night with him, drinking the late squire's wine. When Foster went to bed, the most trying part of Robert's

vigil began. His brain began to ache for lack of sleep, and his limbs were utterly weary, but each night he kept his post in the corridor.

The clock struck three on the second night. Robert had drunk black coffee to keep his wits from straying, but he had hard work not to give way to the strong temptation with which sleep lured him. He dared not close his eyes, for he would certainly have been unconscious in two minutes; and at any instant the man who knew the secret which meant so much to him might leave his room and destroy the only evidence that entitled him—Robert—to a fortune.

A faint sound caused Robert to sit up. The door which he had been watching opened, and a figure in a dressing-gown emerged. Robert's fingers closed on a revolver which lay in his pocket. Foster passed down the broad staircase, and his cousin followed stealthily.

The man in the dressing-gown paused at the head of the stairs. Robert had left a light in the library, and it was this which caused Foster to stand still. He appeared to be pondering the situation, and then, with a laugh, he turned on his heel and vanished into his bedroom. Robert knew that his vigil had not been in vain. The second will had not yet been destroyed, and his cousin was awaiting an opportunity.

The strain began to tell on the watcher, but he had determined to take no decisive action until after the funeral. When at last the will was formally read, showing that Douglas Foster was sole heir to his uncle, Robert Chatterton was on the verge of being a physical wreck. Only his iron will, and the knowledge that a fortune depended upon his watchfulness, had kept him awake. He had the consolation, however, of knowing that the missing document had not been destroyed since his uncle's death. His face was drawn and haggard when the solicitor went away, leaving the two cousins alone.

II

"I WANT to have a chat with you, Douglas. Come into the library." Robert's voice was calm, but his nerves were strung up to their highest pitch. This was the culminating moment of a game that had lasted four days and four nights. Only once during that time had he slept. On the last night, fearing that sleep might overpower him, he had crept to his cousin's door and wedged a piece of a match in such a position that if the door were opened the match would be displaced. A little later he had sunk into oblivion in spite of his struggle to keep awake. When he awoke, cramped and stiff, a few hours afterwards, he went to the door and saw with infinite satisfaction that it had not been opened.

He felt as if he were in a dream when at last he invited his cousin into the library. Foster might have observed a danger signal in the square set of his cousin's jaw.

The men looked at each other steadily after the door was closed. Although they had spent many hours together during the last few days, there had been no sign of open enmity. Now, however, there was an atmosphere which caused Foster to move uneasily.

"You're a lucky man," began Robert, "to have come into the whole of this money."

"I suppose so." Foster drummed his fingers on the table. He suspected this was but the prelude to unpleasantness.

"You really believe my uncle's mind was wandering when he spoke of another will?"

"I feel sure of it."

"Then, I get nothing, eh?"

"My dear fellow," began Foster, "I don't care to discuss the matter in this spirit. Of course, if a couple of thousand pounds would give you a lift, I shall be only too happy to make out a check for that amount; but more than that I really cannot do. In law you are not entitled to that, but I do not wish you to feel that I have treated you badly."

"That is kind of you." There was an odd ring in Robert's voice as he got up and walked to the sideboard. "Whisky and soda?" he asked.

"Thank you."

The men sat down again. Robert spoke of the estate and investments for some time, until he noticed his cousin's head nodding. Then he got up quietly, locked the door, and took a coil of rope from his pocket. Douglas Foster was now fast asleep. In five minutes he lay bound hand and foot on a settee. The other man stood over him, watching for the effects of the drug to pass off.

It was half an hour before the sleeper moved and opened his eyes. For a few moments he did not realize his position, but when his eyes met those of his captor he shuddered.

"You hound, what is the meaning of this?" asked Foster.

"It means, my friend, that I have you trussed up as neatly as a chicken, and that you will soon be sorrier for yourself than you ever were before in this world. Shout if it amuses you. The walls are thick, and we are a long way from the servants' hall."

"You're mad!" ejaculated Foster. There was something in his cousin's face which inspired him with dread. "Why have you committed this outrage?"

Robert Chatterton smiled. It was a bitter smile, and it sent a thrill of fear through his companion.

"You conscientiously believe my uncle's mind was wandering when he spoke of a second will?"

"Of course I do." There was a dogged note in the captive's voice.

"Then, I am going to assist your memory. To be candid, it is

my conviction that you are lying. Also, I know that if you get the chance, you will destroy that precious document to which my uncle referred. Your course would be simple enough if you had your liberty, so I have deprived you of it. Now, where is that other will?"

Had Foster known it, that was the moment when a word spoken with conviction would have made the other man waver. But Foster was considering his position. At any rate, Robert would not be mad enough to murder him. Foster hesitated a trifle before he replied, and in that brief interval Robert knew he had guessed the truth.

"I know nothing of any other will. Come, stop this melodramatic fooling and let me loose."

"Foster, you are an unmitigated rascal. I saw your dirty game long ago, yet I could not believe you would try to carry it through. But now I see you just as you are—a cheat with a clever, thieving mind. I should not care, but you proposed to make me the victim, and so I interfere. Some men in my position might feel disposed to kill you, but you are not worth it. I have something better than that in my mind. I don't know what the penalty may be for blinding a man, but you deserve punishment, and I am willing to bear the consequences."

A look of horror came into Foster's eyes.

"You fiend!" he cried. "You don't mean——"

"Yes, precisely that. Don't be afraid that I shall do it unskilfully. If there is one thing I know a great deal about, it is the human eye. The operation is simple, and it shall be carried out with the same care that I should exercise in a hospital—perhaps more." Again he smiled grimly.

The man on the couch trembled. His lips moved, as if he were going to speak, but he remained silent. Chatterton drew a small table to the side of the couch and placed one or two glistening instruments on it. Then he took two tiny phials from his pocket.

"Now, don't move," he said, bending over the other man. "I want to put a few drops of this stuff into your eyes to dilate the pupils."

Foster struggled, but he was helpless. The delicate hands of the surgeon forced his eyelids open gently, and the victim felt a slight stinging pain as the liquid ran over his eyes.

"You will go to penal servitude for this!" screamed the trussed man.

"Probably, probably," replied his cousin, as he poured the contents of another phial over a handkerchief. "And yet," he added, "it is worth it, in the circumstances. Now, my friend, inhale this. It is no use holding your breath—I can wait. Eye-operations are painful sometimes. See how merciful I am in giving you an anæsthetic. Ah, I thought you would breathe soon. Now you will be ready in a few seconds."

Foster's senses swam. The fumes filled his lungs, and his heart began to beat more quickly. He struggled to move his arms, but they were as firmly fixed as if a vise held them. The captor's voice began to sound distant, he lost the power to struggle, he seemed to be drifting through space, and then he lost consciousness altogether.

It seemed days—weeks—afterwards when he began to focus thought once more. At first he felt a sharp pain in his eyes. There was something cold and moist over the upper part of his face. He moved, and a harsh laugh greeted him.

"So you're coming round at last," said Robert. "I'm glad, because I want to get this business finished. Just half a moment, and I will take these bandages off. You have earned the distinction of going through an operation which, to the best of my belief, has never been performed before, except on guinea-pigs, as nobody is anxious to be made blind. There, you're all right now. Your eyes may smart for a while, but that will soon pass off. Now, my interesting friend," he added, as he lifted the wet bandage from his cousin's face, "won't you compliment me on my professional skill? Don't say you can see me, I beg!"

Foster opened his eyes, and a sensation of nausea overpowered him. Everywhere was blank nothingness. Deadly fear filled his mind. Blind! The thing was unspeakable.

"You cur!" he muttered, between his teeth.

"Excellent," commented Chatterton. "I observe that success has rewarded my efforts. As I told you, it is quite a simple operation. It will mean a considerable change in your mode of life, but you will have plenty of money, so it won't be such a great inconvenience as it might otherwise be. How do you feel on the subject?"

Great beads of perspiration stood out on Foster's forehead. It was worse than a nightmare, for he knew it was all actuality.

"Now, I will let you into a little secret," said Chatterton. His bantering tone had gone. "As a matter of fact, and I don't wish to hide the worst part of the truth from you, you will be stone-blind in twenty-four hours. I don't wish to deliver a scientific lecture to you, my friend, but, to put it in its most simple terms, I could yet entirely arrest the effect of the operation, if I so desired. Look at that exquisite sunshine. Sorry. Of course you can't see it. Still, you can reflect how beautiful it would be to be able to see it. Think of all the glorious things you will not be able to see; think of yourself a helpless log, doomed to be led about like a dog on a string for the rest of your days. Now, believe me, I can still save your sight, if I wish to. But you must not be long, or even my skill won't help you. You know my terms. Where is the second will?"

There was silence. Chatterton began to fear that his victim would still refuse to speak.

"Do you swear that you can undo this fiendish work?"

"I do, providing you are quick."

"Then, for God's sake, hurry! If you fail, blind though I am, I will kill you!"

"The will—where is it?"

The man on the couch heaved a painful sigh.

"It is in a secret drawer in the study writing-table. When the first drawer is opened, you will feel a small knob on the top. Move it sideways, and you will see how it works. I saw Uncle put it there. For Heaven's sake, hurry!" He closed his aching eyes and lay motionless.

There was the flush of triumph on Robert Chatterton's face as he went out of the room. He found the top drawer of the desk locked, but with the aid of a poker he forced it open. A moment later he held the second will in his hand. Hastily writing a note, he put it with the document into an envelope, addressed it, and walked to the pillar box. It seemed an eternity to Douglas Foster before his cousin returned.

"For goodness sake, end this delay!" he cried. "You've got the will, have n't you."

"I found it," a quiet voice at his side replied. "It is safe now, on the way to my solicitor."

"You cur!" went on Foster excitedly. "Do hurry up. You are certain you can bring my sight back again?"

"I fancy so," replied Robert, with scorn, as he struck a match and lighted the gas.

The man on the couch glared at him.

"It's all right," said Chatterton. "You need not look as if you would like to murder me. It is after midnight—that accounts for the darkness. Also, I had closed the shutters, to help the realistic effect. What a pity you did n't think of such a simple possibility before, is n't it?"



SUNSET

BY DORA M. HEPNER

A BURST of glory in the western sky;
 The lonely twitter of a restless bird;
 A sense of pain, the quivering of a sigh
 As with the beauty e'en the soul is stirred;
 A silence deep, unbroken by a word.
 The slipping of a Day into the Vale of Years—
 A Sun that shrinks—then dips, and disappears!

KIDNAPPED IN THE JUNGLE

By Harriette Irmaguard Lockwood

IT was evening in the Philippines—"Buena Nauches," wonderful and mystifying in its tropical beauty. The deep jungle stillness came stealing up from the darker gloom of the Sierras de Marvales, that, mystery-crowned, stood, grim sentinels, looking out over the China Sea.

The heat had made the day one of great suffering; a day to try the strength of even the old-timers at Olongapo Naval Station; but now the sun was sinking into his bed of purple and gold, beyond the western peaks, and a great sigh of relief came from the Americans, with the first gust of rising breeze, wafted in over the nipa-thatched buildings.

The garrison buildings were close to the coast, and the evenings were the best part of the day; for then all the coolness drifted in from the great billows and the sea-caves.

Spick and span in glittering equipment stood ten companies of United States marines, in front of the company quarters, waiting for a dapper little bugler to sound the "adjutant's call." At the signal, the body of men stepped forth into perfect lines. They moved quickly into place on the splendid parade-ground that lay in front of "Officers' Row," a street of tropical bungalows.

On the deep verandas of these houses were gathered the officers' wives and daughters, who dared the wild life and dangers with their dear ones. Among the daintily gowned women at the Colonel's home was the American school-teacher, Alice West. She, with the rest, had come to watch "parade," which came just before sunset every evening.

The ever inspiring sight caused the flush of pink to mount into her fair cheeks. There was a thrill of pride and joy in her gay heart as her eyes sought out the tall form of her lover, who now stood erect and proud at "point of rest." He was the color sergeant, and to the girl seemed a part of the beautiful flag he held rippling in the breeze.

Out there stood the stern-eyed old Colonel, statue-like, in front of his pride, "the best drilled men in the corps." Alice watched him as he waited the "report."

She was glad to be living where she could look away to the great mountains and the sea. She loved the music and the color, and best of all she loved her work among the little brown children, who in turn adored "Señorita."

The playful breeze that tossed the girl's fluffy brown hair lifted the Colonel's new gold-tasseled campaign hat and sent it scurrying across the parade-ground, right into the eager grasp of the garrison pest and torment, a huge ape, "Reilly," by name. Reilly picked up the hat and placed it jauntily upon his ugly head just as the band struck up a lively march. The Colonel stood at "parade rest," his arms folded across his breast. He did not move, and seemed not to miss his new hat that had cost him *ocho pesos* in Manila. The lips of a thousand men tightened, lest a smile appear. Shoulders were stiffened into even more military lines. The ape chattered in fiendish glee, and mocked the attitude of the angry Colonel. When the hat slipped down to Reilly's ears, he jammed it back on his head, and marched past the Colonel, much to the inward glee of the men.

When all was over, and the flag at the gate had fluttered down to the strains of "Retreat" from the band, the Colonel called his orderly. "Get my hat, and have Green shoot that infernal ape." Reilly was on the alert, and at the first move from the soldier he sped to the house-top and placed the hat on the ridge-pole. Then he fled to his home in a huge tree, where "Mrs. Reilly" was holding close in her loving embrace a tiny baby ape. The men had built a snug home for these apes, and had seen that they were well cared for.

Later, in the quarters, there was much merriment over the ape's mischievous actions; but the roars of laughter were suddenly quelled by the appearance of Provost-Sergeant Green, with the fighting ape at the end of a chain.

"It was the divil's own job to catch this brute! He thought I was about to hurt the baby. I had to tear him from his happy home; and now it's me that's got to shoot him. The old man ordered it done this very hour. We can't even wait till sunrise!"

A roar of indignation rent the air. The men were fond of the ape. Had they not taken care of him since he was a baby? Did n't they go out in the jungle and get a mate for him? Was he to be killed when his mate needed him most? "Hide him until the old man cools off!" they urged. Reilly was accordingly led away a captive, after Green had had several fights with him and was warned by the men that the ape would be his enemy evermore.

"I saw Miss West holding Mrs. Reilly's baby in her arms to-day," said one.

"Oh, well, Miss West might do that, but even old Reilly can't get the baby in his arms. Miss West can tame anything. Look at Brant. He was the wildest cow-puncher that ever shipped with a marine outfit. Yet she has tamed him, and he will eat out of her hand now. He has given up all thought of going out into the hills and joining the natives." All eyes were upon James Brant, who smiled, flushed, and left the room.

"Look, there goes Prince Hotspur now. He is going to night school, to learn the lesson of love."

"Who would n't if they had such a peach of a teacher as Miss West?"

"Oh, knock off the gab, and listen to what happened to Monte today." Green had returned and was binding up a torn finger while he talked. "Monte went hunting, and took a shot at a huge ape that was in his lookout tree. Now, you know the trees swarm with monkeys and apes, and they defend one another. When the big brute fell screaming to the ground, the whole band set out after Monte, who barely got away with his life. He said the apes came out into the water after him. He ought to know better than to shoot an ape, any way."

"He'll learn better some day. I never saw a rooky make such a fool of himself as that fellow has. He will get killed before he sees service."

"Bet your life he will!" answered Gray. "I'd rather risk a poisoned arrow than an enraged band of monkeys. Apes have a memory as long as their lives; and I fear, Green, that you will have a chance to watch old Reilly now. He will not forget."

Alice West and James Brant sat waiting for the tropical "search-light" while they planned many things that lovers love to plan. "Taps" sounded, long-drawn and sweet, the bugle notes resounding from the towering mountains. The brooding silence was now broken by the wild calls of birds; and as the moonlight entered the gloom a new world seemed created. The man and the woman listened and waited, awed by the sounds about them; for even the trees in the garrison were the haunts of night-birds.

"It is late, dear; I must go. I forget time's swift passing when we are together, talking of our home in God's country. Only three more months, Alice, then I shall be sent home. And you?"

"I am going with you, Jamie dear."

He clasped her in his arms in a good-night caress, then strode away.

The next morning there was a ripple of excitement at the post. The news passed from lip to lip. Reilly's baby was dead. The old mother held the limp little form close to her breast and tried in vain to coax it to take its food. Tears stood in many eyes as the boys watched the pitiful actions. Even the Colonel, when informed of the tiny monkey's death, relented, and Reilly was given his liberty.

Green was ordered to bury the dead animal, but he had another fight to get it away from the mother. As soon as the little mound had been finished, old Reilly promptly began digging it open. He was driven away many times from the grave.

"Now what do you think has happened?" Gray exclaimed the next day. "Old Reilly and his mate are gone. The grave has been opened, and the dead baby is gone, too." Thereafter, although they knew that

Reilly had "deserted," he came back under cover of night and took away small belongings of the men, as well as a generous ration of canned milk when he could find it.

A month later Green rushed into the guard-room with white, frightened face. "Have you seen my baby? Little Buster was playing in the shade of the house an hour ago. When his mother called him to get his supper he was gone. I have searched the place for him, but he cannot be found."

"Look at the Colonel's house. Perhaps Miss West has him."

Although every corner was searched, the baby was gone. Rank never barred little Buster from any home; for the little one was only seventeen months old. He was the pet of every one in the post.

The place was a scene of uproar and excitement as the evening came, for all the men were hunting "Baby Green." With the Colonel's consent, bands of armed men beat the bush all night, and a reward of one hundred pesos was offered in the "*Aldea*" for the child's return. Nothing came of all the work to find the baby. The mother was almost beside herself, and Green's face wore an expression of woe that made his friends dash away hot tears. A week passed, then a month, but nothing was heard of the child. Alice West grieved over his loss, and Brant tried everything he could think of to find trace of "Buster."

Six weeks later all effort to find the baby had been given up, and he was mourned as dead. The men had lost spirit, and seemed to care nothing for pleasure. The Colonel ordered a hunting party to start for a distant mountain, known as "Grande," where an ice-cold lake lay near the mountain peak. He hoped to cheer the men with some excitement, so he told them that deer were plentiful near "Lago Frio," or Cold Lake.

Great success attended the first week of the hunt. Deer came to the lake to drink of its cool, sweet waters. Brant and Monte made some side-trips up little rivers that emptied into the lake. One day near the end of the second week, when it was nearly time to break camp and turn toward home, they were resting on the banks of a small stream. The heat of the day made rest necessary, for the sun beat down in fiery streams, and even the apes and the birds were quiet. As Brant lit his pipe for a smoke, he noticed Monte suddenly grasp his rifle and take aim at a huge ape swinging in the top of a tree some distance from them.

Striking at the gun with his free hand, Brant cried, "Don't do that, if you don't want to be hurt. The apes are not molesting us. Let them alone. Put down that gun, I tell you!" He struck at it again, but he was too late, for the aim was true, and a wild cry from the tree told them that the bullet had done its work.

Both men ran for the boat, and only in the nick of time, for the shore swarmed with the shrieking animals. They pushed into deep water.

Brant stood up in the boat and looked toward the shore with a wild exclamation bursting from his lips: "*Santa Maria!* Give me the glasses, Monte, quick!"

"What's up?" cried Monte, as he handed the glass to Brant.

"Good God! Monte, you have shot old Reilly! His mate is beside him, and she has Buster in her arms! Thank God, our baby is alive and well! Here, take a look." Brant sank into the seat with pale face.

"It is our Baby Green!" shouted Monte, as he dropped the glass and grasped the oars.

"What are you going to do? Are you mad? We shall be torn to pieces if we return there. Let us go after the rest of the party. Row now for our baby's life!"

After the wildest excitement had died a little, it was decided that to enter the jungle where old Reilly was lying wounded or dead was only madness. It would drive the apes further back, and perhaps be the cause of Buster's death.

"If we only had Miss West here, she could go among them. A man will only enrage them now," Monte complained.

"Right you are, Monte! Miss West is the only person who can make up with the apes now. Get a move on you all! We are going after Miss West," cried Brant, heeding not at all the protest that Miss West might be killed. He knew she could get the baby away from "Mrs. Reilly," but it might take some time and dangerous hiking.

"We will keep this all a secret from the Greens until we are sure of success. There is no need to cause more suffering. Gee! but that baby was a sight with dirt, and as naked as could be. Through the glass, he seemed to be all right, which is something to be glad of."

One week later, in the dim dawn of morning, a boat stealthily crept up to the shore of the lake. Alice West stepped ashore. A blanket and some food were placed beside her, and, silent as the shadows, the boat drifted into the thick jungle bushes growing down to the edge of the water. It was a dark wall in the blackness of night, where the boat was secured. Five men hid themselves in the undergrowth, and, alone, the girl waited for the morning light. Well armed, and brave as ever a woman can be, she sat down and ate some breakfast. To her sensitiveness, every new sound seemed magnified. The late night silence was broken by the harsh cry of parrots, the squeal of peccaries, and the patter of padded feet on the hard-beaten trails. Slowly a haze overspread the late moon, and far to the east flushing shafts of light shot up above the mountain peaks. The jungle trees loomed in mystical gloom; and the drip of dew from their moss-streamers fell like rain. Then came the light of day, and with it the chatter of apes. Now it was light enough for Alice to see that the place where Reilly had fallen was bare. He was not there.

Curiously the monkeys flocked about at a safe distance, and looked at the girl, who sat still and whistled softly a little call she had used at the post when she had wanted Reilly to come to her.

The watchful men climbed to the tops of trees and waited. They had their rifles ready to protect Alice, if need be.

After an hour, when the sunlight had warmed her chilled body, the girl looked about. She walked very slowly, and made no move to frighten the apes, that now paid little attention to her.

As the heat increased the girl drew under the shade of a huge tree and kept up her plaintive little call. Once she thought she heard a human voice, and her heart leaped in joy. Again, it seemed to come from above her in the dense tree-top. Then a thought gripped her, and she acted on it at once. She made the whining cry she had heard "Mrs. Reilly" use to summon her mate. A stir in the branches above her, through which she could not see, caused her to continue the call.

Suddenly she was startled by the appearance of "Mrs. Reilly" right in front of her, with the baby clinging close to her hairy breast. When Alice could regain her breath, she called to Buster, who shrank back and cried. He had forgotten her. He knew no mother now but the beast that held him tenderly while she watched Alice narrowly, as if expecting to see her mate appear from some hiding-place about the girl.

Alice tossed the ape some bread, which was divided with Buster, who cried for more.

"Come to Auntie Alice, darling, and you shall have bread," called the tearfully happy woman. The ape watched and came closer at sound of the plaintive call, but not for a moment did she loosen her hold of the baby.

Finally the child, tired out, fell asleep, and then as the old ape lost interest in Alice and clung idly to a low-growing limb of the tree, Alice walked toward the shore. When full in the open she began sending a message by "wig-wag" that could be seen by the anxious men.

Buster is all right. I shall stay until I get him. Be ready with the lasso when I signal.

She then coaxed the ape with bits of bread, and after hours of the trying play she at last induced the animal to let her hold the child. Filthy and with matted, tangled hair, the naked baby was not unwilling to eat the food the girl gave him. She tossed bits further and further away from her each time, until the ape had to go several yards to obtain the bread. Then the girl gave the signal, and the *shish* of the rope was followed by a scream from the ape. The lasso fell and tightened about her body. Alice sprang toward the water, and, with the baby in her arms, held high, she went out until the apes could not follow her.

While the struggling animal fought and cried, the boat was shot

forward to rescue the precious baby and Alice. Willing hands pulled them into the boat, where, the long strain over, Alice swooned. Buster was passed from man to man; tears flowed freely.

"I hate to do it, but God knows our baby will not be safe until that old ape is on her way to join her mate!" Brant cried, as he aimed his Krag at the shore.

"Do it quick, then, before Miss West revives. Ah, poor old beast, it is all over with her. Listen to the uproar! Come, let's pull for the big camp. Night will soon be down upon us." Monte fell to the oars with a will, while Brant took the girl's feverish hands in his.

When the twilight fell they were settled in camp for the night. Alice had bathed Buster and made him sweet and clean. As he rested in her arms she sang a sleepy song she had often heard his mother sing to him. Brant came and leaned over her, while he whispered, "I always knew you were this kind of a little woman." Then Buster kissed them both.



WHERE HAROLD SLEEPS

BY FLORENCE EARLE COATES

WHERE Harold sleeps the night is blest.
 In the Great Mother's easeful breast
 He lies the brave and sweet among
 Who, loved by the wise gods, die young—
 The goal achieved without the quest.

Though winds of Autumn from the West
 May rudely rock the unsheltered nest,
 Yet shall all joys of Spring be sung
 Where Harold sleeps;

And we, our human griefs confessed,
 We, too, by a dear hope caressed—
 Death's hope illimitable, sprung
 From nothing that to earth hath clung—
 Shall, waiting a new dawn, find rest
 Where Harold sleeps!

AN ORCADIAN WEEK'S ENTERTAINMENT

By Eleanor Root

“PEOPLE here do not speak with nearly so broad an accent as the people in Scotland,” I remarked to my landlady the morning after my arrival in the Orkney Islands, “and I notice the names do not sound Scotch—Cutt, Twatt, Flett, Cursiter, and so on. How is that?” My hostess stiffened visibly.

“They are not Scotch we are not Scotch we did not come from Scotland have ye never heard of the Norsemen from beyond the seas we are the descendants of them we are not of Scotch blood ye do not call the English Irish ye’re not to call us Scotch.”

The utterance of the typical Orcadian, delivered as it is without a single pause or change of inflection, is very suggestive of saga-repeating ancestors. Of their Norse ancestry the natives are very proud, indignantly repudiating, as will be seen, the idea that their forebears were Caledonians.

“I beg your pardon,” I returned humbly, and to change the subject plunged into the theme of afforestation. The venture was an unfortunate one, as trees refuse to grow on the islands.

“Trees spoil the scenery,” declared my hostess. “We would not have them if we could if ye go to the Southland ye cannot see anything of the scenery for the trees we like to see the scenery.”

“I’ve heard there were Picts’ houses here,” I said desperately. “Can you tell me where there is one of these houses?”

“I’m not wanting ye to wander around among old stones it’s the truth I’m telling ye I’ll tak’ ye to see the Widow Flett’s new house it is bonny.”

“But it is the old things I am most anxious to see! I’ve seen new houses all my life, but I never saw anything that belonged to a Pict. I think I’ll go to-morrow and visit the ‘Maeshowe.’ Some people think the Picts built that, don’t they? And there’s a circle of ‘Standing Stones’ near by, I’ve been told.” There was some further talk about the Widow Flett’s house, but I carried my point. My companion volunteering to write on ahead and engage a night’s lodging for me at her sister’s mother-in-law’s cousin’s in the village of Strom-

ness, which overlooked the "Stones," I deferred my departure for twenty-four hours.

I started out in a burst of sunshine on my nine-mile walk—there are no trains in the Orkneys—but reached my destination in a deluge. As I traversed the narrow streets, cobbled to the extent of direst discomfort, trying in vain to see the sky through roofs which apparently met overhead, I exclaimed involuntarily, "How awful!" However, all discomfort was forgotten when, at my abiding place, I was greeted in tones of warmest cordiality by an old body with befrilled mutch framing her smiling face.

"Come awa' ben," she exclaimed in tones of warmest cordiality. "Ye'll be the lady frae Kirkwall I was expectin'." I was at once conducted to a room where a brightly burning lamp showed me a table literally groaning under the weight of good things provided for me. There were fowls, ham, mutton, beefsteak-pie, scones, biscuits, pancakes, bread and butter, marmalade, honey, cheese, jam, tea, and cakes. After seating me, she bustled away, closing the door behind her. Considerable time elapsed before her return, during which period I was well employed.

"This is most unpleasant weather," I remarked when she appeared again. "We do not often have such storms in America this time of year. And how cold it is getting outdoors!" I shivered.

Immediately I saw that I had made a mistake. The smile left her round face, and she answered somewhat severely, "Well, folk dinna drop down dead frae the heat here the way they do in the streets of America in summer we are comfortable all the time it is neither too hot nor too cold but I would rather be too cold than to drop down dead frae the heat."

"Oh, yes, indeed," I ejaculated hastily, adding somewhat irrelevantly, "How religious the Orkney people are! I have been hearing how regularly they go to church." Her face became somewhat brighter.

"I have a cousin in America," she commented, "an' she wrote me about the queer religions there spiritualism an' Christian Science an' ev'rything but maybe I should n't be speakin' that way for I dinna gang to the kirk mysel' noo that the steeple's been put on I tell the minister that it would be a gey-like thing for me to go to the kirk an' me expectin' ilka windy day or night that the steeple would fa' down on my roof I use' to go regular but how could I be goin' when the wind blows so hard I'm afraid of the steeple how could I go when I'm afraid the steeple will be fallin' down on my hoose?"

"But I should not be so afraid of the steeple as of the sea. The bay washes the foundations of many of the houses, does it not?"

"Oh ay that's true the bay comes right in below this window folk wi' nothin' to dae sit an' fish out the window ye couldna dae better than

that in America could ye there's my old cat Tom use' to be a fine mooser but since he's taken to fishin' there's never a moose gets kilt in this hoose they're roonin' about all night long but come awa' I'll light ye up to your bed ye must be tired wi' your walk." She led the way outdoors, and up an outside stairway to my dormitory. The next morning I found the bill of fare of the previous evening augmented by a fine trout which her grandson had caught out the window of my breakfast-room.

The repast over, I took a walk up the hill at the back of the hamlet, to the site of the cottage inhabited by the famous Stromness witch, who was accustomed to sell favorable winds to sailors in the time of Sir Walter Scott. The Wizard of the North was a wretched sailor, and it is related that he and his captain once visited the practiser of black magic and paid an extra price for a good wind. But though the pot was boiled, and many incantations muttered in their presence, the voyage back to Scotland was accomplished in the teeth of a terrific gale, it is sad to say.

A little later I set out for the "Stones of Stenness," of which aboriginal relics Scott, in his notes on the Orkney Islands, says, "Stonehenge excels this Orcadian monument, but that of Stenness is, I conceive, the only one in Britain which can be said to approach it in consequence." As I stood gazing at the huge circle of boulders brought to the spot by prehistoric man, I felt solemn, awed. It was not necessary to picture human sacrifice or other pagan rite in order to feel impressed. I was glad I was alone. An exclamation or irrelevant remark would have jarred.

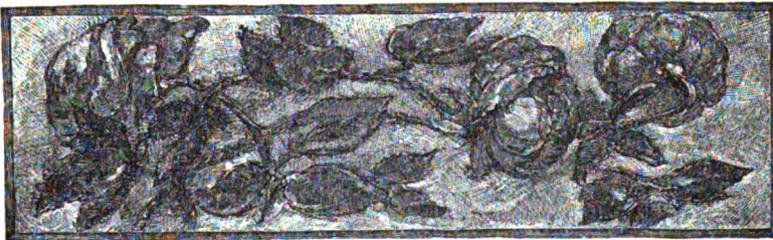
A short distance further on I came to the "Maeshowe," that mysterious artificial mound, with its rock-encased, sepulchre-like cell, about which so many fruitless conjectures have been formed. Circumnavigating the moat surrounding it was an antiquarian, with whom I engaged in conversation.

"Some people think the Norsemen constructed it," he said in the course of our talk, "but it was gray with the moss of centuries before the first Norwegian prow touched these shores." I do not recall the erudite reasons for his conclusions, but they had something to do with the precession of the equinoxes, the movements of the spheres, and the setting of the sun on the longest or shortest day of the year, I forget which, behind a huge monolith known as the "Watchman." The whole made me wonder how one small head could contain it all.

So steeped did I become in the primordial past that I found it a distinct anticlimax to be taken to view the mediæval buildings of Orkney: the Cathedral, the Bishop's Tower, Earl Patrick's Castle. I confided my feelings to my landlady and besought her to tell me where I could find a Pict's house.

Again she declared she did not want me to wander any more among old stones, and perseveringly brought up afresh the subject of the Widow Flett's house. This time I succumbed, and was piloted to it via the foundation stones of the Carnegie Library. After viewing it, I said good-by to my companion, and set off alone to explore the out-lying hills. My search was successful, for I found two tiny, stone-lined caves, which I was assured, on my return, were prehistoric habitations.

The following morning I set sail across the Pentland Firth for Caledonia again, my ideas regarding the necessity of going to distant parts of the earth in order to meet with the strange and unwonted, completely revolutionized!



TO A WILD ROSE

BY L. L. BIDDLE

BORN with the breath of wood nymphs fanning thee,
 Laved by the early morning dew,
 Thy shade of pink was filched from eastern skies
 Just ere the sun appeared in view.

As this sun rose, thy heart became pale gold;
 All day its warmth helped thee to grow;
 At eve a drowsy brook lulls thee to rest;
 Thy slumber song the night winds blow.

Wild rose we name thee while thou givest us
 Thy fair pink beauty and sweet scent;
 Or is this not the wood nymphs' fragrant breath
 Which fanned and made thee redolent?

THE BREAKING-IN OF FATTY

By Grant Trask Reeves



TO the citizens of Rockham, Bill B. Bangs was a joyful optimist, ever ready to prophesy a pennant for his ball team. To his ball-players and would-be recruits, he was a rank pessimist; and you can hardly blame him. To be manager of a minor league ball club is far from holding a play job—especially when certain youths whose batting eyes need the assistance of strongly magnifying spectacles, who possess weak-muscled arms, and whose leaded feet would deserve a handicap in a turtle race, try to convince the said manager that they are stars in the embryo.

A student of human nature might have told Bill that in this little world of ours there are a legion of “square pegs” who are vainly endeavoring to wedge themselves into “round holes”; also, that many of these dissatisfied “square pegs” are *unknowingly* occupying their proper “square holes.” Indeed, Bill knew all this. As he expressed it, “Half the guys livin’ are fishin’ for whales with minnow-hooks.” And when he said this, he would shift his chew of molasses-soaked plug, and his eyes would twinkle, as he recalled the case of Fatty Sweet.

Fatty may have been a “square peg” in the figurative sense, but never literally; for not by the most unlimited stretching of the imagination could any one visualize Fatty as being square. He was *round*—as round as the roundest “official league ball” ever made. With a waist measure that threatened to equal his height, with the cheeks of a German comedian, with plump arms and legs, Fatty was as near spherical as a human being possibly could be. The “round hole” that Fatty so sincerely believed he could easily drop into was professional baseball; and Bill B. Bangs, as manager of the Rockham Baseball Club of the Squint County League, was the obstacle between Fatty and the fulfilment of his wishes.

Clad in a white coat and a spotless apron, Fatty toiled day in and day out, handing sugar, butter, eggs, beans, and other necessities of life across the counters of Rockham’s largest grocery emporium. At times he was the source of much comedy that tickled the funny-bones of the store’s patrons; yet, withal, he was an efficient clerk. But that was n’t enough—he wanted to be a ball-player. And now that we’ve finished the preliminary practice, let the bell ring—let “his umps” toss out a nice, white, new ball, and we’re off.

Bangs figured afterward that one of the Fate sisters (let's call them that) deliberately took his arm and led him into that store where Fatty clerked. For, being a single man and residing in Rockham only six months of the year, Bill hung up his hat and filled his stomach at the boarding-house of the esteemed Mrs. Griggs. Consequently, he had little, if any, occasion to enter the portals of a grocery store. But he did. A sign advertising his favorite brand of tobacco lured him within, and, once inside, the stage was set.

He stepped up to the cigar case, near the front of the store, and another of the Fate sisters designedly led Fatty behind the counter to serve him. It was the first time that Fatty had ever encountered Bangs; but the fat youth was undaunted by any rules of etiquette.

"How d'ye do, Mr. Bangs?" he saluted, as the manager tossed a dime on top of the case.

Bangs was not greatly surprised. Everybody in a minor league city—a Class D city—seems to know the manager of the local nine. So Bill made some remark about the weather, or politics, and slipped the plug of tobacco into his pocket, preparatory to leaving the store. But Fatty had no intention of allowing the manager to escape as easily as that. He opened his mouth, but, although his tongue moved, not a sound issued from within. Evidently he was slightly flustered. Bangs waited curiously until the other had found his voice.

"My—my name's Sweet," Fatty volunteered.

"Yes?" Bangs politely replied. He was wondering what was to come.

"C-could you tell me," the grocery clerk continued, "how a young feller could git a chance ter play ball—play for a livin', I mean?"

That was Bill's strong point—instructing the "young idea."

"Why," he told him, "the lad ought to get the ear of some minor league manager and see if he can get a try-out. If he makes good, he'll get a job."

Sweet gurgled far down in his throat for a moment, and his moon-like cheeks flushed like those of a bashful girl. After a struggle with his Adam's apple, he managed to blurt out, "I—I wonder if you'd give me a try-out?"

The unexpected had occurred, and Bangs stood staring at the lad, at loss for a reply. Fatty's big, round, blue eyes were as pleading as a baby's. The manager leaned over the counter, that he might better size up his would-be recruit.

Finally he said, "To tell the truth, I have n't any vacancies at present. Better run over to Alston and see Dobbs; I hear he wants to get hold of a good outfielder." Somehow, Bangs hated to turn the boy down flatly.

Sweet's eyes reflected his disappointment. "But I'm an infielder," he protested.

In his astonishment, Bangs produced and bit off fully half of his

plug of tobacco. He came very near exploding with laughter as he tried to picture the fat youth cavorting around the infield with his team; but he succeeded in preserving a sober face, and answered seriously enough, "I'll keep you in mind, and if I need an infielder I'll let you know."

Fatty was persistent.

"How about a try——" he began; but Bangs pulled out his watch and interrupted:

"I'm sorry that I can't stay longer," he interjected. "I want to get out to the park and watch the boys practise before the game starts. They begin at three o'clock now, you know." And he hustled from the store.

But Bangs had not seen the last of Fatty—no, indeed! The idea had been given birth in Sweet's mind, and clerking became a form of slavery. He bewailed because he had to work nine hours in a "stuffy" store, instead of earning "soft" money prancing about the diamond for a couple of hours each day.

Nowhere was Bangs safe from Fatty's pleas for a try-out. Sweet was confined to the store during the day, and did not find opportunity to visit the ball park; but in the evening he haunted Bangs's steps. He called at Mrs. Griggs's boarding-house; he intercepted Bangs during the manager's evening strolls; he attended the same "movie" show, and he even pleaded with Bangs over the telephone—sometimes summoning the manager from between the sheets of his bed at an hour when all respectable people are supposed to have retired.

He managed to secure a couple of forenoons off from his job, and reported at the park for morning practice. The first morning Bangs was not present, and Captain Ryan allowed Fatty to amble to the outfield and chase the hits during batting practice. Fatty went to dinner winded, and swearing that he "had n't had a square deal." The second day, just as Fatty arrived at the park, a sudden rainstorm blew up, and morning practice was abandoned. But Fatty did not give up, and they say that persistence has its reward. Maybe.

One Saturday evening, some two weeks after Bangs first met Fatty, the manager was busily engaged at Mrs. Griggs's supper table, stowing away great forkfuls of New England baked beans and huge bites of buttered brown bread. Each night, during the meal hour, Bill B. was obliged to replay the game of the afternoon for the benefit of Mrs. Griggs's other boarders. Bill did not mind this so much; but it did grate upon his sensibilities to be obliged to listen to suggestions from his fellow-boarders—a plumber, a "gents' furnishing" clerk, and the owner of a local fish-market—as to how he should manage his team. On this evening Mrs. Griggs was listening attentively to the conversation, interjecting an occasional "Do tell!" or "I swan!" when a loud jangling of the door-bell called her from the table.

A moment later she came hurrying back.

"It's that stout young man to see you again," she informed Bangs.

The manager's Adam's apple bobbed convulsively. Then he turned to the landlady.

"Tell him I'm not in," he requested.

"But he says he saw you through the window as he came down the street," the landlady objected.

Bangs muttered softly into his napkin. Then he added, "Tell him I can't see him this evening—I'm too busy."

Mrs. Griggs carried this ultimatum to the caller, and returned to her place at the head of the table.

Finishing his meal, Bangs ascended the stairs to his room, and opened the door. There, comfortably perched on the edge of the bed, was Fatty.

"What the——" began the manager.

Fatty smiled affably. "I came in the back door," he explained.

Bangs stood with his closed fists resting on his hips, his feet spread somewhat apart.

"It's quite evident that you came in some way," he replied. "But you're liable to go out through the window."

Sweet glanced toward the window and then down his rotund form. "It's a pretty small window, Mr. Bangs," he grinned. "And say: how about givin' me a job with your team?"

"Oh, Lord! what's the use?" groaned Bangs, in feeble supplication.

He dropped into a chair facing Fatty. "Have n't I told you that you'd better keep your job?" he asked. "Have n't I told you that twelve iron men per week the year round for a job clerkin' are better than nineteen dollars a week for six months of the year as a ball-player?"

"Yep," Fatty admitted.

"Then, what do you want to play ball for?" Somehow, Bangs hated to tell Sweet that he regarded it as physically impossible for him ever to become a ball-tosser.

Fatty dug down into his watch-pocket and produced a massive silver time-piece. He carefully unscrewed the back and handed the manager a snapshot that he carried inside of the case. Bangs scrutinized the picture—that of a dainty miss of eighteen or nineteen summers.

"You see," Fatty was explaining rather self-consciously, "Betty and I are pretty good friends, and she'd like to have me be something besides a grocery clerk." The inflection of scorn was pronounced as he said "grocery clerk."

"Er-r—you and the young lady are—are in love?" queried Bangs. Being a bachelor, he was unversed in expressions of the kind.

"I don't know about Betty's lovin' me," replied the fat boy; "but I know that I like her a gosh-darn lot. An' if I was a ball-player, I guess maybe Betty might love me."

Bangs sat and thought, studying the faded pattern of the carpet. He must find some way to discourage the boy and make him keep his present position. He raised his eyes until they were focused on his portly caller. No, Fatty surely was not built for work on the diamond. The sun broke through Bangs's clouds of perplexity, and the idea was formulated into words.

"Do you get a vacation this summer?" he asked.

"Ye-es, two weeks," Fatty answered. And he added, "But it comes in September."

"Could you take them now?" Bangs inquired.

Fatty thought for a few seconds or so. "Why, I reckon the boss might let me off," he replied.

"Well, then," Bangs said, "you get your two weeks off and report to me. I'll give you a suit, and carry you with the team for a couple of weeks *without pay*—remember that. And if you make good, I'll give you a contract. If not, you won't lose your job in the store."

Fatty's cherubic countenance was wreathed with smiles. He was in the seventh heaven of joy.

"There 'll be no mornin' practice on Monday, for we play at Erinsville in the afternoon," continued Bangs. "Come to the club-house about one o'clock. Now beat it, for I've got some letters to write."

When the door had closed behind the jubilant Fatty, Bangs filled his pipe and took the whitewashed ceiling into his confidence. "It's tough, all right," he soliloquized; "but what else can I do? A couple o' weeks warming a hard bench 'll cure him o' wantin' to be a ball-player."

On the following Monday afternoon, just as the hands of Bangs's watch were pointing to the hour of one, Sweet strode into the club-house, situated under the grandstand at the local park. Those players who had arrived were donning their togs, getting ready to start for Erinsville.

Bangs escorted Fatty to a locker and told him to dig in and find a suit. Fatty dug and kept digging. A pair of spiked shoes, a blue jersey, and a pair of blue and white stockings—the latter two articles being stretchable—were found that fitted. As for choosing a shirt from those in the locker, that was impossible. There were big men on the Rockham club, but they were not built sidewise. Fatty managed to wedge his way into a pair of faded and dirty Rockham trousers, and as he tied a string about his waist in lieu of a belt, Bangs remarked:

"Don't you ever bend over too quick in those, son, or they 'll be callin' out the police."

Fatty grinned and wormed his way into his own roomy sweater. A small-sized Rockham cap, perched precariously upon the back of his head, completed his uniform, and he was ready to start for Erinsville.

Now, the six teams of the Squint County League were pretty well

bunched. As in the case of most minor leagues of its class, the Squint County teams were only a one-day attraction in the various towns of the league, as it was easier to pay travelling expenses than hotel-bills.

Fatty knew, from the morning papers, that the "Nuts" from Shelburne were leading the league by one game, while the "Bullets" from Rockham held second place in the percentage column. To-day the Nuts were in Alston, playing the Alston gang, a hard proposition holding third place. The "Irishmen" from Erinsville were supposed to be easy for Bangs's aggregation.

Following the open trolley-car that carried the players to Erinsville was another car, in which rode the young lady whose picture embellished Fatty's watch. Fatty knew she was there, and every bit of his massive body tingled with happiness; for she would see him in a uniform—a real, sure-enough, "big" league uniform, among real ball-players, even if he was sitting on the bench.

Within ten minutes after the car had rolled into Erinsville, Bangs had herded his ball-players to the ball park and upon the diamond. He was of the type of aggressive manager who desires his players to obtain every minute of the practice time allotted to them. When the regulars lined up for a few swings at the sphere, Fatty was right there, too, gripping a bat.

"Come on, kid," Captain Ryan growled at him. "Get wise to yourself an' get out an' chase 'em. You kin do your battin' durin' mornin' practice at home."

Fatty glanced at Bangs, who happened to be standing near by, but the manager did not interfere; so the fat recruit obeyed Ryan's mandate. He grabbed a glove and moved out between second and third bases, ready to show his prowess as an infielder. Balls were batted to the right of him and to the left of him and over his head, but never a hit came within his reach. Just before the bell clanged for the Rockham players to give up the field, Fatty sprinted as fast as his stubby legs would carry him toward third base and jabbed out his hand to intercept a sizzling grounder. He missed the ball, but plunged forward in a grand slide for third. The Erinsville club possessed a "skin diamond," and in the absence of grass Fatty's open mouth took in great gulps of dirt and dust. The laughing applause from the stands did not tend to decrease his humiliation as he came in to the bench, bedraggled and dusty, with little rivers of perspiration pouring down his face.

Shortly before the game commenced, Cal Carney, the umpire, came over to the Rockham bench to secure the names of Bangs's battery.

"O'Hare is catching Nash," Bangs told him. Then he added questioningly, "Like this better than collecting fares, Cal?" Before Carney had obtained his job holding the indicator, he had been a Rockham car-conductor.

"You betcha," grinned the umpire; and he strolled out before the grand-stand to announce the batteries.

After the game was under way, Fatty snuggled onto the bench beside Bangs, and from time to time he would cast shy, joyful glances toward a certain demure little lass who was seated behind the grand-stand netting. And, if the truth must be told, the young lady in question watched the Rockham bench rather more closely than she did the game.

The Bullets started right in in the first inning to make sure of a win. With a chance to be topping the percentage column by nightfall, they did not intend to have the winning or the losing of the game depend upon the necessity of a ninth-inning rally. They corralled three runs during their first turn at bat. The Irishmen promptly retaliated in their half of the inning, and with the aid of a single, a base on balls, a passed ball, and an error, sent two runs across the rubber. In the first half of the second inning the Bullets came to bat with blood in their eyes; and when the fusillade of hits had subsided, three more tallies were chalked up for Rockham. Then Nash settled down to business and pitched gilt-edged ball. The sun beat down on the diamond, and the parched throats of the players became filled with dust, that turned to mud after each trip to the water-bucket. The game dragged on, scoreless, for three more innings. The fans who had turned out to witness this contest between a tail-ender and a contender for the pennant became more interested in their cigars and in the announcements that appeared on the score-board in deep right field from time to time, telling how the game at Alston was progressing, than in the game at hand. The bulletins up to this time showed Alston had a three-run lead over the Nuts; and a three-run lead often means a game won.

In the sixth inning the spectators were temporarily aroused from their coma when Haeffner, the local catcher, singled to centre field. But the hit went for naught, for Gunn fanned, and Karp lifted an easy fly to Gordon, out in right field, making the third out. While the Bullets were driving in another run in the seventh inning, Bangs permitted Sweet to go out to the third-base coaching box. Fatty swaggered from the bench with all the nonchalance of an old-timer. On reaching the coaching box, he immediately started the usual line of conversation that he had heard many coaches direct to the pitcher through the medium of the batter.

Murray, who was covering third base for the Irishmen, twisted open one corner of his mouth and, without taking his eyes from the batter, ejaculated, "Say, Fat!"

Sweet stopped his chatter and glanced up expectantly.

"Write him a letter about it," Murray advised, still talking out of the corner of his mouth.

Fatty desisted in his attempt to "rattle" the pitcher, and devoted the

remainder of his term in the coacher's box to attempting to think up an appropriate retort to the third baseman's remark.

In the final half of the same inning the Irishmen donned their batting clothes for a time, and sent two more runners around the circuit. Bangs quickly "yanked" Nash. Although the retiring pitcher had left the bases filled, with only one man down, Ferris, who took up the task, proved equal to it, speedily fanning two batters and closing the inning.

With the rally of the Irishmen as an incentive, the Bullets came in to bat and proceeded to "go and do likewise." After they had caused the scorer to record another run in his book, Manager Kearney of the locals substituted his third pitcher of the game—and incidentally the last available substitute he possessed, unless a utility infielder or outfielder with a bandaged hand, sitting on the bench, could be counted. But the scoring stopped, and the Erinsville aggregation trotted in to their bench in the last of the eighth inning with the score seven to four against them.

The first man up, short-stop Gessel, was called out on three strikes. The third one seemed to him to have passed a little wide of the plate, and he vigorously protested.

"Oh, you crook!—you second-story worker!" yelled some one in the bleachers, glad of a chance for diversion.

"Aw, gee, Cal," he said, "that was rotten!"

"You're out," Carney repeated; and with his mask he waved the player away from the plate.

Then the third of Mrs. Fate's daughters stepped into the scene, waving with her fine Italian hand the blazing red ensign of anger.

Gessel moved out of the batter's box, still glaring at the umpire.

"Whadye think this is—the end o' the line an' it's everybody out?" he snarled.

"You get onto the bench quick," ordered Carney, "or I'll fine you." The allusion to his days as a conductor had ruffled the umpire's temper.

Gessel started for the bench and then turned back, wearing a broad grin. "Ding! ding! all aboard," mimicked the short-stop, as he pulled in the air at an imaginary bell-rope for the benefit of the crowd.

Carney's face flushed red under its coat of tan.

"Get out of the game!" he shouted at Gessel. And as Gessel backed toward the bench the umpire added, "You're fined a five-spot."

When Gessel reached the bench of the home team, a hasty conference ensued; after which Pat Kearney walked out to the plate and talked with Carney. The umpire was obdurate, and shook his head negatively. It seemed that the substitute with the bandaged hand was unavailable because of broken fingers; but Carney would not allow Gessel to return to the game in spite of Kearney's arguments and threats.

"Cut that rough stuff," commanded the umpire; "or I'll put you out of the game, an' you'll be two men short instead o' one."

Kearney gave it up and came over to the Rockham bench.

"Whadye say, Bill?" he asked Bangs. "Can you lend me a man, so 's we can finish the game?"

"I guess so," responded the Rockham manager. He glanced over the few players seated on the Rockham bench and commenced to chuckle. "Hey, Sweet!" he called to Fatty, who happened to be bending over the water-bucket. "Kearney wants you to go in at short for his team."

Fatty jumped to respond; but Kearney did not seem overpleased.

"Thanks," he growled at the chuckling Bangs; and he and Fatty went over to the Erinsville bench.

Haeffner and Gunn, catcher and second baseman respectively of the home team, went out in order, and the Irishmen trotted onto the field once more—that is, they all trotted except Fatty. A fat man waddles, and F. Sweet was no exception. He got into position between second and third bases, spit into his glove, and crouched a bit, with his hands on his knees—oblivious to all except the fact that the prettiest, sweetest girl in the world was watching him—witnessing his début as a ball-player.

Spencer, who led off in this half of the ninth, came to the bat smiling and confident. He tapped the plate with his bat, and then the ball—for a pretty two-bagger. Cuddy, who followed, gripped his bat high up, with the evident intention of bunting. The Erinsville twirler aimed one high and close in an effort to keep the batter from sacrificing; but it swerved a trifle too close, and Cuddy romped down to the initial sack, rubbing his elbow. O'Hare succeeded in dumping a slow-rolling bunt before the plate, and, although he was thrown out, Spencer and Cuddy both advanced a base. Second and third bases were occupied, and only one man was out. Fatty moved in nearer the plate and crouched, nervously alert.

Ferris, supposed to be the weakest batting pitcher in the league, stepped up to the plate and simply waited, with his bat on his shoulder. Out of five balls pitched by Judd, four missed the plate, and Ferris trotted to first, filling the bases. Gordon, who had already secured two hits, stepped into the batter's box, and a few loyal rooters for the home team prepared to leave the park, rather than witness the slaughter.

Judd wound up and sent in his curve ball. Around snapped Gordon's bat. "Crac-ck!" it connected with the ball, just before the curve broke. Past the pitcher shot the zipping grounder, and Gordon dug his spikes into the dirt and sprinted for first base. As the ash met the leather, Fatty had started toward second base, dashing wildly in the direction of the skipping ball. Several steps he ran, and then, tripping over his own feet, he plunged headlong, scraping over the dirt. As he slid, he saw the ball passing him, and grabbed desperately for it. Miraculously he clutched it and rolled over second base an instant before Ferris reached the bag.

"Here! here!" Howes was shouting, holding out his hands, with one foot touching first base.

Fatty sat up amid a cloud of dust and slammed the ball straight into the hands of the first baseman.

"Runner out! Batter out!" decided Carney, as the ball settled in Howes's glove.

Those fans who had remained in their seats acted like the wildest of wild men. They clapped, laughed, and shouted by turns. Fatty's double play was the sensation of the game. The hero of the moment scrambled up from his sitting posture and made for the Erinsville bench, futilely endeavoring to brush the dust from his soiled jersey and pants. Gunn trotted along behind him, thumping him on his broad back.

"By Jinks! you're there, kid; you're there," the second baseman was saying.

As Fatty neared the bench, the roar of applause increased in volume. "Tip your cap, boy," said the second baseman. "Take off your cap."

Fatty pulled off his battered headgear and grinned sheepishly. Again the crowd applauded, and he sought the seclusion of the bench.

Ferris started in right where he had left off and fanned the first man to face him. The next dumped an easy roller onto the diamond; but Captain Ryan did the unexpected and dropped an easy throw. Manager Kearney dropped a Texas leaguer over the infield, and two men were on. Howes waited out the pitcher, and, despite his size, received his base on balls. With only one out and the bases filled, the Rockham infielders crept in, awaiting a play at the plate. But Bunker, the next batter, relieved the tension by popping a little foul that O'Hare easily caught, and the infielders moved back.

Fatty had been crouching over the row of bats laid out before the Erinsville bench, and now he selected Kearney's pet stick and walked to the plate. His heart was pounding furiously, and there was a queer feeling about the pit of his stomach. He took a fleeting glance toward the stand, and there sat the girl—smiling. She had confidence in him, and there is said to be such a thing as telepathy. He settled his spiked feet firmly in the holes of the batter's box, and faced Ferris. The Rockham infielders were chattering away to their pitcher.

"It's all over, bo," Cuddy was saying. "This fat guy ain't a ball-player. Fan him."

Ferris raised his arms and tensed his muscles to speed over his swiftest shoot. It may have been that the sun reflected from a silver watch-charm worn by a man in the stand, or, more appropriately, from the dainty watch pinned to the waist of Fatty's fair friend. But any way, just as the ball left his fingers, a beam from Old Sol shot into Ferris's eyes, and straight up in "the groove" came the ball. Fatty put all of his weight behind one mighty swing. Straight out on a line the ball travelled, striking between the centre and left fielders and rolling toward the flag-pole far off in the limits of the outfield.

“Run! Run!” roared the crowd; and Fatty, with his eyes half closed and his pudgy fists doubled up, tore down the first base line. One base-runner crossed the plate—another—and then another. The score was tied, and Fatty came pounding up to third base. The centre-fielder had secured the ball, and was relaying it in to the second baseman, who had run out to take the throw. O’Hare waited at the plate, his big mitt ready. The player coaching at third base tried to warn Fatty, but there was no stopping him. The fat chap kept on toward the plate, speeding like a runaway engine. O’Hare extended his arms to take the throw, standing in the base line, attempting to block off the runner from the plate.

Some one shrieked, “Slide!” and Fatty dived for the plate head first. For some feet he slid on his rounded stomach, and then twisted to one side, rolling over and over. O’Hare tagged him; but a second later the catcher was bowled from his feet by the rolling mass of flesh, and the ball flew from his fingers. Over the home base Fatty rolled with the winning run.

Kearney was among the first to reach him and help him to his feet.

With an arm about Sweet’s shoulders, he started to lead the fat boy toward the Erinsville dressing-room.

“Some of the boys tell me that you have n’t signed up with Bangs yet,” said the Erinsville manager. “I’ll give you seventy-five a month if——”

A form broke in between them and jostled Kearney back a bit. It was Bangs, glaring belligerently at the manager of the Irishmen.

“I’ve got first claim on him,” Bangs was saying. “He promised to sign with me for eighty-five a month. Did n’t you?” Bangs turned to Sweet for confirmation of his statement.

“Yep,” answered Fatty absent-mindedly—he was smiling toward the stand, where sat the prettiest girl in the world.



LESSONS

BY RICHARD KIRK

WERE you ever as young as I?
 Shall I be as old as you?
 Did you have lessons and wonder why?
 Were you ever as young as I,

And much rather run or play “I spy!”
 Than do what they made you do?
 Were you ever as young as I?
 Shall I be as old as you?

ACHIEVEMENT

By Edith Lowell

THERE was once upon a time a wonderful painter, who said, "I will paint a portrait of Mankind." So he toiled day and night for many weary weeks, until at last the picture was finished. Then he went out on the high-road and placed it where all who passed might see, and sat down on the bank close by.

Soon there came an old man, bent and decrepit, yet with a marvelous light upon his countenance. He had fought his battle with the world and had found peace. He stopped before the painting and looked at it searchingly. At length he said to the artist:

"He knew the sorrows of the world; he has borne them long and patiently, but by means of them he has seen the light at the end of the road."

The painter answered him, "I think he has;" and the old man passed on.

Presently there sounded the beat of hoofs upon the road, and with a clash of arms and a snatch of song a soldier came riding along. He drew rein in front of the portrait and scanned it curiously.

"A wonderful picture; the man was brave and courageous, frank and true!" said he to the painter.

"Yes," was the reply, "he indeed was;" and the soldier rode gaily away.

A shepherd, playing a merry lay on his pipe, approached the picture.

"Ah, this man was happy! One can see the trees, the flowers, the birds, the little brooks and green fields, even if they are not upon the canvas." And he too went merrily on his way, playing his pipe.

Next came a youth and a maid, happy in each other's company, singing of springtime and of love. Stopping before the portrait, they regarded it earnestly. "He loved," sighed the youth, and they looked into each other's eyes. Then off they went, hand in hand, turning once more to fling a backward glance at the masterpiece.

At length there came a ragged wanderer who skulked along as if fearful of being seen. The watcher withdrew into the bushes that screened the highway, but as the man stood a moment before the painting, the artist heard him mutter:

"He struggled against temptation, but—he overcame!"

The outcast gazed yet a moment longer, then a new look came into his face, a look of determination and fresh courage, and forthwith he

straightened his shoulders, lifted his head, and marched boldly down the high-road.

The painter, coming forth from his hiding-place, looked searchingly at his work, and said:

“It is as it should be. I have painted Mankind. The good see in it their own virtues, their thoughts are mirrored there; and the weak, though seeing struggle pictured on the canvas, take courage from the victorious light, and so pass on to renew the battle.”



THE PRICE

BY CARLOTTA PERRY

YOU would be a great artist? Can you make
 A lyre of your own aching heart-strings, and,
 Striking it with a careful, critic hand,
 Out of the chords a deathless music wake?

Or can you take the keen-edged blade of Pain,
 And from your quivering soul, with its dire aid,
 Studying meanwhile each stroke as it is made,
 Chisel a statue for Art's sacred fane?

Or can you in your heart's blood bravely dip
 Your brush, and paint a picture that will bring—
 The while it sets the dull world wondering—
 The approving smile to Art's impartial lip?

Can you pour sweet from bitter? Can you, whirled
 By tempest, guide a storm-tossed bark to calm?
 Can you go starving for Love's blessed alm,
 Yet of your very famine feed a world?

You cannot? 'T is too great a price to pay?
 You are too weak? Ay, 't is a fearful price.
 If you one moment count it sacrifice,
 You are not called to greatness; go your way

And live like other women, and rejoice
 In your own path; it may be better so.
 I do not say, but this full well I know:
 God gives unto His chosen ones no choice.

THE SWEETNESS OF THE LIGHT

By Arthur Leeds

“**T**RULY the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.” For the thousandth time, Erbsloeh found himself repeating the words that had been running through his mind persistently ever since the accident at the foundry.

The text had taken on a new and, to him, direful meaning. Suppose, only suppose, he *should* go blind!

The thought chilled his heart; numbed his brain; petrified his very soul. He knew now what it was, this fear, a thousand times more terrible than any certain, inevitable catastrophe. It was the obsession of doubt, the overhanging shadow of what *might* happen.

Once, Erbsloeh had ridiculed a friend of his because the man affirmed his conviction that he had only a few months to live, basing his assertion on a prophecy, made to him when a boy by a gypsy fortune-teller, that he would die in the year following that in which he told Erbsloeh of the Romany's prediction. Erbsloeh had laughed at, even derided, the man, because of his superstitious fear that he was marked for death inside of a year.

Now it was *his* turn to know apprehension. He understood something of the man's one-time dread, the terrible oppression that had made him pause at his work and stare blankly at the floor, a strange, almost haunted look in his eyes.

Erbsloeh felt as if some one had looked him in the face and called him a coward, a weakling. He tried to shake it off, but the shadow still remained.

Suddenly he pushed back his chair from the little table and listened. He had only half finished his frugal meal, but the familiar air, floating up to him from the street-organ on the pavement below, rising above the rattle of home-going wagons and automobiles, of ever-passing “L” trains, and of plodding, work-weary pedestrians from the factories and shops, arrested his attention; and, getting up, he crossed to the open window and looked out.

He had not worked for over two weeks, in obedience to the doctor's strict orders; yet he was tired, weary in body and mind. As he listened, he leaned heavily against the window-frame, his chin almost touching

his breast, his knees sagging forward and braced against the wall, his hands clasped weakly and lying on the sill of the window. Through the heavy green glasses he wore, the city, bathed in the glow of sunset, seemed to be of the same color everywhere. To the west, seen up the cross-street, a greenish-yellow disc showed. Hazy green smoke rose from the greenish-black chimneys on houses, shops, factories, of similar hue, toward a heaven of the same eye-soothing yet monotonous color.

He knew that, to other eyes, the sky was a very blaze of variegated color. He longed to remove the glasses and see it as they did. Then he remembered the physician's warning, and his customary control of himself returned.

For a second the music ceased; then the tune was no longer "*Die Wacht am Rhein*." It had changed to one of the popular rag-time songs of the day. Yet it was catchy and musical; and music, it seemed to Erbsloeh, was part of his very life—as necessary as the food lying on the table.

As he stood there, the question came to him, Why had *he* never been taught to play an instrument—he, whose whole soul was filled with a passionate love of music, of harmony? If only, now, he could pick up a violin, as Carl could, and draw from it the sweet, tender old melodies of the Fatherland; if he could but play softly to himself the old love songs that his wife used to sing to him as that same unchanging sun dipped behind the hills and twilight came down over the Rhine, over the old town, and its last rays fell on the windows of the university buildings and the majestic old palace on the hillside!

"*Heidelberg! Alt Heidelberg!*"

His voice trembled, and behind the green glasses there rose warm, unrestrained tears. The firm, quiet mouth was drawn down, and his teeth bit into his upper lip. He clutched the sill of the window and drew himself erect. This was weakness!

He half turned from the window as he recognized the doctor's footsteps ascending the stairs.

The physician entered, smiling and kindly-looking. "I come late, *mein freund*; but I am, at present, a very busy man. New York is a bad place for the very young and the very old of the poor in the hot weather. We doctors—the Board of Health—we are all kept busy; but the death-rate grows as the temperature rises." He laid a letter on the table. "Mrs. Krell was about to bring this up to you; I saved her the trouble. You will read it, please—afterwards? I am rather late now with my other calls."

During the whole of the doctor's more than ordinarily careful examination, Erbsloeh kept silent, except to answer, simply and directly, his physician's questions. At last the doctor replaced the green glasses, and, after giving his patient a few simple orders, was about to leave.

As he turned towards the door, Erbsloeh rose quickly and laid a detaining hand on his arm.

"Doctor," he said quietly but firmly, "I want you to—you *must* be plain with me. You come to-day; you go away. You say, do so-and-so; and I do it, just as you direct. It is well for me to do as you order, if I am to be cured. But, Doctor, *am I to be cured?* I must, I *will*, know!

"Listen! In Germany—in Berlin—there is my boy, Carl. My wife—you know—she is dead. Carl is all I have left to live for—it is for him, his welfare, his future, that I have worked always since—she died. Then, in the foundry, comes this accident; my eyes are injured. But—you can tell; I can only guess—*how badly?* Will the good sight come back to me and allow me to provide for my boy?"

The physician raised his hand in soothing protest, but Erbsloeh continued:

"Do you not understand? It is not my eyes for which I care. The light is sweet; sight is a precious thing, yet the blind"—he trembled ever so slightly as he spoke the last word—"they are always provided for, somehow. And I am growing old; a few years in darkness would not be so terrible—if I were alone. But there is my boy; he studies there in Berlin. He is young; he has his future to look to. He must have his chance, Doctor, my boy, my Carl!

"I love music, yet I could never play; but Carl—*ach, Gott!* Carl makes the violin sing the words that my heart throbs to. For him I must work another year—perhaps two. But let him fulfil his ambition, and I am satisfied, content—let come what may. So, I ask you, my eyes—will they soon be strong enough to let me go on earning for my boy? It will be a week, perhaps—not longer?"

The doctor had been studying the old man's face ever since Erbsloeh commenced his impassioned appeal. He, too, was a German; sympathy for his fellow-countryman overwhelmed him. He understood the lingering doubt that was racking the father's brain; and the tragic note in the inquiry touched his heart as Erbsloeh continued:

"I am a coward. It is of more danger than you have allowed me to know, yes? Perhaps it will mean—in the end—that I shall lose my sight? *Ach!* it may be so!" as he caught the expression on the physician's face. "Then, if it is to be, when *will* it come? How much longer have I to work? Tell me—for Carl's sake!"

The doctor laid down his medical case, which he had been holding, ready to leave. Grasping Erbsloeh's hand in one of his, he placed the other, with almost brotherly gentleness and affection, on the old man's shoulder.

"*Mein freund,*" he said, very firmly yet very softly, the sympathy he felt expressed in his every look and word, "I will tell you all that

I can. It is right that you should know; but I fear the knowledge will only make it harder for you.

"Yesterday—at any rate, when I was last here—I might have hesitated to tell you what I now do, because then I was hoping that I myself might be able to effect a cure. To-day I see how little I can do—how helpless I am.

"I tell you, then, plainly but sorrowfully, that your sight is doomed—unless the services of just one man that I know of can be procured. He *may* save your eyes; but so far as I know—and I know of many—he alone can. *Without* his aid, in less than two months, you will have gone blind forever."

Ersbloeh had been seated beside the table, his hand still grasping the physician's. Back of the dark green glasses, the doctor saw the haggard face paling as he was concluding his statement.

At the last words, the old German rose to his feet, seeming to brace himself as if in expectation of a still greater shock. As was his habit when in trouble or deep thought, he stood, hands clasped tightly together, his mouth hard and straight, rocking himself nervously, very slowly, from side to side.

The doctor waited patiently, his deep commiseration apparent in the expression with which he regarded his patient. This he realized: In all the world, there was one thing—one being—which made life, to Ersbloeh, worth the living. Carl *was* life to his father. Anything happening that might threaten the boy's future, his career as a violinist, would be, to the old man, the absolute pinnacle of heaped-up disaster.

"This—this specialist of whom you speak," Ersbloeh presently asked in what was almost a whisper, "he is to be consulted—where?"

"It seems almost jesting with you to say it," was the reply, "and *Gott* knows I am far from jesting at present. I realize, only too well, how out of the question such aid would seem to be, in your case—how impossible it is for you to procure it. My own experience has been, I may say, wide; and in the time that I have been practising I have come in contact with many celebrated eye-specialists, both in this country and in Europe. I repeat, there is but one, to the very best of my knowledge, who *might* be capable of curing the peculiar malady which is now threatening your sight as a result of the accident in which your eyes were injured. His name is Victor Borchard; he lives at Number 47, Boulevard Malesherbes, Paris."

"Paris!" Ersbloeh faced the physician and grasped him by the arm. "Paris! As well say St. Petersburg or Yokohama! I could hardly afford to go to Chicago, let alone to Europe! And this famous doctor, his charges would be far greater than any but the very wealthy could meet. *Ach*, it is not you, but Fate, *mein Herr* Doctor, that jests with me. We who are poor, we are the playthings of Fate for all time. For

money, the greatest physician will come from the other side of the world. Without money—*ach*, why talk? I—I am without money.

“But you—I am grateful to you, Doctor, for your sympathy, as well as for your attention, your care. To-morrow you shall be paid the balance of what I owe you—as soon as I can get it from the bank. There will be about forty dollars left. And Carl—poor little Carl!”

“*Mein freund*,” the other man said softly, compassionately, “I am going now. To-morrow I will call again—to see and talk with you. The money—I will take no more from you. Rest now; get a good sleep if you can. Remember, there is hope while life lasts.”

A clasp of the hand, a brief good-night, and he was gone. Erbsloeh was alone.

It was dark now. Over Manhattan hung a glorious full moon. Its rays, however, failed to enter the little window, just as the cheer it brought to others failed to enter Erbsloeh's almost bursting heart. Winter was coming; the months did slip by so! Out in the country, they would be welcoming the harvest moon—singing to it and working beneath it. Work! He could not work! He was useless, destroyed, a broken thing, unable to provide for himself, unable to provide for his boy. Two months, the doctor had said! Perhaps sooner. Possibly only a month, and then the brightest moon and the brightest sun would be unable to lighten his darkness! What would he not give, now, if only he had been ten feet farther from that terrible—that damnable molten metal when it had splashed toward him.

To be able to *see*! To see the light, the glorious, God-given light: that one idea held over all others. Only not to be in the dark! While he *could*, he *must* have light. The darkness was choking him—crushing him.

He stumbled over to the match-holder, pulled out six or eight matches in his eagerness, then turned to the table and lit the lamp. As he did so, his eyes fell on the letter the doctor had laid there. He picked it up, and, holding it close to the lamp, bent over, scrutinizing it through the green glasses.

It was postmarked Wieblingen. He had a half-brother in Wieblingen, a few miles from Heidelberg, the only relative remaining in the Fatherland. Opening it, he read, slowly, painfully, disregarding caution and straining his eyes to make it out:

... bequeathing you the sum of two thousand dollars. His unfortunate losses of late probably account for the fact that his entire fortune amounted to only about fourteen thousand dollars, all of the balance being left to his wife.

Two thousand dollars! Two million, just then, could not have seemed much more!

He picked his way through the attorney's communication again. Could it be true? Or were his eyes, already turning traitors, cruelly tricking him? The second laborious reading dispelled the doubt in his mind.

Two thousand dollars! It would take him to France, to Paris. He could visit this specialist of whom Dr. Lentz had spoken. He could pay him his price, his full fee, surely. He could be cured—*perhaps!*

Only—*perhaps!* At the thought, an icy hand seemed suddenly to grip his heart. He could go to Paris, yes. He could go prepared to pay the specialist his price. But *could* he, even though he were able to take with him a million dollars, be sure of returning with his fully, permanently restored sight?

What if the operation failed! That was the terrifying possibility. Unless, by his visit to Paris, he could save his sight, the trip would be worse than useless. It would mean that, returning either blind or rapidly *going* blind, the money would be wasted utterly—thrown away.

With his sight gone, his means of making a livelihood would be gone, too. Then, without money, what would become of him? What would become of Carl?

“Carl! *Ach*, Carl, *mein* baby, I had forgotten you!” he cried aloud, in sudden anguish of startled recollection. “Wretched, selfish old man! It is of myself that I think! Who will provide for you when I am unable to? This money *might* make well my eyes; but if the great doctor should fail——!”

He crossed to a small shelf on the other side of the room, and took down a photograph. He could not see the face, but, as the tears rose to the affected eyes, he kissed it again and again.

“Did I forget, *mein* boy? *Ach*, yes! I was selfish, humanly selfish. And now am I to choose? The great doctor may fail to cure me, Carl, but you, *you*, will not fail to care for me, always.”

He paused. The terrific solemnity of the problem appalled him. To accept the chance—and to lose! To have the specialist fail! *All* would be lost.

On the other hand, this money would enable Carl to complete his studies; his success would be assured. For himself, the boy would make a great name; for his father, fame and fortune growing, he would make a home of comfort, peace, and loving happiness. *He* had lived for Carl; now Carl would live and work for him.

Then there rose in his mind the words from Ecclesiastes: “Truly the light is sweet——”

“It is true; the light *is* sweet. But it is better—the other way. What matter a few years in the dark? I could not earn, even if I could save my sight, half enough to do for him what I can do—the other way. Carl shall have his chance! The light *is* sweet, but there is consolation

in the darkness sometimes. Carl will be the father now; I am as a child—a child who cannot see the way and must be led. To-morrow I will make arrangements to transfer the money to him in Berlin. He shall not know that what I send him is all I have until I tell him—when he cannot interfere with my plan. So, *mein Carl*”—laying the picture on the table—“I have chosen!”

He turned and looked out across the acres of huddled buildings and vaguely discernible, star-like lights. Then he blew out the lamp and seated himself in the old rocker with his back to the window.



THE PRICELESS BOON

{ BY STUART STERNE

YES, I am old and poor, sweet child, the evening shadows fall,—
The hope and joy and light of youth have faded, one and all!

And dreams of love?—Thou makest me smile! Ah, long and long ago.
Those at whose sight my heart leaped high were laid the earth below!

And those who live? Well, well, no more!—’T is best, mayhap, alone,
What though no spot in God’s fair world I ever called my own,

But still unwearied day by day must be content to gain
Sufficient for my lonely needs, by toil of hand and brain?

All, all for which my foolish heart most loud and sorely cried,
God’s infinite wisdom (praise His name!) for aye and aye denied!

Yet am I blest,—thou think’st it strange?—for on my scanty board
There gleams a draught trod only from the wine-press of the Lord.

Tears must we yield, and sweat, and blood, most true, ere it be won,
But yet at last it gushes forth, more golden than the sun,

So passing fragrant, rich, and sweet, a single drop thereof
Gives fuller joy than happiness, more deep content than love!

Thou canst not guess the priceless boon?—Oh, child, the peace untold
That passeth understanding, God gave me to have and hold!



WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC



THE PRODUCTION OF PRESIDENTS

BY hook or by crook, we manage to keep a President in the White House. But if we could rightly estimate the time and money and vital energy sacrificed by each citizen in accomplishing this feat, especially since the injection of preferential primaries; if we could count the cost of the disturbance of business, of the anxiety, the excitement, the disappointment, and now and then the general upset of everything, as a regular four-yearly occurrence, we should find the tax upon the public assuming serious proportions.

The evils of the present system are growing constantly more apparent to every one. Several remedies were discussed in the Senate during the last Congress, and the subject will come up again next session. A bill was passed making the presidential term six years, with ineligibility to reelection; but when it reached the House it died for want of exercise. It was better so, for no one in the Senate wanted the bill exactly as it passed. It would have reduced the burden and disruption, but out of all proportion would be the result if, in some hysteria, the wrong man slipped into the office.

To suggest to our solons a presidency by commission would be to see them laugh. And at first thought it is rather startling—even a little chimerical. But on second thought there are advantages to be derived which, though destructive to the designs of politicians, might prove of inestimable value to the nation. And, all things considered, there is precious little, if anything, to be lost.

Corporations are combinations of individuals working together, to the

end that if one dies another takes his place; resulting in a body without death and a brain without decline. One man may be changed at any time, but the policy and the energy continue unimpaired. Municipal government by commission is a plan with many advocates which is rapidly increasing its hold upon public favor. The District of Columbia and one hundred and seventy-three cities have adopted it with most satisfying results. Among its advantages is the same immortality and freedom from sudden upheaval which is secured by the corporation. Or suppose, for example, that every time a commander-in-chief of the army or navy retired, all of the officers retired with him and the entire policy and system were liable to be changed. Would it not be fatal to the entire stability of the organization?

The suggestion of a presidential commission naturally presents a picture of the local organizations already in operation, with the immediate objection that if applied to the nation it would be cumbersome; slow to act and slow to respond to public sentiment. Naturally, this would be fatal. But the principle might be preserved with such different details as to obviate the objections, while securing the advantages and relieving us of the grave disadvantages of the present system.

Let us imagine a plan like this: The President and the Vice-President and the ten cabinet officers are all elected by the people. Together they form a presidential commission. The entire country is divided into six sections—Presidential Districts. Two commissioners are residents of and elected from each district. Each district elects one commissioner every six years. Only one-sixth of the country has a presidential election in any one year.

Each member of the commission serves for twelve years. The dean of the commission is the actual President of the United States through his final year of service. His immediate successor serves for that year as Vice-President. The rest of the commissioners are the heads of the various departments, serving precisely as the cabinet officers serve to-day. There would be only this difference: the cabinet would represent the people, being elected by the people. In performing the functions of their offices, they would be fitting themselves for further service. And in the last analysis the President should be subservient to a two-thirds vote of the cabinet.

Each President would thus bring to the office the experience of ten years at the head of departments and one year as Vice-President. The fact that his tenure would be brief would be no detriment. The governors of many states serve but a single year—without past service and experience. During the recent discussion of the subject in the Senate, it was admitted that but for the burden of elections it would be better to reduce rather than extend the presidential term. Each President would bring to the office the inspiration of constant competition instead of

partisan policies. His ambition would be to carry out to the best of his ability the policies of the nation which he himself had helped to establish through his long term of office.

The presidency would thus be almost as far removed from politics as a throne. The country would never again be torn by factional fights in a national election, or convulsed by the sudden overturn of prevailing policies, due to some temporary agitation. The result would inevitably be a steady progress and constant growth along lines which made for the best good of the entire country.

Important officials and diplomatic representatives would secure their posts through merit, and hold them according to the ability displayed in the service. We should neither have to sacrifice valuable officers nor find government business halted all along the line because a change in administration changed the official personnel. We should have a perpetual administration in which every portion of the country would be represented according to its choice, where principle and policy would necessarily replace partisanship.

Business would not only be stable at home, but the dignity, integrity, and influence of the nation would be immeasurably enhanced abroad, through the establishment of a stable organization. It would obliterate the danger which Alexander Hamilton foresaw, and which we have recently come to realize as a grave handicap—the lack of stability of organization. Such stability was never more important to us than to-day, when the tendency of the people is to abrogate their individual rights under the Constitution, as the sovereign power of the nation, surrendering every function of government to the fluctuating will of any temporary majority inspired by the passions of the moment.

But even better than this can be secured for the people through a presidency by commission. This commission as a whole might well be invested with more initiative power over Congress than it would be safe to place in the hands of one man who also holds the referendum power of veto. The commission might be required to consider propositions presented by direct vote of the people, and empowered to insist upon legislation. This would give to the people a representation much more sensitive to the public will and more responsive than exists to-day, obliterating the most prominent objection.

It would materially relieve us of the burden of politics. It would relieve us of the danger which always lurks in partisan domination. It would relieve us of the damage of fluctuating policies. It would halt the present trend toward anarchy. It would provide the people with the only method of direct legislation which is conceivable and not chaos; while it retained for us the inestimable restraints of the Constitution and strengthened that vital necessity to a successful republic—a representative government.

WILLARD FRENCH

THE HOUSEWORK CURE

FATHER VAUGHAN, the noted London clergyman, shocked a fashionable congregation in the West End some time ago when he bade neurotic, dissatisfied women take to the wash-tub as a cure for nerves. Since then a number of noted physicians have endorsed the idea, and actually prescribed a daily series of the ordinary tasks of home for women who have never known what it is to have to wait upon themselves.

Hutchinson ventured a contrary opinion in one of his recent brilliant-but-not-so articles, to the effect that housework aged and broke down women—an edict which was immensely popular with the lazy ones. But the fact is, if the simple acts of sweeping, dusting, bed-making, and brushing up had been planned by a physical culturist, they could not be better adapted to keep women healthy, happy, and free from the morbid ailments that come under the head of nervousness—an affliction that will disappear from the list one of these days, let us hope, as completely as has hysteria, the complaint of our fashionable grandmothers.

Women who, in order to escape the trials and expense of keeping bad servants, have dismissed them and taken up the care of their homes on a simpler scale, have been surprised how the mind is rested and the body made supple by the easy exercise and concentration called for in preparing the foods that are to be cooked and served for the next meal.

Of course, housework, to be done with benefit and without wear, must be done neatly, scientifically, and æsthetically. It must be rid of all the stigma that through ignorance has been allowed to attach itself to the duties of housekeeping, a false and degrading rating that reflects on the intelligence of the sex feminine and drives our native-born girls into stuffy shops and factories to work like slaves over dangerous machines, rather than enter kitchens of well-provided homes.

The girls who nowadays are given a course in domestic science as well as Latin and French learn how interesting and beautiful the work of the home becomes when handled intelligently and in the glad spirit that dignifies all labor cheerfully done. The artistry of cleanliness is one of the most exquisite things in the world, despite the dusty studios of the velvet-jacketed Futurists and professional table-d'hôte's.

And now a new prophet has arisen who claims that New Thought can be applied to the work of the home in such a way that it is turned into a veritable joy exercise. This new, up-in-the-air view of housework is simply the carrying of an uplifting, helpful spirit, idealizing the various actions of the day, putting thoughts of affection, sustenance, strength, and nourishment into breakfast-getting, of power, balance, fresh air, rest, and helpful sleep into bed-making, and so on. Proceeding on this programme, the body moves rhythmically and gracefully, bends,

reaches, turns, much with the swerve of the dancer—the modern dancer who puts beautiful thoughts into every motion so perfectly that she presents the flowers of the garden, the birds, and the trees to her auditors. Delsarte was the father of it all, of course, but we only half digested his doctrine. Applied to home-service, the theories ennoble and dignify work which has long ranked as drudgery.

When intelligent and cultured women begin to see the æsthetic side of housework and feel the feminine thrill which reminds them that it is their part of the big scheme to make the temple beautiful, much will result which will render the appliances of this form of labor more sensible and better adapted to the purposes intended. Much has been done, of course, in the past decade, and one of the pleasant facts is that men have no sooner mastered the sciences than they have proceeded to make woman's work lighter. We have lifts and chutes, air-cleaners, electric stoves, and fireless cookers—all the wonders of the century. When we have the perfect kitchen presided over by the æsthetic, happy, antiseptically-gowned goddess of the home, we will have the perfect woman as well.

KATE MASTERSON

A CONTRAST

A CONTRAST—and its chief cause—is shown by the cases of Preston, Pennsylvania, and Wellsville, Kansas. The Pennsylvania town is said to be the “wickedest in America.” Four hundred and twenty-five of its five hundred inhabitants drink whiskey, and four hundred and fifteen of the four hundred and twenty-five are said to get drunk regularly. Wellsville, the Kansas town, forty-eight miles from Kansas City, is forty-four years old, has a population of seven hundred and fifty, and has never had a saloon in its history. It has never had a case of rape or of murder; a pauper, a thief, or a lawyer. Of course its inhabitants are not all saints, but they have no pool-rooms and no bawdy-houses. There is a twenty-five-thousand-dollar school-house, set down on a sixty-acre playground. There are brick and cement sidewalks, and brilliant street-lights at all crossings. Everybody in town works hard except the town-marshal. Once an agent for a mail-order liquor house visited Wellsville, but before he had booked any orders fifteen feminists, armed with horse-whips, marched to his hotel—and the salesman departed minus his sample-case.

Would you rather buy real estate in Preston, Pennsylvania, or in Wellsville? Would you rather bring up a family in the “wickedest town in America,” or in the Kansas community?

RENÉ LAIDLAW

LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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THE ROSE-GARDEN HUSBAND

BY

MARGARET WIDDEMER

CHAPTER I

THE Liberry Teacher checked a small wriggle of purest weariness, and sat brightly up in her place, with a furtive glance around to see if the children had noticed. It was four o'clock of a Saturday, a time of day and week when the whole library staff wishes devoutly that it had taken up school-teaching or hack-driving or scrubbing by the day, or anything that would give it the rest of the world's Saturday afternoon off.

She was not officially entitled the Liberry Teacher. Her description on the pay-roll ran: Assistant Librarian of the Children's Department, Greenway Branch of the City Public Library. But Liberry Teacher was what the children called her, and she saw scarcely anybody but the children six days of the week, fifty-one weeks a year. Grown-up people, when she came across them, called her Miss Braithwaite. Her real name, that nobody at all ever called her by, was Phyllis Narcissa. The Liberry Teacher was quite willing to have a real name like that out of sight. She had a sense of fitness, and that sort of name belonged back in a New England parsonage garden full of roses, with a pink cotton frock and the days before she was eighteen; not in a dusty city library, worn

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by a twenty-five-year-old person with reading-glasses and a woollen shirtwaist!

Not that the Liberry Teacher did n't like her position. She had held it for a whole year now. Before that she had been in the Cataloguing, where it hurts your eyes, but you can sit down; and before that in the Circulation, where it hurts your feet, but you see lots of things to amuse you. She had started in at eighteen years and thirty dollars a month. Now she was twenty-five, and she got all of fifty-five dollars. She ought to have been a very happy Liberry Teacher, and she was, usually. Indeed, when the children wanted her and could n't find her they always demanded "the one that laughs." But at four o'clock of a wet Saturday afternoon, in a badly ventilated, badly lighted basement library-room full of damp, unwashed little foreign children, even the most cheerful Liberry Teacher may be forgiven for having thoughts that are tired and cross and restless.

She watched, with brazen indifference, Giovanni and Liberata Bruno pawing the colored Bird Book that was supposed to be looked at only under supervision; and the distant sounds of conflict caused by Jimmy Hoolan's desire to get the wreck of the last surviving Alger book from John Zanowski moved her not a whit. She was wishing—wishing hard and vengefully, which is always a risky thing to do, for you never know when the Destinies may hear you. She was wishing, with the detailed and careful accuracy one learns in library work, for a garden, a sum of money, and a husband; but principally a garden. This is why:

That day, as she was coming back from her long-deferred, twenty-minute dairy-lunch, she had charged, umbrella down, almost full into a pretty lady getting out of a shiny gray limousine. An unnecessarily pretty lady, all furs and fluffles and veils and perfumes and waved hair! And each of her white-gloved hands held tight to a pretty, picture-book child who was wriggling with wild excitement. They were heading, all three, under the awning that crossed the street, for the matinée of a fairy-play. The Liberry Teacher smiled at the children with accustomed good-will, and lowered her umbrella while she swerved to let the group pass. The mother smiled back, a smile that changed, as the Liberry Teacher passed, to puzzled remembrance. The gay little family went on into the theatre, and Phyllis hurried back to her work, trying to think who the pretty lady could have been, to seem almost to remember her. The solution had not come till she was pulling off her rain-coat in the dark little cloak-room.

"Eva Atkinson!" she exclaimed.

Eva Atkinson! If it had been anybody else but *Eva*!

Back in the little leisurely, wind-blown New England town where her father had been the minister—oh, what ages and ages ago it seemed!—Eva Atkinson had been the principal grocer's daughter, not so very

pretty, not so very clever, and about six years older than Phyllis Braithwaite. She remembered, as she tried to arrange her damp hair, that somebody had written her, once, that Eva had married and come to the city to live. And this had been Eva—radiantly complexioned, wonderfully groomed, beautifully gowned—looking twenty-four, perhaps, at most—with a car, and pretty, clean children, and *heaps* of money!

The Liberry Teacher took only a hasty glance at herself in the small greenish mirror, before she dashed down to her basement again, hurried along by her usual panic-stricken ten-minutes-late feeling. But that one glance had been altogether too many for her peace of mind, supposing her to have had any before.

What irritated her most was—she entertained the thought with a whimsical consciousness of its impertinent vanity—that she had so much more raw material to do with than Eva, and—the world had n't given her a chance to do anything with it! The face in the green glass—she gave a little cry of anger as she thought of it now, two hours later.

“I looked liked a battered bisque doll!” she said crossly.

And it must be worse now, because between two and four there had been many little sticky fingers pulling at her sleeves and skirt, and one just has to cuddle dear little library children, even when they're not extra clean; and when Vera Aronsohn burst into tears on the Liberry Teacher's shoulder because her pet fairy-book was missing, she had caught several strands of the Teacher's yellow hair in her anguish, to the detriment of the hair's arrangement. It was heavy, straight hair, and it would have been honey-colored, only that it was tarnished by lack of the constant brushing and sunning which blonde hair must have to stay its best self. The Liberry Teacher's skin, too, that should have been a living rose-and-cream, was dulled by lack of outdoor life, and of time and money to pet it with creams and powders; dulled, perhaps, a little, too, by the very stupid things to eat one gets at a boarding-house and a dairy-lunch. Some of the girls did cooking over the library gas-range, but the Liberry Teacher's hours were so arranged that she had not time. As for her eyes, you can't keep eyes as wide and blue and luminous as they were back in the New England country, when they have been doing close work in a bad light for years. And the Liberry Teacher's eyes had been so long and wondering and blue when she was Phyllis, back at home—and the cataloguing had made the lids heavy, and dragged a hateful little wrinkle between the straight brown brows! The eyes filled now with indignant self-sympathy. The Liberry Teacher laughed a little. The idea of eyes crying about themselves was funny, somehow.

“Direct from producer to consumer!” she said half-aloud.

“Teacher! I want a liberry called ‘Bride of Lemon Hill,’” demanded a small citizen. “The school-teacher, she says I must to have it!”

She thought a moment, but she had to search the pinned-up list of

required reading for schools for at least three minutes before she bestowed "The Bride of Lammermoor" on a thirteen-year-old daughter of Hungary.

"This is it, is n't it, honey?" she said with the flashing smile her children adored her for.

"Yes, ma'am, thank you, Teacher," said the thirteen-year-old, and went off to a corner, where she sat till closing-time, entranced over her own happy choice, "The Adventures of Peter Rabbit," with colored pictures dotting it satisfactorily. The Liberry Teacher knew that she ought to go over and hypnotize the child into reading something leading more directly to Browning and Strindberg, but she did n't.

"Poor little wop!" she thought unacademically. "Let her be happy in her own way!" And she herself went on being unhappy in *her* own way. "A battered bisque doll!" she said to herself again, bitterly.

But she was wrong. She looked more like a bisque figurine, slim and clear-cut, and a little neglected, perhaps, by its owners—and most incongruously covered with modern working-clothes instead of the close draperies that belonged to it; but needing only a touch or so to be as good as ever.

"And Eva was never as attractive as I was!" her thoughts went on. "Oh, I'm sick of elevating the public! I'm sick of working hard fifty-one weeks out of fifty-two for board and lodging and shirtwaists, and the occasional society of a few other people that don't get any more out of life than I do! I wish—I wish I had a lot of money, and a rose-garden, and a *husband!*"

The Liberry Teacher was aghast at herself. She had n't meant to wish that so hard. She jumped up and dashed across the room and began frantically to shelf-read books, explaining meanwhile with most violent mental emphasis to the listening Destinies:

"I did n't—I did n't mean a *real* husband. It is n't that I want to be married, like an old maid, or a Duchess novel. I just want all the lovely things Eva has, or any girl has that *marries* them—without any trouble. I want time to keep pretty, and a chance to make friends, and lovely frocks with lots of lace, and just months and months and months when I never have to do anything by the clock—and a garden!"

This last idea was dangerous. It is n't a good thing to think of rose-gardens in a stuffy city library o' Saturdays, especially when you were brought up with a garden as one of the commonest necessities of life, and most especially when you are tired almost to the crying-point with a week's hard work, with all the week's big sisters back of it dragging on you, and all its little sisters in front of it worrying you—and time not up till six. But the Liberry Teacher went on blindly straightening shelves and thinking about that rose-garden, with a file of manicurists and masseuses and French maids and messenger-boys with boxes banked

soothingly behind every bush, till the thought became too beautiful to dally with.

"I'd marry *anything* that would give me rest and a rose-garden!" said the Liberry Teacher defiantly to the Destinies. "*Anything*—so long as it was a gentleman—and did n't scold me—and—and I did n't have to associate with him!" her New England maidenliness added in haste. Then she shook herself and laughed a little, and collected some of the most uproarious of her flock, to whom she began telling stories to keep them quiet. She was very clever at story-telling.

But, "Done!" the Destinies had replied quietly. "We'll send our messenger over right away!"

It was not their fault if the Liberry Teacher could not hear.

CHAPTER II

HE did not look in the least like a messenger of Fate.

"Teacher!" hissed Isaac Rabinowitz, interrupting at a highly-keyed part of her narrative. "Teacher! There's a guy wants to speak to you!"

"Aw, shut-tup!" chorused his indignant schoolmates. "Can't you see Teacher's tellin' a story? Go chase yerself! Go do a tango roun' de block!"

Isaac received these and several similar suggestions with the calm poise of his race.

"Here's de guy," was all he vouchsafed before he went back to the unsocial corner where, afternoon by faithful afternoon, he read a fat three-volume life of Alexander Hamilton.

The Liberry Teacher looked up and smiled a bright greeting to the gray-haired, elderly gentleman who stood, a little uncertainly, at the door of the Children's Room. He smiled and nodded in return.

"Just a minute," said the Liberry Teacher pleadingly.

The elderly gentleman nodded again, and crossed to Isaac and his ponderous volume, and began to talk to him with a benign lack of haste. The Teacher hastened a little with the Merry Adventures of Robin Hood, and felt more cheerful. She always liked seeing either Mr. De Guenther or his wife. They were so leisurely and trim and gentle-spoken that she had picked out both of them as people-you'd-like-if-you-got-the-chance, long ago when she was a timorous substitute behind the big circular charging-desk. Then she had waited on them, and identified them by their cards as really belonging together, and felt a pleased little quiver of joy when she discovered him in the city Who's Who. Since then she had come to know them both very well. She often chose books for Mrs. De Guenther when she was at home with colds, and once she had found Mr. De Guenther's spectacles, where he had left them, between the pages of the Pri-Zuz volume of the encyclopedia, and mailed them to him. When

she had vanished from sight, for awhile, into the nunnery-promotion of the Cataloguing Room, they had remembered her, and asked her to Sunday night dinner a couple of times. Now that she was out in the light of partial day again in the Children's Room, she had run across them both often on her errands upstairs. He was a lawyer, she knew from gossip and Who's Who, and they lived in a great, handsome old house that was being crowded by the business district. She had always thought that if she were a Theosophist she would plan to have them for an uncle and aunt in her next incarnation. But this was the first time either of them had come all the way down the ladder-like stairs from the circulation department, especially to see her, since last October.

The Liberry Teacher finished her story with an expedition that whisked poor Robin Hood out of his brook so fast the children scarcely grasped what had happened, and went across to Mr. De Guenther as swiftly as if she were dashing towards a bad boy to expel him.

"I do hope you want to see me," she said brightly.

Mr. De Guenther rose neatly from his seat beside the rather bored Isaac Rabinowitz.

"In the words of our young friend here," he admitted in the amiably precise voice which matched so accurately his beautifully precise movements and immaculate spats, "I am the guy."

She giggled irrepressibly. Things looked brighter for seeing him. "Did you know that was slang?" she asked.

"I did not, I am sorry to say," said Mr. De Guenther. "We have not seen much of you lately, Mrs. De Guenther and I."

The Liberry Teacher pranced with invisible impatience over this careful and polite conversational opening. He had come down here on purpose to see her—there must be something going to happen! Nobody ever wanted *something*—any kind of a something—to happen more than the Liberry Teacher did that bored, stickily wet Saturday night, with those tired seven years in the Greenway Branch dragging at the tense place in the back of her neck, and the seven times seven to come making her want to scream. And now maybe something—oh, please, the very smallest kind of a something would be welcomed!—was going to happen. Maybe Mrs. De Guenther had sent her a concert ticket. She had, once before. Or maybe it might even be a ticket to an expensive seat in a real theatre! Her catalogue-heavy blue eyes burned luminous at the idea.

"But I must n't wish," she told herself belatedly. "It may n't anything be true."

So she answered very politely and holding-tightly all the pleasant roundabout remarks Mr. De Guenther was pushing about like pawns on a chessboard. She replied with the same trained cheerfulness she gave her library children, and even warmed to a vicious enthusiasm over the state of the streets and the dampness of the wet weather.

"He knows lots of real things to say," complained the Liberry Teacher to herself. "Why does n't he say some of them? I suppose this is his bedside—no, lawyers don't have bedside manners—his bedside manners, then——"

But by that time she had missed at least a sentence and a half about the Street-Cleaning Department, and something else, apparently; for he had produced a note addressed flowingly to her in his wife's English hand, and was saying:

"—which she has asked me to deliver. I trust you have no engagement for to-morrow night."

"Why—no!" said the Liberry Teacher delightedly. "No, indeed! Thank you and her. I'd love to come."

Then Mr. De Guenther, sitting calmly there with his silvery head against a scarlet Washington's-Birthday poster, so that three painted cherries stuck out above his head in the fashion of a scalp-lock, said something else real.

"I have—we have—a little matter of business to discuss with you, an offer, I may say, of a different line of work. And I want you to satisfy yourself thoroughly—thoroughly, my dear, of my reputableness. Mr. Johnston, the chief of the city library, and whose office is in this branch, is one of my oldest friends. I am, I believe, well-known as a lawyer in this my native city. I should be glad to have you satisfy yourself on these points, because"—could it be at this pause that Mr. De Guenther was embarrassed?—"because the line of work which I wish, or rather my wife wishes, to lay before you is—is—a very different line of work!" ended the old gentleman inconclusively. There was no mistake about it this time: he was embarrassed.

"Oh, Mr. De Guenther!" she exclaimed, before she thought what she was saying, and catching his arm, in her eagerness, as she spoke. "Oh, Mr. De Guenther, *could* the Very Different Line of Work have a—have a *rose-garden* attached to it anywhere?"

Before she was fairly done she knew how silly her question was. How could any line of her work have gardens belonging to it? You don't have to catalogue roses on neat cards, or improve their minds by the Newark Ladder System, or do anything at all librarious to them, except pressing them in books to mummify; and the Liberry Teacher did n't think that was a nice thing to do to roses. So Mr. De Guenther's reply quite surprised her.

"There—seems—to—be—no—reason," he said slowly and placidly, as if he was dropping his words out of a slot—"why there should—*not* be a rose-garden, or even—*two*, connected with it. None—whatever."

That was all the explanation he offered, but the Liberry Teacher asked for no more.

"Oh!" she said rapturously.

"To-morrow at seven," he said, smiling and moving toward the door as quietly as if he had just dropped in to ask the meaning of "circum-ambient," or who discovered smallpox, or if she would n't write him an essay on "Initiative and Referendum," or any such little everyday thing librarians expect. And instead—his neat and civilized elderly back seemed to deny it—he had left with her, the Liberry Teacher, her, dusty, shopworn, tousled Phyllis Braithwaite, an invitation to come and consider a Line of Work which was so Entirely Different that she had to look up the spotless De Guenther reputableness before she came!

. . . It was ten minutes past the time when she should have begun to put out the children! She stared aghast at the large, ruthless clock, created two Monitors for Putting Out at one royal sweep, and managed her nightly eviction with such gay expedition that it almost felt like ten minutes ago when the place, except for her pride-swollen monitors, was cleared. While these officers watched the commonalty clump reluctantly upstairs to the umbrella-rack, the Liberry Teacher went sedately around the low shelves, giving the books the routine straightening they needed before seven o'clock struck and the horde rushed in again. It was really her relieving officer's work, but the Liberry Teacher felt that her mind needed straightening, too, and this generally did it. She looked from the back very much like most of the librarians you see: alert, slender, pleasant, a little dishevelled, a little worn; but Phyllis, the dreaming young Phyllis who had to stop being young and a dreamer, and become Miss Braithwaite the librarian those long seven years ago—that Phyllis had wakened and taken away the reins of self-government from Miss Braithwaite the Liberry Teacher. She let her mind stray as far as it would over this wonderful new Different Line of Work—and discovered herself laboriously trying to find the exact place under "Domestic Economy: Condiments" for "Five Little Peppers and How they Grew." And Miss Black, the night-duty girl that week, was standing at the doorway waiting to relieve guard.

"Do see what I've done!" laughed the Liberry Teacher. Somehow things seemed light-hearted and laughable since Mr. De Guenther's most fairy-tale visit, with its wild hints of Lines of Work. Miss Black came, looked, laughed.

"In the 640's!" she said. "Well, you're liable to do nearly anything on Saturdays. Last Saturday Dolly Green, up in the Circulation, was telling me, an old darky said she'd lost her mittens in the reading room, and first they knew Dolly was hunting through the Woollen Goods classification in Dewey, and Mary Gayley pawing the dictionary for Mit!"

"I know," nodded the Liberry Teacher. "They found the mittens around her neck on a cord, did n't they? Good-by, Anna Black. I'm

going home to have some lovely prunes and real dried beef, and maybe a glass of almost-milk if I can persuade Maggie I need it."

"My landlady prefers dried apricots," said Miss Black cheerfully. "Good-by. Good luck!"

But as the Liberry Teacher pinned down her serviceable hat and fastened her still good rain-coat over her elderly sweater, neither prunes nor mittens nor next week's work worried her at all. After all, living among the fairy-stories, with the Little People, makes that pleasant land where wanting is having, and all the impossibilities come true, very easy of access. Phyllis Braithwaite's mind wandered innocently off in a dream-pace full of roses, till the muddy marble steps of her boarding-place gleamed sloppily at her through the foggy rain. She sat up late that night doing improving things to the white lace waist of her best suit, which was black. As her needle nibbled busily down the seams, she continued happily to wonder about the Entirely Different Line. It sounded to her more like a reportership on a yellow journal than anything else imaginable. Or, perhaps, could she be wanted to join the Secret Service?

"At any rate," she concluded light-heartedly as she stitched the last conscientious ruching into the last knuckle-covering sleeve—"at any rate, I'll have a chance to-morrow to wear mother's gold earrings that I must n't have on in the library. And oh, how lovely it will be to have one real live meal that was n't cooked boredly by a poor old dead-tired boarding-house cook, or a syndicate!" And she went to bed—to dream of Entirely Different Lines that were all the colors of the rainbow, and radiated from the circulation desk like tight-ropes. She never thought about Eva Atkinson's carefully prettied face, or her own shopworn one, at all. Only, she thought that, far at the end of the pink Entirely Different Line—a very hard one to walk—there was a rose-garden exactly like a patchwork quilt, where she was to be.

CHAPTER III

NEXT morning everything had a light-hearted, holiday feeling. The rain had cleared away every vestige of last week's slush, and had then itself most considerately retired down the gutters. The sun was shining as if May had come, and the wind, through the Liberry Teacher's open windows, had a springy, pussy-willow, come-for-a-walk-in-the-country feel to it. She found that she had slept too late to go to church, and prepared for a joyous dash to the boarding-house bath-tub. There might be—who knew but there actually might be, on this day of days, enough hot water for a real bath!

All of the contented, and otherwise, elderly people who inhabited the boarding-house appeared to have gone off without using much hot water.

The Liberry Teacher found that she could have a genuine hot bath, and enough water left to wash her hair satisfyingly. This was surely a day of days! She used the water—alas for selfish human nature—to the last warm drop, and went gayly back to her little room without any emotions whatever for the poor other boarders, soon to find themselves wrathfully hot-waterless. And then—she curled thoughtlessly down on the bed, and slept, and slept, and *slept!* She waked up dimly in time for one o'clock dinner, dressed, and ate a little of it, still half-asleep. She went back upstairs to make ready for the trolley-ride that should take her out to the country, where long walks were to be had—and fell asleep again. The truth was, the Liberry Teacher was about as tired as a girl can get.

She waked at dusk with a jerk of terror lest she should have slept over seven. But it was only six. There was a whole hour to prink in, which is a very long time to people used to getting down to libraries half an hour after their alarm-clocks wake them.

Some houses, all of themselves, are indifferent to you. Some make you feel as if you were not wanted in the least—these generally possess a great deal of haughty gilt furniture—and some give you the impression that they have been wanting just you for years. The De Guenther house, staid and softly-toned, did none of these things. But it gave the Liberry Teacher, in her neat best suit, a feeling as of gentle welcome-home. She felt happy and *belonging*, even before quick-smiling, slim little Mrs. De Guenther came noiselessly in to welcome her. After Mrs. De Guenther came her husband, pleasant and unperturbed as usual, and after him an agreeable gray cat who had copied his master's walk exactly, as far as it can be done on four feet. All four sat amiably about the room, and held precise and pleasant converse about a great many things that did n't especially matter. The Liberry Teacher liked it. It was pleasant to sit nestlingly on a fluffy chair, and hear about all the scholarly day-before-yesterday things her father had used to talk about. She carried on her part in the conversation blithely. There was only once that she was ashamed of herself: when her eyes filled with unexpected tears at a quite dry and unemotional quotation from Horace on the part of Mr. De Guenther. But she smiled the next minute.

“That's the first time I've heard a Latin quotation since I left home,” she found herself saying quite simply in explanation, “and Father used to quote Horace so much every day that—that I felt as if a long-lost relative had walked in!”

But her hosts did n't seem to mind. Mr. De Guenther in his evening clothes looked swiftly across at Mrs. De Guenther in her gray silk and cameo, and they both nodded a little satisfied nod, as if she had said something they were glad to hear her say. Then dinner was served, a

dinner as different—she did n't even want to specify to herself the dinners it differed from. She merely ate it with a shameless inward joy. Then it ended, still to the pleasant accompaniment of conversation about books and music and pictures she had been interested in, and found nobody to share her interest with. She could feel, too, running through everything, a general easy taking-for-granted of all the old gentle, inflexible standards of breeding that she had almost forgotten, down here in the heart of the city among her obstreperous, affectionate little foreigners.

They finished their coffee in the long, old-fashioned salon parlor, and then Mr. De Guenther straightened himself and Mrs. De Guenther folded her hands, and the Liberry Teacher prepared thrilledly to hear about the Different Line of Work.

There was nothing at first about work of any sort. The story the couple were alternately telling merely concerned some clients of theirs, a Mrs. Harrington and her son. She listened attentively.

"This lady, my client, Mrs. Harrington," said Mr. De Guenther, speaking gravely at length, "is the one for whom I may ask you to do some work. I say may, but it is a practical certainty. She is absolutely alone, my dear Miss Braithwaite, except for her son. I am afraid I must ask you to listen to a long story about them."

"Oh, but I *want* to hear!" said the Liberry Teacher, leaning forward with that quick, affectionate sympathy of hers that was so winning. It seemed to her tired, alert mind like one of the stories she read her children, an Arabian Night tale which might begin: "And the Master of the House ascribing praise to Allah related the following tale."

Mr. De Guenther went swiftly on.

"There have always been just the two of them, mother and son, and Allan has always been everything to Mrs. Harrington." ("Poor Angela!" murmured Mrs. De Guenther.) "They are old friends of ours," explained the husband. "My wife and Mrs. Harrington were school-mates. Well, Allan, the boy, grew up with everything that a boy could possibly desire, personally and otherwise. He was handsome and intelligent, with much charm of manner. There was practically nothing which the poor boy had not. That was one trouble, I imagine. If he had not been so intelligent, he would not have studied so hard at college; if he had not been strong and agile, he would not have taken up athletics so whole-heartedly; and then, his charm, money, and social status—well, in short, he kept studies, athletics, and social affairs all going at high pressure for four years. But he was young, and he might not have felt so much ill effect from all that, though the doctors said afterward that he was nearly at the breaking-point when he graduated."

She bent closer to the story-teller in her intense interest. It still sounded like one of her own fairy tales. How would it end for the Prince?

Mr. De Guenther went on:

"Allan must have been just about twenty-two when he graduated, and it could not have been long afterward that he became engaged to a young girl—Louise Frey was her name, was it not, Love? Yes, Louise Frey. A beautiful girl, dark, and very full of life and good spirits. Their marriage was set, I believe, for the following September."

So there was a princess in the story, too! It was very interesting.

"It must have been scarcely a month before this that the lovers went for a long automobile ride, across a range of mountains near a country place where they were both staying. They were alone in the machine. Allan was driving, of course—doubtless with a certain degree of impetuosity, as he did most things. They were some three or four hours from their destination, on an unfrequented part of the road, when there occurred an unforeseen wreckage in a part of the car's machinery. The car was turned over and badly splintered. Both young people were pinned under it. So far as he knew at the time, Allan was not injured or in any pain; but he was held beyond any ability to move a finger, by the car above him. Miss Frey, on the contrary, was badly hurt, and held in a way which caused her intense pain. Her sufferings were so extreme as to cause death in about three hours, a little before relief came to them."

The listener clutched the arms of her chair, wide-eyed. She could see the horror of the thing through the old lawyer's unemotional story. The young lover, pinioned, helpless, condemned to watch his sweetheart dying in torture, unable to help her by so much as lifting a hand!

"But—you said he was an invalid?" she asked.

"Yes, I regret to say," answered Mr. De Guenther. "It was found that the shock, acting on an already over-keyed mind and body, together with some spinal blow which the doctors still seem at sea about, affected Allan's powers of locomotion. He has been unable to walk since. And—which is sadder—his state of mind and body has become steadily worse. He can scarcely move at all now, and his mental attitude can be described only as painfully morbid. Sometimes he does not speak for days together, even to his mother."

"Oh!" she said again. "And how long has it been?"

"Seven years this fall, I think," said Mr. De Guenther consideringly. "Is it not, Love? Yes, seven years."

"Seven years!" the Liberry Teacher echoed. Just as long as she had been working for her living in the big, dusty library. Supposing she had lived all that time in such suffering as this poor Allan had endured and his mother had watched! She felt suddenly as if the dusty, restless Children's Room, full of its turbulent little outland voices, was a safe, sunny Paradise.

"I have told most of the story, Isabel, Love," said Mr. De Guenther to his wife. "Would you like to tell the rest? It is at your instance

that I have undertaken the commission for Mrs. Harrington, you will remember."

It struck the Liberry Teacher that Mr. De Guenther did n't think it was quite a dignified commission, even at that.

"Very well, Love," said his wife, and took up the tale in her swift, soft voice:

"You can fancy how this poor mother has felt about it."

"Yes, indeed!" said Phyllis Braithwaite pitifully.

"Her whole life has been one long devotion to her son since the accident happened. I don't think a half-hour ever passes that she does not see him. But in spite of this he has grown steadily worse, as Mr. De Guenther has told you. And poor Angela has broken under the strain. She was never strong. She is dying now. They give her perhaps two months more. Her one anxiety, of course, is for poor Allan's welfare. You can imagine how you would feel if you had to leave an entirely helpless son or brother to the mercies of hired attendants, however faithful. And they have no relatives. They are the last of the family."

The listening girl began to see. Was she to be asked to act as nurse, perhaps guardian, to this morbid invalid with the injured mind and body?

"But I'd be a hireling, too!" she said inwardly. She looked questioningly at Mrs. De Guenther.

"And where does my part come in?" she asked, with a certain sweet and childlike directness which was sometimes hers. "Would n't I be a hireling, too, if—if I have anything to do with it?"

"No," said Mrs. De Guenther gravely; "you would not. You would have to be his wife."

CHAPTER IV

THE Liberry Teacher, in her sober best suit, lay back in her entirely commonplace chair in the quiet old parlor, and looked unbelievably at the sedate elderly couple who had made her this wild proposition. She caught her breath. But catching her breath did not seem to affect anything that had been said. Mr. De Guenther took up the explanation again, a little deprecatingly, she thought.

"You see now why I requested you to investigate our reputability?" he said. "Such a proposition as this, especially to a young lady who has no parent or guardian, requires a considerable guarantee of good faith and honesty of motive."

"Will you please tell me more about it?" she asked quietly. She did not feel now as if it was anything which had especially to do with her. It seemed more like an interesting story she was unravelling sentence by sentence. The long, softly lighted old room, with its Stuarts and Sullys

and old engravings, and its gracious, gray-haired host and hostess, seemed only a picturesque part of it. . . . Her hostess caught up the tale again.

"Angela has been nearly distracted," she said. "And the idea has come to her that if she could find some conscientious woman, a lady, and a person to whom what she could offer would be a consideration, who would take charge of poor Allan, that she could die in peace."

"But why did you think of asking me?" the girl asked breathlessly. "And why does she want me married to him? And how could you or she be sure that I would not be as much of a hireling as any nurse she may have now?"

Mrs. De Guenther answered the last two questions together.

"Mrs. Harrington's idea is, and I think rightly, that a conscientious woman would feel the marriage tie, however nominal, a bond that would obligate her to a certain duty toward her husband. As to why we selected you, my dear, my husband and I have had an interest in you for some years, as you know. We have spoken of you as a girl whom we should like for a relative——"

"Why, isn't that strange?" cried Phyllis, dimpling. "That's just what I've thought about you!"

Mrs. De Guenther flushed, with a delicate old shyness.

"Thank you, dear child," she said. "I was about to add that we have not seen you at your work all these years without knowing you to have the kind heart and sense of honor requisite to poor Angela's plan. We feel sure you could be trusted to take the place. Mr. De Guenther has asked his friend Mr. Johnston, the head of the library, such things as we needed to supplement our personal knowledge of you. You have everything that could be asked, even to a certain cheerfulness of outlook which poor Angela, naturally, lacks in a measure."

"But—but what about *me*?" asked Phyllis Braithwaite a little piteously, in answer to all this.

They seemed so certain she was what they wanted—was there anything in this wild scheme that would make *her* life better than it was as the tired, ill-paid keeper of a roomful of turbulent little foreigners?

"Unless you are thinking of marriage"—Phyllis shook her head—"you would have at least a much easier life than you have now. Mrs. Harrington would settle a liberal income on you, contingent, of course, on your faithful wardership over Allan. We would be your only judges as to that. You would have a couple or more months of absolute freedom every year, control of much of your own time, ample leisure to enjoy it. You would give only your chances of actual marriage for perhaps five years, for poor Allan cannot live longer than that at his present state of retrogression, and some part of every day to seeing that Allan was not neglected. If you bestow on him half of the interest and effort I have

known of your giving any one of a dozen little immigrant boys, his mother has nothing to fear for him."

Mr. De Guenther stopped with a grave little bow, and he and his wife waited for the reply.

The Liberry Teacher sat silent, her eyes on her slim hands, that were roughened and reddened by constant hurried washings to get off the dirt of the library books. It was true—a good deal of it, anyhow. And one thing they had not said was true also: her sunniness and accuracy and strength, her stock-in-trade, were wearing thin under the pressure of too long hours and too hard work and too few personal interests. Her youth was worn down. And—marriage? What chance of love and marriage had she, a working-girl alone, too poor to see anything of the class of men she would be willing to marry? She had not for years spent six hours with a man of her own kind and age. She had not even been specially in love, that she could remember, since he was grown-up. She did not feel much, now, as if she ever would be. All that she had to give up in taking this offer was her freedom, such as it was,—and those fluttering Perhapes that whisper such pleasant promises when you are young. But, then, she would n't be young so *very* much longer. Should she—she put it to herself crudely—should she wait long, hard, closed-in years in the faith that she would learn to be absolutely contented, or that some man she could love would come to the cheap boarding-house, or the little church she attended occasionally when she was not too tired, fall in love with her work-dimmed looks at sight, and—marry her? It had not happened, all these years while her girlhood had been more attractive and her personality more untired. There was scarcely a chance in a hundred for her of a kind lover-husband and such dear picture-book children as she had seen Eva Atkinson convoying. Well— Her mind suddenly came up against the remembrance, as against a sober fact, that in her passionate wishings of yesterday she had not wished for a lover-husband, nor for children. She had asked for a husband who would give her money, and leisure to be rested and pretty, and—a rose-garden! And here, apparently, was her wish uncannily fulfilled.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" inquired the Destinies with their traditional indifference. "We can't wait all night!"

She lifted her head and cast an almost frightened look at the De Guenthers, waiting courteously for her decision. In reply to the look, Mr. De Guenther began giving her details about the money, and the leisure time, and the business terms of the contract generally. She listened attentively. All that—for a little guardianship, a little kindness, and the giving-up of a little piece of life nobody wanted and a few little hopes and dreams!

Phyllis laughed, as she always did when there were big black problems to be solved.

"After all, it's fairly usual," she said. "I heard last week of a woman who left money along with her pet dog, very much the same way."

"Did you? Did you, dear?" asked Mrs. De Guenther, beaming. "Then you think you will do it?"

The Liberry Teacher rose, and squared her straight young shoulders under the worn net waist.

"If Mrs. Harrington thinks I'll do for the situation!" she said gallantly,—and laughed again.

"It feels partly like going into a nunnery and partly like going into a fairy-story," she said to herself that night as she wound her alarm. "But—I wonder if anybody's remembered to ask the consent of the groom!"

CHAPTER V

HE looked like a young Crusader on a tomb. That was Phyllis's first impression of Allan Harrington. He talked and acted, if a moveless man can be said to act, like a bored, spoiled small boy. That was her second.

Mrs. Harrington, fragile, flushed, breathlessly intense in her wheelchair, had yet a certain resemblance in voice and gesture to Mrs. De Guenther—a resemblance which puzzled Phyllis till she placed it as the mark of that far-off ladies' school they had attended together. There was also a graceful, mincing white wolfhound which, contrary to the accepted notion of invalids' faithful hounds, did n't seem to care for his master's darkened sick-room at all, but followed the one sunny spot in Mrs. Harrington's room with a wistful persistence. It was such a small spot for such a long wolfhound—that was the principal thing which impressed itself on Phyllis's frightened mind throughout her visit.

Mrs. De Guenther convoyed her to the Harrington house for inspection a couple of days after she had accepted some one's proposal to marry Allan Harrington. (Whether it counted as her future mother-in-law's proposal, or her future trustee's, she was never sure. The only sure thing was that it did not come from the groom.) She had borrowed a half-day from the future on purpose, though she did not want to go at all. But the reality was not bad; only a fluttering, emotional little woman who clung to her hands and talked to her and asked useless questions with a nervous insistence which would have been nerve-wearing for a steady thing, but was only pitiful to a stranger.

You see strange people all the time in library work, and learn to place them, at length, with almost as much accuracy as you do your books. The fact that Mrs. Harrington was not long for this world did not prevent Phyllis from classing her, in her mental card-catalogue, as a very perfect specimen of the Loving Nagger. She was lying back,

wrapped in something gray and soft, when her visitors came, looking as if the lifting of her hand would be an effort. She was evidently pitifully weak. But she had, too, an ineradicable vitality she could summon at need. She sprang almost upright to greet her visitors, a hand out to each, an eager flood of words on her lips.

"And you are Miss Braithwaite, that is going to look after my boy?" she ended. "Oh, it is so good of you—I am so glad—I can go in peace now. Are you sure—sure you will know the minute his attendants are the least bit negligent? I watch and watch them all the time. I tell Allan to ring for me if anything ever is the least bit wrong—I am always begging him to remember. I go in every night and pray with him—do you think you could do that? But I always cry so before I'm through—I cry and cry—my poor, helpless boy—he was so strong and bright! And you are sure you are conscientious——"

At this point Phyllis stopped the flow of Mrs. Harrington's conversation firmly, if sweetly.

"Yes, indeed," she said cheerfully. "But you know, if I'm not, Mr. De Guenther can stop all my allowance. It would n't be to my own interest not to fulfil my duties faithfully."

"Yes, that is true," said Mrs. Harrington. "That was a good thought of mine. My husband always said I was an unusual woman where business was concerned."

So they went on the principle that she had no honor beyond working for what she would get out of it! Although she had made the suggestion herself, Phyllis's cheeks burned, and she was about to answer sharply. Then somehow the poor, anxious, loving mother's absolute preoccupation with her son struck her as right, after all.

"If it was my son," thought Phyllis, "I should n't worry about any strange hired girl's feelings either, maybe. I'd just think about him. . . . I promise I'll look after Mr. Harrington's welfare as if he were my own brother," she ended aloud, impulsively. "Indeed, you may trust me."

"I am—sure you will," panted Mrs. Harrington. "You look like—a good girl, and—and old enough to be responsible—twenty-eight—thirty?"

"Not very far from that," said Phyllis serenely.

"And you are sure you will know when the attendants are neglectful? I speak to them all the time, but I never can be sure. . . . And now you'd better see poor Allan. This is one of his good days. Just think, dear Isabel, he spoke to me twice without my speaking to him this morning!"

"Oh—must I?" asked Phyllis, dismayed. "Could n't I wait till—till it happens?"

Mrs. Harrington actually laughed a little at her shyness, lighting

up like a girl. Phyllis felt dimly, though she tried not to, that through it all her mother-in-law-elect was taking pleasure in the dramatic side of the situation she had engineered.

"Oh, my dear, you must see him. He expects you," she answered almost gayly. The procession of three moved down the long room towards a door, Phyllis's hand guiding the wheel-chair. She was surprised to find herself shaking with fright. Just what she expected to find beyond the door she did not know, but it must have been some horror, for it was with a heart-bound of wild relief that she finally made out Allan Harrington, lying white in the darkened place.

A crusader on a tomb. Yes, he looked like that. In the room's half-dusk the pallor of his still, clear-featured face and his long, clear-cut hands was nearly the same as the whiteness of the couch-draperies. His hair, yellow-brown and waving, flung back from his forehead like a crest, and his dark brows and lashes made the only note of darkness about him. To Phyllis's beauty-loving eyes, he seemed so perfect an image that she could have watched him for hours.

"Here's Miss Braithwaite, my poor darling," said his mother. "The young lady we have been talking about so long."

The Crusader lifted his eyelids and let them fall again.

"Is she?" he said listlessly.

"Don't you want to talk to her, darling boy?" his mother persisted, half out of breath, but still full of that unrebuffable, loving energy and insistence which she would probably keep to the last minute of her life.

"No," said the Crusader, still in those empty, listless tones. "I'd rather not talk. I'm tired."

His mother seemed not at all put out.

"Of course, darling," she said, kissing him. She sat by him still, however, and poured out sentence after sentence of question, insistence, imploration, and pity, eliciting no answer at all. Phyllis wondered how it would feel to have to lie still and have that done to you for a term of years. The result of her wonderment was a decision to forgive her unenthusiastic future bridegroom for what she had at first been ready to slap from him.

Presently Mrs. Harrington's breath flagged, and the three women went away, back to the room they had been in before. Phyllis sat and let herself be talked to for a little longer. Presently she rose impulsively.

"May I go back and see your son again for just a minute?" she asked, and had gone before Mrs. Harrington had finished her permission. She darted into the dark room before her courage had time to fail, and stood by the white couch again.

"Mr. Harrington," she said clearly, "I'm sorry you're tired, but I'm afraid I am going to have to ask you to listen to me. You know, don't you, that your mother plans to have me marry you, for a sort of

interested head-nurse? Are you willing to have it happen? Because I won't do it unless you really prefer it."

The heavy white lids half-lifted again.

"I don't mind," said Allan Harrington listlessly. "I suppose you are quiet and trustworthy, or De Guenther would n't have sent you. It will give Mother a little peace, and it makes no difference to me."

He closed his eyes and the subject at the same time.

"Well, then, that's all right," said Phyllis cheerfully, and started to go. Then, drawn back by a sudden, nervous temper-impulse, she moved back on him. "And let me tell you," she added, half-laughing, half-impertinently, "that if you ever get into my quiet, trustworthy clutches you may have an awful time! You're a very spoiled invalid."

She whisked out of the room before he could have gone very far with his reply. But he had not cared to reply, apparently. He lay unmoved and unmoving.

Phyllis discovered, poising breathless on the threshold, that somehow she had seen his eyes. They had been a little like the wolfhound's, a sort of wistful gold-brown.

For some reason she found that Allan Harrington's attitude of absolute detachment made the whole affair seem much easier for her. And when Mrs. Harrington slipped a solitaire diamond into her hand as she went, instead of disliking it she enjoyed its feel on her finger, and the flash of it in the light. She thanked Mrs. Harrington for it with real gratitude. But it made her feel more than ever engaged to marry her mother-in-law.

She walked home rather silently with Mrs. De Guenther. Only, at the foot of the De Guenther steps, she made one absent remark.

"He must have been delightful," she said, "when he was alive!"

CHAPTER VI

AFTER a week of the old bustling, dusty hard work, the Liberry Teacher's visit to the De Guenthers' and the subsequent one at the Harringtons', and even her sparkling white ring, seemed part of a queer story she had finished and put back on the shelf. The ring was the most real thing, because it was something of a worry. She did n't dare leave it at home, nor did she want to wear it. She finally sewed it in a chamois bag that she safety-pinned under her shirtwaist. Then she dismissed it from her mind also. There is very little time in a Liberry Teacher's life for meditation. Only once in awhile would come to her the vision of the wistful Harrington wolfhound following his inadequate patch of sunlight, or of the dusky room where Allan Harrington lay inert and white, and looking like a wonderful carved statue on a tomb.

She began to do a little to her clothes, but not very much, because

she had neither time nor money. Mr. De Guenther had wanted her to take some money in advance, but she had refused. She did not want it till she had earned it, and, any way, it would have made the whole thing so real, she knew, that she would have backed out.

"And it is n't as if I were going to a lover," she defended herself to Mrs. De Guenther with a little wistful smile. "Nobody will know what I have on, any more than they do now."

Mrs. De Guenther gave a scandalized little cry. Her attitude was determinedly that it was just an ordinary marriage, as good an excuse for sentiment and pretty frocks as any other.

"My dear child," she replied firmly, "you are going to have one pretty frock and one really good street-suit *now*, or I will know why! The rest you may get yourself after the wedding, but you must obey me in this. Nonsense!—you can get a half-day, as you call it, perfectly well! What's Albert in politics for, if he can't get favors for his friends!"

And, in effect, it proved that Albert was in politics to some purpose, for orders came up from the Head's office within twenty minutes after Mrs. De Guenther had used the telephone on her husband, that Miss Braithwaite was to have a half-day immediately—as far as she could make out, in order to transact city affairs! She felt as if the angels had told her she could have the last fortnight over again, as a favor, or something of the sort. A half-day out of turn was something nobody had ever heard of. She was even too surprised to object to the frock part of the situation. Phyllis tried to stand out a little longer, but it's a very stoical young woman who can refuse to have pretty clothes bought for her, and the end of it was a seat in a salon which she had always considered so expensive that you scarcely ought to look in the window.

"Had it better be a black suit?" asked Mrs. De Guenther doubtfully, as the tall lady in floppy charmeuse hovered haughtily about them, expecting orders. "It seems horrible to buy mourning when dear Angela is not yet passed away, but it would only be showing proper respect; and I remember my own dear mother planned all our mourning outfits while she was dying. It was quite a pleasure to her."

Phyllis kept her face straight, and slipped one persuasive hand through her friend's arm.

"I don't believe I *could* buy mourning, dear," she said. "And—oh, if you knew how long I'd wanted a really *blue* blue suit! Only, it would have been too vivid to wear well—I always knew that—because you can only afford one every other year. And"—Phyllis rather diffidently voiced a thought which had been in the back of her mind for a long time—"if I'm going to be much around Mr. Harrington, don't you think cheerful clothes would be best? Everything in that house seems sombre enough now."

"Perhaps you are right, dear child," said Mrs. De Guenther. "I hope you may be the means of putting a great deal of brightness into poor Allan's life before he joins his mother."

"Oh, don't!" cried Phyllis impulsively. Somehow she could not bear to think of Allan Harrington's dying. He was too beautiful to be dead, where nobody could see him any more. And, besides, Phyllis privately considered that a long vacation before he joined his mother would be only the fair thing for "poor Allan." Youth sides with youth. And—the clear-cut white lines of him rose in her memory and stayed there. She could almost hear that poor, tired, toneless voice of his, that was yet so deep and so perfectly accented. . . . She bought docilely whatever her guide directed, and woke from a species of gentle daze at the afternoon's end to find Mrs. De Guenther beaming with the weary rapture of the successful shopper, and herself the proprietress of a turquoise velvet walking-suit, a hat to match, a pale blue evening frock, a pale green between-dress with lovely clinging lines, and a heavenly white crêpe thing with rosy ribbons and filmy shadow-laces—the negligee of one's dreams. There were also slippers and shoes and stockings and—this was really too bad of Mrs. De Guenther—a half-dozen set of lingerie, straight through. Mrs. De Guenther sat and continued to beam joyously over the array, in Phyllis's little bedroom.

"It's my present, dearie," she said calmly. "So you need n't worry about using Angela's money. Gracious, it's been *lovely!* I have n't had such a good time since my husband's little grand-niece came on for a week. There's nothing like dressing a girl, after all."

And Phyllis could only kiss her. But when her guest had gone she laid all the boxes of finery under her bed, the only place where there was any room. She would not take any of it out, she determined, till her summons came. But on second thought, she wore the blue velvet street-suit on Sunday visits to Mrs. Harrington, which became—she never knew just when or how—a regular thing. The vivid blue made her eyes nearly sky-color, and brightened her hair very satisfactorily. She was taking more time and trouble over her looks now—one has to live up to a turquoise velvet hat and coat! She found herself, too, becoming very genuinely fond of the restless, anxiously loving, passionate, unwise child who dwelt in Mrs. Harrington's frail elderly body and had almost worn it out. She sat, long hours of every Sunday afternoon, holding Mrs. Harrington's thin little hot hands, and listening to her swift, italicised monologues about Allan—what he must do, what he must not do, how he must be looked after, how his mother had treated him, how his wishes must be ascertained and followed.

"Though all he wants now is dark and quiet," said his mother piteously. "I don't even go in there now to cry."

She spoke as if it were an established ritual. Had she been using

her son's sick-room, Phyllis wondered, as a regular weeping-place? She could feel in Mrs. Harrington, even in this mortal sickness, the tremendous driving influence which is often part of a passionately active and not very wise personality. That certitude and insistence of Mrs. Harrington's could hammer you finally into believing or doing almost anything. Phyllis wondered how much his mother's heartbroken adoration and pity might have had to do with making her son as hopeless-minded as he was.

Naturally, the mother-in-law-elect she had acquired in such a strange way became very fond of Phyllis. But indeed there was something very gay and sweet and honest-minded about the girl, a something which gave people the feeling that they were very wise in liking her. Some people you are fond of against your will. When people cared for Phyllis it was with a quite irrational feeling that they were doing a sensible thing. They never gave any of the credit to her very real, though almost invisible, charm.

She never saw Allan Harrington on any of the Sunday visits. She was sure the servants thought she did; for she knew that every one in the great, dark old house knew her as the young lady who was to marry Mr. Allan. She believed that she was supposed to be an old family friend, perhaps a distant relative. She did not want to see Allan. But she did want to be as good to his little, tensely-loving mother as she could, and reassure her about Allan's future care. And she succeeded.

It was on a Friday about two that the summons came. Phyllis had thought she expected it, but when the call came to her over the library telephone she found herself as badly frightened as she had been the first time she went to the Harrington house. She shivered as she laid down the dater she was using, and called the other librarian to take her place. Fortunately, between one and four the morning and evening shifts overlapped, and there was some one to take her place.

"Mrs. Harrington cannot last out the night," came Mr. De Guenther's clear, precise voice over the telephone, without preface. "I have arranged with Mr. Johnston. You can go at once. You had better pack a suit-case, for you possibly may not be able to get back to your boarding-place."

So it was to happen now! Phyllis felt, with her substitute in her place, her own wraps on, and her feet taking her swiftly towards her goal, as if she were offering herself to be made a nun, or have a hand or foot cut off, or paying herself away in some other awful, irrevocable fashion. She packed, mechanically, all the pretty things Mrs. De Guenther had given her and nothing else. She found herself at the door of her room with the locked suit-case in her hand, and not even a nail-file of the things belonging to her old self in it. She shook herself together, managed to laugh a little, and returned and put in such things

as she thought she would require for the night. Then she went. She always remembered that journey as long as she lived; her hands and feet and tongue going on, buying tickets, giving directions—and her mind, like a naughty child, catching at everything as they went, and screaming to be allowed to go back home, back to the dusty, matter-of-course library and the dreary little boarding-house bedroom!

CHAPTER VII

THEY were all waiting for her, in what felt like a hideously quiet semicircle, in Allan's great dark room. Mrs. Harrington, deadly pale, and giving an impression of keeping herself alive only by force of that wonderful fighting vitality of hers, lay almost at length in her wheel-chair. There was a clergyman in vestments. There were the De Guenthers; Mr. De Guenther only a little more precise than his everyday habit was, Mrs. De Guenther crying a little softly and furtively.

As for Allan Harrington, he lay just as she had seen him that other time, white and moveless, seeming scarcely conscious except by an effort. Only she noticed a slight contraction, as of pain, between his brows.

"Phyllis has come," panted Mrs. Harrington. "Now it will be—all right. You must marry him quickly—quickly, do you hear, Phyllis? Oh, people never will—do—what I want them to——"

"Yes—yes, indeed, dear," said Phyllis, taking her hands soothingly. "We're going to attend to it right away. See, everything is ready."

It occurred to her that Mrs. Harrington was not half as correct in her playing of the part of a dying woman as she would have seen to it that any one else was; also, that things did not seem legal without the wolfhound. Then she was shocked at herself for such irrelevant thoughts. The thing to do was to keep poor Mrs. Harrington quieted. So she beckoned the clergyman and the De Guenthers nearer, and herself sped the marrying of herself to Allan Harrington.

When you are being married to a Crusader on a tomb, the easiest way is to kneel down by him. Phyllis registered this fact in her mind quite blankly, as something which might be of use to remember in future. . . . The marrying took an unnecessarily long time, it seemed to her. It did not seem as if she were being married at all. It all seemed to concern somebody else. When it came to the putting on of the wedding-ring, she found herself, very naturally, guiding Allan's relaxed fingers to hold it in its successive places, and finally slip it on the wedding-finger. And somehow having to do that checked the chilly awe she had had before of Allan Harrington. It made her feel quite simply sorry for him, as if he were one of her poor little boys in trouble. And when it was all over she bent pitifully before she thought, and kissed one white, cold cheek. He seemed so tragically helpless, yet more alive, in

some way, since she had touched his hand to guide it. Then, as her lips brushed his cheek, she recoiled and colored a little. She had felt that slight roughness which a man's cheek, however close-shaven, always has—the *man-feel*. It made her realize unreasonably that it was a man she had married, after all, not a stone image nor a sick child—a live man! With the thought, or rather instinct, came a swift terror of what she had done, and a swift impulse to rise. She was half-way risen from her knees when a hand on her shoulder, and the clergyman's voice in her ear, checked her.

"Not yet," he murmured almost inaudibly. "Stay as you are till—till Mrs. Harrington is wheeled from the room."

Phyllis understood. She remained as she was, her body a shield before Allan Harrington's eyes, her hand just withdrawing from his shoulder, till she heard the closing of the door, and a sigh as of relaxed tension from the three people around her. Then she rose. Allan lay still with closed eyelids. It seemed to her that he had flushed, if ever so faintly, at the touch of her lips on his cheek. She laid his hand on the coverlet with her own roughened, ringed one, and followed the others out, into the room where the dead woman had been taken, leaving him with his attendant.

The rest of the evening Phyllis went about in a queer-keyed, almost light-hearted frame of mind. It was only the reaction from the long expectant terror that was over now, but it felt indecorous. It was just as well, however. Some one's head had to be kept. The servants were upset, of course, and there were many arrangements to be made. She and Mr. De Guenther worked steadily together, telephoning, ordering, guiding, straightening out all the tangles. There never was a wedding, she thought, where the bride did so much of the work! She even remembered to see personally that Allan's dinner was sent up to him. The servants had doubtless been told to come to her for orders—at any rate, they did. Phyllis had not had much experience in running a house, but a good deal in keeping her head. And that, after all, is the main thing. She had a far-off feeling as if she were hearing some other young woman giving swift, poised, executive orders. She rather admired her.

After dinner the De Guenthers went. And Phyllis Braithwaite, the little Liberry Teacher who had been living in a hall bedroom on much less money than she needed, found herself alone, sole mistress of the great Harrington house, a corps of servants, a husband passive enough to satisfy the most militant suffragette, a check-book, a wistful wolfhound, and five hundred dollars, cash, for current expenses. The last weighed on her mind more heavily than all the rest put together.

"Why, I don't know how to make Current Expenses out of all that!" she had said to Mr. De Guenther. "It looks to me exactly like about ten months' salary! I'm perfectly certain I shall get up in my sleep and

try to pay my board ahead with it, so I shan't have it all spent before the ten months are up! There was a blue bead necklace," she went on meditatively, "in the Five-and-Ten, that I always wanted to buy. Only I never quite felt I could afford it. Oh, just imagine going to the Five-and-Ten and buying at least five dollars' worth of things you did n't need!"

"You have great discretionary powers—great discretionary powers, my dear, you will find!" Mr. De Guenther had said, as he patted her shoulder. Phyllis took it as a compliment at the time. "Discretionary powers" sounded as if he thought she was a quite intelligent young person. It did not occur to her till he had gone, and she was alone with her check-book, that it meant she had a good deal of liberty to do as she liked.

It seemed to be expected of her to stay. Nobody even suggested a possibility of her going home again, even to pack her trunk. Mrs. De Guenther casually volunteered to do that, a little after the housekeeper had told her where her rooms were. She had been consulting with the housekeeper for what seemed ages, when she happened to want some pins for something, and asked for her suit-case.

"It's in your rooms," said the housekeeper. "Mrs. Harrington—the late Mrs. Harrington, I should say——"

Phyllis stopped listening at this point. Who was the present Mrs. Harrington? she wondered before she thought—and then remembered. Why—*she* was! So there was no Phyllis Braithwaite any more! Of course not. . . . Yet she had always liked the name so—well, a last name was a small thing to give up. . . . Into her mind flitted an incongruous, silly story she had heard once at the library, about a girl whose last name was Rose, and whose parents christened her Wild, because the combination appealed to them. And then she married a man named Bull. . . . Meanwhile the housekeeper had been going on.

. . . "She had the bedroom and bath opening from the other side of Mr. Allan's day-room ready for you, madam. It's been ready several weeks."

"Has it?" said Phyllis. It was like Mrs. Harrington, that careful planning of even where she should be put. "Is Mr. Harrington in his day-room now?"

For some reason she did not attempt to give herself, she did not want to see him again just now. Beside, it was nearly eleven, and time a very tired girl was in bed. She wanted a good night's rest, before she had to get up and be Mrs. Harrington, with Allan and the check-book and the Current Expenses all tied to her.

Some one had laid everything out for her, in the bedroom; the filmy new nightgown over a chair, the blue satin mules underneath, her plain

toilet-things on a dressing-table, and over another chair the exquisite ivory crêpe negligee with its floating rose ribbons. She took a hasty bath—there was so much hot water that she was quite reconciled for a moment to being a check-booked and wolfhounded Mrs. Harrington—and slid straight into bed without even stopping to braid her loosened, honey-colored hair.

It seemed to her that she was barely asleep when there came an urgent knocking at her door.

“Yes?” she said sleepily, looking mechanically for her alarm-clock as she switched on the light. “What is it, please?”

“It’s I, Wallis, Mr. Allan’s man, madam,” said a nervous voice. “Mr. Allan’s very bad. I’ve done all the usual things, but nothing seems to quiet him. He hates doctors so, and they make him so wrought up—please, could you come, ma’am? He says as how all of us are all dead—oh, *please*, Mrs. Harrington!”

There was panic in the man’s voice.

“All right,” said Phyllis sleepily, dropping to the floor as she spoke with the rapidity that only the alarm-clock-broken know. She snatched the negligée around her, and thrust her feet hastily into the blue satin slippers—why, she was actually using her wedding finery! And what an easily upset person that man was! But everybody in the house seemed to have nerves on edge. It was no wonder about Allan—he wanted his mother, of course, poor boy! She felt, as she ran fleetly across the long room that separated her sleeping-quarters from her husband’s, the same mixture of pity and timidity that she had felt with him before. Poor boy! Poor, silent, beautiful statue, with his one friend gone! She opened the door and entered swiftly into his room.

She was not thinking about herself at all, only of how she could help Allan, but there must have been something about her of the picture-book angel to the pain-racked man, lying tensely at length in the room’s darkest corner. Her long, dully gold hair, loosening from its twist, flew out about her, and her face was still flushed with sleep. There was a something about her that was vividly alight and alive; perhaps the light in her blue eyes.

From what the man had said, Phyllis had thought Allan was delirious, but she saw at once that he was only in severe pain, and talking more disconnectedly, perhaps, than a slow-minded Englishman could follow. He did not look like a statue now. His cheeks were burning with evident pain, and his yellow-brown eyes, wide-open, and dilated to darkness, stared straight out. His hands were clenching and unclenching, and his head moved restlessly from side to side. Every nerve and muscle, she could see, was taut.

“They’re all dead,” he muttered. “Father and Mother and Louise—and I—only, I’m not dead enough to bury. Oh, God, I wish I was!”

That was n't delirium; it was something more like heart-break. Phyllis moved closer to him, and dropped one of her sleep-warm hands on his cold, clenched one.

"Oh, poor boy!" she said. "I'm so sorry—so sorry!" She closed her hands tight over both his.

Some of her strong young vitality must have passed between them and helped him, for almost immediately his tenseness relaxed a little, and he looked at her.

"You—you're not a nurse," he said. "They go around—like—like a—vault——"

She had caught his attention! That was a good deal, she felt. She forgot everything about him, except that he was some one to be comforted, and her charge. She sat down on the bed by him, still holding tight to his hands.

"No, indeed," she said, bending nearer him, her long loose hair falling forward about her resolutely-smiling young face. "Don't you remember seeing me? I never was a nurse."

"What—are you?" he asked feebly.

"I'm—why, the children call me the Liberry Teacher," she answered. It occurred to her that it would be better to talk on brightly at random than to risk speaking of his mother to him, as she must if she reminded him of their marriage. "I spend my days in a basement, making bad little boys get so interested in the Higher Culture that they'll forget to shoot crap and smash windows."

One of the things which had aided Phyllis to rise from desk-assistant to one of the Children's Room librarians was a very sweet and carrying voice—a voice which arrested even a child's attention, and held his interest. It held Allan now; merely the sound of it, seemingly.

"Go on—talking," he murmured. Phyllis smiled and obeyed.

"Sometimes the Higher Culture does n't work," she said. "Yesterday one of my imps got hold of a volume of Shaw, and in half an hour his aunt marched in on me and threatened I don't know what to a library that 'taught children to disrespect their lawful gardeens.'"

"I remember now," said Allan Harrington. "You are the girl in the blue dress. The girl Mother had me marry. I remember."

"Yes," said Phyllis soothingly, and a little apologetically. "I know. But that—oh, please, it need n't make a bit of difference. It was only so I could see that you were looked after properly, you know. I'll never be in the way, unless you want me to do something for you."

"I don't mind," he said listlessly, as he had before. . . . "Oh, this dreadful darkness, and Mother dead in it somewhere!"

"Wallis," called Phyllis swiftly, "turn up the lights!"

The man slipped the close green silk shades from the electric bulbs. Allan shrank as if he had been hurt.

"I can't stand the glare," he said petulantly.

"Yes, you can for a moment," she said firmly. "It's better than that ghastly green glow."

It was probably the first time Allan Harrington had been contradicted since his accident. He said nothing more for a minute, and Phyllis directed Wallis to bring a sheet of pink tissue paper from her suit-case, where she remembered it lay in the folds of some new muslin thing. Under her direction still, he wrapped the globes in it and secured it with string.

"There!" she told Allan triumphantly when Wallis was done. "See, there is no glare now; only a pretty rose-colored glow. Better than the green, is n't it?"

Allan looked at her again. "You are—kind," he said. "Mother said—you would be kind. Oh, Mother—Mother!" He tried uselessly to lift one arm to cover his convulsed face, and could only turn his head a little aside.

"You can go, Wallis," said Phyllis softly, with her lips only. "Be in the next room." The man stole out and shut the door softly. Phyllis herself rose and went toward the window, and busied herself in braiding up her hair. There was almost silence in the room for a few minutes.

"Thank—you," said Allan brokenly. "Will you—come back, please?"

She returned swiftly, and sat by him as she had before.

"Would you mind—holding my wrists again?" he asked. "I feel quieter, somehow, when you do—not so—lost." There was a pathetic boyishness in his tone that the sad, clear lines of his face would never prepare you for.

Phyllis took his wrists in her warm, strong hands obediently.

"Are you in pain, Allan?" she asked. "Do you mind if I call you Allan? It's the easiest way."

He smiled at her a little, faintly. It occurred to her that perhaps the novelty of her was taking his mind a little from his own feelings.

"No—no pain. I have n't had any for a very long time now. Only this dreadful blackness dragging at my mind, a blackness the light hurts."

"*Why!*" said Phyllis to herself, being on known ground here—"why, it's nervous depression! I believe cheering-up *would* help. I know," she said aloud; "I've had it."

"You?" he said. "But you seem so—happy!"

"I suppose I am," said Phyllis shyly. She felt a little afraid of "poor Allan" still, now that there was nothing to do for him, and they were talking together. And he had not answered her question, either; doubtless he wanted her to say "Mr. Allan" or even "Mr. Harrington"! He replied to her thought in the uncanny way invalids sometimes do.

"You said something about what we were to call each other," he murmured. "It would be foolish, of course, not to use first names. Yours is Alice, is n't it?"

Phyllis laughed. "Oh, worse than that!" she said. "I was named out of a poetry-book, I believe—Phyllis Narcissa. But I always conceal the Narcissa."

"Phyllis. Thank you," he said wearily. . . . "*Phyllis, don't let go! Talk to me!*" His eyes were those of a man in torment.

"What shall I talk about?" she asked soothingly, keeping the two cold, clutching hands in her warm grasp. "Shall I tell you a story? I know a great many stories by heart, and I will say them for you if you like. It was part of my work."

"Yes," he said. "Anything."

Phyllis arranged herself more comfortably on the bed, for it looked as if she had some time to stay, and began the story she knew best, because her children liked it best, Kipling's "How the Elephant Got His Trunk": "A long, long time ago, O Best Beloved. . . ."

Allan listened, and she thought at times paid attention to the words. He almost smiled once or twice, she was nearly sure. She went straight on to another story when the first was done. Never had she worked so hard to keep the interest of any restless circle of children as she worked now, sitting up in the pink light in her crêpe wrappings, with her school-girl braids hanging down over her bosom, and Allan Harrington's agonized golden-brown eyes fixed on her pitying ones.

"You must be tired," he said more connectedly and quietly when she had ended the second story. "Can't you sit up here by me, propped on the pillows? And you need a quilt or something, too."

This from an invalid who had been given nothing but himself to think of this seven years back! Phyllis's opinion of Allan went up very much. She had supposed he would be very selfish. But she made herself a bank of pillows, and arranged herself by Allan's side so that she could keep fast to his hands without any strain; something as skaters hold. She wrapped a down quilt from the foot of the bed around her, mummy-fashion, and went on to her third story. Allan's eyes, as she talked on, grew less intent—drooped. She could feel the relaxation of his hands. She went monotonously on, closing her own eyes—just for a minute, as she finished her story.

CHAPTER VIII

"I've overslept the alarm!" was Phyllis's first thought next morning when she woke. "It must be——" Where was she? So tired, so very tired, she remembered being, and telling some one an interminable story. . . . She held her sleepy eyes wide open by will-power, and

found that a silent but evidently going clock hung in sight. Six-thirty. Then she had n't overslept the alarm. But . . . she had n't set any alarm. And she had been sleeping propped up in a sitting position, half on—why, it was a shoulder. And she was rolled tight in a terra cotta down quilt. She sat up with a jerk—fortunately a noiseless one—and turned to look. Then suddenly she remembered all about it, that jumbled, excited, hard-working yesterday which had held change and death and marriage for her, and which she had ended by perching on “poor Allan Harrington's” bed and sending him to sleep by holding his hands and telling him children's stories. She must have fallen asleep after he did, and slid down on his shoulder. A wonder it had n't disturbed him! She stole another look at him, as he lay sleeping still, heavily and quietly. After all, she was married to him, and she had a perfect right to recite him to sleep if she wanted to. She unrolled herself cautiously, and slid out like a shadow.

She almost fell over poor Wallis, sleeping too in his clothes outside the door, on Allan's day couch. He came quickly to his feet, as if he were used to sudden waking.

“Don't disturb Mr. Harrington,” said Phyllis as staidly as if she had been giving men-servants orders in her slipper-feet all her life. “He seems to be sleeping quietly.”

“Begging your pardon, Mrs. Harrington, but you have n't been giving him anything, have you?” asked Wallis. “He has n't slept without a break for two hours to my knowledge since I've been here, not without medicine.”

“Not a thing,” said Phyllis, smiling with satisfaction. “He must have been sleeping nearly three hours now! I read him to sleep, or what amounted to it. I got his nerves quiet, I think. Please kill anybody that tries to wake him, Wallis.”

“Very good, ma'am,” said Wallis gravely. “And yourself, ma'am?”

“I'm going to get some sleep, too,” she said. “Call me if there's anything—useful.”

She meant “necessary,” but she wanted so much more sleep she never knew the difference. When she got into her room she found that there also she was not alone: the wistful wolfhound curled plaintively across her bed, which he overlapped. From his nose he seemed to have been dipping largely into the cup of chocolate somebody had brought to her, and which she had forgotten to drink when she found it, on her first retiring.

“You are n't a *bit* high-minded,” said Phyllis indignantly. She was too sleepy to do more than shove him over to the back of the bed. “All—the beds here are so—*full*,” she complained sleepily; and crawled inside, and never woke again till nearly afternoon.

There was all the grave business to be done, in the days that followed, of taking Mrs. Harrington to a quiet place beside her husband, and drawing together again the strings of the disorganized household. Phyllis found herself whispering over and over again :

“The sweeping up the heart
And putting love away
We shall not need to use again,
Until the Judgment Day.”

And with all there was to see after, it was some days before she saw Allan again, more than to speak to brightly as she crossed their common sitting-room. He did not ask for her. She looked after his comfort faithfully, and tried to see to it that his man Wallis was all he should be—a task which was almost hopeless from the fact that Wallis knew much more about his duties than she did, even with Mrs. Harrington’s painstakingly detailed notes to help her. Also his attitude to his master was of such untiring patience and worship that it made Phyllis feel like a rude outsider interfering between man and wife.

However, Wallis was inclined to approve of his new mistress, who was not fussy, seemed kind, and had given his beloved Mr. Allan nearly three hours of unbroken sleep. Allan had been a little better ever since. Wallis had told Phyllis this. But she was inclined to think that the betterment was caused by the counter-shock of his mother’s death, which had shaken him from his lethargy, and perhaps even given his nerves a better balance. And she insisted that the pink paper stay on the electric lights.

After about a week of this, Phyllis suddenly remembered that she had not been selfish at all yet. Where was her rose-garden—the garden she had married the wolfhound and Allan and the check-book for? Where were all the things she had intended to get? The only item she had bought as yet ran, on the charge account she had taken over with the rest, “1 doz. checked dish-towels”; and Mrs. Clancy, the housekeeper’s, pressing demand was responsible for these.

“It’s certainly time I was selfish,” said Phyllis to the wolfhound, who followed her around unendingly, as if she had patches of sunshine in her pocket: glorious patches, fit for a life-sized wolfhound. Perhaps he was grateful because she had ordered him long daily walks. He wagged his tail now as she spoke, and rubbed himself curvingly against her. He was a rather affected dog.

So Phyllis made herself out a list in a superlatively neat library hand :

One string of blue beads.
One lot of very fluffy summer frocks with flowers on them.
One rose-garden.
One banjo and a self-teacher. (And a sound-proof room.)
One set Arabian Nights.

One set of Stevenson, all but his novels.
 Ever so many Maxfield Parrish pictures full of Prussian-blue skies.
 A house to put them in, with fireplaces.
 A lady's size motor-car that likes me.
 A plain cat with a tame disposition.
 A hammock.
 A sun-dial. (But that might be thrown in with the garden.)
 A gold watch-bracelet.
 All the colored satin slippers I want.
 A room big enough to put all Father's books up.

It looked shamelessly long, but Phyllis's "discretionary powers" would cover it, she knew. Mrs. Harrington's final will, while full of advice, had been recklessly trusting.

She could order everything in one afternoon, she was sure, all but the house, the garden, the motor, which she put checks against, and the plain cat, which she thought she could pick up in the village where her house would be.

Next she went to see Allan. She did n't want to bother him, but she did feel that she ought to share her plans with him as far as possible. Besides, it occurred to her that she could scarcely remember what he was like to speak to, and really owed it to herself to go. She fluffed out her hair loosely, put on her pale-green gown that had clinging lines, and pulled some daffodils through her sash. She had resolved to avoid anything sombre where Allan was concerned—and the green gown was very becoming. Then, armed with her list and a pencil, she crossed boldly to the couch where her Crusader lay in the old attitude, in the old duskiness, moveless and with half-closed eyes.

"Allan," she asked, standing above him, "do you think you could stand being talked to for a little while?"

"Why—yes," said Allan, opening his eyes a little more. "Wallis, get—Mrs. Harrington—a chair."

He said the name haltingly, and Phyllis wondered if he disliked her having it. She dropped down beside him, like a smiling touch of spring in the dark room.

"Do you mind their calling me that?" she asked. "If there's anything else they could use——"

"Mother made you a present of the name," he said, smiling faintly. "No reason why I should mind."

"All right," said Phyllis cheerfully. After all, there was nothing else to call her, speaking of her. The servants, she knew, generally said "the young madam," as if her mother-in-law were still alive.

"I want to talk to you about things," she began; and had to stop to deal with the wolfhound, who was trying to put both paws on her shoulders. "Oh, Ivan, *get* down, honey! I *wish* somebody would take a day

off some time to explain to you that you're not a lap-dog! Do you like wolfhounds specially better than any other kind of dog, Allan?"

"Not particularly," said Allan, patting the dog languidly as he put his head in a convenient place for the purpose. "Mother bought him, she said, because he would look so picturesque in my sick-room. She wanted him to lie at my feet or something. But he never saw it that way—neither did I. Hates sick-rooms. Don't blame him."

This was the longest speech Allan had made yet, and Phyllis learned several things from it that she had only guessed before. One was that the atmosphere of embodied grief and regret in the house had been Mrs. Harrington's, not Allan's—that he was more young and natural than she had thought; better material for cheering; that his mother's devotion had been something of a pressure on him at times; and that he himself was not interested in efforts to stage his illness correctly.

(What he really had said when the dog was introduced, she learned later from the attached Wallis, was that he might be a cripple, but he was n't going to be part of any confounded tableau. Whereupon his mother had cried for an hour, kissing and pitying him in between, and his night had been worse than usual. But the hound had stayed outside.)

Phyllis made an instant addition to her list. "One bull-pup, convenient size, for Allan." The plain cat could wait. She had heard of publicity campaigns; she had made up her mind, and a rather firm young mind it was, that she was going to conduct a cheerfulness campaign in behalf of this listless, beautiful, darkness-locked Allan of hers. Unknowingly, she was beginning to regard him as much her property as the check-book, and rather more so than the wolfhound. She moved back a little, and reconciled herself to the dog, who had draped as much of his body as would go over her, and was batting his tail against her joyfully.

"Poor old puppy," she said. "I want to talk over some plans with you, Allan," she began again determinedly. She was astonished to see Allan wince.

"Don't!" he said, "for Heaven's sake! You'll drive me crazy!"

Phyllis drew back a little indignantly, but behind the couch she saw Wallis making some sort of face that was evidently intended for a warning. Then he slipped out of the room, as if he wished her to follow soon and be explained to. "Plans" must be a forbidden subject. Anyhow, crossness was a better symptom than apathy!

"Very well," she said brightly, smiling her old useful cheering-a-bad-child library smile at him. "It was mostly about things I wanted to buy for myself, any way—satin slippers and such. I don't suppose they *would* interest a man much."

"Oh, that sort of thing," said Allan relievedly. "I thought you meant things that had to do with me. If you have plans about me, go

ahead, for you know I can't do anything to stop you—but for Heaven's sake, don't discuss it with me first!"

He spoke carelessly, but the pity of it struck to Phyllis's heart. It was true, he could n't stop her. His foolish, adoring little desperate mother, in her anxiety to have her boy taken good care of, had exposed him to a cruel risk. Phyllis knew herself to be trustworthy. She knew that she could no more put her own pleasures before her charge's welfare than she could steal his watch. Her conscience was New-England rock. But, oh! suppose Mr. De Guenther had chosen some girl who did n't care, who would have taken the money and not have done the work! She shivered at the thought of what Allan had escaped, and caught his hand impulsively, as she had on that other night of terror.

"Oh, Allan Harrington, I *would n't* do anything I ought n't to! I know it's dreadful, having a strange girl wished on you this way, but truly I mean to be as good as I can, and never in the way or anything! Indeed, you may trust me! You—you don't mind having me round, do you?"

Allan's cold hand closed kindly on hers. He spoke for the first time as a well man speaks, quietly, connectedly, and with a little authority.

"The fact that I am married to you does not weigh on me at all, my dear child," he said. "I shall be dead, you know, this time five years, and what difference does it make whether I'm married or not? I don't mind you at all. You seem a very kind and pleasant person. I am sure I can trust you. Now are you reassured?"

"Oh, *yes*," said Phyllis radiantly, "and you *can* trust me, and I *won't* fuss. All you have to do if I bore you is to look bored. You *can*, you know. You don't know how well you do it! And I'll stop. I'm going to ask Wallis how much of my society you'd better have, if any."

"Why, I don't think a good deal of it would hurt me," he said indifferently. But he smiled in a quite friendly fashion.

"All right," said Phyllis again brightly. But she fell silent then. There were two kinds of Allan, she reflected. This kind of Allan, who was very much more grown-up and wise than she was, and of whom she still stood a little in awe; and the little-boy Allan who had clung to her in nervous dread of the dark the other night—whom she had sent to sleep with children's stories. She wondered which was real, which he had been when he was well.

"I must go now and have something out with Mrs. Clancy," she said, smiling and rising. "She's perfectly certain carpets have to come up when you put down mattings, and I'm perfectly certain they don't."

She tucked the despised list, to which she had furtively added her bull-pup, into her sleeve, and took her hand from his and went away. It seemed to Allan that the room was a little darker.

CHAPTER IX

OUTSIDE the sitting-room door stood Wallis, who had been lying in wait.

"I wanted to explain, madam, about the plans," he said. "It worries Mr. Allan. You see, madam, the late Mrs. Harrington was a great one for plans. She had, if I may say so, a new one every day, and she'd argue you deaf, dumb, and blind—not to speak ill of the dead—till you were fair beat out fighting it. Then you'd settle down to it—and next day there'd be another one, with Mrs. Harrington rooting for it just as hard, and you, with your mouth fixed for the other plan, so to speak, would have to give in to that. The plan she happened to have last always went through, because she fought for that as hard as she had for the others, and you were so bothered by then you did n't care what."

Wallis's carefully impersonal servant-English had slipped from him, and he was talking to Phyllis as man to man, but she was very glad of it. This was the sort of facts she had to elicit.

"When Mr. Allan was well," he went on, "he used to just laugh and say, 'All right, Mother darling,' and pet her and do his own way—he was always laughing and carrying on then, Mr. Allan—but after he was hurt, of course, he could n't get away, and the old madam, she'd sit by his couch by the hour, and he nearly wild, making plans for him. She'd spend weeks planning details of things over and over, never getting tired. And then off again to the next thing! It was all because she was so fond of him, you see. But if you'll pardon my saying so, madam"—Wallis was resuming his man-servant manners—"it was not always good for Mr. Allan."

"I think I understand," said Phyllis thoughtfully, as she and the wolfhound went to interview Mrs. Clancy. So that was why! She had imagined something of the sort. And she—she herself—was doubtless the outcome of one of Mrs. Harrington's long-detailed plans, insisted on to Allan till he had acquiesced for quiet's sake! . . . But he said now he did n't mind. She was somehow sure he would n't have said it if it had not been true. Then Wallis's other words came to her, "He was always laughing then," and suddenly there surged up in Phyllis a passionate resolve to give Allan back at least a little of his lightness of heart. He might be going to die—though she did n't believe it—but at least she could make things less monotonous and dark for him; and she would n't offer him plans! And if he objected when the plans rose up and hit him, why, the shock might do him good. She thought she was fairly sure of an ally in Wallis.

She cut her interview with Mrs. Clancy short. Allan, lying motionless, caught a green flash of her, crossing into her room to dress, another blue flash as she went out; dropped his eyelids and crossed his hands

to doze a little, an innocent and unwary Crusader. He did not know it, but a Plan was about to rise up and hit him. The bride his mother had left him as a parting legacy had gone out to order a string of blue beads, a bull-pup, a house, a motor, a banjo, and a rose-garden; as she went she added a talking machine to the list: and Allan was to be planted in the very centre of everything.

"Seems like a nice girl, Wallis," said Allan dreamily. And the discreet Wallis said nothing (though he knew a good deal) about his mistress's shopping-list.

"Yes, Mr. Allan," he conceded.

It was Phyllis Harrington's firm belief that Mr. De Guenther could produce anything anybody wanted at any time, or that, if he could n't, his wife could. So it was to him that she went on her quest for the rose-garden, with its incidental house. The rest of the items she thought she could get for herself. It was nearly the last of April, and she wanted a well-heated elderly mansion, preferably Colonial, not too unwieldy large, with as many rose-trees around it as her discretionary powers would stand. And she wanted it as near and as soon as possible. By the help of Mr. De Guenther, amused but efficient; Mrs. De Guenther, efficient but sentimental; and an agent who was efficient merely, she got very nearly what she wanted. Money could do a great deal more than a country minister's daughter had ever had any way of imagining. By its aid she found it possible to have furniture bought and placed inside a fortnight, even to a list of books set up in sliding sectional cases. She had hoped to buy those cases some day, one at a time, and getting them at one fell swoop seemed to her more arrogantly opulent than the purchase of the house and grounds—than even the big shiny phonograph. She had bought that herself, before there was a house to put it in, going on the principle that all men not professional musicians have a concealed passion for music that they can create themselves by merely winding up something. And—to anticipate—she found that as far as Allan was concerned she was quite right.

"But why do you take this very radical step, my dear?" asked Mrs. De Guenther gently, as she helped Phyllis choose furniture.

"I am going to try the only thing Allan's mother seems to have omitted," said Phyllis dauntlessly. "A complete change of surroundings."

"Oh, my dear!" breathed Mrs. De Guenther. "It may help poor Allan more than we know! And dear Angela did discuss moving often, but she could never bear to leave the city house, where so many of her dear ones has passed away."

"Well, none of *my* dear ones are going to pass away there," said Phyllis irreverently, "unless Mrs. Clancy wants to. I'm not even taking any servants but Wallis. The country-house does n't need any more than

a cook, a chambermaid, and an outdoor man. Mrs. Clancy is getting them. I told her I did n't care what age or color she chose, but they had to be cheerful. She will stay in the city and keep the others straight, on something she calls board-wages. I'm starting absolutely fresh."

They were back at Mrs. De Guenther's house by the time Phyllis was done telling her plans, Phyllis sitting in the identical pluffy chair where she had made her decision to marry Allan. Mrs. De Guenther sprang from her own chair, and came over and impulsively kissed her.

"God bless you, my dear!" she said. "I believe it was Heaven that inspired Albert and myself to choose you to carry on poor Angela's work."

Phyllis flushed indignantly.

"I'm undoing a little of it, I hope," she said passionately. "If I can only make that poor boy forget some of those dreadful years she spent crying over him, I shan't have lived in vain!"

Mrs. De Guenther looked at Phyllis earnestly—and, most unexpectedly, burst into a little tinkling laugh.

"My dear," she said mischievously, "what about all the fine things you were going to do for yourself to make up for being tied to poor Allan? You should really stop being unselfish, and enjoy yourself a little."

Phyllis felt herself flushing crimson. Elderly people did seem to be so sentimental!

"I've bought myself lots of things," she defended herself. "Most of this is really for me. And—I can't help being good to him. It's only common humanity. I was never so sorry for anybody in my life—you'd be, too, if it were Mr. De Guenther!"

She thought her explanation was complete. But she must have said something that she did not realize, for Mrs. De Guenther only laughed her little tinkling laugh again, and—as is the fashion of elderly people—kissed her.

"I would, indeed, my dear," said she.

CHAPTER X

ALLAN HARRINGTON lay in his old attitude on his couch in the darkened day-room, his tired, clear-cut face a little thrown back, eyes half-closed. He was not thinking of anything or any one especially; merely wrapped in a web of the dragging, empty gray half-thoughts of weariness in general, that had hung about him so many years. Wallis was not there. Wallis had been with him much less lately, and he had scarcely seen Phyllis for a fortnight; or, for the matter of that, the dog, or any one at all. Something was going on, he supposed, but he scarcely troubled himself to wonder what. The girl was doubtless making herself boudoirs

or something of the sort in a new part of the house. He closed his eyes entirely, there in the dusky room, and let the web of dreary gray formless thought wrap him again.

Phyllis's gay, sweetly carrying voice rang from outside the door:

"The three-thirty, then, Wallis, and I feel as if I were going to steal Charlie Ross! Well——"

On the last word she broke off and pushed the sitting-room door softly open and slid in. She walked in a pussy-cat fashion which would have suggested to any one watching her a dark burden on her conscience.

She crossed straight to the couch, looked around for the chair that should have been by it but was n't, and sat absently down on the floor. She liked floors.

"Allan!" she said.

No answer.

"Allan *Harrington!*"

Still none. Allan was half-asleep, or, what did instead, in one of his abstracted moods.

"*All-an Harrington!*"

This time she reached up and pulled at his heavy silk sleeve as she spoke.

"Yes," said Allan courteously, as if from an infinite distance.

"Would you mind," asked Phyllis guilelessly, "if Wallis—we—moved you—a little? I can tell you all about everything, unless you'd rather not have the full details of the plan——"

"Anything," said Allan wearily from the depths of his gray cloud; "only don't *bother* me about it!"

Phyllis jumped to her feet, a whirl of gay blue skirts and cheerfully tossing blue feathers. "Good-by, dear Crusader!" she said with a catch in her voice that might have been either a laugh or a sob. "The next time you see me you'll probably *hate* me! Wallis!"

Wallis appeared like the Slave of the Lamp. "It's all right, Wallis," she said, and ran. Wallis proceeded thereupon to wheel his master's couch into the bedroom.

"If you're going to be moved, you'd better be dressed a little heavier, sir," he said with the same amiable guilelessness, if the victim had but noticed it, which Phyllis had used from her seat on the floor not long before.

"Very well," said Allan resignedly from his cloud. And Wallis proceeded to suit the action to the word.

Allan let him go on in unnoticing silence till it came to that totally unfamiliar thing these seven years, a stand-up collar. A shingly new linen collar of the newest cut, a beautiful golden-brown knit tie, a gray suit——

"What on earth?" inquired Allan, awakening from his lethargy.

"I don't need a collar and tie to keep me from getting cold on a journey across the house. And where did you get those clothes? They look new."

Wallis laid his now fully dressed master back to a reclining position—he had been propped up—and tucked a handkerchief into the appropriate pocket as he replied, "Grant & Moxley's, sir, where you always deal." And he wheeled the couch back to the day-room, over to its very door.

It did not occur to Allan, as he was being carried downstairs by Wallis and Arthur, another of the servants, that anything more than a change of rooms was intended; nor, as he was carried out the door to a long, closed carriage, that it was anything worse than his new keeper's mistaken idea that drives would be good for him. He was a little irritable at the length and shut-upness of the drive, though, as his cot had been swung deftly from the ceiling of the carriage, he was not jarred. But when Wallis and Arthur carried the light pallet on which he lay swiftly up a plank walk laid to the door of a private car—why, then it began to occur to Allan Harrington that something was happening. And—which rather surprised himself—he did not lift a supercilious eyebrow and say in a soft, apathetic voice, "Very we-ell!" Instead, he turned his head toward the devoted Wallis, who had helped two conductors swing the cot from the ceiling, and was now waiting for the storm to break. And what he said to Wallis was this:

"What the deuce does this tomfoolery mean?" As he spoke he felt the accumulated capacity for temper of the last seven years surging up toward Wallis, and Arthur, and Phyllis, and the carriage-horses, and everything else, down to the two conductors. Wallis seemed rather relieved than otherwise. Waiting for a storm to break is rather wearing.

"Well, sir, Mrs. Harrington, she thought, sir, that—that a little move would do you good. And you did n't want to be bothered, sir——"

"Bothered!" shouted Allan, not at all like a bored and dying invalid. "I should think I did, when a change in my whole way of life is made! Who gave you, or Mrs. Harrington, permission for this outrageous performance! It's sheer, brutal, insulting idiocy!"

"Nobody, sir—yes, sir," replied Wallis meekly. "Would you care for a drink, sir—or anything?"

"No!" thundered Allan.

"Or a fan?" ventured Wallis, approaching near with that article and laying it on the coverlid. Allan's hand snatched the fan angrily—and before he thought he had hurled it at Wallis! Weakly, it is true, for it lighted ingloriously about five feet away; but he had *thrown* it, with a movement that must have put to use the muscles of the long-disused upper arm. Wallis sat suddenly down and caught his breath.

"Mr. Allan!" he said. "Do you know what you did then? You *threw*, and you have n't been able to use more than your fore-arm before! Oh, Mr. Allan, you're getting better!"

Allan himself lay in astonishment at his feat, and forgot to be angry for a moment. "I certainly did!" he said.

"And the way you lost your temper!" went on Wallis enthusiastically. "Oh, Mr. Allan, it was beautiful! You have n't been more than to say snarly since the accident! It was so like the way you used to throw hair-brushes——"

But at the mention of his lost temper Allan remembered to lose it still farther. His old capacity for storming, a healthy lad's healthy young hot-temperedness, had been weakened by long disuse, but he did fairly well. Secretly it was a pleasure to him to find that he was alive enough to care what happened, enough for anger. He demanded presently where he was going.

"Not more than two hours' ride, sir, I heard Mr. De Guenther mention," answered Wallis at once. "A little place called Wallraven—quite country, sir, I believe."

"So the De Guenthers are in it, too!" said Allan. "What the dickens has this girl done to them, to hypnotize them so?"

"But I've heard say it's a very pretty place, sir," was all Wallis vouchsafed to this. The De Guenthers were not the only people Phyllis had hypnotized.

He gave Allan other details as they went on, however. His clothes and personal belongings were coming on immediately. There were two suit-cases, perhaps he had noticed, in the car with them. The young madam was planning to stay all the summer, he believed. Mrs. Clancy had been left behind to look after the other servants, and he understood that she had seen to the engagement of a fresh staff of servants for the country. And Allan, still awakened by his fit of temper, and fresh from the monotony of his seven years' seclusion, found all the things Wallis could tell him very interesting.

Phyllis's rose-garden house had, among other virtues, the charm of being near the little station; a new little mission station which had apparently been called Wallraven by some poetic young real-estate agency, for the surrounding countryside looked country enough to be a Gray's Corners, or Smith's Crossing, or some other such placid old country name. There were more trees to be seen in Allan's quick passage from the train to the long old carryall (whose seats had been removed to make room for his cot) than he had remembered existed. There were sleepy birds to be heard, too, talking about how near sunset and their bedtime had come, and a little brook splashed somewhere out of sight. Altogether spring was to be seen and heard and felt, winningly insistent. Allan forgave Wallis, not to speak of Phyllis and the conductors, to a certain degree. He ordered the flapping black oilcloth curtain in front rolled

up so he could see out, and secretly enjoyed the drive, unforeseen though it had been. His spine never said a word. Perhaps it, too, enjoyed having a change from a couch in a dark city room.

They saw no one in their passage through the long, low old house. Phyllis evidently had learned that Allan did n't like his carryings about done before people.

Wallis seemed to be acting under a series of detailed orders. He and Arthur carried their master to a long, well-lighted room at the end of the house, and deftly transferred him to a couch much more convenient, being newer, than the old one. On this he was wheeled to his adjoining bedroom, and when Wallis had made him comfortable there, he left mysteriously for a while. It was growing dark by now, and the lights were on. They were rose-shaded, Allan noticed, as the others had been at home. Allan watched the details of his room with that vivid interest in little changes which only invalids can know. There was an old-fashioned landscape story paper on the walls, with very little repeat. Over it, but not where they interfered with tracing out the adventures of the paper people, were a good many pictures, quite incongruous, for they were of the Remington type men like, but pleasant to see nevertheless. The furniture was chintz-covered and gay. There was not one thing in the room to remind a man that he was an invalid. It occurred to Allan that Phyllis must have put a good deal of deliberate work on the place. He lay contentedly, watching the grate fire, and trying to trace out the story of the paper, for at least a half-hour. He found himself, at length, much to his own surprise, thinking with a certain longing of his dinner-tray. He was thinking of it more and more interestedly by the time Wallis—trayless—came back.

"Mr. and Mrs. De Guenther and the young madam are waiting for you in the living-room," he announced. "They would be glad if you would have supper with them."

"Very well," said Allan amiably, still much to his own surprise. The truth was, he was still enough awake and interested to want to go on having things happen.

The room Wallis wheeled him back into was a long, low one, wainscoted and bare-floored. It was furnished with the best imitation Chipendale to be obtained in a hurry, but over and above there were cushioned chairs and couches enough for solid comfort. There were more cheerful pictures, the Maxfield Parrishes Phyllis had wanted, over the green-papered walls. There was fire here also. The room had no more period than a girl's sentence, but there was a bright air of welcomeness and informality that was winning. An old-fashioned half-table against the wall was covered with a great many picnicky things to eat. Another table had more things, mostly to eat with, on it. And there were the

De Guenthers and Phyllis. On the whole it felt very like a welcome-home.

Phyllis, in a satiny rose-colored gown he had never seen before, came over to his couch to meet him. She looked very apprehensive and young and wistful for the rôle of Bold Bad Hypnotist. She bent toward him with her hand out, seemed about to speak, then backed, flushed, and acted generally as if something had frightened her badly.

"Is she as afraid of me as all that?" thought Allan. Wallis must have given her a lurid account of how he had behaved. His quick impulse was to reassure her.

"Well, Phyllis, my dear, you certainly did n't bother me with plans *this* time!" he said, smiling at her. "This is a bully surprise!"

"I—I'm glad you like it," said his wife shyly, still backing away.

"Of course he'd like it," said Mrs. De Guenther's kind staccato voice behind him. "Kiss your husband, and tell him he's welcome home, Phyllis child!"

Now, Phyllis was tired with much hurried work, and overstrung. And Allan, lying there smiling boyishly up at her, Allan seen for the first time in these usual-looking gray man-clothes, was like neither the marble Crusader she had feared nor the heartbroken little boy she had pitied. He was suddenly her contemporary, a very handsome and attractive young fellow, a little her senior. From all appearances, he might have been well and normal, and come home to her only a little tired, perhaps, by the day's work or sport, as he lay smiling at her in that friendly, intimate way! It was terrifyingly different. Everything felt different. All her little pieces of feeling for him, pity and awe and friendliness and love of service, seemed to spring suddenly together and make something else; something unplaced and disturbing. Her cheeks burned with a childish embarrassment as she stood there before him in her ruffled pink gown. What should she do?

It was just then that Mrs. De Guenther's crisply spoken advice came. Phyllis was one of those people whose first unconscious instinct is to obey an unspoken order. She bent blindly to Allan's lips, and kissed him with a child's obedience. Then she straightened up, aghast. He would think she was very bold!

But he did not, for some reason. It may have seemed only comforting and natural to him, that swift childish kiss, and Phyllis's honey-colored, violet-scented hair brushing his face. Men take a great deal without question as their rightful due.

The others closed around him then, welcoming him, laughing at the surprise and the way he had taken it, telling him all about it as if everything were as usual and pleasant as possible, and the present state of things had always been a pleasant commonplace. And Wallis began to serve the picnic supper.

CHAPTER XI

THERE were trays and little tables, and the food itself would have betrayed a Southern ducky in the kitchen if nothing else had. It was the first meal Allan had eaten with any one for years, and he found it so interesting as to be almost exciting. Wallis took the plates invisibly away when they were done, and they continued to stay in their half-circle about the fire and talk it all over. Phyllis, tired to death still, had slid to her favorite floor-seat, curled on cushions and leaning against the couch-side. Allan could have touched her hair with his hand. She thought of this, curled there, but she was too tired to move. It was exciting to be near him, somehow, tired as she was.

Most of the short evening was spent celebrating the fact that Allan had thrown something at Wallis, who was recalled to tell the story three times in detail. Then there was the house to discuss, its good and bad points, its nearnesses and farnesses.

"Let me tell you, Allan," said Mrs. De Guenther warmly at this point, from her seat at the foot of the couch, "this wife of yours is a wonder. Not many girls could have had a house in this condition two weeks after it was bought."

Allan looked down at the heap of shining hair below him, all he could see of Phyllis.

"Yes," he said consideringly. "She certainly is."

At a certain slowness in his tone, Phyllis sprang up. "You must be tired to *death!*" she said. "It's nearly ten. Do you feel worn out?"

Before he could say anything, Mrs. De Guenther had also risen, and was sweeping away her husband.

"Of course he is," she said decisively. "What have we all been thinking of? And we must go to bed, too, Albert, if we are going to take that early train in the morning. Good-night, children."

Wallis had appeared by this time, and was wheeling Allan from the room before he had a chance to say much of anything but good-night. The De Guenthers talked a little longer to Phyllis, and were gone also. Phyllis flung herself full-length on the rugs and pillows before the fire, too tired to move further.

Well, she had everything that she had wished for on that wet February day in the library. Money, leisure to be pretty, a husband whom she "did n't have to associate with much," rest, if she ever gave herself leave to take it, and the rose-garden. She had her wishes, as uncannily fulfilled as if she had been ordering her fate from a department store, and had money to pay for it. . . . And back there in the city it was somebody's late night, and that somebody—it would be Anna Black's turn, would n't it?—was struggling with John Zanowskis and Sadie Rabinowitzes by the lapful, just as she had. And yet—and yet they

had really cared for her, those dirty, dear little foreigners of hers. But she'd had to work for their liking. . . . Perhaps—perhaps she could make Allan Harrington like her as much as the children did. He had been so kind to-night about the move and all, and so much brighter, her handsome Allan in his gray, every-day-looking man-clothes! If she could stay brave enough and kind enough and bright enough. . . . her eyelids drooped. . . . Wallis was standing respectfully over her.

"Mrs. Harrington," he was saying, with a really masterly ignoring of her attitude on the rug, "Mr. Harrington says you have n't bid him good-night yet."

An amazing message! Had she been in the habit of it, that he demanded it like a small boy? But she sprang up and followed Wallis into Allan's room. He was lying back in his white silk sleeping things among the white bed-draperies, looking as he always had before. Only, he seemed too alive and awake still for his old rôle of Crusader-on-a-tomb.

"Phyllis," he began eagerly, as she sat down beside him, "what made you so frightened when I first came? Wallis had n't worried you, had he?"

"Oh, no, it was n't that at all," said Phyllis. "And thank you for being so generous about it all."

"I was n't generous," said her husband. "I behaved like everything to old Wallis about it. Well, what was it, then?"

"I—I—only—you looked so different in—*clothes*," pleaded Phyllis, "like any man my age or older—as if you might get up and go to business, or play tennis, or anything, and—and I was *afraid* of you! That's all, truly!"

She was sitting on the bed's edge, her eyes down, her hands quivering in her lap, the picture of a school-girl who is n't quite sure whether she's been good or not.

"Why, that sounds truthful!" said Allan, and laughed. It was the first time she had heard him, and she gave a start. Such a clear, cheerful, *young* laugh! Maybe he would laugh more, by and by, if she worked hard to make him.

"Good-night, Allan," she said.

"Are n't you going to kiss me good-night?" demanded this new Allan, precisely as if she had been doing it ever since she met him. Evidently that kiss three hours ago had created a precedent. Phyllis colored to her ears. She seemed to herself to be always coloring now. But she must n't cross Allan, tired as he must be!

"Good-night, Allan," she said again sedately, and kissed his cheek as she had done a month ago—years ago!—when they had been married. Then she fled.

"Wallis," said his master dreamily when his man appeared again, "I want some more real clothes. Tired of sleeping-suits. Get me some, please. Good-night."

As for Phyllis, in her little green-and-white room above him, she was crying comfortably into her pillow. She had not the faintest idea why, except that she liked doing it. She felt, through her sleepiness, a faint, hungry, pleasant want of something, though she had n't an idea what it could be. She had everything, except that it was n't time for the roses to be out yet. Probably that was the trouble. . . . Roses. . . . She, too, went to sleep.

"How did Mr. Allan pass the night?" Phyllis asked Wallis anxiously, standing outside his door next morning. She had been up since seven, speeding the parting guests and interviewing the cook and chambermaid. Mrs. Clancy's choice had been cheerful to a degree, and black, all of it; a fat Virginia cook, a slim young Tuskegee chambermaid of a pale saddle-color, and a shiny brown outdoor man who came from nowhere in particular, but was very useful now he was here. Phyllis had seen them all this morning, and found them everything servants should be. Now she was looking after Allan, as her duty was.

Wallis beamed from against the door-post, his tray in his hands.

"Mrs. Harrington, it's one of the best sleeps Mr. Allan's had! Four hours straight, and then sleeping still, if broken, till six! And still taking interest in things. Oh, ma'am, you should have heard him yesterday on the train, as furious as furious! It was beautiful!"

"Then his spine was n't jarred," said Phyllis thoughtfully. "Wallis, I believe there was more nervous shock and nervous depression than ever the doctors realized. And I believe all he needs is to be kept happy, to be much, much better. Would n't it be wonderful if he got so he could move freely from the waist up? I believe that may happen if we can keep him cheered and interested."

Wallis looked down at his tray. "Yes, ma'am," he said. "Not to speak ill of the dead, Mrs. Harrington, the late Mrs. Harrington, was always saying 'My poor stricken boy,' and things like that—'Do not jar him with ill-timed light or merriment,' and reminding him how bad he was. And she certainly did n't jar him with any merriment, ma'am."

"What were the doctors thinking about?" demanded Phyllis indignantly.

"Well, ma'am, they did all sorts of things to poor Mr. Allan for the first year or so. And then, as nothing seemed to help, and they could n't find out what was wrong to have paralyzed him so, he begged to have them stopped hurting him. So we have n't had one for the past five years."

"I think a masseur and a wheel-chair are the next things to get," said Phyllis decisively. "And remember, Wallis, there's something the matter with Mr. Allan's shutters. They won't always close the sunshine out as they should."

Wallis almost winked, if an elderly, mutton-chopped servitor can be imagined as winking.

"No, ma'am," he promised. "Something very wrong with 'em. I'll remember, ma'am."

Phyllis went singing on down the sunny old house, swinging her colored muslin skirts and prancing a little with sheer joy of being twenty-five, and prettily dressed, with a dear house all her own, and—yes—a dear Allan a little her own, too! Doing well for a man what another woman has done badly has a perennial joy for a certain type of woman, and this was what Phyllis was in the very midst of. She pranced a little more, and came almost straight up against a long old mirror with gilt cornices, which had come with the house and was staying with it. Phyllis stopped and looked critically at herself.

"I have n't taken time yet to be pretty," she reminded the girl in the glass, and began then and there to take account of stock, by way of beginning. Why—a good deal had done itself! Her hair had been washed and sunned and sunned and washed about every ten minutes since she had been away from the library. It was springy and three shades more golden. She had not been rushing out in all weathers unveiled, nor washing hastily with hard water and cheap library soap eight or ten times a day, because private houses are comparatively clean places. So her complexion had been getting back, unnoticed, a good deal of its original country rose-and-cream, with a little gold glow underneath. And the tired heaviness was gone from her eyelids, because she had scarcely used her eyes since she had married Allan—there had been too much else to do! The little frown-lines between the brows had gone, too, with the need of reading-glasses and work under electricity. She was more rounded, and her look was less intent. The strained Liberry Teacher look was gone. The luminous long blue eyes in the glass looked back at her girlishly. "Would you think we were twenty-five even?" they said. Phyllis smiled irrepressibly at the mirrored girl.

"Yas, 'm," said the rich and comfortable voice of Lily-Anna, the cook, from the dining-room door; "you sholy is pretty. Yas, 'm—a lady *wants* to stay pretty when she's married. Yo' don' look much mo'n a bride, ma'am, an' dat's a fac'. Does you want yo' dinnehs brought into de sittin'-room regular till de gem'man gits well?"

"Yes—no—yes—for the present, any way," said Phyllis, with a mixture of confusion and dignity. Fortunately the doorbell chose this time to ring.

A business-like young messenger with a rocking crate wanted to speak to the madam. The last item on Phyllis's shopping list had come.

"The wolfhound's doing fine, ma'am," the messenger answered in response to her questions. "Like a different dog already. All he needed was exercise and a little society. Yes, 'm, this pup's broken—in a

manner, that is. Your man picked you out the best-tempered little feller in the litter. Here, Foxy—careful, lady! Hold onto his leash!”

There was the passage of the check, a few directions about dog-biscuits, and then the messenger from the kennels drove back to the station, the crate, which had been emptied of a wriggling six-months-old black bull-dog, on the seat beside him.

CHAPTER XII

ALLAN, lying at the window of the sunny bed-room, and wondering if they had been having springs like this all the time he had lived in the city, heard a scuffle outside the door. His wife's voice inquired breathlessly of Wallis, “Can Mr. Allan—see me? . . . Oh, gracious—*don't*, Foxy, you little black gargoyle! Open the door, or—shut it—quick, Wallis!”

But the door, owing to circumstances over which nobody but the black dog had any control, flew violently open here, and Allan had a flying vision of his wife, flushed, laughing, and badly mussed, being railroaded across the room by a prancingly exuberant French bull at the end of a leash.

“He's—he's a cheerful dog,” panted Phyllis, trying to bring Foxy to anchor near Allan, “and I don't think he knows how to keep still long enough to pose across your feet—he would n't become them anyhow—he's a real man-dog, Allan, not an interior decoration. . . . Oh, Wallis, he has Mr. Allan's slipper! Foxy, you little fraud! Did him want a drink, angel-puppy?”

“Did you get him for me, Phyllis?” asked Allan when the tumult and the shouting had died, and the caracoling Foxy had buried his hideous little black pansy-face in a costly Belleek dish of water.

“Yes,” gasped Phyllis from her favorite seat, the floor; “but you need n't keep him unless you want to. I can keep him where you'll never see him—can't I, honey-doggums? Only I thought he'd be company for you, and don't you think he seems—cheerful?”

Allan threw his picturesque head back on the cushions, and laughed and laughed.

“Cheerful!” he said. “Most assuredly! Why—thank you, ever so much, Phyllis. You're an awfully thoughtful girl. I always did like bulls—had one in college, a Nelson. Come here, you little rascal!”

He whistled, and the puppy lifted its muzzle from the water, made a dripping dash to the couch, and scrambled up over Allan as if they had owned each other since birth. Never was a dog less weighed down by the glories of ancestry.

Allan pulled the flopping bat-ears with his most useful hand, and asked with interest, “Why on earth did they call a French bull Foxy?”

"Yes, sir," said Wallis. "I understand, sir, that he was the most active and playful of the litter, and chewed up all his brothers' ears, sir. And the kennel people thought it was so clever that they called him Foxy."

"The best-tempered dog in the litter!" cried Phyllis, bursting into helpless laughter from the floor.

"That does n't mean he's bad-tempered," explained master and man eagerly together. Phyllis began to see that she had bought a family pet as much for Wallis as for Allan. She left them adoring the dog with that reverent emotion which only very ugly bull-dogs can wake in a man's breast, and flitted out, happy over the success of her new toy for Allan.

"Take him out when he gets too much for Mr. Allan," she managed to say softly to Wallis as she passed him. But, except for a run or so for his health, Wallis and Allan between them kept the dog in the bed-room most of the day. Phyllis, in one of her flying visits, found the little fellow, tired with play, dog-biscuits, and other attentions, snuggled down by his master, his little crumpled black muzzle on the pillow close to Allan's contented, sleeping face. She felt as if she wanted to cry. The pathetic lack of interests which made the coming of a new little dog such an event!

Before she hung one more picture, before she set up even a book from the boxes which had been her father's, before she arranged one more article of furniture, she telephoned to the village for the regular delivery of four daily papers, and a half-dozen of the most masculine magazines she could think of on the library lists. She had never known of Allan's doing any reading. That he had cared for books before the accident, she knew. At any rate, she was resolved to leave no point uncovered that might, just possibly *might*, help her Allan just a little way to interest in life, which she felt to be the way to recovery. He liked being told stories to, any way.

"Do you think Mr. Allan will feel like coming into the living-room to-day?" she asked Wallis, meeting him in the hall about two o'clock.

"Why, he's dressed, ma'am," was Wallis's astonishing reply, "and him and the pup is having a fine game of play. He's got more use of that hand an' arm, ma'am, than we thought."

"Do you think he'd care to be wheeled into the living-room about four?" asked Phyllis.

"For tea, ma'am?" inquired Wallis, beaming. "I should think so, ma'am. I'll ask, anyhow."

Phyllis had not thought of tea—one does not stop for such leisurely amenities in a busy public library—but she saw the beauty of the idea, and saw to it that the tea was there. Lily-Anna was a jewel. She built the fire up to a bright flame, and brought in some daffodils from the garden without a word from her mistress. Phyllis herself saw that the

phonograph was in readiness to play, and cleared a space for the couch, near the fire. There was quite a festal feeling.

The talking-machine was also a surprise for Allan. Phyllis thought afterward that she should have saved it for another day, but the temptation to grace the occasion with it was too strong. She and Allan were as excited over it as a couple of children, and the only drawback to Allan's enjoyment was that he obviously wanted to take the records out of her unaccustomed fingers and adjust them himself. He knew how, it appeared, and Phyllis naturally did n't. However, she managed to follow his directions successfully. She had bought recklessly of rag-time discs, and provided a fair amount of opera selections. Allan seemed equally happy over both. After the thing had been playing for three-quarters of an hour, and most of the records were exhausted, Phyllis rang for tea. It was getting a little darker now, and the wood-fire cast fantastic red and black lights and shadows over the room. It was very intimate and thrilling to Phyllis suddenly, the fire-and-lamp-lit room, with just their two selves there. Allan, on his couch before the fire, looked bright and contented. The adjustable couch-head had been braced to such a position that he was almost sitting up. The bull-dog, who had lately come back from a long walk with the gratified outdoor man, snored regularly on the rug near his master, wakening enough to bat his tail on the floor if he was referred to. The little tea-table was between Allan and Phyllis, crowned with a bunch of apple-blossoms, whose spring-like scent dominated the warm room. Phyllis, in her green gown, her cheeks pink with excitement, was waiting on her lord and master a little silently.

Allan watched her amusedly for awhile—she was as intent as a good child over her tea-ball and her lemon and her little cakes.

"Say something, Phyllis," he suggested with the touch of mischief she was not yet used to, coming from him.

"This is a serious matter," she replied gravely. "Do you know I have n't made tea—afternoon tea, that is—for so long it's a wonder I know which is the cup and which is the saucer?"

"Why not?" he asked idly, yet interestedly too.

"I was otherwise occupied. I was a Daughter of Toil," explained Phyllis serenely, setting down her own cup to relax in her chair, hands behind her head; looking, in her rosy gown, the picture of graceful, strong young indolence. "I was a librarian—did n't you know?"

"No. I wish you'd tell me, if you don't mind," said Allan. "About you, I mean, Phyllis. Do you know, I feel awfully married to you this afternoon—you've bullied me so much it's no wonder—and I really ought to know about my wife's dark past."

Phyllis's heart beat a little faster. She, too, had felt "awfully married" here alone with Allan in the firelit living-room.

"There is n't much to tell," she said soberly.

"Come over here closer," commanded Allan the spoilt. "We've both had all the tea we want. Come close by the couch. I want to see you when you talk."

Phyllis did as he ordered.

"I was a New England country minister's daughter," she began. "New England country ministers always know lots about Greek and Latin and how to make one dollar do the work of one-seventy-five, but they never have any dollars left when the doing's over. Father and I lived alone together always, and he taught me things, and I petted him—fathers need it, specially when they have country congregations—and we did n't bother much about other folks. Then he—died. I was eighteen, and I had six hundred dollars. I could n't do arithmetic, because Father had always said it was left out of my head, and I need n't bother with it; so I could n't teach. So they said, 'You like books, and you'd better be a librarian.' As a matter of fact, a librarian never gets a chance to read, but you can't explain that to the general public. So I came to the city and took the course at a library school. Then I got a position in the Greenway Branch—two years in the circulating desk, four in the cataloguing room, and one in the Children's Department. The short and simple annals of the poor!"

"Go on," said Allan.

"I believe it's merely that you like the sound of the human voice," said Phyllis, laughing. "I'm going to go on with the story of the Five Little Pigs—you'll enjoy it just as much!"

"Exactly," said Allan. "Tell me what it was like in the library, please."

"It was rather interesting," said Phyllis, yielding at once. "There are so many different things to be done that you never feel any monotony, as I suppose a teacher does. But the hours are not much shorter than a department store's, and it's exacting, on-your-feet work all the time. I liked the work with the children best. Only—you never have any time to be anything but neat in a library, and you do get so tired of being just neat, if you're a girl."

"And a pretty one," said Allan. "I don't suppose the ugly ones mind as much."

It was the first thing he had ever said about her looks. Phyllis's ready color came into her cheeks. So he thought she was pretty!

"Do you—think I'm pretty?" she asked breathlessly. She could n't help it.

"Of course I do, you little goose," said Allan, smiling at her.

Phyllis plunged back into the middle of her story:

"You see, you can't sit up nights to sew much, or practise doing your hair new ways, because you need all your strength to get up when

the alarm-clock barks next morning. And then, there's always the money-worry, if you have nothing but your salary. Of course, this last year, when I've been getting fifty dollars a month, things have been all right. But when it was only thirty a month in the Circulation—well, that was pretty hard pulling," said Phyllis thoughtfully. "But the worst—the worst, Allan, was waking up nights and wondering what would happen if you broke down for a long time. Because you *can't* very well save for sickness-insurance on even fifty a month. And the work—well, of course, most girls' work is just a little more than they have the strength for always. But I was awfully lucky to get into children's work. Some of my imps, little Poles and Slovaks and Hungarians mostly, are the cleverest, most affectionate babies——"

She began to tell him stories of wonderful ten-year-olds who were Socialists by conviction, and read economics, and dazed little atypical sixteen-year-olds who read Mother Goose, and stopped even that because they got married.

"You poor little girl!" said Allan, unheeding. "What brutes they were to you! Well, thank Heaven, that's over now!"

"Why, Allan!" she said, laying a soothing hand on his. "Nobody was a brute. There's never more than one crank-in-authority in any library, they say. Ours was the Supervisor of the Left Half of the Desk, and after I got out of Circulation I never saw anything of her."

Allan burst into unexpected laughter. "It sounds like a Chinese title of honor," he explained. "'Grand Warder of the Emperor's Left Slipper-Rosette,' or something of the sort."

"The Desk's where you get your books stamped," she explained, "and the two shifts of girls who attend to that part of the work each have a supervisor—the Right and Left halves. The one that was horrid had favorites, and snapped at the ones that were n't. I was n't under her, though. My supervisor was lovely, an Irishwoman with the most florid hats, and the kindest, most just disposition, and always laughing. We all adored her, she was so fair-minded."

"You think a good deal about laughing," said Allan thoughtfully. "Does it rank as a virtue in libraries, or what?"

"You have to laugh," explained Phyllis. "If you don't see the laugh-side of things, you see the cry-side. And you can't afford to be unhappy if you have to earn your living. People like brightness best. And it's more comfortable for yourself, once you get used to it."

"So that was your philosophy of life," said Allan. His hand tightened compassionately on hers. "You *poor* little girl! . . . Tell me about the cry-side, Phyllis."

His voice was very moved and caressing, and the darkness was deepening as the fire sank. Only an occasional tongue of flame glinted across Phyllis's silver slipper-buckle and on the seal-ring Allan wore. It was

easy to tell things there in the perfumed duskiness. It was so dark, and the hand keeping hers in the shadows might have been any kind, comforting hand. She found herself pouring it all out to Allan, there close by her; the loneliness, the strain, the hard work, the lack of all the woman-things in her life, the isolation and dreariness at night, the over-fatigue, and the hurt of watching youth and womanhood sliding away, unused, with nothing to show for all the years; only a cold hope that her flock of little transient aliens might be a little better for the guidance she could give them—

Years hence in rustic speech a phrase,
As in rude earth a Grecian vase.

And then, that wet, discouraged day in February, and the vision of Eva Atkinson, radiantly fresh and happy, kept young and pretty by unlimited money and time.

“Her children were so pretty,” said Phyllis wistfully, “and mine, dear little villains, were such dirty, untaught, rude little things—oh, it sounds snobbish, but I’d have given everything I had to have a dainty, clean little *lady*-child throw her arms around me and kiss me, instead of my pet little handsome, sticky Polish Jewess. Up at home everything had been so clean and old and still that you always could remember it had been finished for three hundred years. And Father’s clean, still old library——”

Phyllis did not know how she was revealing to Allan the unconscious motherhood in her; but Allan, femininely sensitive to unspoken things from his long sojourn in the dark—Allan did. It was the mother-instinct that she was spending on him, but mother-instinct of a kind he had never known before; gayly self-effacing, efficient, shown only in its results. And she could never have anything else to spend it on, he thought. Well, he was due to die in a few years. . . . But he did n’t want to. Living was just beginning to be interesting again, somehow. There seemed no satisfactory solution for the two of them. . . . Well, he’d be unselfish and die, any way. Meanwhile, why not be happy? Here was Phyllis. His hand clasped on hers more closely.

“And when Mr. De Guenther made me that offer,” she murmured, coloring in the darkness, “I was tired and discouraged, and the years seemed so endless! It did n’t seem as though I’d be harming any one—but I would n’t have done it if you’d said a word against it—truly I would n’t, dear.”

The last little word slipped out unnoticed. She had been calling her library children “dear” for a year now, and the word slipped out of itself. But Allan liked it.

“My poor little girl!” he said. “In your place I’d have married the devil himself—up against a life like that.”

"Then—then you don't—mind?" asked Phyllis anxiously, as she had asked before.

"No, indeed!" said Allan, with a little unnecessary firmness. "I told you that, did n't I? I like it."

"So you did tell me," she said penitently.

"But supposing De Guenther had n't picked out some one like you——"

"That's just what I've often thought myself," said Phyllis naïvely. "She might have been much worse than I. . . . Oh, but I was frightened when I saw you first! I did n't know what you'd be like. And then, when I looked at you——"

"Well, when you looked at me?" demanded Allan.

But Phyllis refused to go on.

"But that's not all," said Allan. "What about—men?"

"What men?" asked Phyllis innocently.

"Why, men you were interested in, of course," he answered.

"There were n't any," said Phyllis. "I had n't any place to meet them, or anywhere to entertain them if I had met them. Oh, yes, there was one—an old bookkeeper at the boarding-house. All the boarders there were old. That was why the people at home had chosen it. They thought it would be safe. It was all of that!"

"Well, the bookkeeper?" demanded Allan. "You're straying off from your narrative. The bookkeeper, Phyllis, my dear!"

"I'm telling you about him," protested Phyllis. "He was awfully cross because I would n't marry him, but I did n't see any reason why I should. I did n't like him especially, and I would probably have gone on with my work afterwards. There did n't seem to me there was anything to it for any one but him—for of course I'd have had his mending and all that to do when I came home from the library, and I scarcely got time for my own. But he lost his temper fearfully because I did n't want to. Then, of course, men would try to flirt, in the library, but the janitor always made them go out when you asked him to. He loved doing it. . . . Why, Allan, it must be seven o'clock! Shall I turn on more lights?"

"No. . . . Then you were quite as shut up in your noisy library as I was in my dark rooms," said Allan musingly.

"I suppose I was," she said, "though I never thought of it before. You must n't think it was horrid. It was fun, lots of it. Only, there was n't any being a real girl in it."

"There is n't much in this, I should think," said Allan savagely, "except looking after a big doll."

Phyllis's laughed tinkled out. "Oh, I *love* playing with dolls," she said mischievously. "And you ought to see my new slippers! I have pink ones and blue ones, and lavender and green, all satin and suède. And

when I get time I'm going to buy dresses to match. And a banjo, maybe, with a self-teacher. There's a room upstairs where nobody can hear a thing you do. I've wanted slippers and a banjo ever since I can remember."

"Then you're fairly happy?" demanded Allan suddenly.

"Why, of course!" said Phyllis, though she had not really stopped to ask herself before whether she was or not. There had been so many exciting things to do. "Would n't you be happy if you could buy everything you wanted, and every one was lovely to you, and you had pretty clothes and a lovely house—and a rose-garden?"

"Yes—if I could buy everything I wanted," said Allan. His voice dragged a little. Phyllis sprang up, instantly penitent.

"You're tired, and I've been talking and talking about my silly little woes till I've worn you out!" she said. "But—Allan, you're getting better. Try to move this arm. The hand I'm holding. There! That's a lot more than you could do when I first came. I think—I think it would be a good plan for a masseur to come down and see it."

"Now, look here, Phyllis," protested Allan, "I like your taste in houses and music-boxes and bull-dogs, but I'll be hanged if I'll stand for a masseur. There's no use, they can't do me any good, and the last one almost killed me. There's no reason why I should be tormented simply because a professional pounder needs the money."

"No, no!" said Phyllis. "Not that kind! Wallis can have orders to shoot him or something if he touches your spinal column. All I meant was a man who would give the muscles of your arms and shoulders a little exercise. That could n't hurt, and might help you use them. That would n't be any trouble, would it? *Please!* The first minute he hurts you, you can send him flying. You know they call massage lazy people's exercise."

"I believe you're really interested in making me better," said Allan, after a long silence.

"Why, of course," said Phyllis, laughing. "That's what I'm here for!"

But this answer did not seem to suit Allan, for some reason. Phyllis said no more about the masseur. She only decided to summon him, any way. And presently Wallis came in and turned all the lights on.

CHAPTER XIII

IN due course of time June came. So did the masseur, and more flowered frocks for Phyllis, and the wheel-chair for Allan. The immediate effect of June was to bring out buds all over the rose-trees; of the flowered dresses, to make Phyllis very picturesquely pretty. As for the masseur, he had more effect than anything else. It was as Phyllis had

hoped: the paralysis of Allan's arms had been less permanent than any one had thought, and for perhaps the last three years there had been little more the matter than entire loss of strength and muscle-control, from long disuse. By the time they had been a month in the country Allan's use of his arms and shoulders was nearly normal, and Phyllis was having wild hopes, that she confided to no one but Wallis, of even more sweeping betterments. He slept much better, from the slight increase of activity, and also perhaps because Phyllis had coaxed him outdoors as soon as the weather became warm, and was keeping him there. Sometimes he lay in the garden on his couch, sometimes he sat up in the wheel-chair, almost always with Phyllis sitting or lying in her hammock near him, and the devoted Foxy pretending to hunt something near by.

There were occasional fits of the old depression and silence, when Allan would lie silently in his own room with his hands crossed and his eyes shut, answering no one—not even Foxy. Wallis and Phyllis respected these moods, and left him alone till they were over, but the adoring Foxy had no such delicacy of feeling. And it is hard to remain silently sunk in depression when an active small dog is imploring you by every means he knows to throw balls for him to run after. For the rest, Allan proved to have naturally a lighter heart and more carefree disposition than Phyllis. His natural disposition was buoyant. Wallis said that he had never had a mood in his life till the accident.

His attitude to his wife became more and more a taking-for-granted affection and dependence. It is to be feared that Phyllis spoiled him badly. But it was so long since she had been needed by any one person as Allan needed her! And he had such lovable, illogical, masculine ways of being wronged if he did n't get the requisite amount of petting, and grateful for foolish little favors and taking big ones for granted, that—entirely, as Phyllis insisted to herself, from a sense of combined duty and grateful interest—she would have had her pretty head removed and sent him by parcel-post, if he had idly suggested his possible need of a girl's head some time.

And it was so heavenly—oh, but it was heavenly there in Phyllis's rose-garden, with the colored flowers coming out, and the little green caterpillars roaming over the leaves, and pretty dresses to wear, and Foxy-dog to play with—and Allan! Allan demanded—no, not exactly demanded, but expected and got—so much of Phyllis's society in these days that she had learned to carry on all her affairs, even the house-keeping, out in her hammock by his wheel-chair or couch. She wore large, floppy white hats with roses on them, by way of keeping the sun off; but Allan, it appeared, did not think much of hats except as an ornament for girls, and his uncovered curly hair was burned to a sort of goldy-russet all through, and his pallor turned to a clear pale brown.

Phyllis looked up from her work one of these heavenly last-of-June

days, and tried to decide whether she really liked the change or not. Allan was handsomer, unquestionably, though that had hardly been necessary. But the resignedly statuesque look was gone.

Allan felt her look, and looked up at her. He had been reading a magazine, for Phyllis had succeeded in a large measure in reviving his tastes for magazines and books. "Well, Phyllis, my dear," said he, smiling, "what's the problem now? I feel sure there is something new going to be sprung on me—get the worst over!"

"You wrong me," she said, beginning to thread some more pink embroidery silk. "I was only wondering whether I liked you as well tanned as I did when you were so nice and white, back in the city."

"Cheerful thought!" said Allan, laying down his magazine entirely. "Shall I ring for Wallis and some peroxide? As you said the other day, 'I have to be approved of or I'm unhappy!'"

"Oh, it really does n't matter," said Phyllis mischievously. "You know, I married you principally for a rose-garden, and that's lovely!"

"I suppose I spoil the perspective," said Allan, unexpectedly ruffled.

Phyllis leaned forward in her blossom-dotted draperies and stroked his hand, that long carven hand she so loved to watch.

"Not a bit, Allan," she said, laughing at him. "You're exceedingly decorative! I remember the first time I saw you I thought you looked exactly like a marble knight on a tomb."

Allan—Allan the listless, tranced invalid of four months before—threw his head back and shouted with laughter.

"I suppose I serve the purpose of garden statuary," he said. "We used to have some horrors when I was a kid. I remember two awful bronze deer that always looked as if they were trying not to get their feet wet, and a floppy bronze dog we called Fido. He was meant for a Gordon setter, I think, but it did n't go much farther than intention. Louise and I used to ride the deer."

His face shadowed a little as he spoke, for nearly the first time, of the dead girl.

"Allan," Phyllis said, bending closer to him, all rosy and golden in her green hammock, "tell me about—Louise Frey—if you don't mind talking about her? Would it be bad for you, do you think?"

Allan's eyes dwelt on his wife pleasurably. She was very real and near and lovable, and Louise Frey seemed far away and shadowy in his thoughts. He had loved her very dearly and passionately, that boisterous, handsome young Louise, but that gay boy-life she had belonged to seemed separated now from this pleasant rose-garden, with his golden-haired, wisely-sweet young chatelaine, by thousands of black years. The blackness came back when he remembered what lay behind it.

"There's nothing much to tell, Phyllis," he said, frowning a little. "She was pretty and full of life. She had black hair and eyes and a

good deal of color. We were more or less friends all our lives, for our country-places adjoined. She was eighteen when—it happened.”

“Eighteen,” said Phyllis musingly. “She would have been just my age. . . . We won’t talk about it, then, Allan. . . . Well, Viola?”

The pretty Tuskegee chambermaid was holding out a tray with a card on it.

“The doctor, ma’am,” she said.

“The doctor!” echoed Allan, half-vexed, half-laughing. “I *knew* you had something up your sleeve, Phyllis! What on earth did you have him for?”

Phyllis’s face was a study of astonishment. “On my honor, I had n’t a notion he was even in existence,” she protested. “He’s not *my* doctor!”

“He must have ‘just growed,’ or else Lily-Anna’s called him in,” suggested Allan sunnily. “Bring him along, Viola.”

Viola produced him so promptly that nobody had time to remember that professional doctor’s visits don’t usually have cards, or thought to look at the card for enlightenment. So the surprise was complete when the doctor appeared.

“Johnny Hewitt!” ejaculated Allan, throwing out both hands in greeting. “Of all people! Well, you old fraud, pretending to be a doctor! The last I heard about you, you were trying to prove that you were n’t the man that tied a mule into old Summerley’s chair at college.”

“I never did prove it,” responded Johnny Hewitt, shaking hands vigorously, “but the fellows said afterwards that I ought to apologize—to the mule. He was a perfectly good mule. But I’m a doctor all right. I live here in Wallraven. I wondered if it might be you by any chance, Allan, when I heard some Harringtons had bought here. But this is the first chance a promising young chicken-pox epidemic has given me to find out.”

“It’s what’s left of me,” said Allan, smiling ruefully. “And—Phyllis, this doctor-person turns out to be an old friend of mine. This is Mrs. Harrington, Johnny.”

“Oh, I’m so glad!” beamed Phyllis, springing up from her hammock, and looking as if she loved Johnny. Here was exactly what was needed—somebody for Allan to play with! She made herself delightful to the newcomer for a few minutes, and then excused herself. They would have a better time alone for awhile, any way, and there was dinner to order. Maybe this Johnny-Hewitt doctor would stay for dinner. He should if she could make him! She sang a little on her way to the house, and almost forgot the tiny hurt it had been when Allan seemed so saddened by speaking of Louise Frey. She had no right to feel hurt, she knew. It was only to be expected that Allan would always love Louise’s

memory. She did n't know much about men, but that was the way it always was in stories. And then Phyllis threw back her shoulders and laughed, as she had sometimes in the library days, and reminded herself what a nice world it was, any way, and that Allan was going to be much helped by Johnny Hewitt. That was a cheering thought, anyhow. She went on singing, and ordered a beautiful, festively-varied dinner, a very poem of gratitude. Then she pounced on the doctor as he was leaving and made him stay for it.

Allan's eyes were bright, and his face lighted with interest. Phyllis, at the head of the table, kept just enough in the talk to push the men on when it seemed flagging, which was not often. She learned more about Allan, and incidentally Johnny Hewitt, in the talk as they lingered about the table, than she had ever known before. She and Allan had lived so deliberately in the placid present, with its almost childish brightnesses and interests, that she knew scarcely more about her husband's life than the De Guenthers had told her before she married him. But she could see the whole picture of it as she listened now: the active, merry, brilliant boy who had worked and played all day and danced half the night, who had lived, it almost seemed to her, two or three lives in one. And then the change to the darkened room—helpless, unable to move, with the added sorrow of his sweetheart's death, and his mother's deliberate fostering of the sorrow. It was almost a shock to see him in the wheelchair at the foot of the table, his face lighted with interest in what he and his friend were saying. What if he did care for Louise Frey's memory still! He'd had such a hard time that anything Phyllis could do for him ought n't to be too much!

When Dr. Hewitt went at last Phyllis accompanied him to the door. She kept him there for a few minutes, talking to him about Allan and making him promise to come often. He agreed with her that, this much progress made, a good deal more might follow. He promised to come back very soon, and see as much of them as possible.

Allan, watching them, out of earshot, from the living-room where he had been wheeled, saw Phyllis smiling warmly up at his friend, lingering in talk with him, giving him both hands in farewell; and he saw, too, Hewitt's rapt interest and long leavetaking. At last the door closed and Phyllis came back to him, flushed and animated. He realized, watching her return with that swift lightness of foot her long years of work had lent her, how young and strong and lovely she was, with the rose-color in her cheeks and the light from above making her hair glitter. And suddenly her slim young strength and her bright vitality seemed to mock him, instead of being a comfort and support as heretofore. A young, beautiful, kind girl like that—it was natural she should like Hewitt. And it was going to come natural to Hewitt to like Phyllis. He could see that plainly enough.

"Tired, Allan Harrington?" she asked brightly, coming over to him and dropping a light hand on his hair, in a caressing little way she had dared lately. . . . Kindness! Yes, she was the incarnation of kindness. Doubtless she had spoken to and touched those little ragamuffins she had told him of just so.

He had got into a habit of feeling that Phyllis belonged to him absolutely. He had forgotten—what was it she had said to him that afternoon, half in fun—but oh, doubtless half in earnest!—about marrying him for a rose-garden? She had done just that. She had never made any secret of it—why, how could she, marrying him before she had spoken a half-dozen words to him? But how wonderful she had been to him since—sometimes almost as if she cared for him. . . .

He moved ungraciously. "Don't *touch* me, Phyllis!" he said irritably. "Wallis! You can wheel me into my room."

"Oh-h!" said Phyllis, behind him. The little forlorn sound hurt him, but it pleased him, too. So he could hurt her, if only by rudeness? Well, that was a satisfaction. "Shut the door," he ordered Wallis swiftly.

Phyllis, her hands at her throat, stood hurt and frightened in the middle of the room. It never occurred to her that Allan was jealous, or indeed that he could care enough for her to be jealous.

"It was talking about Louise Frey," she said. "That, and Dr. Hewitt bringing up old times. Oh, *why* did I ask about her? He was contented—I know he was contented! He'd gotten to like having me with him—he even wanted me. Oh, Allan, Allan!"

She did not want to cry downstairs, so she ran for her own room. There she threw herself down and cried into a pillow till most of the case was wet. She was silly—she knew she was silly. She tried to think of all the things that were still hers, the garden, the watch-bracelet, the rest, the pretty gowns—but nothing, *nothing* seemed of any consequence beside the fact that—she had not kissed Allan good-night! It seemed the most intolerable thing that had ever happened to her.

CHAPTER XIV

It was just as well, perhaps, that Phyllis did not do much sleeping that night, for at about two Wallis knocked at her door. It seemed like history repeating itself, when he said:

"Could you come to Mr. Allan, please, Mrs. Harrington? He seems very bad."

She threw on the silk crêpe negligee and followed him, just as she had done before, on that long-ago night after her mother-in-law had died.

"Did Dr. Hewitt's visit overexcite him, do you think?" he asked as they went.

"I don't know, ma'am," Wallis said. "He's almost as bad as he was after the old madam died—you remember?"

"Oh, yes," said Phyllis mechanically. "I remember."

Allan lay so exactly as he had on that other night, that the strange surroundings seemed incongruous. Just the same, except that his restlessness was more visible, because he had more power of motion.

She bent and held the nervously clenching hands, as she had before. "What is it, Allan?" she said soothingly.

"Nothing," said her husband savagely. "Nerves, hysteria—any other silly womanish thing a cripple could have. Let me alone, Phyllis. I wish you could put me out of the way altogether!"

Phyllis made herself laugh, though her heart hurried with fright. She had seen Allan suffer badly before—be apathetic, irritable, despondent, but never in a state where he did not cling to her.

"I can't let you alone," she said brightly. "I've come to stay with you till you feel quieter. . . . Would you rather I talked to you, or kept quiet?"

"Oh, do your wifely duty, whatever it is," he said. . . . "It was a mistake, the whole thing. You've done more than your duty, child, but—oh, you'd better go away."

Phyllis's heart turned over. Was it as bad as this? Was he as sick of her as this?

"You mean—you think," she faltered, "it was a mistake—our marriage?"

"Yes," he said restlessly. "Yes. . . . It was n't fair."

She had no means of knowing that he meant it was unfair to her. She held on to herself, though she felt her face turning cold with the sudden pallor of fright.

"I think it can be annulled," she said steadily. "No, I suppose it was n't fair."

She stopped to get her breath and catch at the only things that mattered—steadiness, quietness, ability to soothe Allan!

"It can be annulled," she said again evenly. "But listen to me now, Allan. It will take quite awhile. It can't be done to-night, or before you are stronger. So for your own sake you must try to rest now. Everything shall come right. I promise you it shall be annulled. But forget it now, please. I am going to hold your wrists and talk to you, recite things for you, till you go back to sleep."

She wondered afterwards how she could have spoken with that hard serenity, how she could have gone steadily on with story after story, poem after poem, till Allan's grip on her hands relaxed, and he fell into a heavy, tired sleep.

She sat on the side of the bed and looked at him, lying still against

his white pillows. She looked and looked, and presently the tears began to slide silently down her cheeks. She did not lift her hands to wipe them away. She sat and cried silently, openly, like a desolate, unkindly treated child.

"Mrs. Allan! Mrs. Allan, ma'am!" came Wallis's concerned whisper from the doorway. "Don't take it as hard as that. It's just a little relapse. He was overtired. I should n't have called you, but you always quiet him so."

Phyllis brushed off her tears, and smiled. You seemed to have to do so much smiling in this house!

"I know," she said. "I worry about his condition too much. But you see—he's—all I have. . . . Good-night, Wallis."

Once out of Allan's room, she ran at full speed till she gained her own bed, where she could cry in peace till morning if she wanted to, with no one to interrupt. That was all right. The trouble was next morning.

Somehow, when morning came, the old routine was dragged through with. Directions had to be given the servants as usual, Allan's comfort and amusement seen to, just as if nothing had happened. It was a perfect day, golden and perfumed, with just that little tang of fresh windiness that June days have in the Northern states. And Allan must not lose it—he must be wheeled out into the garden.

She came out to him, in the place where they usually sat, and sank for a moment in the hammock, that afternoon. She had avoided him all the morning.

"I just came to see if everything was all right," she said, leaning toward him in that childlike, earnest way he knew so well. "I don't need to stay here if I worry you."

"I'd rather you'd stay, if you don't mind," he answered. Phyllis looked at him intently. He was white and dispirited, and his voice was listless. Oh, Phyllis thought, if Louise Frey had only been kind enough to die in babyhood, instead of under Allan's automobile! What could there have been about her to hold Allan so long? She glanced at his weary face again. This would never do! What had come to be her dominant instinct, keeping Allan's spirits up, emboldened her to bend forward, and even laugh a little.

"Come, Allan!" she said. "Even if we're not going to stay together always, we might as well be cheerful till we do part. We used to be good friends enough. Can't we be so a little longer?" It sounded heartless to her after she had said it, but it seemed the only way to speak. She smiled at him bravely.

Allan looked at her mutely for a moment, as if she had hurt him.

"You're right," he said suddenly. "There's no time but the present, after all. Come over here, closer to me, Phyllis. You've been awfully good to me, child—is n't there anything—*anything* I could do

for you—something you could remember afterwards, and say, ‘Well, he did that for me, any way?’”

Phyllis’s eyes filled with tears. “You have given me everything already,” she said, catching her breath. She did n’t feel as if she could stand much more of this.

“Everything!” he said bitterly. “No, I have n’t. I can’t give you what every girl wants—a well, strong man to be her husband—the health and strength that any man in the street has.”

“Oh, don’t speak that way, Allan!”

She bent over him sympathetically, moved by his words. In another moment the misunderstanding might have been straightened out, if it had not been for his reply.

“I wish I never had to see you at all!” he said involuntarily. In her sensitive state of mind the hurt was all she felt—not the deeper meaning that lay behind the words.

“I’ll relieve you of my presence for awhile,” she flashed back. Before she gave herself time to think, she had left the garden, with something which might be called a flounce. “When people say things like that to you,” she said as she walked away from him, “it’s carrying being an invalid a little *too* far!”

Allan heard the side-door slam. He had never suspected before that Phyllis had a temper. And yet, what could he have said? But she gave him no opportunity to find out. In just about the time it might take to find gloves and a parasol, another door clanged in the distance. The street door. Phyllis had evidently gone out.

Phyllis, on her swift way down the street, grew angrier and angrier. She tried to persuade herself to make allowances for Allan, but they refused to be made. She felt more bitterly toward him than she ever had toward any one in her life. If she only had n’t leaned over him and been sorry for him, just before she got a slap in the face like that!

She walked rapidly down the main street of the little village. She hardly knew where she was going. She had been called on by most of the local people, but she did not feel like being agreeable, or making formal calls just now. And what was the use of trying to make friends, any way, when she was going back to her rags, poor little Cinderella that she was! Below and around and above everything else came the stinging thought that she had given Allan so much—that she had taken so much for granted.

Her quick steps finally took her to the outskirts of the village, to a little green stretch of woods. There she walked up and down for awhile, trying to think more quietly. She found the tide of her anger ebbing suddenly, and her mind forming all sorts of excuses for Allan. But that was not the way to get quiet—thinking of Allan! She tried to put him

resolutely from her mind, and think about her own future plans. The first thing to do, she decided, was to rub up her library work a little.

It was with an unexpected feeling of having returned to her own place that she crossed the marble floor. She felt as if she ought to hurry down to the cloak-room, instead of waiting leisurely at the desk for her card. It all seemed uncannily like home—there was even a girl inside the desk who looked like Anna Black of her own Greenway Branch. Phyllis could hear, with a faint amusement, that the girl was even scolding energetically in Anna Black's own way. The words struck on her quick ears, though they were not intended to carry:

"That's what comes of trusting to volunteer help. Telephones at the last moment 'she has a headache,' and not a single soul to look after the story-hour! And the children are almost all here already."

"We'll just have to send them home," said the other girl, looking up from her trayful of cards. "It's too late to get anybody else, and goodness knows *we* can't get it in!"

"They ought to have another librarian," fretted the girl who looked like Anna. "They could afford it well enough, with their Soldiers' Monuments and all."

Phyllis smiled to herself from where she was investigating the card-catalogue. It all sounded so exceedingly natural. Then that swift instinct of hers to help caught her over to the desk, and she heard herself saying:

"I've had some experience in story-telling; maybe I could help you with the story-hour. I could n't help hearing that your story-teller has disappointed you."

The girl like Anna fell on her with rapture.

"Heaven must have sent you," she said. The other one, evidently slower and more cautious by nature, rose too, and came towards her. "You have a card here, have n't you?" she said. "I think I've seen you."

"Yes," Phyllis said, with a pang at speaking the name she had grown to love bearing; "I'm Mrs. Harrington, Phyllis Harrington. We live at the other end of the village."

"Oh, in the house with the garden all shut off from the lane!" said the girl like Anna, delightedly. "That lovely old house that used to belong to the Jamesons. Oh, yes, I know. You're here for the summer, are n't you, and your husband has been very ill?"

"Exactly," said Phyllis, smiling, though she wished people would n't talk about Allan! They seemed possessed to mention him!

"We'll be obliged forever if you'll do it," said the other girl, evidently the head librarian. "Can you do it now? The children are waiting."

"Certainly," said Phyllis, and followed the younger girl straightway

to the basement, where, it seemed, the story-hour was held. She wondered, as they went, if the girl envied her her expensively perishable summer organdie, with its flying sashes and costly accessories; if the girl thought about her swinging jewelries and endless leisure with a wish to have them for herself. She had wanted such things, she knew, when she was being happy on fifty dollars a month. And perhaps some of the women she had watched then had had heartaches under their furs. . . .

The children, already sitting in a decorous ring on their low chairs, seemed after the first surprise to approve of Phyllis. The librarian lingered for a little by way of keeping order if it should be necessary, watched the competent sweep with which Phyllis gathered the children around her, heard the opening of the story, and left with an air of astonished approval. Phyllis, late best story-teller of the Greenway Branch, watched her go with a bit of professional triumph in her heart.

She told the children stories till the time was up, and then "just one story more." She had not forgotten how, she found. But she never told them the story of "How the Elephant Got His Trunk," that foolish, fascinating story-hour classic that she had told Allan the night his mother had died; the story that had sent him to sleep quietly for the first time in years. . . . Oh, dear! was everything in the world connected with Allan in some way or other?

It was nearly six when she went up, engulfed in children, to the circulating room. There the night-librarian caught her. She had evidently been told to try to get Phyllis for more story-hours, for she did her best to make her promise. They talked shop together for perhaps an hour and a half. Then the growing twilight reminded Phyllis that it was time to go back. She had been shirking going home, she realized now, all the afternoon. She said good-by to the night-librarian, and went on down the village street, lagging unconsciously. It must have been about eight by this time.

It was a mile back to the house. She could have taken the trolley part of the way, but she felt restless and like walking. She had forgotten that walking at night through well-known, well-lighted city streets, and going in half-dusk through country byways, were two different things. She was destined to be reminded of the difference.

"Can you help a poor man, lady?" said a whining voice behind her, when she had a quarter of the way yet to go. She turned to see a big tramp, a terrifying brute with a half-propitiating, half-fierce look on his heavy, unshaven face. She was desperately frightened. She had been spoken to once or twice in the city, but there there was always a policeman, or a house you could run into if you had to. But here, in the unguarded dusk of a country lane, it was a different matter. The long gold chain that swung below her waist, the big diamond on her finger, the gold mesh-purse—all the jewelry she took such a childlike delight in

wearing—she remembered them in terror. She was no brown-clad little working-girl now, to slip along disregarded. And the tramp did not look at all like a deserving object.

“If you will come to the house to-morrow,” she said, hurrying on as she spoke, “I’ll have some work for you. The first house on this street that you come to.” She did not dare give him anything, or send him away.

“Won’t you gimme somethin’ now, lady?” whined the tramp, continuing to follow. “I’m a starvin’ man.”

She dared not open her purse and appease him by giving him money—she had too much with her. That morning she had received the check for her monthly income from Mr. De Guenther, sent Wallis down to cash it, and then stuffed it in her bag and forgotten it in the distress of the day. The man might take the money and strike her senseless, even kill her.

“To-morrow,” she said, going rapidly on. She had now what would amount to about three city blocks to traverse still. There was a short way from outside the garden-hedge through to the garden, which cut off about a half-block. If she could gain this, she would be safe.

“Naw, yeh don’t,” snarled the tramp, as she fled on. “Ye’ll set that bull-pup o’ yours on me. I been there, an’ come away again. You just gimme some o’ them rings an’ things an’ we’ll call it square, me fine lady!”

Phyllis’s heart stood still at this open menace, but she ran on. A sudden thought came to her. She snatched her gilt sash-buckle—a pretty thing but of small value—from her waist, and hurled it far behind the tramp. In the half-light it might have been her gold mesh-bag.

“There’s my money—go get it!” she gasped—and ran for her life. The tramp, as she had hoped he would, dashed back after it and gave her the start she needed. Breathless, terrified to death, she raced on, tearing her frock, dropping the library cards and parasol she still had held in her hand. Once she caught her sash on a tree-wire. Once her slipper-heel caught and nearly threw her. The chase seemed unending. She could hear the dreadful footsteps of the tramp behind her, and his snarling, swearing voice panting out threats. He was drunk, she realized with another thrill of horror. It was a nightmare happening.

On and on—she stumbled, fell, caught herself—but the tramp had gained. Then at last the almost invisible gap in the hedge, and she fled through.

“Allan! Allan! Allan!” she screamed, fleeing instinctively to his chair.

The rose-garden was like a place of enchanted peace after the terror of outside. Her quick vision as she rushed in was of Allan still there, moveless in his chair, with the little black bull-dog lying asleep across

his arms and shoulder like a child. It often lay so. As she entered, the scene broke up before her eyes like a dissolving view. She saw the little dog wake and make what seemed one flying spring to the tramp's throat, and sink his teeth in it—and Allan, at her scream, *spring from his chair!*

Phyllis forgot everything at the sight of Allan, standing. Wallis and the outdoor man, who had run to the spot at Phyllis's screams, were dealing with the tramp, who was writhing on the grass, choking and striking out wildly. But neither Phyllis nor Allan saw that. Which caught the other in an embrace they never knew. They stood locked together, forgetting everything else, he in the idea of her peril, she in the wonder of his standing.

"Oh, darling, darling!" Allan was saying over and over again. "You are safe—thank heaven you are safe! Oh, Phyllis, I could never forgive myself if you had been hurt! Phyllis! Speak to me!"

But Phyllis's own safety did not concern her now. She could only think of one thing. "*You can stand! You can stand!*" she reiterated. Then a wonderful thought came to her, striking across the others, as she stood locked in this miraculously raised Allan's arms. She spoke without knowing that she had said it aloud. "*Do you care, too?*" she said very low. Then the dominant thought returned. "You must sit down again," she said hurriedly, to cover her confusion, and what she had said. "Please, Allan, sit down. Please, dear—you'll tire yourself."

Allan sank into his chair again, still holding her. She dropped on her knees beside him, with her arms around him. She had a little leisure now to observe that Wallis, the ever-resourceful, had tied the tramp neatly with the outdoor man's suspenders, which were nearer the surface than his own, and succeeded in prying off the still unappeased Foxy, who evidently was wronged at not having the tramp to finish. They carried him off, into the back kitchen garden. Allan, now that he was certain of Phyllis's safety, paid them not the least attention.

"Did you mean it?" he said passionately. "Tell me, did you mean what you said?"

Phyllis dropped her dishevelled head on Allan's shoulder.

"I'm afraid—I'm going to cry, and—and I know you don't like it!" she panted. Allan half drew, half guided, her up into his arms.

"Was it true?" he insisted, giving her an impulsive little shake. Phyllis sat up on his knees, wide-eyed and wet-cheeked like a child.

"But you knew that all along!" she said. "That was why I felt so humiliated. It was *you* that I thought did n't care——"

Allan laughed joyously. "Care!" he said. "I should think I did, first, last, and all the time! Why, Phyllis, child, did n't I behave like a brute because I was jealous enough of John Hewitt to throw him in the river? He was the first man you had seen since you married me—

attractive, and well, and clever, and all that—it would have been natural enough if you 'd liked him."

"Liked him!" said Phyllis in disdain. "When there was you? And I thought—I thought it was the memory of Louise Frey that made you act that way. You did n't want to talk about her, and you said it was all a mistake——"

"I was a brute," said Allan again. "It was the memory that I was about as useful as a rag doll, and that the world was full of live men with real legs and arms, ready to fall in love with you."

"There's nobody but *you* in the world," whispered Phyllis. . . . "But you're well now, or you will be soon," she added joyously. She slipped away from him. "Allan, don't you want to try to stand again? If you did it then, you can do it now."

"Yes, by Jove, I do!" he said. But this time the effort to rise was noticeable. Still, he could do it, with Phyllis's eager help.

"It must have been what Dr. Hewitt called neurasthenic inhibition," said Phyllis, watching the miracle of a standing Allan. "That was what we were talking about by the door that night, you foolish boy! . . . Oh, how tall you are! I never realized you were tall, lying down, somehow!"

"I don't have to bend very far to kiss you, though," suggested Allan, suiting the action to the word.

But Phyllis, when this was satisfactorily concluded, went back to the great business of seeing how much Allan could walk. He sat down again after a half-dozen steps, a little tired in spite of his excitement.

"I can't do much at a time yet, I suppose," he said a little ruefully. "Do you mean to tell me, sweetheart—come over here closer, where I can touch you—you're awfully far away—do you mean to tell me that all that ailed me was I thought I could n't move?"

"Oh, no!" explained Phyllis, moving her chair close, and then, as that did not seem satisfactory, perching on the arm of Allan's. "You'd been unable to move for so long that when you were able to at last your subconscious mind clamped down on your muscles and was convinced you could n't. So no matter how much you consciously tried, you could n't make the muscles go till you were so strongly excited it broke the inhibition—just as people can lift things in delirium or excitement that they could n't possibly move at other times. Do you see?"

"I do," said Allan, kissing the back of her neck irrelevantly. "If somebody'd tried to shoot me up five years ago, I might be a well man now. That's a beautiful word of yours, Phyllis, inhibition. What a lot of big words you know!"

"Oh, if you won't be serious!" said Phyllis.

"We'll have to be," said Allan, laughing, "for here's Wallis, and, as I live, from the direction of the house. I thought they carried our

friend the tramp out through the hedge—he must have gone all the way around.”

Phyllis was secretly certain that Wallis had been crying a little, but all he said was, “We’ve taken the tramp to the lock-up, sir.”

But his master and his mistress were not so dignified. They showed him exhaustively that Allan could really stand and walk, and Allan demonstrated it, and Wallis nearly cried again. Then they went in, for Phyllis was sure Allan needed a thorough rest after all this. She was shaking from head to foot herself with joyful excitement, but she did not even know it. And it was long past dinner-time, though every one but Lily-Anna, to whom the happy news had somehow filtered, had forgotten it.

“I’ve always wanted to hold you in my arms, this way,” said Allan late that evening, as they stood in the rose-garden again; “but I thought I never would. . . . Phyllis, did you ever want me to?”

It was too beautiful a moonlight night to waste in the house, or even on the porch. The wheeled couch had been wheeled to its accustomed place in the rose-garden, and Allan was supposed to be lying on it as he often did in the evenings. But it was hard to make him stay there.

“Oh, you *must* lie down,” said Phyllis hurriedly, trying to move out of the circle of his arms. “You must n’t stand till we find how much is enough. . . . I’m going to send for the wolfhound next week. You won’t mind him now, will you?”

“Did you ever want to be here in my arms, Phyllis?”

“Of course not!” said Phyllis, as a modest young person should. “But—but——”

“Well, my wife?”

“I’ve often wondered just where I’d reach to,” said Phyllis in a rush. . . . “Allan, *please* don’t stand any longer!”

“I’ll lie down if you’ll sit on the couch by me.”

“Very well,” said Phyllis; and sat obediently in the curve of his arm when he had settled himself in the old position, the one that looked so much more natural for him.

“Mine, every bit of you!” he said exultantly. “Heaven bless that tramp! . . . And to think we were talking about annulments! . . . Do you remember that first night, dear, after Mother died? I was half-mad with grief and physical pain. And Wallis went after you. I did n’t want him to. But he trusted you from the first—good old Wallis! And you came in with that swift, sweeping step of yours, as I’ve seen you come fifty times since—half-flying, it seemed to me then—with all your pretty hair loose, and an angelic sort of a white thing on. I expect I was a brute to you—I don’t remember how I acted—but I know you sat on the bed by me and took both my wrists in those strong little hands of yours, and talked to me and quieted me till I fell fast

asleep. You gave me the first consecutive sleep I'd had in four months. It felt as if life and calmness and strength were pouring from you to me. You stayed till I fell asleep."

"I remember," said Phyllis softly. She laid her cheek by his, as it had been on that strange marriage evening that seemed so far away now. "I was afraid of you at first. But I felt that, too, as if I were giving you my strength. I was so glad I could! And then I fell asleep, too, over on your shoulder."

"You never told me that," said Allan reproachfully. Phyllis laughed a little.

"There never seemed to be any point in our conversations where it fitted in neatly," she said demurely. Allan laughed, too.

"You should have made one. But what I was going to tell you was—I think I began to be in love with you then. I did n't know it, but I did. And it got worse and worse, but I did n't know what ailed me till Johnny drifted in, bless his heart! Then I did. Oh, Phyllis, it was awful! To have you with me all the time, acting like an angel, waiting on me hand and foot, and not knowing whether you had any use for me or not! . . . And you never kissed me good-night last night."

Phyllis did not answer. She only bent a little, and kissed her husband on the lips, very sweetly and simply, of her own accord. But she said nothing then of the long, restless, half-happy, half-wretched time when she had loved him and never even hoped he would care for her. There was time for all that. There were going to be long joyous years together, years of being a "real woman," as she had so passionately wished to be that day in the library. She would never again need to envy any woman happiness or love or laughter. It was all before her now, youth and joy and love, and Allan, her Allan, soon to be well, and loving her—loving nobody else but her!

"Oh, I love you, Allan!" was all she said.



MEASURE FOR MEASURE

BY MARGARET H. LAWLESS

WHEN that "some day" shall come at last to be,
 When my son's heart will wander far from me,
 To seek its joy in some one fair and young,
 Then will my inmost soul be pierced and wrung
 With the same anguish that another felt
 When my boy's father for my favor knelt,
 And with my joyous and triumphant "Yes"
 I pierced the heart of her life's happiness!

STANTON, LINCOLN'S SECRETARY OF WAR

AN HISTORICAL PAPER

By James Matlack Scovil



EDWIN M. STANTON, the Danton of the War Department under Lincoln, had won name and fame at Steubenville, Ohio, before he removed to Washington to practise his profession during the administration of Buchanan. With John A. Dix, he did much to recall the faltering President to a sense of his responsibilities to the nation.

Mr. Lincoln in the first month of the year 1862 was in deep depression of mind. The war had lasted for seven months, and, barring one or two trifling engagements in Western Virginia, every conflict of arms between the Union and the Confederate armies had resulted in disgraceful defeat to the Northern side.

The administration had been bitterly attacked by Vallandigham of Ohio, who on the 7th of January had made a protest against the surrender of Mason and Slidell as an act of cowardice which would probably tempt England to make war upon the United States.

Lincoln was sensitive to criticism. He was profoundly angered at Vallandigham's words, and thoroughly aroused by the trenchant criticism of Judge Kelly at the expense of the commanding general of the Union forces. The "one-armed devil of the New Jersey Infantry," as the gallant Phil Kearney has been called, had poured out his resentment at "Tardy George," as he had dubbed McClellan.



It was at this period that Lincoln sent for John W. Forney and Judge William D. Kelly. He first expressed his satisfaction that Kelly "had spoken out in meeting" against the imbecility which sought to weary the heart of the North by supineness in action on the part of its armies.

Kelly, Forney, and some others had no love for Simon Cameron. Though the Secretary seemed to understand the vast exigencies of the situation, he was terribly handicapped by the distrust of his political methods felt by a powerful faction of the Pennsylvania Republican

leaders, who continually prophesied disaster if he remained in the War Department. Lincoln hesitated at the name of Edwin M. Stanton, because he had not formally given in his adherence to the administration. Forney said as a War Democrat that he would be responsible for the fidelity of Stanton to the great principles for which the North had rushed to arms. The nation was soon thrilled with the announcement that Lincoln had made a new departure and had selected a man of convictions, of courage, and of iron will for the War Department; and that man was Edwin M. Stanton. He was promptly confirmed by the Senate and assumed control of the War Department on the 20th of January, 1862. His first act, eminently in keeping with his character, was to advise President Lincoln to issue an order for a general advance of the armies of the Union. This order, dated January 27, directed "that the 22d day of February be the day for a general movement of the land and naval forces of the United States against the insurgent forces." This was known as "General War order number one," and was soon followed by what is now known as "Special War order number one," providing "that all the disposable force of the Army of the Potomac, after providing safely for the defense of Washington, be formed into an expedition for the immediate object of seizing and occupying a point upon the railroad southward of what is known as Manassas Junction, all details to be in the discretion of the Commander-in-chief, and the expedition to move before or on the 22d of February next."

The very day these orders reached McClellan, the war to the knife between Stanton and the commanding general began. It could have but one ending: either Stanton must leave the War Department or McClellan must be displaced.



It was at this period that Stanton uttered the celebrated *mot*, "McClellan is trying to capture Richmond with Washington as his base, and intends to capture Washington with Richmond for his base." Lincoln and Stanton declared in favor of Washington as a base of supplies, with Manassas as the first point to be assailed. But to this proposition McClellan demurred. He wrote, "So much am I in favor of the southern line, that I would prefer the move from Fortress Monroe as a base to an attack upon Manassas." His officers in military council voted two to one against Stanton's plan.

The difficulties which followed are too familiar to be repeated here. Stanton was in a towering rage, and in the presence of Ben Wade and Andrew Johnson denounced McClellan as "treacherous" and "incompetent."

After McClellan's letter of July 7th to Mr. Lincoln, in which he

expressed the opinion that "any declaration of radical views will rapidly disintegrate our present armies," the cabinet was called together and the Emancipation Proclamation was issued.

The only serious misunderstanding that ever occurred between Stanton and Lincoln was before the battle of Antietam, when McClellan was restored to his command to organize the army in and around Washington city. It was never intended that he should take command at the battle of Antietam; and Stanton always asserted that McClellan could have pursued and destroyed the dispirited forces of the Confederates. What angered Stanton—and he expressed his disgust directly to the President—was that McClellan should have been restored to his command over Stanton's head, the order directly emanating from Mr. Lincoln as commander-in-chief of our armies and navies. But subsequent events clearly established the wisdom of Lincoln's act.



The same opinion which Stanton expressed of McClellan, Lincoln held in regard to the battle of Gettysburg. He frequently contended that had General Meade followed up his victory at Gettysburg he could have cut to pieces and routed in detail Lee's army at Falling Waters. This opinion he expressed to Henry Winter Davis at one of his infrequent visits to the White House prior to the election of 1864.

Stanton used to say, "I do not always give a reason, but I always have a reason for what I do." He gave a reason why in his opinion McClellan could have, on half a dozen different days, marched into Richmond. In the army of the Potomac were 185,000 of our best soldiers, 534 pieces of artillery, while Johnson's army in Northern Virginia had a total of 84,000 men and less than 50,000 ready for active duty. Our army outnumbering this army four to one, "the fact is," said Stanton, "it was no part of McClellan's policy to get into Richmond by force of arms. He wanted to achieve the Presidency by a policy of peace, and he failed to win the game."

When Senator Wilson of Massachusetts, Elizur Wright and Wendell Phillips called on the President to complain of the failure of the Emancipation Proclamation, Stanton was present. He said Lincoln never appeared to better advantage. He told Phillips that he had worked so long with minorities that he had got into a habit of being dissatisfied, and with amiable satire prodded the Abolitionists by saying that it was rarely they lost an opportunity to run the administration. Phillips has described Lincoln as "a man who had never walked a straight line in his life." Lincoln felt keenly the bitter diatribes of the Abolitionists. He was mortal, and keenly yearned for the approval of mankind. McClellan was too slow; the Abolitionists were too fast. Greeley maddened him with

his daily cry of "On to Richmond" in the *Tribune*, and when Wendell Phillips patronizingly intimated that the Abolitionists would show Mr. Lincoln how to run the government during the next four years, the President said with a touch of sadness in his voice, "Mr. Phillips, I have ceased to have any personal feeling or expectation in that matter—I don't say I never had any—so abused and borne upon as I have been. I must bear this load which the country has entrusted to me as well as I can, and do my best."

Stanton was undoubtedly a great lawyer. The Wheeling Bridge case gave him legal rank with Webster and Choate. He was a lawyer with a conscience.

Handling millions of dollars annually, he went out of office a poor man. He was offered a ten thousand dollar retainer in the Credit Mobilier case, but after examining the case he threw up the brief.

There was granite in the man, and he could be despotic. I remember asking an audience for a Provost Marshal who had been badly treated.

"I want a half-hour of your time to state my case," said the Marshal.

Stanton rose from his chair, and, looking sternly at the unhappy man before him, said, "Do you know that I have put a man in the old Capitol Prison for demanding half an hour of my time?"

I said slowly, "Mr. Secretary, are the interests of justice nothing to you?" He took us into the inner office and granted the man the relief he prayed for.



Stanton was a man of full habit, stocky, about five feet ten in height. He habitually wore a long beard half way to his waist, without a mustache. To the ordinary or casual visitor he was stern, unyielding, and forbidding, but for those who knew him best he had a tender heart. He was the incarnation of duty. I have known him for a week to remain in the War Department twenty hours out of the twenty-four, and the stars have gone out of the sky and morning come in the east, while he and the President were bending above the telegraph instrument, waiting for good news from the soldier of whom Stanton said, "He is as slow as a Virginia creeper."

At 9.30 in the morning it was his habit to ride up in a coupé to the War Department, walk up the steps, and go behind his desk in the reception room, where he stood for many hours in the day. Here he scanned the many faces whose owners were awaiting his movements. And woe to the man caught with his hand unlawfully in the public Treasury! The chances were he would be reposing in the old Capitol Prison before night.

When Andrew Johnson became President, Stanton placed detectives in the White House to watch him, charging treasonable motives on the

commander-in-chief. Johnson naturally resented this, and ordered Stanton out of the War Department. Senator Sumner from his place in the Senate telegraphed Stanton one word, "Stick"; and he stuck, barricading himself in the War Department, eating and sleeping in his private office for many weeks. He alleged that Johnson had threatened to drive what he called the "Rump" Congress out of the Capitol with bayonets.

The heroic struggle during the four years he stood side by side with Lincoln was too much even for the man of "blood and iron." Within a year from the day he left the War Department his health gave way. As his death drew near, President Grant sent a special messenger with his commission as a Judge of the United States Supreme Court.

"Too late, too late," said the dying man. Chandler of Michigan did what Stanton would not permit while he lived, raised a fund in forty-eight hours of seventy-five thousand dollars for the family of the dead statesman.

His public life was consecrated to the cause of his country. You might break, but you could not bend him: you might annihilate, but you could not corrupt.

His integrity was matchless, his courage was of more than mortal quality. His name stands high on the roll of the illustrious and patriot dead of America.



DOCTRINE

By Thomas L. Masson

THERE are more people in cities than anywhere else.

When you want to accomplish a certain result you go where there is the greatest opportunity.

To make government better, you must make people better.

To make people, you must work where there are the greatest number of them.

Reform the cities, and the country will take care of itself.

In advertising campaigns, one district is tried out first. If it succeeds, then the whole country is taken. This saves much money. It reduces the risk.

In this country we are trying to reform too many cities at once. Let us take one at a time.

Begin anywhere.

If New York is too large, take Fifth Avenue. Let all the efficiency reformers in the country concentrate on Fifth Avenue. Let's learn on Fifth Avenue.

If we can reform Fifth Avenue, we can reform the world.

THE RETURN OF THE VIKING

By *H. de Vere Stacpoole*

Author of "The Blue Lagoon," etc.



I HAVE just arrived home from Marseilles and a visit to Páll Jacob Breim, the Scandinavian timber merchant who has the timber trade of the whole of the south of France practically in his hands. King Log with a vengeance.

His house is situated in the Canabière Prolongué, on the same side as and not far from the Hôtel Noailles; a huge barrack of a place, with a central courtyard domed with glass and decorated with thirty-foot palms and bitter-orange trees, bearing red-golden fruit just now.

The courtyard, the house, the entrance hall, the stout major-domo who receives you, and the servants who pass you on to their master, the tapestried rooms—all have a touch of magnificence, without a trace of the vulgarity of wealth.

"Surely this is a king's palace!" you say, and when you see Breim, "Surely this is the king!" He is of the golden-haired type of Scandinavian; an immense man with a corn-colored beard, blue fearless eyes, noble features, and an expression reckless, sunny, and laughing. A true Viking of the old days when Thor was god and Trade was Plunder, and the three cardinal facts of Life—Woman, the Wine-cup, and the Sword.

It had been my good fortune to be able to render Breim a service at very small trouble to myself, and he repaid me with his friendship; that is to say, he gave me a thing better than all the gold and jewels in the world, for the friendship of such a man is priceless, eternal, and indestructible as a diamond. One counts it amidst one's chief assets. So that were I to catalogue my possessions I should list them as: the Friendship of Jacob Breim, so much money in the bank and certain securities, my books and manuscripts, clothes and nearly worthless jewelry, to say nothing of that which I place above all other things, the Friendship of you to whom I am writing now.

It was this warmth of feeling that led him one day after luncheon to break into his past and give me from his own lips the amazing story of how he gained his wealth and his wife, who was at that moment from home, staying with some friends at Hyères, and whom I have never seen. If the story shocks you ever so slightly, it is because you have never met Jacob Breim, seen in him the spirit of the Norse conquerors, and

learned from his personality the truth of that old saying: "Other times, other manners."

THE STORY

I

IN September, twenty-one years ago, Jacob Breim, second mate of the *Thordur*, found himself one day on the great Strand Road of Calcutta, without a berth or the visible chance of getting one, and with nothing in his pockets except a few Danish gold pieces, an old tobacco-box, a pipe, and a cotton pocket-handkerchief stamped with the map of Amsterdam. He had left his ship for reasons best known to himself, and she had sailed that morning with an Englishman as second mate.

After a visit to the shipping-office, Breim, who had managed to change his Danish money at a ruinous rate of exchange, wandered off and found himself in Lal Bazaar. It was his first visit to India, and the sights and sounds and smells of Calcutta led this colossal Viking man along as a captured elephant is led by its captors. Wholly fascinated, marvelling at what he saw, yet with a touch of derision in his wonder, Breim passed along, criticising the native population, contrasting the wealth of the city with the effeteness of the people, piling the spires and domes and thundering wharfs against the spindle-shanked Babus.

In Lal Bazaar he fetched up before a sailors' drinking-shop with seats in front, and who should be sitting on one of the seats, drinking and smoking, but a man whose life he had once saved at the risk of his own, Captain Benedikt Gröndaal, a brother Dane, captain of the Danish steamer *Helga*, due to leave that night bound west for Mediterranean ports and blessed Copenhagen.

Breim and Gröndaal hailed each other with great effusion and fell to drinking together, Gröndaal paying for the drinks. He knew all about the *Thordur* and the brute who called himself her captain, and when he learned Breim's case fell to lamenting that only an hour before he had engaged a third officer—"Else," said he, "you might have sailed with me. But come, I'll take you on with me, call it a stowaway, you can berth in my cabin, and you need n't touch a rope. You'll be lost here amongst the Howrah crimps, but at Marseilles you'll easy get a berth—or come on to Copenhagen."

Breim refused. He did not like the idea of going home as poor as he left, he would stick on and take his chance, and Gröndaal, knowing the man's nature, did not waste breath in pushing the matter. "However," said he, "the *Helga* does n't sail till dawn, so, if you change your mind, come aboard her. You know Benedikt Gröndaal, and that he's yours till death."

"I will," said Breim with a laugh, little thinking of the use he would make of that invitation.

They sat talking of Copenhagen and men they knew. They had more drinks, Breim insisting on paying this time, so that when the moment of parting came Gröndaal invited his friend on board for a last glass and a pocketful of Bismarck cigars, and Breim, having nothing better to do, came.

They got a boat at the wharf-side and rowed off to the ship, and the smell of her and the sight of the life-buoys stamped *Helga Kjobenhavn*, made Breim almost repent of his determination to stay on in Calcutta. But Breim was a man who, having once made up his mind, never altered it, and after an hour on board was rowed ashore with a pocketful of cigars and the benediction of Gröndaal on his head.

"Remember, if you chance to think better of it, that the *Helga* does n't lift her anchor till dawn," cried Gröndaal over the side.

"I will," said Breim. He knew that Gröndaal, with the prospect of a night at anchor, a good first officer, and a Hughli pilot to take him down the river next morning, would be at the bottle again. Which is not to say that Gröndaal was a drunkard, but just a man who took perhaps a glass too much now and then, when business was over and things were safe, and that extra glass you would have detected only in his conversation, which tended at these times to the grandiloquent, as did his ideas.

On shore Breim wandered off down the Great Strand Road. He had left his few belongings at a tavern near the quay, and he was now looking out for a lodging for the night.

It was getting towards sunset, and the river was touched by mist, which dimmed the opposite shore and even invaded the streets; filling the bazaars with its magic, etherealizing temple and spire, till the flame in the west became reflected in a city floating amidst the fire of opal and the mist of pearl.

Our wanderer found little poetry in the mist of the Great Strand Road. He wandered back to Lal Bazaar, still seeking for a suitable lodging, and found himself again before the half-café, half-grog-shop, where he had met Gröndaal; and here, seated comfortably drinking, was another man from the north, Evindur Magnusson no less, an Ice-lander born and bred; engineer on an oil-tank, and completely out of his element amidst the other drinkers.

Breim, pausing in his search for a lodging, took a drink and fell in talk with Magnusson. The talk first ran in sea channels, and then went home straight to Akureyri, Magnusson's birthplace, which Breim had once visited. The effect was magical: Magnusson lit up, called for more drinks and, when they had vanished, for more, grew quarrelsome

when Breim wanted to stand his share, took a cigar and grew friendly again, lit the cigar and launched into poetry.

Nine out of ten Icelanders are poets, and though Breim knew scarcely a word of Icelandic, he sat listening to the other and nodding his head in approbation, for the drink was taking hold upon him, though less by reason of its strength than of the fact that he had not eaten since noon.

Then Magnusson, leaving the Icelandic, talked in Danish of the Sagas, and Breim listened again to the praise of Gunnar, the Icelandic Bayard, which he had heard in his youth. Gunnar who might possibly have been one of his own ancestors. Gunnar who could leap more than his own height in all his war gear and as far backwards as forwards.

The lamps were slight now in Lal Bazaar, and the crowds had changed and the mist was thickening, but neither Breim nor Magnusson recked anything of this; they talked and talked, Magnusson clinging to the Sagas as a Scotsman in liquor clings to Burns, Breim drinking deeply both from his glass and from the other's words. Old recollections of his youth filled his brain, and fugitive fancies of great deeds crowded on him begotten of the deeds of Gunnar and Burnt Njal. Heaven only knows what old doors between him and the remote past the drink may not have set ajar. At times he would bang his great fist on the table, as though to emphasize something that had just been spoken by his subconscious mind, and at times he would laugh and stroke his beard, seeming to be immersed in what Magnusson was saying, yet hearing nothing of it, filled as his mind was with all the voices of Drunkenness.

Now they were walking together, he and Magnusson, in Lal Bazaar. The landlord of the tavern, fearing trouble, had refused them more drink, or so it seemed; the fog had increased and held in its folds all the chill of all the dead bodies that had ever floated down Hughli, yet they walked content as gods, and the fog felt warm as cotton wool, and the lights seemed burning to light them alone.

II

ALL at once, and after many devious ramblings, they broke into the blaze of Bow Bazaar. The uproar and the lights were better than music to the revellers, and a tavern-keeper, unacquainted with the depth of their previous potations, gave them more drink in return for vulgar money.

The great frame of Breim resisted these waves of alcohol, but Magnusson the poet, a far lighter craft, took in the seas badly.

And now they were walking down Bow Bazaar, where Magnusson suddenly vanished as though he had never been and Páll Jacob Breim found himself alone in the mysterious city of Calcutta. He did not

trouble in the least about the vanishing of Magnusson, but passed on his lordly way, till, tired of the lights and noise, he made his way from Bow Bazaar to a darker and more quiet quarter. Half an hour later, having traversed many streets and held conversation with several people, he found himself in the Chitpore Road; and, vaguely remembering the fact that he was in search of a lodging, he continued his way, unconsciously entangling himself in a part of the city to which Europeans never come unless in the uniform of the police.

He was now in the Yoshiwara of Calcutta, the Paradise of the rich Babu and the native millionaire; a vast harem of many sultans, dangerous to approach as the once harem of Yildiz Kiosk.

To complete his destruction and to entangle him more deeply, the fog now closed on the city and on the street where he was, a fog tangible as the darkness that closed upon the Egyptians.

Without lights, he had absolutely to grope his way, feeling by the house walls, and this discomfort sobered him a good deal in a fictitious manner, banked down the fires of alcohol without extinguishing them, reducing him to that most miserable of mortals, the man who is intoxicated, yet has to think, not dream.

He had passed several houses when he came to an entry so narrow that he could touch either wall; feeling his way, he came down it, turned a corner, continued, turned another corner, and found himself in a courtyard.

Looking up, he could see vague lights in the shaft of fog above him; looking down, he could not see the ground beneath his feet.

Disturbed by this place, just as the mind is disturbed by the evil places of dreamland, he sought to leave it, and, searching for the passage by which he had entered, found an arched doorway open and leading to a flight of steps.

The steps restored his confidence; steps lead to houses and houses give shelter for the night, and, lured by these generalities, he began the ascent of a circular stone staircase which brought him to a black clear space pierced by a thread of light shining through the keyhole of a door.

Advancing with hands outstretched, he felt the doorway, felt for the handle, turned it, and, opening the door, entered a room.

III

SELDOM have half-dazed men come upon such a surprise as that which greeted Breim on his opening of this mysterious door.

The room was strongly lit, and in an armchair by a couch sat a gentleman brown as a coffee berry, turbaned, and holding in one hand the long snake-like stem of a narghile, the amber mouthpiece of which he had just removed from his lips.

On the couch, with her head crushing the silken pillow, lay a woman, a woman whose body was one leaping blaze of jewels; slab-like emeralds, sapphires, diamonds, and rubies crusted her, clung to her ears, her hair—her very feet. Each hand blazed with gems, and each breast had a shield crusted with brilliants and nipped by a pigeon-blood ruby. She was scarcely a woman, almost still a child, and Breim, who at a first glance saw everything, at a second saw nothing but her face; a face so wildly lovely and so maddening to the senses that the intruder scarcely felt the first shock of the man who was upon him.

It was only when he recognized that he had been stabbed through the shoulder of his coat and that the dagger was aiming at his heart that the Berserker, banked down with the slag of drink, blazed out. Had he been facing a dozen antagonists, he would have fought roaring like a bull, but now, as he crumpled his attacker and flung him in a corner senseless, he laughed as we may fancy Gannlaugur to have laughed in that last duel for the hand of Helga.

Breim, holding the woman, who had fainted, in his arms, looked about him. He saw on the back of the armchair, where the coffee-colored man had been sitting a few minutes before, a shawl of some black material. Seizing it with one hand, he put the senseless woman on the bed and began wrapping her in the shawl, winding it about her from head to feet till she looked no longer like a woman, but like the mummy of a child. It was only now that one could see, really, the smallness of her form and her fragility, and as he picked her up, holding her in one arm, the vast stature of the man reduced her still more by contrast, and as he left the room with her you would have said, "Here is a man bearing his child away to a place of safety."

He came down the dark staircase, and as he came he heard from some windy height above the music of a guzla. The instincts of Loot and Plunder awakened by the instinct for fight and now dominating him told him of the yelling horde that would be on his track if they only knew.

In the courtyard the fog was as thick as ever, yet, without consciously looking for it, he found the opening of the passageway as easily as though he had been walking in broad daylight, and in the street he went assuredly and without groping; for he was walking now through no earthly city, but through the country of the subliminal mind, and making with the instinct of the homing pigeon for the sea.

He had only two coherent ideas, flight and the prize in his arms, and just as a drunken man finds unconsciously his own door, so he found the wharf-side, and by the wharf-side an empty boat, for everything conspires to help the man whom the gods are helping to help himself.

IV

CAPTAIN BENEDIKT GRÖNDAAL was seated in his cabin, playing upon the fiddle, a half-empty bottle of schnapps on the table beside him, when he heard the anchor watch hailing some one, voices, and his door burst open, revealing Breim, bearing a bundle in his arms.

Breim, without a word, placed his bundle on the couch, and Gröndaal, still in a maze of music and schnapps, saw Breim kneeling beside the couch. He was about to speak when Breim's great hand removed the shawl that hid a woman's face. She had recovered consciousness, but she neither moved nor spoke. Her eyes were fixed on the eyes of Breim in the fascination of terror, and Breim, kneeling beside her, devouring her with his eyes, seemed as unconscious of all earthly things as she. The world held nothing else for these two people at that moment but themselves, and Gröndaal, feeling himself an intruder, went out into the foggy night and shut the door. The fog was so dense that he could scarcely see the shore lights; he could hear vaguely the grumble of late traffic, but not a sound to indicate that the great city had been robbed of its most precious possession.

V

SELAH! You can imagine for yourself how he took her to Marseilles with the connivance of Gröndaal, how he sold her jewels, and how he founded his fortune on that sale of unholy goods, but you never could imagine the love of this woman for the man who stole her. A love and adoration based on the firm foundation of fear, born even in the first few hours of her captivity, and magical by contrast with the love of the swine amidst whom he had found her.

I do not know whether this story is moral or immoral. To read it properly, you must read it by the light of Breim's character. It really belongs in spirit to the time of the Vikings, as he did, fully, that night; and, in part, even now. One thing I must ask you: to tell it to nobody, or else I may lose what I treasure most—the friendship of this Buccaneer.



A PASSING

BY ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH

NO more than this I deem a loved one's death:
 The passing through a door that soon shall swing
 For us—a moment's daze—a quick-drawn breath;
 And then—the old love's joyous welcoming!

A GAME OF BILLIARDS

By Eugene A. Clancy

JIMMIE OLIVER, youngest of freshmen, came slouching out of Alma Mater's gates, and stood on the curb, feeling in his pockets. He looked about idly for a moment, worlds of thought in his eyes; then he slouched down the street, slouched around the corner, and up the stairs of "Glennon's Billiard and Pool Room."

Now, in the eyes of the college faculty Glennon's was anathema. It was a full and modern proof that hell and its fires are real and material. Whenever a student cut his lectures, the faculty was morally certain that said student was around in Glennon's, betting three cents to a nickel on the one ball, or was staking his week's lunch-money on a fifteen-to-one shot with Joe, the hand-book man, who made Glennon's his headquarters. And the faculty was always right. Not to go to Glennon's was to class yourself among the worms, the insects of intellect and the wearers of specs.

Into this Inferno slouched Jimmie Oliver. It was still early morning, so there was no one present except the proprietor. John Glennon was kneeling on the floor, repairing a table, working in the slow, laborious way of a fat, pudgy man who is fast nearing the age of sixty.

"Hello, Oliver," he solemnly greeted the youth. "Early, ain't you? What's the matter—get down late?"

"Nope. Just came out," snapped Jimmie, climbing into one of the high chairs and filling one of those flattened pipes such as only college freshmen smoke.

Glennon made no reply, but went on with his work. He was used to Jimmie's lordly ways. The boy was a sort of self-constituted partner. He spent most of his afternoons in the place, actually running the business sometimes, thus allowing old John to sit at the little round table in the corner and play poker with three or four ancient companions. The truth was, Glennon had a prodigious respect for the youth. The young gentleman always treated old John as an equal, man to man; often discussing Home Rule with him, and displaying great wisdom therein. Again, Jimmie was familiar with all the fine points of racing history, and John listened in awe while the freshman refuted the oldest "sports," and even told Joe, the hand-book man, that he ought to be planting green peas instead of trying to "make book."

John had a secret reverence for all students, and, though few ever guessed it, was quite a sentimentalist on the subject. Years ago he had had the prospect of going to college himself, but his father went into bankruptcy at the critical moment, and John had to get a menial job—setting up balls in a pool-room. The balls soon bewitched him; the chalk-dust got imbedded in his system, and the business claimed him for its own. Yet even now, when the rheumatism was contending with the chalk, he constantly beheld in every noisy boy in the room—what he himself might have been.

“Say, Glennon,” Jimmie suddenly exclaimed, puffing hard, “desist for a minute and listen!”

“Well?” John inquired, dutifully obeying.

“You need a man here all the time to help you—a general manager—a permanent bouncer—don’t you?”

“Well,” John replied, with a reflective sigh, “I could use such a man. But it’s mighty hard to get one who will be on the level for five minutes.”

“All right,” went on Jimmie, nervously puffing at his pipe. “Now listen, Glennon—listen hard so as you’ll get it all the first time, and I won’t have to draw colored maps. I was fired from college this morning—for good, no come-back. My scholastic career is all over—blown out to sea and sunk in fifty fathoms of water, with no divers in sight. My old man is the original Flinty Parent, and when he hears of it I shall probably have to weigh anchor in the home waters too. Any way, I must henceforth join the wage-earners, and I might just as well begin now. Pa won’t get me a job—he is the kind who never loses a chance to say, ‘Go forth and earn thy bread as I did.’ He is a general in that vast army that came to New York without shoes and otherwise indecently clad, and sold papers for James Gordon Bennett the Elder, and slept under the Brooklyn Bridge before it was built. You see? Well, let me begin right now! Five dollars a week to start will not break you, and you know me. Is it a go?”

Old John gave no sign of intelligence for a moment. He had only got as far as the fact that Jimmie was fired from college.

“What—what did they fire you for?” he asked vaguely.

“For coming here!” Jimmie answered sharply. “They’ve been after this joint for some time. It seems, the faculty had a big powwow, and decided they had to make an example. I’m the example. Prexy did the It-hurts-me-more-than-it-does-you stunt this morning. Said he must lay aside his personal feelings because he had a public duty to perform, etc., and ended with a speech to the effect that he was wrung to the soul, because he knew my father’s high and respected position—Father’s a big banker, you know, Glennon, and I think Prexy was a bit scared. Now, about the job—suppose it’s all right, eh?”

John had by this time got as far as fact number two: that Jimmie wanted a real job; wanted to work for him; to become a plain pool-room man. With his large, dull eyes, he looked full at the applicant, who stood waiting, puffing out clouds of smoke. The pool-room atmosphere seemed to roll away with the smoke, and for the first time Glennon realized that he was a gray-haired man nearing sixty and his friend Jimmie was nothing but a boy. He found himself face to face with a vital problem, and unprepared. There passed through his mind a picture of a banker sitting somewhere down-town—a banker and a father whose place he, the pool-room man, was suddenly called upon to fill instantly and efficiently. The idea became clearer and clearer as he continued to observe the applicant. Old John's conscience was waking with painful prods. He noted now the slight figure, the very young face. The neat blue suit and the shining patent leather shoes got into his head. He observed the gold watch-chain, the bright necktie, and the freshman cap pulled over a shock of black hair. He noted also the boyish light in the eyes, which now seemed pretty full of trouble. As Jimmie went on nervously puffing, it further occurred to Glennon that those same eyes were not very far from the flood stage.

All these things Glennon noted, and then he got to fact number three. They had fired him for coming to his place—to Glennon's! Why should the college fire boys for coming to his place? He ran everything on the square. There was nothing wrong in pool or billiards—everybody played them; everybody he knew, at least, and he did n't know any crooks. The boys did n't bother with Joe, the hand-book man, much—they had no money for such things. And they were never allowed to play poker in Glennon's. They simply enjoyed themselves there! And might they not be in much worse places—in Murphy's (the rival establishment), for instance?

This third fact began to loom large in John's mind. Hitherto he had considered himself a public benefactor; a purveyor of innocent amusement. And now the faculty of a college had put a ban on him—actually fired a student for coming near him! The thing was horrible, inexplicable.

"Well," Jimmie broke in on his cogitations, "have n't you connected with the plans and specifications yet? Do I get the job?"

"No," Glennon replied gruffly, turning to his work again. "You better go on home an' square yourself!"

"All right, then!" the boy cried, with a stamp of vexation. "I'll go down to Murphy's—he'll take me on!"

This was too much for Glennon. "Here, you!" he yelled, as Jimmie reached the door. "Come back here. You can have the job—for a little while, any way!"

"That's better, Glennon," said Jimmie, coming back, with a smile

of superior approval. "I'll begin right away. Now, you go and sit down and read the paper, and I'll finish this table. Knew you would n't go back on me."

Oliver's banishment evidently had a salutary effect on the children of Alma Mater. Only a few of the case-hardened—who would assist at a murder just for excitement's sake—appeared in the afternoon. Jimmie was voted a martyr, a hero, and his new job declared a fitting and scathing rebuke to the Learned Powers.

Glennon, his emotions in a tangle, hung about, undecided whether he should report the matter to the police or should henceforth regard all colleges as institutions of unbridled falsehood and tyranny. He quietly cornered one or two students while Jimmie was busy, and consulted them. The horrible facts were instantly confirmed.

"But," he objected slowly, "why don't some of you tell the—the main guys in the college—show 'em how it is?"

"No use, Pop," a callow youth replied. "Prexy did it himself. It's all over but the shouting!"

Glennon heaved a fat sigh and waddled away. From force of long habit, he sat down to his afternoon's game of poker; but, finding it impossible to keep his mind on the cards, he got up and went to his favorite corner in the far end of the room, and stood contemplating the month of December on a five-year-old calendar. For some unknown and occult reason, the calendar seemed to give him an idea. Turning around, he beckoned to the callow youth, with whom he held a whispered conversation.

"But you don't really mean to do it, Pop, do you?" the callow youth asked.

"Mean it?" retorted John indignantly. "I sure do! It ain't something as can't be done, is it?"

The collegian's eyes narrowed in a humorous way, which to any one else would have been a danger signal, but which was lost on old John, who quietly pocketed the card on which the youth had written something after some slight hesitation.

For some time Glennon stood watching Jimmie Oliver hustling about, performing the duties of his new job—setting up the balls, finding cues, collecting the money, and cleaning tables. John's face was a study. Now and then he covertly fumbled the card in his pocket and indulged in a body-shaking chuckle. Gradually, however, his massive countenance assumed an expression of most unwonted ferocity. When seemingly on the verge of epilepsy, he folded his arms and roared, "Oliver, come here!"

The cue that Jimmie was putting in a rack dropped to the floor. He was very seldom spoken to in that way—"he would n't stand for it," in his own language. But now it suddenly flashed on him that things were

somehow different—he was “working,” and he was scared. He meekly hurried to the ogre in the corner, his eyes wide with inquiry.

“What’s—what’s up, Glennon?” he faltered, the familiarity of the “Glennon” sticking in his throat.

“First and foremost,” said John, keeping up the roar, “I want you to change your way of talking to me. This being your first job, I’ll pardon you this time. But just remember as I’m your boss, an’ a boss is always addressed as sir or mister.” Here John had an inspired thought. “How would you address the president of your college?” he bellowed. “Would you address him as ‘Prexy’?”

“No—sir,” answered Jimmie, awe and wonder in his voice.

“Of course not!” John continued. “You would say ‘Dr. Prexy.’ Well, the same rule goes in business: to you, I’m Mr. Glennon.”

“All right—I got it—Mr. Glennon,” said Jimmie.

“Then, see as you don’t forget it!” John went on, still roaring and frowning, and perspiring with his efforts to be in a rage and keep his head clear at the same time. “Now listen to me. You said that Dr. Prexy was n’t goin’ to write to your father until to-morrow? Well, here’s what you got to do! You go right home now as if nothing had happened and say nothing. Come down to-morrow as if you was goin’ to college, an’ come right in here to me. Understand?”

“But, Mr. Glennon,” Jimmie was venturing, hesitatingly, “I——”

“There ain’t no buts about it!” Glennon roared. “I’m your employer—your boss—an’ you’re to do as I tell you—or I’ll fire you!” he concluded, just by way of dramatic effect.

Oliver was no exception to the general run of “new boys.” He was thoroughly stunned and subdued.

“All right, Mr. Glennon,” he replied, very glad to get away from this new kind of John Glennon. “I’ll be down at nine in the morning. Here’s the money I took in this afternoon. Shall I—shall I clean up before I go?”

“No! Just you do as I tell you!” John thundered, in a final burst, and scarcely able to keep from turning a few light steps to celebrate his first success as an “awful boss.”

Delegating a steady customer, who happened to be above reproach in the matter of receipts, to run the business for the evening, John prepared to go home. Before going out, he paused at his cigar-case and carefully stowed away in his pocket four of the best three-for-a-quarter cigars. Nobody ever bought these luxurious weeds. John kept them merely for the looks of the thing.

Arriving in the bosom of his family, he found his wife and blooming daughter, as they should be, preparing supper. Observing his profound and thoughtful aspect, Mrs. Glennon’s mind immediately flew to arrests for keeping a gambling house, and such things. Miss Glennon, as a

young lady employed at the music-counter in Dacy's, and hence having a closer knowledge of the world and the reasons why men look profound, laughed at her mother's fears and scornfully remarked: "You've got the wrong dope, Ma! Pa has merely bet five dollars on a skate that fell down. He'll feel better after supper."

Even Miss Glennon, however, began to have serious fears for her father's well-being and sanity when, during the meal, he announced with an air of deep mystery that he was going to make a social call of great importance, and ordered them to set out his Sunday shoes, his striped trousers, elaborate frock coat, white vest, gold cuff-links, stick pin, and silk hat. John very seldom wore these splendid things—never all at once, except on Easter Sundays, and even last Easter he had dispensed with the silk hat, considering it going too far.

No explanation was forthcoming. He stopped their questions by doing the "awful boss" with great success. Miss Glennon became convinced that her pa was going to run for the district leadership, and, under the spell of the social dreams thus engendered, eagerly helped him. At last, regally arrayed, the whole effect finished off with a wonderful and fearful gold-headed cane, he emerged from his house and waddled into an uptown car.

Getting off at one of the exclusive corners near Central Park, he paused for a moment to read the card the callow youth had given him, then made for one of the brown-stone residences and rang the bell.

"Is Dr. Prexy in?" he inquired of the maid.

The maid giggled. "Dr. Prexy?" she repeated. "No one of that name lives here."

John consulted the card again. "Dr. Prexy, number fifty-seven," he insisted. "Young woman," he said, feeling a great temptation to try the "awful boss," "I want to see the president of the college that's down on —— Street!"

"Oh!" answered the girl. "Why did n't you say so? Yes, this is Dr. Harrison's house, but I don't know whether he's in. What name?"

"Mr. John Emmet Glennon," replied John impressively.

As old John sat waiting in the beautiful drawing-room, he felt his courage oozing away. The white vest, the frock coat, and the silk hat seemed to lose their effectiveness. He had always thought of a college president as an Unapproachable Being, a kind of Sublime Sultan of Intellect, not to be compared to common mortals—and here he was invading the sacred dwelling! He was deciding to say only a word or two for Jimmie and leave, when he beheld the Great Being standing in front of him—a tall, erect, silver-haired man with deep, brilliant eyes, who quietly held out his hand and said: "Mr. Glennon? What can I do for you?"

Dr. Harrison, besides being a famous educator, was one of those old-

fashioned, finely cultured, always courteous gentlemen whose kind, alas, is not quite so numerous as it might be in these days of push and shove and hustle. He carried himself and spoke in that commanding, decisive manner which marks the "self-made" man—the man who has had to battle his way to the top. He dropped into a chair and sat waiting for his visitor to explain himself. His eyes took in every detail of John's make-up, without seeming to do so.

John could think of nothing to say. By way of gaining time, he fished out two of the expensive cigars, and silently offered one to the Doctor, who seemed startled at the gift, but quickly accepted it, striking a match at the same time and putting it to John's cigar and then to his own. With the cigar between his lips, John began to feel more comfortable. Such a pleasant beginning, he considered, should soon lead to an amicable agreement.

"Dr. Prexy," he commenced, "I came——"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Glennon," interrupted the Doctor, with a slight twinkle in his eyes, "but my name is Harrison. I believe among themselves the students have the habit of referring to me as 'Prexy,' but I assure you my real name is Harrison."

John considered whether he should hand over the other cigar as a peace-offering. He was so long revolving this question that Dr. Harrison decided it was high time to come to his visitor's rescue.

"Come, Mr. Glennon," he suggested, "to what do I owe the honor of this visit? Perhaps you have a boy down at the college—in some kind of trouble, eh?"

Old John positively beamed on him. Here was a man to deal with—a man of brains, who had almost hit the nail on the head without a hint!

"Dr. Harrison," he burst out, "I did come here to see you about a boy—not exactly my own boy, though, but just the same a boy what I takes a lot of interest in, because I've known him a long time, an' know he's a good boy an' now likely to be put on the wrong track, for no good reason as I can see! I had a chance to go to college myself once—until I was knocked all over pretty much as this boy is unless he's put back on the main line. The college was took away from me; but here's a youngster what has a natural right and means—and you fired him to-day, Doctor. I mean young Oliver. What I want is for you to take that boy back in college."

John paused, thoroughly scared by his first effort in the speech line.

"Mr. Glennon," said the Doctor, "I fail to understand exactly your interest in the matter, but I may as well tell you now that it is impossible. Of late our boys have been frequenting low places—common pool-rooms, for instance—to such an extent that we have had to take action. Boys need a severe example. For the general welfare, we had to make a sacrifice. Oliver's offenses were flagrant. I am heartily sorry

for the boy, but it cannot be helped. You are very nearly as old as I am, I judge, Mr. Glennon, and you must know the truth of what I say. You know quite well the vicious characters that frequent the billiard-rooms about the city, and you must be aware how easily boys are led into evil in them—into gambling, drinking, and other things.”

John sat like a stone for a minute. Then, slowly and steadily, he said, “Dr. Harrison, I am the man what runs the billiard-room in Third Avenue what you fired Oliver for coming to.”

The educator was on his feet in an instant. “My dear Mr. Glennon,” he exclaimed, “I do not wish you to think that I apply my remarks to you personally——”

“Dr. Harrison,” John interrupted, his voice firm and his body rigid, “you don’t have to apologize to me. I knows lots of people thinks as you do, an’ sometimes they ’re right. But, begging your pardon, we ’re talking now about something I think I knows a little more about than you do. Because there ’s fights and gambling in Bowery saloons an’ pool-rooms, you would n’t have the billiard tables and quiet games of cards taken out of your club, would you? Well, as far as I knows, I am a decent citizen, and I run a respectable billiard and pool room. No low characters come into my place of business, and there ’s no gambling, except such as you yourself could n’t object to. There ’s a hand-book man comes in, and one or two of us men put a dollar on a race now and then, but we have n’t lost any fortunes nor wrecked any homes. Your boys don’t gamble—I don’t let ’em. The boys have been coming into my place for years. All they do is play billiards an’ pool, an’ go home. All boys like the games, an’ it don’t do ’em any harm. They might be in lots worse places. For twenty years I ’ve kept sort of moral tabs on them boys. An’ now you fire this here Jimmie Oliver—the best of them all, a born gentleman—for coming there!”

John paused to mop his glistening brow and relight his cigar. The Doctor stared at him intently, a puzzled expression on his face.

“Well,” said the Doctor, after a long silence, “one thing is clear, Mr. Glennon: you are a sincere and worthy man—I wish all in your business were like you. I also wish that I could comply with your request; but we have now laid down the law, and to take Oliver back would demoralize discipline.”

Old John gathered himself for a final appeal.

“Doctor,” he said, slowly beating his fat hand on the chair, “you don’t look deep enough—an’ it ’s worth while! Lord! going to pool-rooms ain’t nothing to what they might do! Look here, Dr. Harrison, I ’ll tell you something as I ain’t told nobody, because I ’ve never had a call to—something I ’ve never forgotten, though, an’ never will. For two months when I was a boy at public school I was a thief—I stole about fifty dollars’ worth of books from the other boys’ straps. I did n’t do it

altogether of my own accord—though I ain't excusing myself on that account. A boy what lived opposite me an' was my chum—the smartest boy in the school, too—he put the idea in my head. We did it for the row it made, not the money; but it was plain stealing just the same. We were caught; but instead of the usual punishment, they did something that hit us deep—that turned our souls inside out. The principal took us into his room, sat down between us, put an arm around each of us, an' just talked, quietly. But, Lord! I'll never forget that talk; an' I guess that other boy won't either! That was all. Nobody ever knew. And——”

John trailed off into an amazed silence. Dr. Harrison had suddenly jumped from his chair and was pacing up and down the room, muttering excitedly. For the moment he seemed bent and very old. “To think it should come back to me now,” he muttered, “after all these years!” Pausing in front of Glennon, he faced him and exclaimed:

“Glennon, Johnny Glennon, look at me—don't you know me? Don't you see the boy who made you—steal?”

John's cigar dropped on the immaculate striped trousers, and the sacred silk hat, which he had carefully held all the time, fell to the floor.

“Holy saints!” he gasped. “It—it is! Spider Eddie—Eddie Harrison—or I'll be—be——!”

The two men, so widely different, so strangely met, looked at each other for a long minute, neither able to speak. Then their hands clasped. The Doctor was the first to recover himself.

“Johnny,” he said, still holding Glennon's fat hand, “forty years—or is it forty-five?—have certainly made a great change—outwardly. Think of sitting here an hour without recognizing each other! Even at that, if you had not mentioned that—that one incident—I should not have known you—even our names lost! But I too have never forgotten that——”

“And now is the time to give it a final fixing-up!” chimed in old John, his business mind making immediate application of the sentiment aroused. “You take that youngster back, Eddie, an' we'll both move up a bit more in the way of squaring ourselves!”

“He comes back to-morrow,” the Doctor snapped, taking a letter from his pocket and tearing it across. “Johnny, you are right—there are some very vital things about which you know much more than I do. But here, this won't do—come up stairs, come up to the smoking-room, Johnny! I'm alone to-night, and free. We'll have a long chat. I want you to tell me all about this evil pool-room business of yours.”

John lumbered up after him, and the first thing that met his gaze on entering the smoking-room was a large and handsome billiard table. The Doctor looked rather sheepish.

“The game is my hobby, John,” he explained. “By Jove, you must

be a crack shot—I'd like to cross cues with you, but I suppose its small pleasure for you, seeing it's your business?"

"You're on, Eddie," John replied, and gravely selected a cue; first placing the frock coat carefully over a chair.

The balls were soon clicking, the Doctor vowing that no professional was going to beat him! Old John said nothing—he was trying to grasp the splendid reality of it: the fact that he was actually playing billiards with a college president!

Before he went away a secret treaty was ratified, wherein John Glenon agreed to exclude all students from his premises during lecture hours, and otherwise to continue to keep "moral tabs" on the student body.

And in the morning, while old John thoughtfully glued new tips on a stack of cues, there was not far away a boy who put his head in his arms and sobbed uncontrollably with gratitude and joy. But no one saw, and no one ever knew—except the silver-haired man who went to the door and turned the key; a gentle twinkle in his kindly, brilliant eyes, as he stood quietly waiting for the full heart to calm itself.



ULTIMATE FAILURE

BY CHARLES HENRY LUDERS

HOWEVER much my sorrows have fallen short,
 Or swerved aside, or overshot that mark
 Far-set, whose circles centre but in Truth,
 This the desire—the one unfading dream—
 The hope of my young manhood,—so to stand,
 So aim, so loose the tense expectant string,
 That, at the last, each wingèd shaft may fly
 Unto the heart of Truth unerringly.

Yet—though I soothe the sting of ill-success
 With thoughts of Error, lurking in the grass,
 Nursing a wound some wide-flown dart has given—
 A fear dwells ever at my inmost soul,
 That, haply, ere my growing skill has won
 The prize—Perfection—I may feel the bow
 Break at full bend, or hear its worn cord part,
 Or find the quiver empty at my belt.

HENRY WARING—HONEST MAN

By Sally Nelson Robins



I

IN a shabby house on a shabby plantation in Gloucester County, Virginia, Henry Waring and his wife, Caroline, had lived for fifteen years. The place sensed death and decay, and the Warings were chief mourners at their own funerals.

Waring's appearance was apologetic, on account of his shallow blue eyes and a "poor me" sort of mouth; and Caroline's beauty had receded ignominiously before neglect and discontent.

Supper seemed to be ready, but Caroline, with a pair of loose-jointed tongs, drummed aimlessly on the fire. Suddenly she threw the tongs to their place, and asked quickly, "Heard anything?"

"Dr. Warner wants to see me," Henry answered. "He has a lot of lumber to be shipped, and needs an honest man."

Into Caroline's mind his words projected a new truism: "Honesty is the worst policy." Her smile was unsympathetic, and her raised lip showed a gap in her fine teeth.

"If I get it," Henry continued, "I'll go up and down every day until I can save something, and then we can go to Newport News and live."

Caroline suddenly revolted. Hitherto she had accepted Henry's ideas.

"If you ever save anything, you will pay debts." Her color rose, and Henry remembered suddenly her early beauty. "I don't feel anything but debt. I get up to debt. I cook to debt. I churn to debt. I sleep to debt. If my blood would pay, I'd let it out to-night."

She rose from her low chair, drew a long breath, and announced drearly, "Supper's ready."

Conversation at the table was laconic: "Tea, Henry?"—"Bread, Carrie?"—"Butter, Henry?"—"Another cup, Henry?"

After supper, Caroline went into their big, bare bedroom. If Henry were really going to see about the place, his clothes must be ready. She took from the wardrobe a pair of worn trousers—Henry's best.

She ran her hands inside and held them to the lamp. There were thin places, but no real holes.

She then took from the bureau-drawer his Sunday shirt. The edges of the wrist and collar bands were frayed, and she carefully clipped them. The touch of the worn garments softened her mood.

When she returned to Henry, he was as she had left him, except that he had removed his pipe from his mouth and was holding it in his hand. An indistinct emotion forced these words:

“Even if I don’t always agree with you, Henry—I love you.”

Henry started toward her, and then sat back in his chair.

“But it is hard to tell it, ain’t it, Carrie? I love you, too.”

II

As Henry Waring awaited the train the next morning, the mail-carrier asked:

“Where you going, Mr. Waring?”

“I’m going away on business,” Henry answered, and the mail-carrier smiled.

It was Warwick court day, and Judge Turnbull and several lawyers got on at Williamsburg. Henry, with the rest, stopped at Newport News. He walked timidly to Dr. Warner’s office, got an elastic promise, and then went over to Schemlz’s Bank, to see an old friend—Dick Stevens.

As he was talking to Dick, he noticed the cashier handing Judge Turnbull a large roll of money. Indeed, he caught Judge Turnbull’s eye as he carefully put this money into a red morocco pocketbook.

Waring, with the rustic fear of being late, boarded the homeward train in good time. He took his seat by the window; between him and a well-dressed woman with a pale young man was a vacant seat, which later Judge Turnbull took.

The same sort of people always seem to travel, and on this occasion—as usual—there were the young mother with thirsty children, the old woman with her basket, the overdressed girl, the mournful lady, the loquacious man, gentlemen of the grip, et cetera, et cetera.

It was about dusk when the train pulled out, and almost immediately the conductor, in pacific tones, announced:

“It’s nobody’s fault, of course, but we’ve got to ride to Williamsburg in the dark, because there’s not a lamp in this coach.”

A ripple of remonstrance passed through the car, and then the passengers talked quietly in the semi-darkness.

Suddenly, like the pop of a gun, Judge Turnbull’s voice rose:

“Stop! Stop!” he cried.

In a moment those in the car were on their feet, but at the command of the conductor they sat down again.

“Keep still! Keep still!” he cried. “What’s to pay, Judge?”

“A scoundrel has tried to kill me. He saw me get some money out of the bank. Take him—I might faint.”

The conductor moved up the car with a lantern. "Got him?" asked the judge.

"I got him," answered the conductor.

The lantern revealed a jagged cut in the judge's shoulder, through which blood was flowing: and the judge held Henry Waring, entirely unresisting, in his firm hands.

III

THE fifth of March destroyed the disillusion of Caroline Waring.

The eternal routine had been broken by an overwhelming revelation—instead of by Henry's presence. His appearance for dinner inevitably ended a sentence, made a full stop in the day; but the hours rolled on over endless prairies of thought when Henry was away.

All day burning questions, like flaming swords, had crossed at the gate of her soul; and her soul answered:

"What more can I do than I have done to my vineyard?"

She trembled at the pertinacity of the voices. "Why did you wait so long? Why did you not speak before?" she asked.

Now at six o'clock the cow was milked, the table set, and she waited for eight o'clock and Henry. She stood upon the sagging portico. The mild March sunlight was kind to the landscape. Six hens and a cock were pecking green tidbits as they went to roost. The wind blew their feathers in a trembling ruff, and quickened their nervous footsteps.

"Why not fifty hens and five roosters?" came red hot from the silence. "Why not cattle upon a thousand hills? Why not? Why not—all the things that are not?"

Her glance fell upon the paper mulberries which once stood in leafy splendor on the terrace—which sloped from them to the garden gate. Their splendor had departed, they had gone to hideous trunk excrescences and gnarled roots. A few abortive shoots, like the puny offspring of a late marriage, tried to soar upward. Two great elms, each side of the gate, tossed bursting branches and scornfully derided the stumps, the waste, the tottering picture. They would not surrender, nor must Caroline.

"Wives submit yourselves to your husbands!"

"If you are uncertain about anything, ask him in the privacy of your chamber."

"Have I not submitted long enough? What use to ask when there comes no answer?"

She had heretofore permitted herself to see but one thing at a time. Her horizon suddenly lifted, and a multitude of ideas flocked beneath. She, a mental bankrupt, in a twinkling became a mental capitalist.

The first year of marriage there had been the baby idea. The baby came and went before its time. Then the idea of personal grievance,

and fourteen years of sullen and monotonous repetition. Her idols, her grievances, piled like sand-dunes at the windows of her soul. She could never see beyond them—until to-day.

Henry was a slave to the threadbare ideas of his forefathers. She had followed him. Henry—the *man*—was a human motor-car with no gasoline in the tank. If she, the *woman*, could supply the gasoline, would he run? He was bond, not free.

Year after year—"Bread, Carrie?"—"Butter, Carrie?" No more. Breakfast. Blind work. Dinner. Blind work. Supper. Bed. Not a divine pickaxe for the soul-mine. Not the courage of a "heaven-born" conviction. A sweep of land—life. A horde of evil in the tangles and thickets—death. No sight to see the heavenly vision! No will to drive the evil to the open and destroy! To them that do not obey the truth, indignation and wrath.

IV

CAROLINE WARING did not quite understand herself, as she entered the house, after receiving the information from the mail-carrier that Henry would not come until to-morrow. She demanded no explanation of his action; she was too glad of space and silence for her thoughts. He would come soon enough.

The convention of clothes stifled her, and she undressed early; freed her full hair from its hideous severity, flung wide the windows of her mind and let the truth sweep through. For the first time she realized that she belonged to herself—with privilege of bestowing only what she chose. Her life was her own.

A clinging vine leaps gladly to the strong oak, the wall of stone, but it can't cling with nothing to cling to. Besides, Caroline Waring is not a clinging vine, and the effort to cling with nothing to cling to has doubled her spirit into hard knots.

She is a young ash tree, fit to grow in God's free pastures; but a sound heart and a sound body are choked with the briers and brambles, the mould and rottenness, of a great delusion.

Harm for a woman to think? Harm for a woman to listen? Harm for a woman to act? Must a woman with "God" big in her exclusively listen to a man with less?

"Wives submit yourselves to your husbands."

The Pauline cry has an awful distinctness, but it is elastic.

This great universe is God's freehold. Patches of it He has leased to humanity, and humanity has to render an account of its stewardship. Responsibility has no sex.

The patch leased to Caroline and Henry is full of briers, mould, evil of all kind—none necessary. There is a way to prune, destroy, build up. If Caroline sees the way and Henry does not, must she not show him the

way, join hands for betterment? He, the man, and she, the woman, *together* can make a new earth.

Day broke once more over the old earth, and Caroline Waring went forth without fear to meet it.

V

THE evening train brought Henry home. He shambled over the road in the gathering night, and wished he did not have to tell Caroline that he had been arrested.

Before his foot touched the doorstep, she was out to meet him with a strange effusion which made his story more difficult to relate.

The lamp in the hall revealed a new Caroline: her hair was fluffed and in combs, her frock was abominable, but the dull waist turned in at the neck revealed the whiteness of a slender throat. She had stuck a piece of wax into the ghastly gap whence an eye-tooth had gone; she was tired of screwing her lips down to hide it.

Coffee steaming on the trivet, hot biscuits on the footman, and the savory odor of broiled chicken, surprised Henry almost as much as Caroline's personal recklessness. The contrast between her queer elation and his late experience was so violent that it dulled his appetite for Caroline's extravagance.

She waited until the meal was over to ask, "Did Mr. Warner keep you all night?"

Waring fidgeted a little, and then said in a "taupe" monotone, "Mr. Warner did n't keep me. He will write. I—I was arrested."

"Arrested? Hurrah!" Caroline's mental perversity pricked Henry like a pin, and he jumped from his chair.

"So you really did something? What was it?" she asked.

"I did nothing," Henry answered.

"Oh-h-h!" said Caroline regretfully.

"I was accused of stabbing Judge Turnbull on the train."

"Stabbing Judge Turnbull on the train? How very interesting!"

What was the matter with Caroline? How could two days make such a difference?

"What did you do? What did you say?" Caroline's excitement was becoming.

"Nothing," answered Henry gloomily.

"Nothing? You did nothing? You said nothing? Please tell me all about it."

Henry told things with wearisome minuteness. He now proceeded to give an elaborate account of himself from the moment he left Caroline until he returned. All that he said to Mr. Warner, all that Mr. Warner said to him, all that happened on the train and in Williamsburg, was related with a peculiar and irritating nicety.

"And you did not resent the treatment," asked Caroline, "with two perfectly good fists and a competent tongue? Did you slink away with an humble apology for being arrested? You should have rent your garments, torn your hair, horsewhipped the judge, sued him for slander!"

"What is the matter, Caroline? I was n't going to act the fool. I was satisfied. An honest man——"

"Rot!" said Caroline. "A satisfied man is a dead man. Honesty is not passive decency, but absolute justice. Diogenes is hunting still. The man who pilfers a loaf to satisfy his craving is better than the man who does n't crave and therefore need not steal a loaf. I have been stuffing cotton into my ears and putting sand into my eyes all the days of my life, but something pulled it all out yesterday.

"There is an awful mortgage of decayed ideals on your intentions, Henry. For fifteen years I have wrestled with discontent, but I have not been honest enough to express it. My idea of fidelity was to see only what you saw, to think as you thought. I tear that tattered clause from my marital creed. I am going to love you with my mind as well as my heart.

"Do not the heavy mortgages upon your inheritance stifle you, Henry? Have you never seen the scabs, the peets, the mould, hidden in the thickets? No? Then I, the woman, Henry, see what you, the man, have not seen; and I, the woman, will show it to you, the man; and I, the woman, and you, the man, will lift the mortgage from our souls—drive the festering evil off!"

"Women must not meddle with men's business," said Henry, with much solemnity. "Woman's sphere——"

"Of course," Caroline broke in, "I know all about woman's sphere. I'm going to keep on dusting, and sweeping, and cooking, and all that, but the edges of time that I have devoted to dull reflection I intend to give to you.

"We are going to cut off the over-grazed pastures and choked meadows, and give them to somebody else. We are going to make ill-smelling places sweet, we are going to drive out the little foxes that hide in the brambles."

"They are necessary evils. They existed in the days of my forefathers." Henry spoke with solemnity and warmth.

"No evil is quite necessary, Henry dear," said Caroline sweetly. "We'll get a move on our forefathers, and redeem our heritage. We will also decline to creep into Dr. Warner's protection. We are going to join hands and see what we can do with our own little patch."

If Caroline's appearance had astonished Henry, no less was Caroline now astonished as the rapid metamorphosis of her husband. His "hook-worm-istic," "pellagrastic," "malarialistic" apathy vanished miraculously; his faded, limp clothes filled suddenly with an amazing corpulency.

He, a "turn-the-other-cheek," "give-away-your-cloak" man, was turned in a second to a howling tyrant. Nor death, nor poverty, nor pain, nor fading wife and waning fortune, nor arrest, imprisonment, disgrace, had brought forth a cry (he was an honest man); but the bare ideas of a woman presuming to meddle with the affairs of man had plunged him into a boiling frenzy.

He actually stamped his foot and ranted up and down the room. He used very offensive language. His gestures were brobdingnastic—great; and Caroline actually liked his pantomimic fury.

"Man is master; woman the angel in the house!" he cried.

"Poor plucked angel!" said Caroline.

"What is to become of the world when woman leaves her throne?" he asked.

"My throne is the kitchen stove, my sceptre the churn-dasher," Caroline answered.

"I am not joking, Caroline. I am in dead earnest. I should disgrace the sacrificial love of my sainted mother if I did not resent bitterly the awful ideas which you have expressed to-night. My father would turn in his grave if I listened to them." Henry was great in his wrath. "Woman must not interfere with man's prerogatives. What business has she to know that there *are* evils—ill-smelling places? She is a vine, her husband the oak. She is a being made for worship, indulgence, care. Man has placed her on a pedestal. What business has she with mortgages, with scabs and pests?" Henry was inflated with his eloquence, and Caroline smiled.

"A queen? Then, give me robes of state. A vine—a crimson Rambler? Hold fast as I climb. Don't shake! On a pedestal? Really, I was not conscious of it. Angel of the home? With not a wing to aviate! Anachronistic! Anomalous!"

"Well, we'll let the subject rest for the night. The first blood of the combat is drawn. That's good. I am glad to have aroused you, Henry. For the present, Henry dear, we'll compromise. The angel, the crimson Rambler, the queen of the kitchen stove, has a few requests to make. She wants a tooth. Look here!"

Caroline pulled out the piece of wax.

"I want a three-piece ratine. I don't know exactly what it is, but it sounds good, and I want it. Mortgages, pests, scabs, are not woman's business? Very well. But whose business are teeth and ratine dresses, and, oh, such lots and lots of things? Whose business are they?"

"You know all about man's rights, Henry; let us talk a little about women's rights!"

Henry's spirit tumbled as suddenly as it had risen, collapsed like a balloon. He did n't seem to wish to talk about women's rights, so he picked up his little candle and went to bed.

CONSCIENCE, CHIVALRY, AND CORRESPONDENCE

By Mary Caroline Farmer

FROM Miss Helen Peabody, Senior, Wellesley College, to Mr. Peyton
Fairfax, law-student at the University of Virginia:

DEAR MR. FAIRFAX:

No doubt you will be surprised to receive a letter from me, but I want to ask a favor of you. Won't you please return that photograph of myself which I gave you last summer at Atlantic City? Of course it can have no possible value to you, and I should like to have it again.

Very sincerely yours,

HELEN CHURCHILL PEABODY.

From Mr. Peyton Fairfax to Miss Peabody:

MY DEAR MISS HELEN:

Hearing from you again was not merely a pleasant surprise—it was a joy; but there was a drop of gall in the honey. You ask me to surrender a highly prized possession. Of course if you insist I cannot refuse to send back the picture, but won't you reconsider the matter? I consider it one of my greatest treasures. You will pardon me if I wait to hear from you again before returning it.

Cordially yours,

PEYTON FAIRFAX.

From Mr. Peyton Fairfax to Mrs. Dangerfield Fairfax, Richmond, Va.:

DEAREST MOTHER:

Will you please look around the house and find a photograph of a girl in a white dress and send it to me. She has asked for its return and may mean it.

Your affectionate son,

PEYTON.

From Miss Peabody to Mr. Fairfax:

DEAR MR. FAIRFAX:

I am so sorry, but I shall have to insist. You see, my mother never approved of young women giving their photographs to men unless they were engaged, and as I am afflicted with the New England conscience, it troubles me very much to think that I have gone contrary to her wishes.

Very sincerely yours,

HELEN CHURCHILL PEABODY.

From Mrs. Dangerfield Fairfax to Mr. Peyton Fairfax :

DEAR SON :

I am sending you by parcel post a box of photographs of girls in white which I found lying around in every room in the house.

Lovingly,

MOTHER.

From Mr. Peyton Fairfax to Mrs. Dangerfield Fairfax :

DEAR MOTHER :

The picture I mean is not in the bunch. Look for one taken by a Massachusetts photographer. The girl has light hair, I think.

Affectionately,

PEYTON.

From Mr. Fairfax to Miss Peabody :

DEAR MISS HELEN :

Forgive me if I make just one more protest. Your picture is hanging on the wall between a Madonna and a Saint Agnes. They are equal sources of inspiration to me. Surely, surely, your mother will not object to my keeping—not merely a memento of a pleasant summer, but something which I may liken to the token given to the knights of old which inspired them to noble deeds. We Virginians value above all else the influence of pure and noble womanhood. Entreat her to withdraw her objections, or ask your own conscience if there can be the shadow of wrong in my retaining, not a picture, but a guiding star.

In all sincerity,

PEYTON FAIRFAX.

Mrs. Dangerfield Fairfax to Mr. Peyton Fairfax :

DEAR SON :

I am sorry, but I cannot find the picture anywhere. I have looked high and low.

Lovingly,

MOTHER.

From Miss Peabody to Mr. Fairfax :

DEAR MR. FAIRFAX :

I see I shall have to make a full confession. It is not my mother who objects to your retaining the picture. You will remember Mr. John Armstrong, that tall young man who used to sit at one side and glower at us last summer. We had been engaged, and that particular photograph was made especially for him, and it is the only one in existence. The day I gave it to you we had quarrelled and broken our engagement, and I gave you the picture—well, candor compels me to say just to spite him. We have “made up” now and are to be married as soon as possible after my graduation, but he insists that I get the photograph back. “He won’t be happy till he gets it.” Please send it at once, in order that peace may reign.

Very sincerely yours,

HELEN CHURCHILL PEABODY.

Telegram from Mr. Peyton Fairfax to Mrs. Dangerfield Fairfax:

If you can't find that photograph, I shall have to come home, set fire to the house, and escape in my pajamas. The chivalry of Virginia is at stake. Look in my tennis-racket case. Look everywhere.

PEYTON.

From Mrs. Dangerfield Fairfax to Mr. Peyton Fairfax:

DEAR PEYTON:

I am sending you the photograph by special delivery. It was wrapped up with your bathing suit, and is badly blistered in one corner. How very careless, my son!

Affectionately,

MOTHER.

From Mr. Fairfax to Miss Peabody:

MY DEAR MISS HELEN:

I am sending you the photograph by registered mail to-day. Forgive the delay. When I took it from its frame *something*, I won't say what, fell on it and made a blister. I am sorry it is disfigured, but there are some emotions which we cannot control. Of course it was not a surprise to me to learn you are engaged to Mr. Armstrong. I saw how matters were only too plainly last summer. If I had n't—oh, well, why speak of what might have been but never is to be? He need not have grudged me the shadow since he has the substance.

Wishing you all possible happiness, I am,

Cordially your friend,

PEYTON FAIRFAX.

From Peyton Fairfax to Mrs. Dangerfield Fairfax:

DEAREST MOTHER:

I am sending back the bunch of photographs to-day. Please take them up in the attic and put them in the big chest and put a flat iron on them, so they won't get away. Whew, my hair has almost turned gray! Suppose I had had to confess that I had n't the faintest idea where the photograph was that I had promised to keep like the apple of my eye. A Virginian's reputation for chivalry has hung in the balance, but, thanks to you, Mater, I am saved.

Your loving son,

PEYTON.



A FLASH OF LIGHTNING

By David Potter

Author of "An Accidental Honeymoon," "The Lady of the Spur," etc.



TO the two in the marshes the night brought a welcome relief. As the vanishing sun revealed for the last time the heads of the cat-tails, and the blue banners of the swamp-flags, Selden and the girl uttered a thankful sigh. He looked up from his work of poling the little sloop long enough to give her a humorous glance.

"We think alike, as usual," he said.

"Yes. After this I think I'll always be glad when the sun sets. I feel safer at night, Schuyler."

"In these marshes we're as lost to New York as if we were in Borneo," he assured her. "The comic papers call this a foreign country, you know."

She nodded silently. Her more sombre spirit found it hard to keep pace with his efforts to take their situation lightly. She did not doubt the real seriousness of his nature—he was more merry only because more resolute.

The fading afterglow warned him to resume his poling. Leaning on his pole, he drove the sloop vigorously along the winding channels. The water rippled under the overhang of the boat. The wind sighed through the tall reeds. Now and then the roar of a bullfrog sounded from some hidden pool left by the last night's rain.

Mechanically handling the tiller, Edith stared behind her.

Miles away across the illimitable marshes, the lights of the city reddened the sky. The glow was reflected in the clouds gathered thick above it. Driven in from seaward within the last hour, they gave a hint of coming storm.

Gazing back at the vast hive, Edith fancied she could make out the very outline of a certain skyscraper. She turned away her eyes with a shudder.

He had been watching her over his shoulder. "Are you cold?"

"No, no. Yes—a little, perhaps. Are we almost there?"

"Almost. We ought to be able to see the light as soon as we round that point. There! Can you make out that big clump of willows? We can see the cabin from there, if Baker has n't forgotten to set the lamp going. Not much fear of that, though."

A darker mass above the dark shore became visible to the girl's straining eyes. "Yes, I see the willows." Her thoughts dwelt on Schuyler's last words. "Is he a—a reliable man?"

"Trustworthy as—as death. He's hunted and fished these marshes with me since I was a boy. We can count on Baker—he won't talk. Hello! it's so dark I can't see a foot ahead. We don't want to get stranded in the mud. Jove! this tide runs like a mill-race."

He fumbled a moment in a tool-box at the foot of the mast. Presently the flash of an electric hand torch cut the darkness of the stream. His face, humorous and kind, stood out, chalk-white against the night. The girl thrilled profoundly.

Again he pressed the bulb. "Ah," he said, "I see now. The willow roots grow right into the stream, under water—it's an awkward place for a boat." He resumed his poling. "Did you feel a drop of rain?"

"Yes. It does n't matter."

"We must n't get your bags wet. Of course most of my things are already here—in the cabin. I've been bringing them in piece-meal."

"Of course."

She felt something brush her cheek, as if a score of fairy fingers touched her soothingly. The branches of the willows hung fairly over the sloop. A marsh bird or two, disturbed by their passage, twittered for a moment among the rustling leaves.

Then suddenly they were looking straight up a little lane of light into the warm eye of a cottage.

She gave a soft "Oh!"

Selden spoke from the darkness of the prow. "Yes—home. You like it?"

"It looks so friendly—so welcoming."

"It ~~is~~ friendly. I'm glad."

The sloop grated against the steps of a landing-place. Instantly the door of the cabin was thrown open and a man hurried out.

"That you, sir?"

"Yes, Baker. All right."

"Careful of that wharf, Mr. Selden. There's a four-foot break in the third plank."

"How's that?"

"The pile underneath is clean washed out. The tide runs awful strong there, you remember. Fell away sudden this afternoon. I'd just come in in the punt, and mighty near went with it."

"I'm glad you did n't."

"Yes, sir. If the lady'll give me her hand, I'll help her across, all right."

She felt herself lifted by strong arms. Selden followed with the bags.

"Tie up the sloop," he directed. "And look here, Baker, fix that hole the first thing in the morning."

"Yes, sir, I'll do it. If you'll call when you're ready, I'll come in and give you your supper, sir. I dare say the lady'll like a good cup of tea."

Edith and Selden entered the cottage together. He let the bags drop on the floor.

"This is bully!" he exclaimed enthusiastically. "Isn't it? To think that you're here at last! It seems too good to be true."

They were in a tiny living-room. A fire, just large enough to take off the chill of the gathering storm, crackled in an open fireplace. A table, set for two, stood in the middle of the room. The linen and silver sparkled in the glory of the low-swinging lamp. White curtains shielded the windows, and the floor was nearly hidden by a blue and white rug. Shotguns, fishing-rods, and canoe paddles hung above the fireplace.

She drew a long breath. "It's perfect," she agreed. "You did n't do all this yourself?"

"Every bit," he asserted proudly. "That is, Baker and I, but I claim the credit of it."

"It is perfect," she said again.

"The kitchen is over there," he explained—"through that door to the left; and beyond that are Baker's quarters. Here"—he led the way to one side and threw open a door—"this is—our room."

She said nothing. The room was lighted only by a pair of candle-lamps, one on each side of the dressing-table. From the doorway, she could only partly make out the glass handles of the chest, the carved feet of the old chairs, and the shining brass of the bed. Beneath the candle-lamps, a gleam of silver caught her eye.

"You've gotten me a new dressing-set?"

"All complete, I believe," he returned a little anxiously. "I was n't sure you'd be able—you'd care—to bring your own."

"I did n't," she said. "I haven't a thing *he* ever gave me." There was a long silence.

"If you and I ever part——" she began deliberately.

"Don't," he protested.

"Other people—like us—have," she said, a little defiantly.

He laid his hand on her shoulder. "Please don't."

"I won't, but—oh, if anything ever happens to you before—before I die, what should I do!"

He shook his head at her reproachfully, refusing to yield to her gloomy mood.

"At any rate," he said, "the wolf will never howl at your door. I know you did n't mean *that*," he added quickly, "but it's a great satisfaction to me—to know that you won't ever be dependent on—him—again."

"Never," she said, "never!"

"Never," he repeated. "But how we talk! We'll both live a hundred years yet. Well, if you'll fix yourself up, I'll do the same in Baker's room. Then hurrah for supper. I'm ravenous."

"Don't be long," she urged.

He laughed happily. "What a caution for a woman to give a man! I'll be ready ages before you are."

He kissed her, quite simply, and closed the door upon her.

When she rejoined him in the living-room, she had changed her travelling dress for a linen gown.

"You look very homy," he said admiringly. "Yes, and properly camp-like, too. I like you best in white—or in blue—or perhaps in black."

"Are n't you getting a little mixed?" she smiled.

"Mixed? Yes." He sauntered to the fireplace, and, placing one hand on the rustic mantel, stared down at the burning logs. "Things have been decidedly mixing to-day, have n't they?" He gave her one of his oddly-humorous glances. "Well, we'll never be mixed again. We'll never feel uncertain in our lives. You and I are sure."

"Sure," she repeated softly, "always."

Baker bustled in from the kitchen, carrying a steaming tea-kettle.

He was a short, square man, with a gray-streaked beard. Edith was relieved to find that the mild blue eyes that frankly met hers expressed no curiosity.

"Here's your tea, ma'am," said the fisherman, with respectful unconcern. "I'll bring the toast—piping hot." He vanished into the kitchen.

As they seated themselves at the table, the two smiled at each other.

"Baker is very—comforting," she said.

"I knew he'd be. You pour the tea. What a lot of time we've wasted!"

"If we had n't waited as long as we did, we might n't have been—sure."

"That's true," he admitted gravely. "Did you like the room?"

"Yes," she answered, her eyes lowered to avoid his gaze. "The silver set is lovely."

Outside, the raindrops began to patter on the pane. There was a sudden rumble of thunder, and a flash that seemed to obscure the lamp.

She gave a startled cry.

"Are you afraid of lightning?" he asked.

"Oh, no—not much. It came so suddenly."

"Yes. I think it's a real storm."

Baker again emerged from the kitchen, and silently placed a plate of buttered toast on the table. This was soon followed by slices of bacon, thin and crisp, and an omelet.

"You're a master hand, Baker," commented Selden.

The fisherman withdrew, grinning cheerfully.

The two smiled dreamily at each other over the untasted food.

Another clap of thunder shook the house. Selden started to his feet.

"By Jove! I don't want the wind or tide to work the sloop loose. We should be real exiles then—except for Baker's punt. I'll go have a look at it."

He flung open the front door and stepped onto the landing-place. She watched him, smiling at his boyish eagerness.

"Edith," he called, "come see how the lightning lights up the marsh! It looks like fireworks on the Fourth of July."

She joined him on the platform, her hand stealing into his with a vague terror of the darkness, and the marsh, and the lightning playing above it.

Only a few raindrops were falling. A little distance down the stream, the clump of willows loomed ghastly in the vivid flashes.

She felt his strong fingers close comfortingly on hers, then loosen.

"I'll see if the sloop's fast," he said.

The lightning flared as he stepped away from her. Then came a crash, startlingly near. She put her hands over her eyes.

It was long before the expected flash came; but as she let her hands fall, the lightning flared—upon a black hole at her very feet, and a platform empty of Selden.

She did not know that she screamed. She only felt a hand on her arm, and heard Baker's startled voice at her ear.

"What's the matter, ma'am?"

She made no answer, and he shook her roughly.

"What's the matter?"

"He," she muttered—"he——" Baker felt her arm curve downward.

"My God!"

The fisherman knelt at the broken plank and reached far down.

"Maybe he's hangin' to the piles."

"No." She did not know her own voice. "He struck his head. I—heard it."

"My God!" Baker's deep imprecation again smote her dulled

senses. "Then the tide's got 'im. Maybe I can catch—it—in the willow roots."

She heard him tumbling heavily into his punt.

Somehow she found herself back in the cabin. Impossible as it seemed, the buttered toast and the tea still smoked upon the table. She felt no emotion—only, the room seemed to have contracted infinitely, and the ceiling was lowered within an inch of her head.

Holding the saucer close, she took up her tea-cup and held it to her lips.

Suddenly so great a trembling seized her that the cup and saucer rattled together. The liquid stained her crisp gown. She stared through the open door.

The sound of furiously-pulled oars was receding toward the willows



DING DONG

WHEN the world grows old by the chimney-side,
 Then forth to the youngling rocks I glide,
 Where over the water and over the land
 The bells are booming on either hand.

Andante

Now up they go ding, then down again dong,
 And awhile they swing to the same old song;
 For the metal goes round to a single bound,
 A-cutting the fields with its measured sound,
 While the tired tongues fall with a lengthened boom
 As solemn and loud as the crack of doom.

Allegro

Then changed is their measure to tone upon tone,
 And seldom it is that one sound comes alone,
 For they ring out their peals in a mingled throng,
 And the breeze wafts the loud ding dong along.

When the echo hath reached me in this lone vale,
 I am straightway a hero in coat of mail.
 I tug at my belt and I march on my post,
 And feel myself more than a match for a host.

THE CONFESSIONS OF A BOYS' STORY WRITER

PECCAVI. Likewise *De Profundis*. But, as I shall prove, it was a case of original sin, and I have only just awakened to a realization of my iniquity. This conviction of sin has not come in a flash, as at a revival meeting, but by slow degrees.

In recent years I have written a small amount of verse, stories, and articles for juvenile periodicals, and three books for boys. The first intimation that I had a moral defect came to me in a letter from the editor of a leading juvenile magazine, regarding a proposed series of historical sketches on "Gallant Boyhoods of the Navy." When he discovered from my synopsis that several of the midshipmen heroes met their death in the performance of duty, he wrote that the series could not be used, because "young minds must not be brought into contact with the idea of Death."

I suppose that fact is obvious to any normal mind, but to me it came as a surprise. As I looked back on the reading of my boyhood, I remembered with a blush how happily I had snivelled through the deaths of Paul Dombey and Little Nell. Nay, in the earlier years, when my age was still written in one figure, I revelled in the noble end of Casabianca, who was in my reader, and still more in the pious death-bed scenes of certain juvenile saints who drew their fleeting breath in the tracts which formed my earliest mental pabulum. What's more—and here is something for the next Eugenics Congress to consider—my little sister was just as bad as I. I hope I am not taking a mean advantage of her, but I remember a story with a lachrymose end—"Little Dot"—which she used to reread every week or so, each time with a happy flood of tears. We children knew the feeling that Aristotle describes so clumsily as the "purging of the emotions."

We two must have inherited the taint somehow, and, worse yet, I have passed it on! My son, *atat* five, has never shown a tendency toward cruelty in action, but his imagination revels in slaughter. He has always exulted in the gory passing of Goliath and Giant Despair, and after one of his sanguinary battles there are few survivors among his lead soldiers. A moving picture must be "moving" in more senses than one to satisfy his taste. There must be an attack of Indians on an emigrant train, with plenty of casualties on both sides. Then

there must be a careering charge of cavalymen just at the moment when scarcely a white man is left and the women are on the point of capture. Pop—pop—bang—bang! And a lot more redskins must bite the dust.

"Daddy," he begs me, "tell me a sad story—one with lots of fighting and bad Indians."

It is perhaps only another sign of my moral obliquity that I have already in this confession blackguarded my sister and my child. What I meant to do was merely to show that this defect must be something powerfully rooted in our stock, for generations of Puritan and missionary ancestry have failed to tear it out. That is my only excuse, but I beg the reader to bear it in mind as I pass to the blacker parts of this confession.

My first boys' book was a story based on the exploits of privateers in the War of 1812. I have a hatful of newspaper reviews of that story, all highly complimentary, but probably in every case the book had been skimmed over by some man on the staff, and it is notorious that newspaper men are apt to be morally callous. But I learned to my sorrow that the lady librarians throughout the country had by a large majority turned it down.

"What's the matter with it?" I asked a relative of mine who is a librarian himself, and who has luckily escaped the family taint referred to above. After paying a polite tribute to the "manly ideals" and all that, he broke it to me gently: one of the characters was a boatswain, and he chewed tobacco! Horrid habit, of course. Further, the same reprehensible old tar used "strong language." Of course I did n't let him say "damn," but he did say "dog my cats," and once he called a stupid hand a "mullet-headed, bumboat blockhead." There it is, though perhaps the editor will feel constrained to print it in asterisks. You see, I have observed the boatswain in real life, and made his acquaintance in Marryat as well (where, alas, he damns roundly), and I never realized how refined a character he ought to be for the boys of to-day, or perhaps I should say, for the librarians of to-day.

Even with that warning, somehow I did n't learn the lesson. I wrote another book, this time a story about midshipmen in Annapolis. First I sent the manuscript to the editor of a boys' magazine. He returned it as morally deficient, "because it contains roystering and carousing." Said roystering and carousing consisted of one little dinner of classmates, at which there was nothing worse than water to drink, and the jollification arose from the fact that a joke had just been played on the guests by the host himself.

Then I sent the story to the editor of the leading juvenile weekly. He returned it with the remark that he liked it very much, but that it contained things which "it is our policy never to mention," namely,

gambling and drinking. The villain who upheld the cheap sport ideal indulged in both, and got his deserts. Both vices were condemned, of course, but what I had not realized was that even for big boys both should never be *mentioned*. Next I sent the same story to a publisher, and the profligate soul not only seemed to like it, but he went ahead and published it.

Again a sheaf of complimentary newspaper reviews, and again "thumbs down" by the lady librarians. When I asked for the reason this time, I was informed that I was still allowing boys to say "confound it," "hang it," and "to indulge in slang." All of which was highly improper for boys to read. Later it was arranged by a certain gentleman who makes out a list of selected sterilized books for boys to read, that some of the above objectionable phrases should be cut out of the plates, in order that my book might stand among the elect in his list. The publisher assented, but with a wink at me. As I have remarked before, I suspect that he too must be rather abandoned.

Moreover, this publisher had encouraged me to write a sequel to the last, and, on taking it, called it a "jolly good story." Unfortunately, I had written it before I heard of the moral deficiencies of the predecessor. However, I hastily made a few changes in the manuscript and sent it to my librarian relative for expurgating. What was my horror when he expurgated the whole story!

The language was still reprehensible. I had allowed one middy to call another, the villain, a "mucker"! Another good-humoredly called his chum a "fat slob"! Each vile phrase was enough in itself, he assured me, to keep any lady librarian from buying the book. Further, there was "exaggeration of incident," and the "key was too high." "Any bad character hurts a book"—this aimed at my villain. "Cut it out." In one scene some fellows turn the tables on a great tease and give him some of his own medicine, all, of course, in a good-natured, boyish way. Of this he wrote, "Jeering is not consistent with the highest ethical standards, and no standards can be too high for boys." Furthermore, the story must be entirely rewritten because the "rollicking type of story is not wanted. What we librarians are looking for is stories that develop fineness of character."

I believe that has been the theory from the time of Peter Parley and Sanford and Merton down to the present day. But well I remember my own revolt from the tracts and Sunday School books when I was twelve years old. In my despair and depravity I plunged into Dickens. How heartily I loved the "exaggeration," the "high key," and the sharp distinctions between virtue and villainy! A bad character hurts a book? No confusing mixture of good and evil in Uriah Heep, the Master of Dotheboys Hall, and Fagin, and with what fine thumping hatred I hounded the villain through every chapter to the fate he richly deserved!

A rollicking story is not desirable? How I adored "Pickwick Papers," and how often I used to reread favorite passages! (Remember Winkle and Sam Weller on the ice?) Death, drinking, gambling, must not be mentioned? What delicious creeps I got out of *Oliver Twist*!

But why dwell on these painful details? About the same time that I declared my independence of the "fineness of character" stories and discovered Dickens, I hit also upon Jules Verne. No preaching there! "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea," with that mysterious Captain Nemo, was ripping. Remember the escape in the maelstrom, when you could n't for the life of you figure out the possibility of getting away from that submarine? Remember, too, the terrible revenge old Nemo took on a British ship? "Not consistent with the highest ethical standards" by a long shot—you knew that, of course—but great to read about!

Then, there was that sequel, "The Mysterious Island." Was n't that a corker? Three pages were torn out of the only copy I ever got hold of, and I have never quite recovered from the vain regret. Nor shall I ever forget those fascinating trips I made with good old Jules to the moon and to the centre of the earth. But I can't recall a word of preaching or a moral in the whole series.

I cry you mercy, gentle reader; I have forgotten myself. It is always hard to keep original sin down. I realize that what we want now is stories developing nobility of character. Boys in stories must n't be slangy, say "confound it," or hear the mention of tobacco, because we want our own boys to be refined and noble. As a preposterous Sunday School hymn puts it, they must, "like the lily, never smoke"; and if in a story you allow an old sailor to fill his pipe, it is easy to see that that in itself would be liable to fix the evil habit on every boy-reader.

And yet—here original sin bobs up again—why is it that the librarian is so particular about the preachy type of story for boys when she would n't think of buying that kind for herself? Girls' reading does n't enter much into this consideration, because the American girl of thirteen is nowadays so blasé that she reads the novels of her mother. A boy won't read them, because he can tell from a glance at the frontispiece that they are "slushy love-stories." There is bound to be a field for boys' stories, and is it all wrong to give them something they want?

I say it hesitatingly, but I fancy there are many boys as depraved as I was, who get mortally bored with the disguised preachment type of story. Perhaps there is some vital connection between this feeling and the fact that the serial adventures of Deadwood Dick and Jesse James are still the world's best sellers for boys. Mamma, Auntie, and Miss Prym, the village librarian, will set before him noble-character stories, but 'round the corner for a nickel he can get a ripping thriller, with a fast-black villain and an effulgent hero, and something doing on every

page. Of course it is rubbish, but it contains the ginger a boy wants, and it does n't ram a moral down his throat.

Boys, as any teacher knows, are not so easily bluffed as the grown-up persists in thinking they are. I can well remember my own boyish wrath when, after many a promising story got fairly under way, the author would spring at me from some silly ambush and try to stab me with a pointed moral.

But there, I know I'm wrong. Let us have every character in a boys' story develop, between Chapter I and Conclusion, into a Prig, Perhaps you know whom I mean, Mr. E. H. Prig, the famous lecturer, who has been acclaimed by Chautauquans as the Ideal Man; with his moral Perunas always on tap, his socks never failing to match his tie, and his hair hanging long and temperamentally over his collar. Oh, he is the Sweetest Thing, not a real, robust St. Francis, but St. Francis of a Sissy, and would that our rough-and-tumble American boys were more like him! Boys in stories ought to be like him, anyhow, but I don't seem to get the hang of making them that way. As I can't do it, I am going to quit writing books for boys. My next effort is going to be a novel, modelled on the ardent type most popular, a chastely erotic story of burning sands, burning skies, and still more burning love-interest; and I have a notion that old-maid librarians of both sexes who recoil from the word "mucker" will fight to get at the book first. Any way, no one can accuse me any longer of corrupting the young!



SONG

BY LANGDON ELWYN MITCHELL

BE firm, my heart, nor let the world torment thee;
 Be true, my heart, nor do thyself torment;
 Let not a windy fortune cry she rent thee,
 Nor be with wine or rebel passions spent.
 Bear thou against the wind, a banner flying
 Before our army with quick folds of fury;
 Or a storm-breasting eagle, cloudy, crying,
 With wings of darkness and a head all hoary;
 Or the storm's self, all mighty in its anger:
 A Storm, a Banner, an Eagle, and a Clangor!

THE "PUBLIC AT'ERLETIC LEAGUER"

By Lucy Copinger

"BUM," said Miss Lucy mournfully, one day after school, "why are you always getting into fights?"

It was the first week of Bum's month of probation to the Juvenile Court, and he had already been reported the aggressor in several battles.

"I dunno jest why, miss," Bum replied frankly. "It's jest a orful feeling gits insider me, worsen'n a pain, jest like I'm go'n'er bust. Sometimes jest hollerin' an' runnin' around'll git rid of it, but sometimes there ain't nothin'll do it no good but punchin' some feller's bean."

Miss Lucy considered seriously for some days over the problem of getting rid of this surplus energy of Bum's. As a result, she and Bum one day made a visit to one of the neighborhood gymnasia in charge of the Public Athletic League, and Bum was enrolled as a member. She hoped that if he could be induced to attack the punching-bag instead of "some other feller's bean" when the "orful" feelings assailed him, all might yet be well.

His first few visits to the gymnasium were disappointing. "I ain't t'inkin' much of them callusth'necks," he said gloomily to Miss Lucy—"jest standin' in a line an' stickin' yer arms an' legs out different ways."

"He's such a queer mixture," Miss Lucy confided to the director, a solemn-faced young man with spectacles, who looked like a melancholy bookworm, yet who was one of the most aggressive and influential of the Boys' Gymnasium instructors. "In class-room I can't get him to read intelligently or to do his sums right, but he can easily spell out the sporting sheet of any paper, and he seems to know the batting averages of every ball-player in the country. His only law seems to be loyalty to the 'gang,' his immediate ambition to 'git' Fattie Schunck, a stout Bohemian boy about twice his size. His idea of the future is to be a police captain in winter and a big league second-baseman in summer."

The director took off his glasses from his apparently near-sighted eyes that were really so keen, and looked thoughtful. As a probable result of these meditations, Bum appeared the next day wearing a mysterious

air of importance and a small blue button proclaiming him the captain of the Junior Baseball Team of the Public Athletic League.

"He's the best Junior Captain we ever had," the director confided to Miss Lucy later. "He's popular with the boys, and yet a strict disciplinarian. I never saw such tact and diplomacy in a youngster."

"I always did say he was going to be a famous political leader some day," said Miss Lucy proudly.

From that day, when he first put on the League button, Bum became a changed boy. Street brawls were things of the past; his responsibility weighed heavily upon him, and loyalty to the "gang" changed to loyalty to the League, whole-hearted and intense.

For a time things went smoothly. Under Bum's management, the Juniors won several games. Then Miss Lucy began to notice a harassed look on Bum's face. One day he appeared with a cut over one eye. The next day something had happened to his nose. Goaded by Miss Lucy's reproaches, he at last explained.

"It was n't no fight, miss," he said gloomily. "Yistidy it was Fattie Schunck pushing m' head in the back when I was taking a drink outer the burble fount'in, an' the day before he tripped me up when we was practisin' fer the relay race."

Miss Lucy looked incredulous amazement.

"Miss," Bum went on in pathetic eagerness, "I kin prove it by you I ain't afeerd'er him, can't I? He's a heavyweight all right, but I got a upper-cut thet gits his goat iviry time." In earnest illustration and without any intention of disrespect, he drew back, doubled up his lean little fist, and let fly within a fraction of an inch of Miss Lucy's nose in a way that made her jump back suddenly.

"Yes, I know," she said hastily. "Well, then, why don't you give it to him—that is," she corrected herself quickly, "why don't you report it to the director?"

"Miss, I gotter think'er the team," replied the battered but loyal Leaguer. "The big game's comin' off nixt Sat'day. We're go'n'er play the Seniors, an' Fattie's the only pitcher we got thet kin beat'em. He's got a fade-away, miss, like a reg'lar profesh. But he knows he's got m' goat, an' he's actin' dirty."

Evidences of Fattie's mean conduct appeared frequently during the ensuing week upon various portions of Bum's engaging Irish features. Also, under the strain, he began to look thin and pale.

"You've simply got to report him!" cried Miss Lucy in alarm. "Why, you won't have a whole feature left!"

"Aw, now, miss, yer jest talkin'," replied the fanatically loyal Bum. He gritted his teeth balefully. "But I'm jest holdin' out till Sat'day, miss, and then he's go'n'er git his, all right."

Her Saturday afternoons Miss Lucy generally gave to the frivolity of

a *matinée*, but that pleasant afternoon in May found her, with a goodly number of the admiring friends and families of the Public Athletic Leaguers, at the baseball grounds of the League in the city park. Around the diamond, on the grassy slope, lay the members of the League in various attitudes of expectancy, while the grand-stand was represented by several rows of park benches that were already well filled. Several peanut venders gave a realistic touch to the scene, and already in the field the future Cobbs, Matthewsons, and Wagners were practising in the neat white uniforms and navy blue caps and stockings that composed the uniform of the League.

Probably no one of the spectators knew so well as Miss Lucy all the chances and mischances of the opposing teams in that game. She knew that the Seniors' strength lay in its heavy batters and its good fielding, while the pitching end was shaky; and that the Juniors had an uncertain outfield and poor batters, and that their fat, cowardly "southpaw" really held the whole team in his wonderful left arm. She knew that for some mysterious reason if you hollered "sausage face" at Hicks Jackson, the Seniors' second-baseman, he would blow right up. Also that Fattie Schunck, unlike the other boys, who played in ordinary rubber-soled gymnasium shoes, had bought himself a pair of regular baseball shoes, with two wicked spikes sticking, like huge teeth, out from each sole.

For a while the game went along as most amateur games do, with a plentiful sprinkling of runs and errors, its progress marked by the hoots, cat-calls, taunts, and pleadings of the contingent on the grass, who occasionally, when things grew too unendurably emotional, arose in a body, pushed forward upon the diamond, and had to be firmly repulsed by the park policeman. It was evident that the whole strength of the Juniors lay in Bum, who played a masterly game on second base, and was a verbal wonder on the coaching line, and Fattie, whose fade-away had the Seniors guessing. At the beginning of the seventh inning the score was 15 to 10 in favor of the Seniors. Then a judicious and timely yelling of the hated epithet at Hicks Jackson caused that youth to miss an easy grounder which bounded along merrily to the outfield, where it caused to be enacted a little scene painful and galling to the actors in it, but which has been known to occur even among big-leaguers. Joe Lane and Blutch Jennings, the Seniors' right and centre fielders, both hurrying after the frisky sphere, collided with such violence that both were thrown ignominiously upon their backs, to arise panting with mutual rage while the ball pursued its undisturbed course. It was Bum's grounder, and he meanwhile had been tearing like mad around the bases. It was Fattie's turn next at the bat, so as Bum got safely home the two met at the plate, then Bum threw himself breathless upon the grass to one side. Audience and players were all engrossed in watching the umpire soothe the feelings of the colliding outfielders, so no one noticed

the sly, quick lift of Fattie's foot with the sharp spikes on its sole, and how it descended with cruel force upon Bum's outstretched leg; or how a little later Bum went staggering, white but nobly mute, to the players' bench. Even Miss Lucy did not understand during the next innings, when he let go past him fly balls that on other occasions he would have leaped gladly to capture, and made error after error. "He's lost his nerve," she thought, amazed. She saw, however, how alarmingly white he had become, so when the game ended with the score of 19 to 13 in favor of the Seniors, and most of the Athletics had been borne away joyfully or consolingly by their fellows, she went over to where Bum was sitting forlornly hunched up in a ragged red sweater and pulling gingerly at his blue stocking. The young director who had umpired the game was beside him. To her surprise, as she approached, Bum turned up to her a face white with agony. As she leaned over, the director pulled down the stocking and disclosed on Bum's leg, right above the ankle, a long, ragged gash. Above the heroic Athletic Leaguer, the eyes of Miss Lucy and the director met in pity and understanding.

"A dirty Irish trick," said the director in an unsteady voice, "and no one but a Dutchman would have done it."

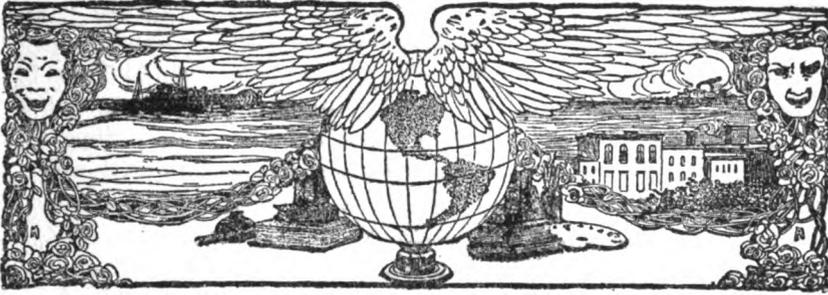
Now, it has been whispered that one day, a week or so after the Senior-Junior game, when every one—even those two potentates, the Janitor and the Principal—had gone home, a young woman looking strangely like Miss Lucy was seen standing, a pleased look upon her face and a ragged red sweater and cap in her hand, at the gate of the Boys' Yard, apparently keeping a sharp watch out for Officer Mulcahey, while from within came awful cries of woe and Teutonic bellows of rage and pain. But as she was the very one who was in honor bound to the Judge of the Juvenile Court to see that Bum kept the peace, and also as no one can deny that the dove of peace has always been Miss Lucy's rightful and favored insignia, the whole story was probably nothing but a libel.



THE FADED PANSY

BY CURTIS HALL

MY garden-beds are sweet with bloom;
 Each flower its pride uprears;
 But this faded pansy's faint perfume
 Has drenched my eyes with tears.



WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

FORESTRY AS A PROFESSION

THERE is no more useful profession than forestry. The opportunity to make himself count in affairs of public importance comes earlier and more certainly to the Forester than to the member of any other profession. The first and most valuable, therefore, of the incentives which lead the Forester to his choice is the chance to make himself of use to his country and to his generation.

But if this is the first matter to be considered in deciding upon a profession, it is by no means the last, and the practical considerations of a fair return for good work, bread and butter for a man and his family, the certainty or uncertainty of employment—such questions as these must have their full share of attention.

There are in the United States Forest Service 1,059 Forest Guards, 1,247 Forest Rangers, 233 Supervisors and Deputy Supervisors, 115 Forest Assistants, and 177 Forest Examiners, who, as already explained, are the technical men in charge of practical forestry on the National Forests. The six District officers together include in their membership about fifty professional Foresters, and about sixty-five more are attached to the headquarters at Washington, so that, allowing for duplications, there are about 335 trained Foresters in the United States Forest Service.

The number of new appointments to the Forest Service in the different permanent grades varies from year to year, but may be said to be approximately as follows: Rangers, 240 new appointments; Forest Assistants, 35; other technical positions, 10. All appointments as Super-

visor are by promotion from the lists of Forest Rangers or Forest Examiners.

The yearly pay of the Forest Guard, who, like the Ranger, must be a citizen of the State in which his work lies, is from \$420 to \$900. Forest Rangers, who enter the Service through Civil Service examination, receive from \$1,100 to \$1,500 per annum. Forest Supervisors, practically all of whom are men of long experience in forest work, receive from \$1,600 to \$2,700 per annum. Forest Assistants enter the Forest Service through Civil Service examination at a salary of \$1,200 per annum, and are promoted to a maximum salary of \$2,500 per annum, as Forest Examiners. Professional Foresters at work in the District offices are recruited mainly from among the Forest Assistants and Examiners. They receive from \$1,100 to \$3,200 yearly. The technical men in charge at Washington get from \$1,100 to \$5,000 per annum, which last is the pay of the Forester at the head of the Service.

The pay of the State Foresters, or other trained Foresters in charge of State work, ranges from \$1,800 to \$4,000, and that of their technical assistants from \$1,000 to \$2,500. Out of the total number, only two are directly in charge of their own work, responsible only to the Governor and the Legislature, while nineteen act as subordinates for State forest commissions or commissioners, who in the majority of cases are political appointees. In striking contrast with the United States Forest Service, politics has so far been a dangerous, if not a dominating, influence in the forest work of most of the States which have undertaken it.

Like the National Forests, the State Forests already in existence will create an increasing demand for the service of technical Foresters. Indeed, as similar forests are acquired by most of the States which are now without them, as undoubtedly they will be, the extent of the opportunity for professionally trained Foresters in State work is certain to grow.

GIFFORD PINCHOT

TOP O' THE YEAR

THE calendar tells us that the year begins on the first of January. Almost every one thinks that it begins in the spring. Neither is true. It begins in October. The spring delusion is an ancestral survival, like fear of the dark, or a tendency to stand with one's back to the wall. To our unfortunate forefathers, doomed to life-imprisonment in the fogs of an ill-conditioned island, the return of the sun seemed the renewal of life. To any one who has lived through a British winter, the first snowdrop is an event, the first cowslip a blessing from the gods.

Not so to the more fortunate American. His winter sun has never ceased to smile. His frosty days of dazzling blue and white have shown

him the celestial country. But his energy decreases with the first warm winds. Spring is a time of running down, not of winding up. It is a season of sentimentality, of lassitude, of slackening of mental fibre, over-rated, overpraised. Away with it!

The youth of the year is in October. All colleges and universities are obliged to conform to this rhythmic law. They muster their cohorts under the banner of autumn. All charitable societies have found it necessary to adjust their calendars to this beat of the human pulse. "Our year begins in October," say their announcements. Truly it does so. So does the year of the heart, the year of the mind, the year of all eager energies. These days are a goblet full of the wine of life. A health to our good work! See! we stand upon the Great Divide, and our kingdom lies below us. Let us march down and take possession. October is the clarion-call, the reveillé, the true beginning, the Top o' the Year.

MARY ELEANOR ROBERTS

INVESTIGATING ICEBERGS

A NEW field of investigation has opened before the Federal officials of the country. Icebergs are the bane of the Atlantic through its busiest season, and are reported in great and dangerous quantities off the coast of Alaska. A bright idea has struck some one that we investigate them.

There is no reason why it should not prove of material value to learn something—if anything can be learned—of the general habits of icebergs which infest the seas preëmpted by shipping. And to this end the U. S. S. *Seneca*, which spends the danger season watching out for them along the pathway of the liners, spends the rest of the open season on the coast of Greenland, with a scientific party on board.

This is hardly the best time to observe the domestic life, cultivation, or manufacture of this most undesirable output of the far north; but it may result in suggestions which, followed up, will help to curb or control the indifferent monsters. They start from very limited areas, at least, and any means of dealing with them that will reduce the danger will be of inestimable value.

It might be possible to establish an effective patrol across the comparatively narrow passage from which they emerge for their summer wanderings—an early patrol, just as they break away from the massive glaciers and free themselves from packs and floes—and either with electricity, dynamite, gunpowder, or the newly discovered "M" rays, or "F" rays, or in some other way, at the source, turn the mountains into cracked ice, which will melt much faster and prove far less objectionable when it reaches the resorts of the transatlantic liners.

Some practical disposition of them will at least be the best result which can come of scientific investigation. It is not so much how and why they come, as how to be rid of them, that the country is anxious to know as a return for the expense of the voyage of investigation.

WILLARD FRENCH

A SPEAKING SHELF

IN these days when books are a-making with dizzying rapidity, and one can buy the book of the hour for a dollar and the time-tested book for but a third of that, we should all of us be able to possess some sort of library as an investment for the proverbial rainy day. Times are too busy, perhaps, for reading every day, even if one were inclined to do so. There's business or politics or housework or school, eating out the largest part of the day; and there is play, that should rightly consume another considerable portion; and always there are unexpected odds and ends of duties cropping up, as rankly unpleasant as weeds. However, books sell, and are bought, so doubtless are read; but being, according to Stevenson, "a mighty bloodless substitute for life," we rightly neglect them for the more exciting, if sometimes less inspiring, intercourse with our fellow-beings. But the rainy day is bound to come—perhaps in the shape of actual besieging weather, perhaps in the shape of a slow convalescence—when there is nothing whatever between ourselves and solitude or boredom but a few planks upholding an assortment of books, some well-thumbed, some perhaps with pages still uncut, save those of chapter one.

Let us suppose you are an irritable convalescent, with dinner still an appalling number of hours away. The time must be filled up somehow. Everybody else is busy, and it is impossible for the family to devise entertainments for you all the while. You aggrievedly do nothing for a time—which is very poor fun—and then turn listlessly to the bookcase as a last resort. Never was a row of titles so dull. Oh, well, any one will do. Here, take this. And you take one down at random and shuffle back to the sofa with it. We call it a sofa, but in reality it is a tribunal, and here is a book being tried for its life, whether it be dull or not. Now, if the book remains to all intents and purposes closed, you may justly pronounce it guilty, so far as you are concerned. But if it opens out wide and you fall headlong in, only to be pulled out at the dinner-hour saying to yourself, "Gee, but this is some book!" (or a politer equivalent), then you are perfectly safe in promoting that book to the Speaking Shelf; for, having once spoken to you in an hour of need, it will speak to you again and again; indeed, will always be ready to call out to you in friendly fashion whenever your eyes fall upon it. It will blink at you jovially with its gilt lettering; and there is an intimate understanding between you

that will persist through all the years to come. It will even open of its own accord at pleasant places, as, for example, where Dick Swiveller awakens from his long illness to find the Marchioness playing cribbage and forgetting to score "two for his nibs"; or where Gyas, losing his temper in the boat-race, exhibits the one warmly human outbreak of individuality in all the twelve books of the *Æneid*. Greater books of maturer years will never crowd it from its niche, and lesser books will always fall away to give it place. Robinson Crusoe, who in a sense has no tongue at all, will feel perfectly at home side by side with Shakespeare, who has the tongue of men and angels; and Munchausen, the joyous liar, will stand unabashed beside Carlyle, the caustic truth-teller.

"Here's richness!" said Squeers, holding aloft the mug of milk-and-water destined for the thirsty throats of his pupils. "Here's richness!" you echo, laying a friendly hand upon the few faithful volumes which are to you the very cream of all that's printed, and which you read after the discriminating fashion of Montaigne, who read "nothing without blitheness." (Perish the thought that one should ever read from a sense of duty! As well drink up Sahara to quench one's thirst.) And as the years pass, each with its semi-annual catastrophe of house-cleaning, and some of them with the spring upheaval of moving-day, see to it that when the uproar subsides you still have with you your Speaking Shelf, no matter how many dumb volumes went into the ash-bin. And it really does n't matter greatly in these days when Carnegie has put a Library at every man's elbow, whether we have the famous "five-foot shelf" or one of but a single foot, so that every volume on it speaks with *winged words*, after the fashion of the gods and heroes of old.

HELEN COALE CREW

PLAY-LEADERS

UPON the social horizon has appeared a new and significant personality—the Play-Leader. To his—or, as often, her—hands has been committed the essential moulding of the great recreation movement, which, in the language of the official report, has swept across the land with the celerity of a beneficent conflagration.

The primary requisites for success in this new procession are set forth in this statement to aspirants:

The candidate must have a sound mind in a sound body, a general knowledge of hygiene, gymnastics, and games, the quality of leadership, an intelligent and enthusiastic appreciation of opportunity for moulding character and of encouraging healthful physical habits, and a compelling desire for personal service.

From this analysis it is evident the play-leader must possess some of the qualities of a Greek athlete, combined with those of the Christian

missionary. He must see in the new recreation a high social purpose if he is to master the technique, or realize the spirit, of this important work.

In taking charge of a recreation centre a rare order of executive ability is called for. To organize groups for the out-of-door and evening divisions, with the mixture of races, creeds, and colors, takes more than tact, psychology of the keenest sort. The children furnish the usual cue and will play together in the best spirit so long as uninterfered with by their elders. But there are folk-games and festivals, dancing, musical, dramatic, and debating clubs. Groups are put together for constructive work in raffia, basketry, the domestic sciences, with prize competitions and exhibits. All this means social engineering upon basic lines. To make progress, the play-leader must come into sympathetic understanding with the entire neighborhood and make the recreation centre its best social expression.

Upon the the playground itself leadership of the boys means a thoroughly "Muscular Christianity." Courage and quick judgment, with an unflinching sympathy, are demanded to meet the difficult situations always arising. The leader must have the unflinching confidence of each follower. He must know just how to handle the boy who cheats, fights, gambles, or lies.

For the younger children and girls, the feminine leader has also a distinctive work. She must inspire and supervise the games without, in the main, seeming to lead. Play cannot be dictated, and the most successful leaders excel in leaving the children to their own initiative. Meantime a quiet, unobtrusive discipline is maintained to ensure each child an equal chance to use the equipment or take part in group games. Occasionally a group will gather about the leader for a "good story," and ability to hold the children in this art is regarded as a supreme test. Once their interest and fancy are aroused, they are like malleable gold for social moulding.

At one playground, Labor Day games are made the crowning event of the year's recreation; at another centre it is the May Day festivities. Whatever the occasion, the children, skilfully directed by their play-leaders, have inspired a new social life in many communities. While the children have found a normal outlet for their abounding spirits, the older people have discovered a unity of interest in the community life hitherto unsuspected.

The sombre, Puritan tone that used to be noted by visitors from abroad, especially in our rural communities, has been steadily yielding to a more genial spirit in every quarter. Yet there is a serious, educational purpose underlying the present recreation movement, giving it social values that hardly obtained in the Greek or Mediæval times. The pageants of to-day are as frequently prophetic as historical. They are inspired by the larger hope of America and the vision of a universal happiness. They make both

observer and participant feel that they "belong" to a community where each member has a part to play worth while.

And the play-leader is a true prophet of the new social order, when the test of a man's worth will lie, not in the amount of his possessions, but in the measure of his contribution to the social well-being, the happiness of those about him.

WILLIAM HALE BECKFORD

VEILED POLITENESS

THERE is a widespread—nay, almost a universal—notion that we have to put up with indignities in our public conveyances—the subways, the elevated trains, and the trolley-cars. In fact, I thought that myself until I applied my mind to it. To my astonishment, I discovered that the little things that I had taken for lack of courtesy were, in fact, delicate attentions from perfect strangers, so if any of you are laboring under the delusion that was once my pet obsession, pray let me enlighten you as to your mistake.

For instance, when a train or a car arrives every one makes a wild dash for it. Until I studied their motives, I thought them purely selfish, but now I see that they are quite the opposite. People make this inconvenient haste to relieve the congestion, so that there will be more room for you on the cars that arrive later. Once inside, how quickly every one will make haste to find a seat, so that you will have more space to stand comfortably! Take the cross-seats. Each single passenger attempts to get one of them, so that a lady and her escort or a pair of ladies or two gentlemen together may be separated. On the face of it, this looks like a lack of courtesy; but as the pair continue their conversation, across the aisle, it gives the other passengers an opportunity to listen, and so enlivens a period of travel that would otherwise be dull. Think how often this sort of thing has engaged your own mind pleasantly. And if you are one of the separated pair, note how by this subtle expedient your conversation at once gains wit and brilliancy. I myself have been so engrossed sometimes that I have ridden past my own station, and so no doubt have you, and this would not have occurred but for the consideration we casual travellers have for one another.

There is the gentleman of the round paunch and the spread-eagle legs. He does not hold his paper widely spread and steadily before him to avoid seeing that there is a lady standing directly in front of him. Base accusation! He is a real philanthropist, and one too seldom rewarded. The man across the way may read the front page while those on either side of him peer over his shoulder. Thus he is sharing the evening sheet with those who would not otherwise know the day's news. It is a little thing, to be sure; but life is made up of little things.

And have n't you seen the dear, motherly woman with her little family of five or six? How the little ones toss and tumble all up and down the side-seat! How diverting their antics! See that one sliding over the fat gentleman's lap. That other one is drawing a picture on the pane with a tiny, sticky finger. Every one loves children at play—many of us have none of our own. How delightful, then, to watch their frolicsome sport, even if it be for the short space of a ride uptown! How great the mother-heart to share them with us—strangers!

Take the youth in bright raiment, sitting with one leg across his knee, like the cross-bar of the figure four. To be sure, he takes up considerable room, but how otherwise should we know the style in hosiery? Those two ladies sitting on the long seat there. The space they occupy gives room for graceful gestures—room to arrange the draperies of their skirts so that they will fall most alluringly. It is a pretty picture. It is art brought to the masses. We may stand and admire them, yes, station after station.

And so, I pray, look always for the motive. There was a time when I hastened to give up my seat to any lady who entered. Since then I have realized that it is much better for her to stand, especially in these days of ruffles and drapery. Clothes are always hung in a closet, not crushed in a drawer; therefore, they should be hung on the figure, for to be sat upon destroys their lines. So, you see, even I have profited by my study of what I once considered the lack of common courtesy.

THOMAS GRANT SPRINGER

DESERTION

WHY does desertion from the Army and Navy still wear a frightful mien in the excellently-spectacled eyes of the twentieth century? Since slavery was abolished, enlistment in our fighting forces is the only kind of employment which a man cannot leave whenever he wishes. The generally recognized penalty for leaving a job is merely a stoppage of wages, but Uncle Sam undertakes to throw a man into prison if he does n't take his leave in a certain way. And even Uncle Sam does n't do this to all his employees, but only to those who are engaged to fight for the honor and glory of their country. Would the honor and glory be increased, perhaps, if this kind of employment were a little more voluntary?

ELLIS O. JONES



THE IDEAL PREFERRED STOCK

By Edward Sherwood Mead, Ph.D.

INDUSTRIAL preferred stocks, only recently a favorite with investors, are now under a cloud. A succession of unexpected and disgraceful occurrences, disastrously affecting the financial condition of a number of companies which have issued this type of security, has thoroughly discredited preferred stock. In spite of all the so-called restrictions providing for accumulative dividends, "sinking funds for retirement," the maintenance of surplus and of a sufficient amount of current assets to retire a large amount of the preferred stock in the event of liquidation; in spite of the prohibition on long-term indebtedness and alienation by mortgage; in spite, also, of representation given to representations of preferred stock upon the Board of Directors, and provision that in the event of the passing of a dividend this representation should be increased—in spite of all these precautions, preferred stocks have repeatedly gone wrong, and the investor is dissatisfied with them.

We cannot, however, accept the conclusion that this type of security will not have a permanent place. The directors of industrial corporations, such as mining and manufacturing companies, have a deep-seated fear of bond issues. The earnings of these companies are so irregular and so likely to be seriously depressed by temporary causes, such, for example, as strikes, that there is a general aversion among their owners and managers to assuming a large liability in the form of funded debt, especially when this is secured by mortgage. And yet these companies are forced to appeal to the investor for money with which to enlarge their plant and business. It is highly expedient, therefore, that if possible the objections to the preferred stock which now practically prevent the sale of this security, should be removed.

A recent plan for the improvement of preferred stock submitted to a reorganization committee will be of interest. The different provisions in order are as follows: The stock was, in the first place, to be preferred and cumulative. It was also to be participating with the common after the common had received a certain dividend. This adds to the preferred feature the extra inducement of unlimited participation in the profits

which sometimes makes venturesome investors prefer common to preferred stock.

The preferred stock also has preference as to assets in dissolution, liquidation or winding up. In order to carry through some advantageous plan of consolidation, it sometimes becomes necessary that an existing company should be entirely wound up. In such an event, in the absence of a special provision just noted, the common stock, which might be practically worthless, owing to small earnings, would have the right equally with the preferred to share in the assets of the company. The sinking fund is provided for the retirement of the preferred stock. This makes it obligatory upon the directors, before paying any dividends on the common stock, to apply a certain amount of their profits to the retirement of the preferred stock at a premium. The effect of this provision is to make a market for the preferred stock, and to enable any stockholder who wishes to dispose of his holdings to find a purchaser.

The corporation also binds itself to maintain a surplus of its profits equal to a large per cent. of the preferred stock, and also to maintain a sum of current assets, such as cash, materials, supplies, good accounts, and notes receivable in excess of current liabilities equal to the same percentage. If preferred stock is given special representation on the board of directors without the consent expressed in writing of three-fourths of the holders of the preferred stock, the corporation cannot do any one of the following things:

- First, mortgage its property;
- Second, change the voting power of the preferred stock;
- Third, sell all, or substantially all, of the property of the company;
- Fourth, sell any part of the property without investing the proceeds in new property;
- Fifth, issue new bonds or notes maturing more than one year from the date of issue.



A frequent criticism of the administration of industrial corporations is the excessive salaries paid to administrative officials. These salaries come out of the fund available for dividends. It is, therefore, provided, in the case under examination, that the aggregate compensation of the administrative officers shall bear a certain relation to the gross sales of the company.

Most of the troubles which have affected industrial corporations during the last three years have been due to extravagant borrowing, and this borrowing has ordinarily taken the form of commercial paper sold through note-brokers. It is necessary to put some restrictions upon the directors in this matter if wise financial administration is to be secured. This restriction can take the form of the registration of all commercial paper

issued by the company with some well-known trust company. By this registration, each note is given a serial number, and an acknowledgment of the registration is placed upon each note over the signature of an officer of the trust company. As fast as the paper is paid and cancelled, report is made to the trust company. The trust company should also be authorized, when requested by any banker, to furnish him with a statement of the amount of paper unmatured. It is necessary to provide for a complete audit by outside accountants of the books and accounts of the corporation. This audit should be made at least twice a year, and the results should be communicated to the trust company. Possessed of this information, the registrar can restrict the issue of commercial paper when such issue would be a violation of the various covenants and restrictions above mentioned.

The corporation should agree with the holders of the preferred stock not to pledge as security for loans any of its quick assets and personal property without the consent of three-fourths of the holders of the preferred stock, except by way of discount of bills and notes receivable, and it should agree further that it will not lend its credit by way of endorsement, guaranty, or surety except as it may be necessary to endorse its notes and bills receivable.



We now come to the method of enforcing these restrictions. This is provided in three covenants as follows:

1. The directors of the company shall be divided into three classes. The directors of the first class, numbering one-third of the total number of directors, shall be elected for a term of five years by the holders of the first preferred stock. The directors of the second class, also one-third of the total number, shall be elected for a term of two years by the holders of the second preferred stock. The remaining directors of the company, composing the third class, shall be elected for a term of one year by the holders of the common stock.

2. In case of a breach of any of the foregoing covenants by the corporation, it is agreed with the holders of the first preferred stock, that at the next election all the votes for directors whose terms then expire shall be cast by the holders of the first preferred stock; and that at the second election next succeeding such breach of covenant and restriction all the votes for directors whose terms shall then expire shall be cast by the holders of the first preferred stock, so that after the second annual election all the directors of the company shall have been chosen by the holders of the first preferred stock. And it is further agreed that the terms of such directors shall be equal to the terms of the directors by the preceding section required to be elected by the holders of the first

preferred stock, so that in case any of the foregoing restrictions or covenants shall be violated within one year thereafter the entire board of directors shall be chosen by the holders of the first preferred stock. And it is further agreed that the exclusive voting power, not only for directors but on all other matters by law reserved to the stockholders, so long as the above-mentioned breach of covenant may continue and for one year thereafter, shall reside and be vested in the said holders of first preferred stock, and it is further agreed that the report of the auditors of the company as to the observance of all the above-described covenants and conditions shall be conclusive as to this fact of their breach or observance.

3. In case any holder of the first preferred stock of this company shall petition any court of competent jurisdiction for relief or an injunction restraining the officers and directors from doing or continuing to do any act which would result in a breach of any of the foregoing covenants and agreements, the company agrees that it will not interpose any defense to such proceedings.

The foregoing restrictions represent the further possible advance toward absolute security for the preferred stock. When the preferred stockholders are represented by a banking house which is given representation upon the board and is in close touch at all times with the registrar of the commercial paper issued by the company, if the banker's representative has faithfully attended board meetings, and if a periodical audit of the accounts of the company in the interest of the preferred stockholders is carefully examined, it will be extremely difficult for the officers and directors to violate any of these covenants without detection; and if the agreement with the preferred stockholder is violated in any substantial particular, Section 3 gives the banking house an adequate remedy.



RANDOM THOUGHTS

RELIGIOUS prejudice inhabits quarters so narrow as to leave no room for doubt.

R. N. Price, Jr.

WOMAN is the uttermost part of the race.

William J. Burtcher

POLITENESS is the mother of prevarication.

Jessie E. Henderson

A MAN may be going the pace and at the same time be obstructing progress.

L. B. Coley

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DIANA OF THE DEEP SNOWS

BY
HENRY P. DOWST

CHAPTER I

DANIEL TRESPERSON McDUNN, of Kalamawassett, owned mines and ranches and railroad stocks, factories, tanneries, and banks, timber-lands in Oregon and Maine, house-lots and houses, office blocks, a street-car line, and a church. This last he built in memory of his father, the first Daniel McDunn, founder of the McDunn dynasty, and gave its use, rent free, to the First Baptist Society of Kalamawassett.

Beyond everything, D. T. McDunn was acquisitive; next he was executive. People said there was no person or thing that Daniel T. could not manage. They were wrong.

He could not manage his son, John Tresperson McDunn.

The boy was wilful, spoiled, and arrogant. Daniel succeeded in his management of affairs because he understood business, but he did not understand boys; so he failed with Jack. When the latter reached his unruly fifteenth year, Daniel shipped him off to an Eastern military school in the hope that the discipline of strangers might prove more salutary than his own.

Later, when Jack managed to squeeze through his Harvard entrance examinations, his father breathed a sigh of semi-relief and doubled the young fellow's allowance.

It is both unnecessary and undesirable to trace Jack McDunn's

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school and college career. If he had saving traits, let us credit them to his stout McDunn ancestry. If he showed reprobative leanings, let us charge them up against an injudicious chemistry of liberty, youth, and pocket-money. It is essential to bear in mind, however, that where he seemed to lack principle, he was not wanting in character. He was masterful, strong-willed, dominant. He did not follow, he led.

One thing surely helped to keep him from going to the devil, bag and baggage: that was athletics. Yet even in football his unruly disposition militated strongly against success. The coaches could not control him. He was insubordinate, insolent, and swaggering. He played a reckless, daredevil game; his fearlessness equalled his speed, and was buttressed by a wiry, panther's strength. But he was ruled off his freshman team by the harassed coaches and so missed an undoubted opportunity to shine in the game with the Yale freshmen.

In his sophomore year he broke training wantonly, although making a creditable showing on the 'varsity during the early part of the season; and when he returned, hectic and irritable after a three days' absence, found himself relegated to the scrub. There he shortly lost interest, and dropped out in pique for the balance of the season.

The next season, however, he came back and reported to the doubting coaches for practice. To be sure, they were for a long time wary; but as he rapidly demonstrated his superiority over candidates for end, they came at length to view him with confidence and to count him highly available material.

Then, because he was doing his best, because he was fearlessly aggressive, he sustained an injury, and had to be laid off. But every afternoon he got into his playing togs, and hobbled painfully out on the field with the subs, sitting in a misery of disappointment on the side-lines during the increasingly rigorous practice. The coaches and captain, disgusted as he himself at the misfortune which deprived the team of the best end it had developed in years, watched for McDunn to go once more in pursuit of the white-light allurements of Boston. But he stuck doggedly about, nursing his injured ankle, and submitted grimly to the handling of doctor and trainers. The ankle grew better, but so slowly that he missed both big games before the battle with Yale, and on the morning of *the* football day of the year, he felt that his prospects for winning his "H" were hopelessly gone. His ankle was almost entirely well, but by this time a regular end and first substitute had been chosen and drilled, and he found himself a bad third choice for the position. As the team ran out on the field, and two-thirds of the big human horseshoe of the Stadium galvanized into a frenzied, throbbing riot of fluttering crimson, Jack McDunn felt dully that not one throat of all those thousands owed him the fraction of a wasted cheer. He was, for that year at least, down and out.

CHAPTER II

HARVARD-YALE football games have been more frequently described than any other piece of scenery we know anything about. They are in the same class with the Alps and the Passion Play and the battle of Gettysburg. Every novelist takes a crack at one sooner or later. Every newspaper man has an annual opportunity to think up new words to characterize the different aspects of intercollegiate gridiron warfare. Just as the available supply of adjectives began to peter out, the building of the Stadium came to the rescue of the gasping journalistic fish who could not live unless swimming in an ocean of descriptives. It supplied human cliffs, and precipices of eager faces, and Brobdingnagian bowls, and all that sort of thing, until one wonders what words will be left when Yale comes through with that proposed amphitheatre so long in prospect.

On a certain November afternoon, which you yourself may remember, the forty thousand and odd spectators in the Stadium witnessed the unusual occurrence of a big game in the rain. Everything was damp except the enthusiasm, for the schedule-makers had neglected the weather-man, who did his best to drown every one, from coaches to ticket-speculators. The Stadium, having one open end and numerous scuppers, escaped becoming a big swimming-pool for all but the players, who would have been materially assisted by life-belts.

Jacintha Bruce sat away up in row double-M of section Six, on the Yale side. With her were Senator Walbridge N. Bruce, her father; Lancey Keane (Yale Oofy-Nine); and Xenia Delmore, to whom Lancey, who had won his Y the year before, explained the plays and pointed out the different participants by names already familiar from liberal newspaper mention.

Jacintha had seen many Harvard-Yale games, and her partisanship leaned heavily Blueward. Her father was a classmate of a certain exalted personage who shall be nameless here, but who, as Mr. Dooley would say, would jump a fut if ye hollered "Bill" at 'im from behoind. He was that particular Senator of the United States whom the great commonwealth of M—— sent to Washington as a result of a real victory of "the people." By that is not meant "the pee-pul," in the ordinary sense, but rather the honest, thoughtful, cool-judging folk who are not usually sufficiently in the majority to have their way. Senator Bruce was a big figure in national affairs. Motherless since early childhood, Jacintha had looked to him for, and found in him, those gentler and more intimate sympathies which all good mothers, but so few fathers, know how to express. Like him, she had grown frank, open, and self-reliant. Yet while she must perforce learn, more than most girls, the drift of masculine thought-process, and felt a certain contempt

for the more patent smallness of her own sex, she was not unfeminine, and did not offend by any trait of what is termed the "strong-minded" woman.

She was a big girl, but so close-knit and of such equable proportions that her stature gave her no awkwardness. She radiated a vital, magnetic quality of good nature.

When she was fifteen years old her ideal of manhood was Ty Cobb. Likewise she thought favorably of John L. Sullivan as a promising candidate for a niche in the Hall of Fame—a niche where his bust would be so lighted as not to suffer by comparison with other niche-inhabiting effigies. But at nineteen she catalogued her father as the truest and best sportsman of all her galaxy. To him and to her friends, she was almost invariably "Jack"—and the name fitted her admirably.

A big game on a crisp, bright autumn day is one thing, but a game in a driving rain is "something else again." Jacintha wore a rubber poncho and sou'wester, and Xenia a conventional raincoat and hood, but the Senator and young Keane had bought great squares of table oilcloth, each with a head-hole cut in the centre, poncho-fashion. All through the great throng shivering on the high-pitched slopes you could see hundreds of men and women similarly protected. The storm had come on rather suddenly about noon, so that all but a comparative few had been forced to raid the stores from Harvard Bridge to the square for such water-shedding garments as could be had. If you own a perfectly good raincoat at home, you hate to buy a new one just for one football game, and the oilcloth expedient became epidemic from the moment the first inventive soul appeared swathed in folds of the shiny marbled fabric. Enterprising dealers in the square had telephoned rush orders to their wholesalers, so that the number of those who could be accommodated with the goods was amazing. But as the color assortment was limited to reds, grays, and whites, and the impatient purchasers had bought in the haste which fears a famine, great crimson splashes appeared almost as indiscriminately on the Yale side of the Stadium as among the more appropriate surroundings of the Harvard sections.

To Jacintha, the unusual aspect of the occasion appealed with delighting novelty. Great drifts of wreathing rain curled over the lofty rim and swept along like mists in a valley, dimming the opposite stands in a drenching haze. The crimson and blue banners refused to flutter with the gay and flamelike splendor of sunnier days. The vast background of welded humanity showed countless unbroken lines of rain-bleached faces, unrelieved by the usual florescence of feminine head-gear. From her place to the side-lines dropped the swift slope of water-soaked backs and shoulders, broken only by patches of red or white oilcloth, while upon the just and the unjust (but mostly just, since

they were all for Yale,) fell the merciless patter, patter, of the rain. Hat-brims ran with small rivers that drizzled at back or front according to their wearers' several hat-tipping habits.

The slicker-clad cheer-leaders, in swaying, lemon-colored ranks at open order along the side-lines, drew from the multitude vast, hoarse thunders. The concerted shouts of the Harvard rooters volumned across the field in a pulsing tumult, undiscouraged by the falling waters, but wanting the resonance that a clearer atmosphere would have given it; and the staccato, nervous beat of Yale's "brek-ek-co-ex, co-ex, co-ex," lost a certain shrill quality of pitch, though lacking nothing of its accustomed savagery.

"Is n't it all wonderful, wonderful!" cried Jacintha, hugging the Senator's arm.

Senator Bruce thumped a damp and frozen foot violently upon the concrete.

"Marvellous," he replied grimly. "Are n't you cold?"

"Cold?" she echoed. "H'm! Cold!"

If anything were needed to quicken and warm Jacintha's normally racing blood, the fortunes of the game furnished the required stimulus, for Yale was clearly outplaying her ancient foe. The players drifted back and forth through oozing mud and seas of water, the ball, treacherously slippery, frequently eluding them. Jacintha had never seen so many fumbles in one game, yet this feature added materially to the excitement of the day, as the big throng rose repeatedly to watch with agonized intensity the result of every missed catch. The Harvard full-back constantly outpunted his ends, so that Yale's losses on fumbled punts were less costly than Harvard's, while the Yale defense found ample time to develop its protective formation for a long run-back whenever the ball was well caught.

Jacintha Bruce saw with the eye of experience that Harvard was unusually weak at right end, and Lancey Keane's running comment confirmed her opinion. Again and again Yale catapulted her backs between tackle and end, or gained with equal certainty by the outside route; and finally, just before the end of the first half, it was the hapless right end who dropped the ball fatally near the Harvard goal line, and—Yale scored!

A savage howl of triumph from the Blue sections pæaned the result to the weeping skies.

A new end appeared with the reopening of play, and for a while the fierce Yale attack lost its effectiveness at that point. Assault upon the other flank proving of little profit, Yale's quarter concentrated his forces between alternate right and left tackles and guards, but with indifferent success. The heavy Harvard defense, aided by the slippery field, held like a log stockade. So the Yale quarter sent his punter

back for a kick, and the wet ball, spinning elusively, shot straight into a pair of clutching Harvard hands and—out again. A second pandemonium shattered the air when Yale saw the ball in her own team's possession on Harvard's eight-yard line.

It was too far at the side for an attempt at a field goal, and the rhythmic "Touch-down, touch-down, touch-down!" echoed from the frenzied Yale stands. A left-end play netted a lost yard, but on the next down the crashing attack gave Yale five yards between right tackle and end. "Touch-down, touch-down, touch-down!" hurtled from the stands. Three yards for a touch-down, and—

The teams untangled their close-locked limbs, scrambled for place, and the whistle blew for time. The Harvard end could not rise. He got to his knees, crept forward on all-fours a body's length, then pitched face downward into a pool of water that would have drowned him in fifteen seconds had not his team-mates pulled his limp form out of the mire and carried him, a sodden weight, to the side-lines.

Jacintha Bruce saw the new end break from the blanket-swathed row of squatting substitutes by the Harvard rail and race madly out to the waiting battle-line. He ran with the suggestion of a limp, but with a springy, catlike elasticity. She saw the crouching lines stiffen, heard faintly the far-off calling of the quarter-back's numerals, and then the whole Yale team seemed to bunch and go surging, an irresistible wave of beef and sinew, upon this as yet untested factor in the game. The half-back with the ball, swiftly skirting the flank of his charging forwards, shot along toward a patent gateway in the seemingly broken defense, when, like a crimson flame, a figure darted out from the ruck of thrusting bodies, and hurled itself in a swift panther-leap upon the fleeing runner. So fierce and sustained was the shock of the attack that the trapped runner was lifted clear off his feet and sent crashing into the turf, the water-softened condition of which alone saved him a broken neck, for he fell on the points of his shoulders, turned a complete flip-flop, and lay pinioned by Jack McDunn's prehensile arms.

It was now Harvard's turn to split the sky, for a second-substitute end had saved her from a threatened touch-down by as brilliant a piece of defensive work as the day had so far uncovered.

And now Jacintha, her loyal Yale heart beating a throbbing protest, saw what real leadership could do in a pinch. Harvard for the first time in the game assumed the offensive. McDunn's wonderful defense of his position in a crisis put new heart into his fellows, and not only that, his presence on the field seemed to stimulate them by the force of example. Said Lancey Keane:

"That's Jack McDunn, and he's a wonder. I've seen him play. I don't see why they did n't put him in before; maybe they're afraid of him. Last year he was an awful welcher. . . . Oh, *look* at that

punt! . . . Hang on to it, Si! Oh, Si, Si, that's three times! . . . Holy goat, that's McDunn! . . . Get him, Leo, nail him——”

Lancey groaned in company with fifteen thousand other followers of the blue, a great rain-soaked, despondent groan, for the diabolical McDunn, racing well down under his full-back's long, twisting drive, was right on top of Si Jones, the Yale quarter, who missed his catch as he had already missed two previous attempts. He dived frantically after the slippery, treacherous thing, but McDunn, poised for his spring, lunged groundward as Ty Cobb steals second, and slid like an eel past the Eli quarter. The ball was Harvard's on Yale's forty-yard line.

The teams were up and crouching again, the ball snapped, and the Harvard full-back went staving into the stubborn blue line, only to be thrown back with a loss. Again came the signal for attack, but McDunn held up his hand, and Seaburn, the Harvard captain and quarter, rose and stepped out of the line-up. McDunn walked over to him, threw an arm across his shoulder, and spoke vehemently in his ear. Seaburn shook his head, whereupon the forty thousand could see that McDunn grew angry. It was as if he were saying, “You blankety-blank idiot, do as I tell you!” His square jaw protruded brazenly under the nose of his captain, his fists whipped the air in quick, determined half-circles, his big shoulders working with the intensity of his argument; and presently Seaburn, not without a trace of sullenness, but with a nod of understanding, went back into the line, while Jack trotted out to his station on the right flank and set himself for the signal.

“Darned if I'd stand it,” growled Lancey. “Think of a substitute bossing his cap—— . . . Look out, Dave, look out! . . . Oh, glug! He did it, he did it!”

For the Yale end opposite McDunn, playing far out, came in a fraction of a second too late, caught McDunn's iron elbow between chin and breast-bone, and toppled crashing on the back of his neck. His assailant, recovering like a tiger, plunged into and through Yale's charging line, while the half with the ball slid smoothly into his wake, cleared the ruck, and was off for a fifteen-yard gain before the secondary defense could penetrate to his flying legs.

The Harvard stands burst into one continuous volley of vengeful cheers as the crimson backs gained two more first downs on plays that McDunn's wonderful offense made possible. The Yale cohorts rose and in frenzied thunders abjured the line to stand fast.

“Hold 'em, Yale, hold 'em!” they roared, half in petition, half in command. The team obeyed for one down, but on the next play they saw a Harvard back start with the ball for McDunn's end, and, determined to smother a manœuvre already thrice successful, the entire line went tearing to the aid of their endangered flank to foil the man who had

turned the tide. But McDunn was not there. Instead of attacking his man as in the previous plays, he fainted once, then turned and skirted his own line, met the advancing back, and, accepting the skilfully passed ball, slipped around the left, where, under cover of his left end, half and full backs, he cleared the coveted yards and squirmed over the line under a swiftly augmenting burden of precipitated blue jerseys.

To Jacintha Bruce, perched high up on the vast Yale cliff, all this was veriest tragedy, with the villain triumphant over innocence and purity. To her, as to the many thousands of fellow Eli sympathizers, Jack McDunn became an obsession, a nightmare. Like them she prayed to the struggling, resisting men of Yale to "Get him; get McDunn," in a voice that was lost in the tumult of fierce exhortation from those about her. At one time she thought that her prayer had been answered, for once when Yale sent her crushing attack against Harvard's right, and failed to gain, the dissolving pile of human members disintegrated into its component individualities to leave a prone figure ground seemingly flat into the watery mire. It was McDunn, who, when his teammates pulled him promptly up and set him on his feet, as promptly crumpled back to earth again, and crouched there writhing in no simulated pain. But he was up again, amid the maniacal cheers of his now-unbalanced admirers, and, after a few halting steps, took his place in the re-forming line, and smeared the very next play, which the Yale quarter had mistakenly intended for a knockout.

"Who said McDunn was a welcher?" she sadly demanded of Lancey Keane, and that commentator answered dolefully:

"Not I, Jack, not I."

CHAPTER III

AND Harvard won, by a score which will be remembered distinctly by those who saw the game, and is of no consequence to those who did not. The great throng poured down from the cement slopes, oozed out at the gates of Soldiers' Field, and was soon spreading off in all directions, like a liquid freed by the breaking of a dropped vessel. The Bruce party, borne on the flooding tide that followed Boylston Street to the square, presently found themselves cast up at the door of a Gold Coast club, where rescuing friends wrought for their resuscitation with tea and biscuits. There were mostly Harvard people, who politely suppressed all overt signs of any possible tendency to gloat, and dispensed succor with hospitable grace.

Jacintha found Medford Crane, a boyhood crony whom her influence had not kept from a Harvard prep school and the eventual obloquy of Harvard matriculation. They sought a corner of the library, where Jacintha voiced her poignant anguish in near-sobs for the edification of her companion.

"Oh, Medford, was n't it just fierce!" she exclaimed.

"It sure was fierce," he agreed, grinning cold-bloodedly.

"Don't gloat!" she protested. "I didn't gloat last year, you know."

"That's right, Jack, you did n't gloat; oh, no, indeed!"

"Gloat if you want to, then, little beast! You haven't had a chance before."

"I swear I'm not gloating, Jack. I sympathize, truly. I'm the most magnanimous of men. I——"

"Men! Heaven help us!" piously ejaculated the girl. "Tell me, Medford Crane, who is this great Jack McDunn? Do you know him well?"

"Oh, so, so," he fenced. "He's one of the Western crowd. I can't say I'm exactly intimate with him. Good fellow, I guess."

Jacintha eyed young Crane narrowly.

"What's the matter with him?" she demanded. "Are you jealous of him? Is n't he——"

"Nobody in college is jealous of him," parried Crane. "He is—oh, he's all right, only he is n't exactly—that is——"

"You mean," cried Jacintha—"you mean he is n't your kind. He is n't from an old Boston family. He can play football, but otherwise he does n't fit. Am I right?"

"Oh, I don't know; maybe. Yes, he does n't fit, that's it."

"Snob!" accused Jacintha.

"Nothing of the sort," protested Crane. "You don't understand. I'm no knocker. He played a great game, and he won for Harvard. I'm properly grateful, and I yelled 'McDunn!' as loud as the rest. Do you think I'm such a dog, such a cad, that I'd knock a man who did what Jack McDunn did? I admire him, I tell you, but I don't know him well enough. Second place, he is n't a proper person for you to know. Now, you've made me say it."

"Fiddlesticks!" she cried, and marched off in a huff.

Yale to the core, Jacintha nevertheless had to admit that she had never seen so good a game of football. She was too fair-minded to allow partisanship to dim her appreciation of the high sporting spirit displayed by the Crimson. And as for McDunn, how could so magnificent an exhibition fail to strike deep, vibrant chords of admiration?

She wanted to meet and know him, to shake his hand, to tell him frankly just what she thought of him. She wanted to see what he looked like at close range. There was a certain individual swing of his shoulders that had made an indelible impression upon her, but whether he were ugly as sin, or an Apollo in mufti, she had no idea. She did n't know whether his eyes were brown or blue, his nose straight and fine or upturned and pugilistic. She suspected the latter. Some-

how, she never could get any satisfaction from the newspaper snapshots, and if they printed better portraits of McDunn she failed to see one. But she could not help forming an image of him in her mind's eye, which, so far as facial identification went, would surely prove a failure if put to the test.

There seemed to be little chance that she would ever have opportunity to compare her mental picture with the real McDunn. Medford Crane said he was not the kind of young man she ought to know; but this only heightened her curiosity. McDunn was rather young to be bad; he might be reckless and indiscreet, but Jacintha knew too much about the average man to give Medford's priggish prohibition a great deal of weight. She was altogether unlikely to find any one who would bring McDunn to see her, and Jacintha certainly could ask such a favor of but few and hold her self-respect.

So it turned out that she went back to Washington with her father disappointed, not alone in the outcome of the great game, but sharply unsatisfied in her failure to realize a wish which under ordinary circumstances would not have gone long unfulfilled. For Jacintha Bruce to express a desire to meet some one was usually but one step removed from the beginning of the acquaintance so sought. This exceptional situation, far from proving the rule, seemed to knock it galley-west.

The fall and winter passed, and Jacintha occasionally saw Jack McDunn's name in the newspapers. She followed the sporting pages with discriminating interest. McDunn came out for baseball in the spring, and developed into a heavy-hitting batter and reliable outfielder of 'varsity calibre. The season wore on and the important games were played, all with vast credit for Harvard, and with scarcely less for McDunn. Jacintha found it impossible to see any of these games, for Senator Bruce wanted her with him in Washington at the end of the session. She had fallen into the habit of doing certain things for him, and while he would have given her cheerful leave for a visit in New England, Jacintha felt that even a day's absence might cause serious inconvenience at a time when important committee work claimed sixteen out of every twenty-four hours.

If McDunn, who had never heard of Jacintha Bruce, had only known it, he was the recipient of a handsome compliment, in the fact that such a girl took interest enough in him to check up his athletic exploits in the newspapers from day to day, and to wish heartily that he were a Yale man. Then came her disillusionment.

The story "broke" soon after commencement week, when McDunn had been more in the public eye as a member of the victorious Harvard baseball team than at any time since the previous autumn. He had played a masterly game, "hitting 'em where they ain't," and fielding his position with marvellous accuracy. The sporting writers freely

predicted the baseball captaincy for him, and if any of these knew the inside reasons precluding such a choice, they kept them out of print. Another and less brilliant player was elected.

Jacintha Bruce found this a distinct disappointment. She was actually disgusted with herself for taking so keen an interest in the situation. When she learned that McDunn had failed of election as leader, she complained bitterly in a letter to young Medford Crane:

I have been reading about the baseball election, and I must say you "Hayvuds" make me tired. I remember your utterly priggish remarks about Mr. McDunn after the game last fall. At Yale, let me tell you, merit would not be ignored and snubbed by snobbishness. As a sporting proposition, Medford, Harvard iss nix. I know that is n't ladylike, and probably you would say to me, "It is n't done, you know." Heaven help us! Must the men have all the red blood?

All of which made poor Medford Crane, who admired Jacintha extravagantly, gnash his teeth in futile exasperation at the unreasonableness of women.

And then, as I said, the story "broke" which set half the country—the half that follows athletics—in a turmoil of protest and disappointment. Perhaps you yourself remember the details; if not, they are too painful for rehearsal. There was no excuse for McDunn. A big athlete, like any other public character, owes something to the public. He owes more to his college than to all else, but with thousands of young men and boys watching his every move it behooves your athlete to live a life that will bear scrutiny. Usually he does, and the admirable example of self-restraint and wholesome moderation set by him serves a useful purpose.

Jack McDunn chose to ignore this obligation. He had fought on the field for the honor of his college; he had been there with the "*morituri salutamus*" thing, so far as the public was concerned; but it never occurred to him that his obligation was a deeper one. In the eyes of many, he, Jack McDunn, stood for Harvard—stood for Athletics—and when he, Jack McDunn, blew up with a loud report, Harvard and her Athletics blew up too.

Anyhow, that was the way the faculty looked upon the matter, and they acted accordingly. The powers-that-be in amateur athletics, however, have no license to interfere in a man's private affairs so long as he violates no rule of the game, and McDunn was untainted as an amateur, and as a contestant fair in every department where his prowess gave him prominence. An easy-going public would forgive him next fall if he should provide them with his usual brand of thrills; otherwise they would forget him. He chose to let them forget him, and made no effort to reinstate himself at Cambridge.

Jacintha Bruce was forced, when she read the newspapers' accounts of McDunn's escapade, to acknowledge that she had been wrong. Medford Crane had said truly that McDunn was not worthy of her acquaintance. She promptly admitted that such a person ought not to expect any consideration when the matter of a team-captaincy was under discussion. Athlete or no athlete, a man who stands for Harvard or Yale or any other college in a position of importance must, first of all, be a gentleman. And McDunn certainly was not a gentleman.

Jacintha refused to admit, even to herself, how deep a disappointment she felt in McDunn's failure to live up to her expectations. She had clung to the belief that she should meet and know him some day, and find in him those qualities of sportsmanship and manliness of which his conduct on the football field gave evidence. Now, however, she realized that the decencies of life forbade her thinking of him. She was glad he was n't a Yale man, anyhow.

CHAPTER IV

ON the third day of September Jack McDunn walked up Washington Street, in Boston, with just sixty-four cents in his pocket. His summer had been a profitless one. Out home he had been received with scant cordiality. So long as he had done well in one thing, even though it be that which his practical father regarded in the light of mere play, the old gentleman had been willing to overlook certain lapses, in the hope that the indomitable spirit of the McDunns would in time show itself in something besides athletic success, and eventually make a man of Jack. But now he abandoned hope, for the boy's disgrace had swept away all confidence in the future. At the end of a few weeks the two found that association meant greater and greater friction. In fact, Jack's visit ended in a violent quarrel and an established breach between them, which the boy's mother weakly and vainly sought to heal.

Jack was no longer a boy, but a man, of age and legally responsible for his own actions and his own debts. Daniel Tresperson McDunn reminded him of this, pointedly and with decision. Unless Jack should demonstrate by a continued line of conduct which the elder McDunn should approve as worthy of something better than an overgrown hulk of bone and muscle, a big engine without a governor, he proposed to wash his hands of him. He gave Jack a thousand dollars and told him flatly that his displacement assayed higher than his hull in actual negotiable value, so far as Daniel's estimate could determine.

Jack took the check, scanned it contemptuously, and tore it into small pieces, which he insolently sent flurrying about his father's ears, like a stage snowstorm. Then he kissed his broken-hearted mother and shook the dust of Kalamawassett from his shoes.

He hoboed his way eastward, choosing such companions on the road as chance might offer or vicissitude impose. He joined with a circus as a canvasman, accepted a position passing patent-medicine booklets for a distributing firm, applied his skill and strength to the furniture-juggling problems of a moving-van concern. Between these frequently changing jobs he sought sedulously to reduce the visible supply of brewed and distilled commodities wherever he found himself. He rode the bumpers, pounded tie and pavement, stole chickens, and slept in barns, haystacks, and empty box-cars. His general trend was eastward, and he beat his way against the head-winds of adversity like a windward-bound ship, making long tacks or short hitches, as the gale might dictate.

Once arrived in Boston, he could have looked up his former cronies who were still in college across the Charles, but in the dilapidated state of his wardrobe pride forbade it. So he walked aimlessly along the street, his ship apparently arrived in a harbor where all desirable anchorages were preempted by more favored craft.

Jack McDunn could not have told himself in any definite way just why he had come to Boston. Lately it had looked more like home to him than any other town of his acquaintance; but now that he found himself at his journey's end, circumstances robbed the city of any very tangible homelike aspect. Instead of renewing the ties of acquaintanceship here, he actually shrank from contact with those who knew him in his prosperous days. Professional athletics, a place on a league team, held possibilities for him, he knew; but he was badly out of training, slowed up by self-indulgence, and mentally unfitted for any attempt to realize upon his physical assets. No manager would give him a hearing; he looked too much the part he had played all summer: the bum, the down-and-out.

One cannot live high or long on sixty-four cents. Plainly he must find work of some kind, or stop eating. Jack applied listlessly at a few wholesale houses, but his appearance was against him. By the end of the afternoon he had made no progress. He bought a *Globe* and, going into the first convenient saloon, sat down at a table and ordered a drink, while he spread open the paper at the classified pages and scanned the male-help advertisements without any great interest. Perhaps he had become too thorough a tramp to care whether he found work or not. Winter was yet afar off, and the open country, with its unguarded hen-yards, orchards, and cornfields, had a far stronger appeal for him than a bale-hook and the callosities of honest toil.

His first drink demanded a second, and in an hour he had spent his money in return for the dubious comfort of partial intoxication. He went out into the street, and wandered aimlessly along the town, wondering vaguely where he should get a meal or a chance to sleep.

The time was just between the cessation of commercial business and the beginning of the evening's theatre-going, café-seeking affairs. McDunn turned, for no special reason, into Essex Street and wended toward the South Station. Suddenly his attention was caught by several men running, and he heard shouting somewhere down the street. If there were any good cause for excitement, he required to know what it was, and fell into a quick trot. At the corner of Oxford Place a small but rapidly augmenting mob had gathered, the centre of which milled and swirled with hatless heads and swinging fists. A policeman came running up and plunged into the crowd. Jack fell into his wake, and immediately found himself in the midst of a well developed young riot.

Half a dozen toughs were trying to beat up a big man who seemed to make very definite objections to the proposition.

"Hi, there, quit that!" roared the cop. He drew his club and laid about him in defense of the thug-beset wayfarer; whereupon the toughs divided their attention between their original victim and the officer. One of them went after the would-be rescuer with a rock, and opened a neat seam over his right eye. The cop, dazed but dogged, seized his assailant by the collar and continued to ply his club to some effect, but Jack saw that, unassisted, both the men must fare ill.

Six drinks of whiskey may not constitute good training diet, but they serve their purpose where recklessness and the primitive impulses of a free fight hold sway. Jack plunged into the mix-up with a howl of delight. His big fists went crashing into the faces of the attacking roughs, and, fighting with both hands and feet, he lent aid where aid was most needed. The beleaguered cop, thus abetted, found a hand to place whistle to lip, and as it shrilled its penetrating call he seized a second bully by the neck, still holding tenaciously to the first.

Backed against a brick wall, with the policeman between them, Jack and the big man who had drawn the first attack beat off those who now centred their efforts upon the rescue of their comrades from the iron grip of the law. But the battle must needs be brief, for Oxford Place presently swarmed with bluecoats, at sight of whom many of the gangsters turned and fled. Five, however, fell into the toils, and with these Jack and the big stranger were bundled into a patrol wagon and rushed off to the Lagrange Street station.

As the clanging vehicle rolled through town, followed by a kite-tail of curious small boys, McDunn managed to get a look at the individual who seemed to have been the cause of all the trouble. He was tall, heavy-set, and almost as dark as a negro. But his straight, coarse black hair, thin lips, and high-bridged nose showed plainly that he was no African. The big cheek-bones, one of which showed a livid bruise, were too characteristic to leave Jack long in doubt—the man was an Indian. Then, along with his race, his identity likewise flashed upon McDunn.

He had seen him before, on the football field—had played opposite him in the game with St. Botolph College, a year before. The big Indian was Tom Soccabasin, of the Penobscots, whose name stood for something momentous in college athletics.

At the police station the work of booking the prisoners proceeded with businesslike despatch. As the last of the five gangsters was led off downstairs to the cell-room, the desk sergeant looked up with a peremptory "next."

"I donno about bookin' these guys," spoke up the officer who had figured most prominently in the recent mêlée.

"Well, did n't you arrest 'em?" asked the desk man.

"I ain't so sure," said the patrolman. "You see, Sergeant, it was like this. I was comin' up Essex Street when I see a mob collectin' at the corner of Oxford Place. I starts to run up, and this man here"—indicating McDunn—"he come along behind me. This other man—this Injun, he looks like—he was standin' off half a dozen o' this Fort Point crowd, puttin' up a pretty fair fight at that. I butts in right off, when Reddy the Mink lays my head open with a hunk o' cobble, an' at that this white fellah he jumps in and puts up the finest scrap you ever seen in your life. 'F't had n't been for him, I'd 'a' fared pretty bad, I can tell you. He's got an awful breath on him, an' I s'pose he may be drunk, or a hobo, but I ain't for holdin' him after what he done for me. An' the Injun here, he's some scrapper, too, but I don't see nothin' to hold him for. He was only defendin' himself."

"What's your name?" asked the desk sergeant.

"Tom Smith," answered the Indian.

"Where do you live, Tom?" was the next question.

"Milo Junction, Maine," said Soccabasin.

"Been drinkin'?"

"Some."

"How'd you get into this fight?"

"I was in a saloon on Essex Street. I bought a round of drinks. I had some money—bills. When I came out a couple of loafers followed me. There at the corner where we had the fight they stopped me and asked for a match. I put my hands in my pockets to find one, and they both landed on me. That's how the fight started."

"What's your occupation?" asked the sergeant. "I saw a football player once that looked just like you."

"Football? Huh!" grunted the Indian. "I'm a log-driver. Sometimes I guide. I come up here the other day——"

"Never you mind the rest," said the officer at Soccabasin's side. "He did n't ask you any more questions. You better not talk too much."

"What's your name?" demanded the desk sergeant of McDunn.

"John Smith," promptly replied Jack.

"Smith? Smith? Where 've I heard—oh, yes. This is your brother Tom, ain't it?"

The policemen all laughed; even Soccabasin smiled faintly, while Jack grinned like a guilty schoolboy.

"Place o' residence, John?" went on the sergeant.

"Milo Junction, Maine," lied Jack.

"River-driver?"

"Yep."

"Guide?"

"'M-h'm."

"Well, boys, if Officer O'Connor, who brought you in, says not to hold you, I won't. I guess you're both drunk enough to enter a complaint against, but—well, all our rooms are taken. That right, O'Connor?"

"Suits me, Sergeant."

"Now, I'll tell you what I'm goin' to do," went on the desk man. "There's a train leaves for down in Maine at eight-forty-five, North Station. You boys have both been drinkin', and I don't want you to drink no more. If you do, you'll get in trouble and be locked up, and I don't want to see that happen. If you promise me that you'll both hop that train and get out of Boston without taking another drink, I'll let you go without booking you. I might hold you as witnesses, but I guess we've got enough on those guys without you."

Soccabasin looked at Jack, and McDunn returned the look.

"I don't know how my friend——"

"Brother," corrected the sergeant.

"How my brother feels," went on Jack. "I'd be glad to oblige you in this matter, but, to tell you the truth, I'm broke. I have n't the price of a ticket to Millinocket Junction."

"You mean Milo Junction," said Officer O'Connor, tenderly touching his finger-tips to his sore brow.

"Milo," repeated Jack.

"How about you?" asked the desk man, indicating the Indian.

"Me?" he answered. "Oh, I have money—money enough for two."

"That settles it—you're your brother's guardeen from here to Maine. Get me?"

"Uh-huh!" grunted Soccabasin.

"That's all right, then," concluded the sergeant. "Good-night, boys."

"Good-night, boys, good-night," cried Officer O'Connor. "I'll shake hands with ye. Ye're a swell pair. An' here's a couple of dollars for ye, Jawn. I owe ye more'n that for the help ye give me. Good-night, fellahs, an' good luck to ye."

CHAPTER V

McDUNN and the big Indian walked slowly up Tremont Street to the subway. Neither said anything for some time. Then Jack began:

"I'm not going down to Maine with you, Soccabasin."

"How do you know my name's Soccabasin?" demanded the Indian.

"Because I'm Jack McDunn," replied the Harvard man.

"That's right, that's right," agreed Soccabasin. "So you are. I've been trying to get your number all evening. Say, but you must be up against it as hard as I am—or worse."

"I'm up against it, all right," said Jack. "But I've got two dollars. That'll see me through till I get a job, or hike out of town."

"Are n't you afraid you'll get run in?"

"Not if I cut out the booze."

"You can't cut it out," warned Soccabasin.

"Well, I'm going to try. How about you?"

"I'm going to obey orders," assured the Indian. "I've got enough. This noble-red-man business has ruined me. I'm going back where I belong and get a job logging or guiding."

"I thought you were playing professional ball," said Jack.

"I was, but I got canned off the team for drinking and insubordination. There is n't a club in the league wants me. I got my pay and an unconditional release two weeks ago, and I've just about enough left to last until I get back to Old Town. You'd better come along."

"What good would I be in the woods? I can't use an axe. I know the country, though. I've hunted all over, from Megantic to 'Dobsis. It must look pretty good about now."

"You come along with me," urged Tom. "I'm only an Indian, but I can do you a good turn. Folks know me down home. Maybe you can go to guidin'—anyhow, it would be a cinch to get you a job in a logging camp. The life is n't bad if you like outdoors."

Jack looked at him speculatively.

"I call you a white man," said he. "Nobody has treated me like this for months—not even my own father. He's sore on me. You knew about my leaving college?"

"I read about it—some."

"All you read was true, I guess, and more. I've been a fool. The funny part of it is, I don't seem to want to be anything else. I'm no good. I was born for a hobo, I guess."

"You come along with me," repeated the Indian. "I've got enough for the tickets."

"I'll go with you," said Jack. "If I get up in the woods and do some hard work, I'll likely straighten out. My old man owns a piece of timber-land up there as big as all of this state, I guess."

"It isn't what your old man owns," said Soccabasin. "It's how good a man you are that counts with those fellows. Come on. It's eight now, and the train goes at eight-forty-five."

They went into the tunnel and took a North Station car. After Tom had bought their tickets to Maine, he said:

"Come on, McDunn; I've got a little left, and you've a couple of seeds. Let's go get a drink."

"No," said Jack.

"Why not?"

"We promised we would n't drink in Boston."

"What's the odds?" queried Tom. "They'll never know. I'm dying for a snifter. Have n't had a thing for two hours or more. Are n't you thirsty?"

"Crazy," said Jack. "But, just to show I'm a good sport, I keep that promise; you can do as you like. Besides, I'm superstitious. I've a hunch if I keep my word my luck's going to turn."

"Well," agreed Soccabasin, a little downcast, "if that's the way you feel about it, I'll compromise with you. I won't drink in Boston, but we'll buy some booze to take with us."

"You're on," said Jack.

As the train pulled out of the shed, Tom and Jack, in the smoker, pried the cork out of a quart bottle, and as long as the whiskey lasted they sat and grew more and more friendly and confidential. They rehearsed college football experiences, baseball, the track; the fun they had had out of training, the triumphs gained by hard work. Late in the night, after the train had left Portland, Tom fell foul of a stranger with another quart, and along toward morning, having located certain points of difference, he fought bitterly and bloodily with said stranger until Jack McDunn restored peace by licking them both. Quiet settled down only when both Tom and Jack fell asleep in their seat, much to the relief of the train crew, who had laid plans to quell the riot with emergency axes.

Next morning the oddly matched pair left the train at Bangor and sought out a dealer who knew Tom and supplied Jack with an outfit of woodsman's clothing "on tick." Returning to the station, they boarded a train for Old Town, the home of Tom's tribe.

The Penobscot reservation occupies an island which divides the swift waters of the river at a point just above the city. Here dwell the last remnants of what was once a fine old clan of American aborigines. The houses are small and white-painted, there is a tiny Catholic church, and the village bears a surface resemblance to almost any small New England country community. The men log, hunt, build a few canoes, and sell the baskets which the womenfolk of the tribe manufacture by hand with skill and taste.

Here came Jack McDunn and Tom Soccabasin, on a forenoon in late summer, ferrying across the river in a lumberman's bateau. They were hardly sober, certainly sick with the effects of much whiskey, but glad to escape from the vicious eddies of saloon and dive, into the wholesomer atmosphere of this frontier to the Maine wilderness. As the two climbed out of the boat at the island landing, Jack said:

"Tom, I've come down here with you to get away from the things that have put you and me on the bum. I want you to promise me one thing: don't tell any one my real name. Hereafter I'm Jack McQuinn, woodsman, lumberjack, hunter, guide, gum-picker—anything you like—but not John Tresperson McDunn until I'm a man again, and maybe not then. That's a long way off, I'm afraid."

He turned and waved a comprehensive hand in the general direction of Boston and the world.

"It's all off now. Good-by, civilization. Not any more for mine!"
And Tom Soccabasin grunted assent.

CHAPTER VI

THERE is a time in the Maine woods with a charm beyond that of the regular hunting season, when the men of the cities have dismissed their guides and trekked back to the railroad and the Pullmans and so once more to the haunts of trust, trolley, and table d'hôte. Only the wise know this, and not all the wise. With the end of fall and the onset of winter come the arctic silence and the snapping arctic cold, the season of fast-locked river and lake, of frozen sap, of crisp, biting air purer than all other material substance, of solitude and of peace. Later the great snows sift in between the close-set trees, and for long months the white solitude envelops mountain and marsh, hill, trail, and valley, in a seamless fabric of feathers and steel.

Only here and there in the enormous acreage of northern Maine are scattered the lumber camps along the rivers and brook-beds, from which men with axe and saw weave along the ridges and slopes, cutting out pine, fir, spruce, and hemlock trees and yarding them up in huge piles ready for the spring drive. A literature has grown up—a bibliography of pine and poplar, of track and trail, of lumber and lumbermen. This is but one isolated episode of the snowy wilds, whereby some lives, unnative to that solitude, were moulded and marked with the everlasting impress of the pine-tree winter.

Jacintha Bruce realized that there is something better worth while than a chance shot at an animal little more difficult to kill than a domestic sheep. As a sporting proposition—and she judged most things in life on that basis—killing deer appealed to her but slenderly. True, she had brought down her buck, and his graceful head with its spreading

antlers had excited plenty of comment among the guests at her father's Washington home. But she had little desire to kill a second, and refused repeated opportunities to do so in her frequent visits to Maine. There were exploits that appealed to her sporting instincts much more strongly. She was expert with the camera, and prouder of successfully made pictures than of any possible number of stuffed creatures.

"You see," she would explain, "it is much more difficult to get a good picture of a wild animal than it is to shoot him. Any one who can break a dinner plate at two hundred yards can pot a deer. That's nothing—even a militiaman could do it. What's the danger? Where's the sporting chance in it? But take a camera and spend a solid week manœuvring for a snap-shot of a cock-grouse, or a doe with her fawn, and see if it does n't take endurance, and patience, and skill. Often there's danger, too. I nearly broke my neck getting my prize view of Mount Katahdin. It was a harrowing experience. But no one has ever duplicated the picture. Here it is—is n't it wonderful? And here's my *chef d' œuvre*—a buck deer only six feet from my lens. When the shutter snapped he jumped. So did I. If I had n't, I should never have lived to develop the film. Photographing a wild animal is a matter of feet; shooting is one of yards—hundreds of them. It's unfair to the beast, and it is about as exciting as bombarding a sofa-cushion with gum-drops. And then there are other things about the woods—the gorgeous walks, the mountains, the lakes—oh, what's the use! I can't describe it—the books are full of it, but you've got to be there to see it and feel it."

And so Jacintha's party stayed in Maine long after the law forbade further slaughter of the innocents. There were pictures that could be had only after a snowfall, and the first snowfall was yet to take place. The cold weather came on shortly, and what froze at night thawed promptly again when the sun got up. The big camp on Chipmonk Island, in Sixth Pistol Lake, looked out across a blue expanse of water unmanacled as yet by Jack Frost, although December was creeping past and Christmas growing nearer.

In Jacintha's party were Lancey Keane, young Doctor Jenness, and the Senator. No other woman had cared to come. Jacintha's sporting proclivities outran those of her feminine friends. But Jacintha did not miss them.

"I'd far rather we had n't any other girl along," she told her father. "Women are so tender. If Xenia or Molly Drake were with us, she'd probably sprain one of her delicate ankles, or get a cold in her throat, and I'd have to nurse her. That would be mighty disagreeable, I should say."

Her camp outfit was much like that the men carried. She packed a sizable bag containing such necessaries as experience dictated—nothing more. And by "packed" I do not mean "filled"; I mean "*carried*."

She refused assistance with this piece of dunnage—it swung from her shoulders as did Lancey's or the heavier burden of her guide.

Jacintha's dress duplicated that of her companions. She wore loose fitting knickerbockers of heavy corduroy, a Mackinaw coat of screaming plaid, heavy woollen stockings, and high laced moccasins. She carried a camera instead of a rifle, and only in this single particular did her equipment differ from that of Lancey, or the Doctor, or her father. A woollen cap with a visor, and home-knitted mittens bought at the Milo village store, completed her costume. At one hundred yards you would have had no suspicion as to Jack Bruce's sex.

The house on Chipmonk was built after the traditional lumber-camp plan. Its log walls were six feet high, its ridge-pole not over ten feet from the floor of split logs. A big, hungry box-stove stood in the middle of the room, and at the front, toward one side, another wood-eater in the shape of a kitchen range served the demands of cookery. A plank table ran the length of the camp. There were six or eight chairs, a shelf for the water-pail, and a deacon-seat. Along the walls were buck-feet, up-bent, thrust between the logs, and these were as convenient for clothes-hooks as for arms-racks, and used for both. Around the funnel of the box-stove, which ran vertically through the roof of cedar "splits," a network of hay-bale wire was strung for drying clothing.

There were no bedrooms. The deacon-seat was made of an enormous cleft log, and extended across one end of the camp about seven feet from the back wall. Its flat side, perhaps twenty inches above the level of the floor, served as a seat whereon democratically might rest guest, guide, and cook. Behind the deacon-seat no flooring was laid, but the space was filled from the ground almost to the level of the seat with evergreen boughs. These, surfaced with straw confined in great ticks or mattresses, made a bed as wide as the width of the camp—say, thirty feet. Came the hour for retiring, and the cook wrapped himself in a blanket and turned in at one end. Next him slept a guide, then another, and another, and another. Dr. Jenness's place in the rank came next, then Lancey Keane's. Jacintha buttoned herself into a duck sleeping-bag with heavy blanket linings and slept between Lancey and the Senator, who occupied the extreme right-of-line. After a hard day of tramping and hunting, the chorus of snores from these nine throats was something alarming, sinister, elementally frank; if you will, brutal.

Occasionally, in the night, the cook crawled out of his blanket and thrust a log or two into the stove. At six he arose, lighted the lamps, and started the fire in the range with wood that crackled, while little wreaths of smoke leaked out around the covers and filled the room with fragrant blue haze. Soon the guides arose, slipped on their moccasins, and pattered out at the front door, stretching and yawning, to be presently followed by Lancey, Jenness, and the Senator. Jacintha

sat up in bed and arranged her hair, chatting meanwhile with the cook. After that she slid behind a screen in the corner for a matter of ten minutes or so. The cook kept about his business.

There was corn-bread for breakfast, and coffee, and apple-sauce with molasses in it, and fried salt pork, baked beans, mustard pickles, and sometimes fried hasty pudding with maple syrup. It was all over a little after seven, when the entire party split up and went its respective questing ways. Sometimes they came back for lunch, sometimes they took a cold "snack" along with them. At night came a square meal of hot saleratus biscuit, "deer-meat" stew, baked beans, apple-sauce with molasses in it, mustard pickles, and maple syrup. There was also tea in tin dippers, to which you might add condensed milk if you wished. All ate at once; there was no "second table." The cook served the meal, and slipped into his seat as soon as the rest were busy, hopping up every now and again to fill some one's tea-mug or to renew the supply of hot bread.

These were good evenings for Jacintha. Maine guides are famous jokers. All sorts of rough witticisms flew back and forth, digging personalities, sarcasms, and decriminations. Within the limits of decency, these verbal battles often waxed hot and furious. Jacintha, Lancey, and Jenness joined in the badinage, and occasionally the Senator himself would cut in sharply, although as a rule he preferred to enjoy the fun as a non-participant. After supper there were pipes, perhaps a game of pitch, a night-cap, and before nine o'clock the chorus of snores was once more in full swing. Jacintha and the guides stopped short of the night-cap. It is not a guide's business to drink; some of them do, but not usually when employed.

To Jacintha this simple daily life never lost the spice of interest. In the first place, there was the changing season—a continuous moving-picture show, indescribably colored, vigorously, vitally animated. Once in a long time some casual visitor from the outside world brought letters and papers. The letters interested Jacintha very little, the papers not at all. Her friends wrote her of their petty affairs—the doings of society, engagements and rumors of engagements, small gossip, scraps of a frippery egoism that seemed to Jacintha microscopically narrow. Perhaps some time, much later in the season, she would, on getting back to town, take notice of such things. Now they were too pygmyish for thought.

Four guides were employed by the Bruce party. Lon Spencer, a wiry little man with only one good eye, took care of the Senator. He and Sand Hoskin owned the camp. "Sand" was a marked "character," and his nickname was honestly earned and deservedly bestowed. Sand, who was a matter of forty-odd years old, took Lancey Keane in tow.

To Dr. Jenness fell the good fortune of having a real Indian guide—

Tom Soccabasin, of Old Town, a man whom Jenness had seen on the football field for St. Botolph's College. The doctor was as tickled as a hen with six chickens, and found Tom not only a surpassingly skilful woodsman but a congenial companion as well.

To Jacintha was allotted Jack McQuinn. Lon and Sand said they did n't know much about Jack, though he seemed to be reliable and honest, and a dependable guide. His great strength and wonderful agility picked him out as one man in a thousand. Tom Soccabasin had recommended him, and Tom was trustworthy. He told them that Jack was a "Bluenose" from over New Brunswick way.

"He don't egzactly talk like them down-easters, now, yit he has the same way o' rollin' an 'r' on his tongue every time he hits one, like it was a fresh chew," commented Sand.

"Everybody talks different, don't they?" queried Lon. "I'd never take that fellah fer no Bluenose, though. An' here 's a thing 't happened t' other mornin'. I come in here sudden f'm ou'doors, an' Jack he 's a settin' side o' the stove, cleanin' his 55-28. I had a idee—I says, loud an' quick-like, 'God save the king!' Jes' like that—'God save the king!' What d' yuh s'pose he done? He turned 'round kind of slow an' looked at me like I 's crazy, 'n' then he says, s'e, 'What the devil king be you a-beefin' about, Lon?' Now, you know 't if he was a reel simon-pure Bluenose he would n't never done like that, would he?"

"He 's a good guide, though, is n't he?" asked some one.

"He is, 'n' he ain't," replied Sand. "He 's strong an' willin', he 's got a good nose for home, an' I doubt if you could lose him in these woods; but he 's got the funniest way o' handlin' a canoe—uses a kinder long, college-boy stroke, like they do up to Boston, out there on the Charles River, where all they do is float 'round and sing 'marilee we rool along,' an' hammer one o' them mandoleums. I'd like ter see one o' them, willy-boys try to pole a canoe up four-mile rips—gosh!"

"I noticed he give you a pretty good tussle comin' up the lake t' other day in that gale," observed Lon slyly.

"Shucks!" said Sand. "I could tucker the liver out o' him in an all-day grind."

"Yes, you could, like a hen's eyebrow," said his partner, with exaggerated incredulity.

One thing was most noticeable about McQuinn: he murdered the English language with protracted and exquisite torture. None of the other guides could outscore him in the matter of double negatives or excel his conjugational atrocities. Even his fellow guides laughed at some of his grammatical eccentricities.

One morning at breakfast he stated:

"Honest, I hain't never nowhere tasted no biscuits ha-a-f so good 's them is, nohow."

"Gosh, Jack," said Lon regretfully, "'s tew bad you can't git another 'no' or two in thar some place."

One night at the supper-table, Lancey Keane, who occasionally got by the ears with big Tom Soccabasin in matters footballistic, fulminated a dispute in regard to certain strategic points in the game.

"And I tell you this, Tom," declared the Yale ex-player: "there's one man who outshone you all at end."

"I know whom you mean," said Soccabasin quietly.

"You bet you do," insisted Lancey, who had had an extra nip out of the cocktail bottle before supper. "So do you, don't you, Jack?"

Since McQuinn's name was Jack, Jacintha had for the time discarded her nickname, and was usually addressed as she had been christened. Jack McQuinn and the girl both looked up at the question, and the man's face bore a look of almost terror-stricken chagrin.

"Yes," said Jacintha, "I know; but don't you dare speak his name here, Lancey Keane. Such a man is n't fit to be talked about among decent people—is he, Tom? Don't you consider him a disgrace to sport, and to college athletics in particular?"

The big Indian squirmed and parried.

"Well, Miss Bruce, all I can say is, he played a clean game. I would n't pretend to judge him. We all have our weaknesses, I'm afraid."

Remembering Tom's, Jacintha felt exceedingly contrite and uncomfortable. She would have liked to apologize to Tom, but feared to make matters worse. Presently Billy, the cook, passing around a pan of fresh biscuits, said:

"Biscuit, Senator? . . . Doc? . . . Mr. Keane? . . . Jack—well, I vum! D'any o' you see Jack go out? I thought he was here all the time."

Later in the evening Tom Soccabasin found opportunity to talk to Jacintha in a corner of the camp.

"Miss Bruce," he said, "I don't want you to be offended with me; but I knew Jack McDunn, and I hated to hear you speak so unkindly about him. I never heard you knock any one before. It is n't like you—you're too good a sport. Jack is n't as bad as he's painted—I wish you'd think a little better of him. If you ever saw him play football or baseball, you know a fairer player never wore spiked shoes. I'm not defending him altogether, you understand. But he was more of a fool than anything else, same as—same as some of the rest of us, Miss Bruce. I guess you know why I'm not playing ball this year. But if I weather the winter and live until the time comes to go south to training camp, you'll hear of me on the diamond next summer. And if I have luck I'm going to have Jack McDunn with me."

Jacintha held out a strong, boyish hand.

"Tom," she said soberly, "I'm sorry for what I said, both on your account and McDunn's. I'm sure you'll make good another season. And the winter in the woods will be the best thing in the world for you."

"I'm glad," said the great brown fellow, "that you're not like the man who said the only good Indian was a dead one."

CHAPTER VII

THE companionship between Jacintha Bruce and her guide, Jack McQuinn, was agreeable to Jacintha in many ways. In spite of his obvious and, sometimes it seemed to her, his almost studied crudities, he was not only intelligent in woodcraft, but possessed the sophisticated sense of humor that your backwoodsman, keen though he may be, always fails to develop. Little sarcasms, subtly turned phrases, nice distinctions and shades of meaning, brought response from McQuinn in the most unexpected ways. And yet he seemed to maintain at all times a guarded reserve with respect to himself. Let the talk drift around to his antecedents, and he either closed up like an oyster or adroitly switched the conversation to a track that suited him better.

In this way he constantly baffled Jacintha, so that she found him a problem, fascinating because unsolvable. Sometimes she caught herself wasting too much time wondering about him. There was something in his personality vaguely but insistently reminiscent. Oddly enough, she could not find this suggestive quality in his face; but again and again on the trail or when she followed him along a carry or tote-road, the haunting likeness to some one would confront her. What was it that could be conjured up by this man's back which his face failed to awaken?

There was no doubt of the utter magnificence of McQuinn's physique. His was the traditional beauty of the body—lean, thin-hipped, compact, catlike. His strength was the strength of a panther, never that of the ox. Tom Soccabasin was a big man—bulky of frame, large-boned, heavy-handed. By actual measurement, McQuinn nearly equalled Tom in height, yet so nicely was he proportioned that he would have passed for a much smaller man, and Tom seemed to outbulk him by many pounds.

"Jack," said the girl one morning, as they set out for a deer-run where Jacintha hoped to get within snapping distance of a particularly wary buck, "what makes you murder the king's English so?"

"Am I such a murderer?" asked the guide.

"Don't you know you hardly open your mouth without at least committing mayhem upon your mother-tongue?"

"That sounds legal," commented Jack with a grin. "What's the penalty?"

"It ought to be hard labor in a grammar reformatory," said Jacintha.

"Tough," said Jack. "I'll appeal the sentence and take my case up. May it please the Court, I hope Your Honor won't fix my bail too high."

"What do you know about appeals and bail, Jack McQuinn?" asked Jacintha.

"Read about 'em in some book. Did you ever read any of Shakespeare's works, Miss Bruce, or Laura Jean Libbey?"

"A little," said Jacintha.

"Well, excuse me for saying so, but you remind me of that there Portia, in a book that was wrote by Shakespeare, called 'The Store-keeper of Ven-ice,' or some such name."

"I do? In what way?"

"Well, in the first place, Portia done a man's work in man's clothes. And then you a-judgin' o' me and sendin' me up to some apothecarial jail——"

"What kind of jail did you say?" demanded Jacintha.

"Well, maybe it was an apotheosized jail—one o' them superstitious jails——"

"Do you mean a hypothetical jail, or a supposititious jail, Jack?"

"Yes, both o' them. It must be swell to have the English language roped, thrown, and branded like you——"

"What do you mean, Jack?" asked Jacintha. "I don't quite understand that expression."

"Well, I meant it must be fine to be able to drop a lariat over 'most any word you want and cut it outter the herd——"

"Jack!"

"Yes, 'm?"

"Do they rope cattle down east, in New Brunswick?"

"No, 'm—that is, yes, 'm. You see, they's a Wild Wes' show come to our town an' I seen them vaqueros or whatever you call 'em a-ropin' hosses and steers and sich, and I got int'rusted, so I read up a lot about life on the plains an' in the minin' country. Gosh, Miss Bruce, I'd like to go out West! I would if some o' these New England short-horns would grub-stake me——"

"Let me tell you something, Mr. Jack McQuinn," broke in Jacintha. "I'm suspicious of you. Your dialect is too mixed. I'm not saying anything to any one else, but you might as well understand you can't fool me any longer. You're not an Easterner—you are as Western as a spiny cactus. I've seen all kinds in Washington—one gets to judge origins by dialects."

"All right, Miss Portia. The prisoner at the bar pleads nolo, and throws himself on the mercy of the court."

"I'll put your case on file," said Jacintha judicially. "No more funny business now. Talk as you like when you are at camp, but please don't double up your negatives any more when we're alone."

"Anything else?" asked Jack meekly.

"No," said Jacintha. "When there is I'll let you know."

The man turned and led the way through the woods, and once more Jacintha saw that haunting, familiar, elusive something in the droop and swing of his broad shoulders.

At camp McQuinn continued to maltreat the English language most shockingly, and now that Jacintha had gained a share of his secret, even so meagre a portion, he seemed to her more than ever to delight in the procedure. Sometimes when he committed some particularly egregious blunder she would catch him watching its effect upon her out of the tail of his eye; and this finally grew rather disconcerting. Yet she hesitated to speak of it, lest she should further weaken her position. At first she had thought to gain a distinct advantage by disclosing to him her suspicions; but she now saw that the advantage in some way or other was on his side, and that she was the one to be embarrassed by the knowledge that he was not what he pretended.

She continued to find a distinct fascination in his company, because she knew that, should her father suspect McQuinn to be other than the roughest sort of backwoodsman, he would be likely to change the disposition of the party's guides.

Jacintha did not fear McQuinn. You can readily suppose that all sorts of suspicions would have been aroused as to his reasons for deception. But she felt instinctively that the man was honest. Whatever his reasons, she held steadfastly to the faith that he was not a fugitive from justice, or any sort of malefactor. Besides, here was a sporting proposition exactly to her taste. She could take care of herself; she was strong as few women are strong—stronger perhaps than the average man. This gave her confidence, poise, and fearlessness.

Suppose McQuinn should turn out some sort of undesirable, despite her instinctive feeling that he would not; what would the development be? Would it not be worth watching? Would it not, perhaps, involve an adventure well worth her participation? The sporting element was strong in the situation, and, that being the case, it was simply pie for Jacintha.

But something happened that went far to confirm her belief in McQuinn. She went with him on an all-day trip to Blue Cap Mountain, and took much longer than she should have done to get the views she wanted. Finding scant time to reach camp before dark, and fearing to alarm her father, she started with McQuinn to hurry down the mountain. Near the foot she did the very thing for fear of which she had refused to invite another to camp: Jacintha twisted her ankle—not

severely, it is true, but enough to cause her an agony of pain and to make the walk homeward a long-drawn-out misery.

Jack McQuinn proved himself in this dilemma a gentleman beyond all shadow of doubt. His chivalry was of the best, and his courtesy, flavored with a certain tactfulness, went far to soothe her pride, which was certainly as badly injured as the ankle. She knew that had she been an ordinary girl McQuinn would have picked her up and carried her most of the way to camp; but she saw that he knew she was n't the sort of girl who would stand for being babied. He kept his hands off, except at such times as he supposed help was absolutely essential. In brief, he treated her exactly as he would have treated another man under like circumstances. It was what he did n't do, far more than what he did do or might have done, that taught Jacintha to respect him, and to realize that whoever he might be, Westerner or Easterner, in jail or out, he was a man who could be trusted as only a gentleman and a thoroughbred could be trusted. And that night, although it was the bandaged ankle whose throbbing drove off sleep, the burden of her thoughts was of Jack McQuinn and that curious, suggestive swing of his shoulders which she felt would some day prove the sure clue to his real name and individuality.

CHAPTER VIII

ON the day following the injury, Jacintha found that the twisted ankle would bear her weight without much discomfort, although she walked somewhat gingerly about the camp, and under Dr. Jenness's orders kept indoors and off her feet during the next two or three days. She utilized these hours of inactivity for mending her clothes and for writing some long-overdue letters to her friends of the outside world.

McQuinn, finding spare time a drug, volunteered to trek out the twenty-odd miles that lay between Chipmonk camp and the nearest village. There were letters to mail and others to bring back. Tobacco was needed, as well as some minor articles of food or flavoring. So on the second day of Jacintha's enforced rest Jack dug his paddle into the waters of Sixth Pistol and drove his canoe off to the westward until it was lost to view behind a jutting wooded point. Dr. Jenness thought that Jacintha's ankle would be nearly well in two more days, and McQuinn agreed to be back at the end of that time.

The hours passed dully enough for Jacintha. She encouraged the men and guides to go about their daily quests. The hunting season was now past, and Lancey Keane and Dr. Jenness had both taken a leaf from Jacintha's book touching the matter of weapons, and followed trail or tote-road with snap-shooting intent, swapping carbine for camera.

"Piping times of peace, these," commented Lancey. "We've beaten the sword into the pruning-hook, Jackie, old scout."

"Yes," supplemented the Doctor, "we've beaten the ramrod into the tripod, so to speak. It's good fun."

"Then, I've beaten some sense into your heads," rejoined the girl maliciously.

"And I," chimed in the Senator, "have beaten the calibre into the calabash." He applied a match to his big, golden-brown pipe and filled the air with the tang of mellow burly.

"Inexpensive wit," nagged Jacintha. "Why the masterly inactivity, Father? Are n't you going to beat it with the boys? The beating seems unusually good this morning."

"I think I shall stay about camp this forenoon and keep you company, Jack."

"Oh, lovely!" cried Jacintha. "You may mend some of my stockings; and my forty-four needs cleaning."

"You encourage me, my dear," replied her father. He sat down by the stove and buried his nose in a month-old review. Jacintha, from long habit, held her tongue while her father read. Presently he dropped his paper and fell into a brown study.

"Penny," said his daughter.

"I was thinking about young McQuinn," said Bruce.

"Is that all?" asked Jacintha, closing the hole in a heel with a bit of yarn, pucker-string fashion.

"That's a funny way to mend," observed the Senator.

"It's easier than darning. I could n't do that with a big hole—it would bunch and make a blister. What else were you thinking about? The new finance bill?"

"Nothing so simple," he answered, smiling. "I was studying a human character."

"That sounds interesting. Whom were you using for your subject? Me? Lancey? Tom Soccabasin? President Wilson?"

"None of those. I was studying McQuinn."

"Really, Father? Do you find him puzzling, too? What do you make of him?"

"As yet, nothing at all definite. I might theorize no end, but it would n't get me anywhere. He is an amazing young man."

"In what way?"

"First of all, physically. I think I've never seen so perfect a human animal."

"He would make a wonderful athlete," said Jacintha. She considered herself a judge of athletic timber.

"You say 'would make.' I should say 'has made.' Let me tell you what happened yesterday. You know Jenness and I wanted to follow Molasses Brook, for Tom said there were sure to be deer, and the Doctor is itching to snap a buck that will match that picture you

got a year ago. I believe he's made some sort of bet about it with you, has n't he?"

"Only a dozen films," said Jacintha.

"Of course," said her father, "you'd have to make it what you call a 'sporting proposition.' You'll keep it up until you're ninety, I suppose."

"Surely," confirmed his daughter.

"Jack wanted to go with us; he'd nothing much to do about here, so we told him to come along. Around noon we got up to the head of Molasses, and, sure enough, there was the run, with tracks by the dozen, many of them hardly an hour old. There's no use in my giving Jenness away, I suppose, and you mustn't let him know I told you, but he made an awful mess of things, poor fellow. Tom and Jack went one way, Lon another, proposing to make a wide circle in the hope that when the deer winded one of them, the animals would make for the water and likely enough come down the run.

"Sure enough, in about three-quarters of an hour Jenness and I, sitting snugly behind a stump, with a good strong sunlight at our backs, heard a rustling and thudding, and there came Mr. Buck as large as life and twice as handsome. He was n't much disturbed, just nervous and suspicious. He walked slowly toward us, head up, flag flickering warily, and in thirty seconds more he would have been within six feet of us. I could just catch him faintly in my view-finder when 'Hish-choo!' went Jenness over my shoulder. 'Hish-choo!'"

"No!" cried Jacintha.

"Yes," insisted her father; "that's just what he did. Of course our deer went off whistling like an amateur siren, and we never saw another all day. I scolded the Doctor properly, but he insisted that some one had put black pepper in his mittens. Mad? He was the maddest man you ever saw. I could n't find any pepper; there was n't a sign of it."

Jacintha laughed.

"Poor old Clinics," she pitied. "That's why he was so glum last night. He's certainly had hard luck this trip. Maybe I'd better take him with Jack and me and show him——"

"I was coming to Jack," broke in her father. "We had to make some sort of lame excuse to the guides, of course, for at least two of them, Tom and Lon, had seen the deer, and they knew he was headed down the run. But we got by some way, and presently we felt hungry, so we made a fire and heated tea, in an open space in front of an old lumber camp. After lunch the boys, Tom and Jack, got scuffling. It was all in fun, but pretty rough. Tom looks far larger than McQuinn, but you'd have been surprised to see how closely they were matched. They wrestled and tumbled about like a couple of young bears for half

an hour. Finally Jack, who appeared to be the more excited of the two, said he would bet Tom a week's pay that he could n't touch a certain tree at the end of the clearing, maybe one hundred and twenty-five yards off, and Tom took him up. Jack was to give a handicap of five yards. The Doctor was judge at the finish, and I acted as starter.

"They took off their Mackinaws, and Tom set himself as a sprinter does for the 'hundred'; but Jack just crouched, ready to spring like a panther. I counted three, and Tom was off with the word—I'd swear he was ahead of my 'go,' but not enough so that I could check it."

"That's part of the game," said Jacintha.

"It was cleverly done," went on Senator Bruce, "and gave Tom an extra yard's advantage. But McQuinn was after him like a rifle-bullet. I thought Tom would win, when suddenly Jack left the ground and shot through the air in a long, diving plunge. I've seen a greyhound take a hurdle like that. He struck Tom midway between knee and hip and pinned him so neatly that he came to the ground with a crash like a falling tree, but with arm outstretched toward the goal. Jenness says his fingers were so near to grazing the tree-trunk that he actually was unable to decide the result of the contest, and called it a dead heat."

"Did n't they run it off?" cried Jacintha, her eyes sparkling.

"No," said the Senator; "I would n't let 'em. Did n't you notice how Tom limped last night, or see the bruise on McQuinn's cheek?"

"O-ho-o!" said the girl. "So that accounts for it."

"That accounts for it?" repeated the Senator. "What do you make of it, Miss Eli?"

"Football," replied Jacintha, without an instant's hesitation.

That afternoon the Senator went off with Lon, and once more left Jacintha to the entertainment of her own thoughts and the sometimes amusing garrulities of Billy the cook. Her mending was finished, and she sought what distraction for her ennui out-of-date papers might offer; but every now and then she caught herself staring off across the cold blue sheet of Sixth Pistol, and when the bottom of a column was reached she was not surprised to find that she remembered not an idea from the first line to the last. So she sat there in the early gathering dusk, thinking, thinking, until Billy came in, puffing and noisy, with a couple of rabbits newly taken from a string of snares he had laid at the far end of Chipmonk.

"Gettin' pesky cold, Miss Brewce, I c'n tell ye," he said. "I jest seen somethin' that 'minded me o' the time Freely Bowers run away from the rabbit, back on Chadburne's ridge——"

He wandered on in a rambling, disjointed narrative of local folk-gossip, to which Jacintha paid no attention. Meanwhile he rattled the stove-covers, and bustled about with supper preparations.

"I can't believe it!" finally ejaculated Jacintha, aloud.

"By gosh, Miss Brewce, it's jest as true as I'm a-stirrin' this mess o' flapjacks!"

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Billy," laughed the girl. "I was n't thinking of your story when I said that."

"Sho!" said Billy; then to himself, "That's a kind o' comercial gal, I snum! Don't b'lieve she heerd a thing I was a-tellin' of 'er!"

CHAPTER IX

JACK MCQUINN returned to camp just ahead of the first real snow-storm of the season. He had been gone four days, and, as Billy remarked to Jacintha the first day of her captivity, it was getting mighty cold. Jack left his canoe at the foot of the lane and came skating across the new black ice the three nights of zero temperature had spread thickly and smoothly over the lake surface. He brought letters and bacon and newspapers and tobacco and three pounds of saleratus, and a new pair of mittens that Jacintha had commissioned him to buy for her.

Jacintha, who was out for a walk on the lake just before dusk, had seen him afar off, a lithe, swallow-like figure skimming down toward her with the swoop of a bird. She was surprised to find how glad she was to see him. And that was odd, because, you see, she was a high-bred, cultured girl, the daughter of a Senator of the United States, while Jack McQuinn was only a licensed guide, a woodsman, rough, untutored, shaming his mother tongue every time he opened his lips. Just how absurd her pleasure at his coming might be, she herself did not realize; if she had sensed its incongruity, she would very likely have issued orders to pack up and quit Sixth Pistol. Then again, perhaps—who knows?

McQuinn's eyes sparkled with the vigor of the fresh, cold air, and with a deep and frank delight at meeting Jacintha first of all the Chip-monk party.

"Gosh!" he burst forth, grinding his heels into the ice and sweeping down upon her in a wide, twisting spread-eagle. "Gosh! I'm glad to see you, Miss Jacintha. 'T was mighty nice of you to come out to meet me, now, wa'n't it? Miss me much, hey?"

"Oh, not much," she replied airily. "I wish I could skate like you."

"All in a little practice," he returned complacently. "You could, I'll bet."

"Ever play hockey?" asked Jacintha keenly.

"Sure—well, we call it shinney 'round where I come from."

"Really?" said the girl, with a trace of irony.

McQuinn looked at her with a hint of suspicion in his eyes.

"Why?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing," she said. "You know they play it a good deal in some of the colleges. Have you the mail? And did you get my mittens?"

"Yessum," replied McQuinn. "I got 'em. One's red and one's blue. How'll that suit you, Miss Bruce?"

"If that's so," returned Jacintha, "you may turn right around and go back and change them."

Jack fished in his pockets and brought out sundry small packages.

"Here they be—are, I should say."

He produced the mittens, but with them something else—a half-pint flask, filled to the neck and tightly corked.

"What's that?" demanded Jacintha.

"Vinegar."

"It's liquor—whiskey," she said.

The man looked at the bottle soberly, turning it over and over in his hand. Then he pivoted and with a wide sweep of his arm sent it crashing with a jingle of splintered glass among the trees on the shore. After which he looked at Jacintha.

"I got that the first night I hit the village," he said. "I hope you noticed it was full?"

"Yes?" said the girl questioningly.

"I lugged that around in my pocket all the time I was gone. I could feel it against my hip with every step. Sometimes I would take it out and look at it; once I pulled out the cork with my teeth, and smelled the whiskey. Then I put back the stopper and hammered it home against a tree. Do you know what that meant, Miss Bruce?"

"I can guess, Mr. McQuinn," she said. "Why do you tell this to me?"

"Good Lord!" he burst out. "I had to tell some one. That's too big a thing to keep all to myself. Can't you understand?"

"Yes," said Jacintha; "I understand. I'm glad you told me if you felt that way—do you wish me to congratulate you?"

"I do," he cried, with more intensity than she had ever known him to express. "I do—and, what's more, I don't care whether any one else would congratulate me or not. If it were n't for you, I could n't have done it."

"Hush," said Jacintha. "What have I ever done? I'm not your guardian."

"Ain't you—I mean, are n't you?" he asked quizzically. "Maybe you don't know, now, maybe you don't know anything about that."

Jacintha turned and walked back to camp through the wintry, stinging twilight, the guide skating easily beside her. At the landing he kicked off his skates, and together they went up the path to the door.

That night Jacintha lay awake a long time, staring at the twinkling rays cast through the interstices in the box-stove upon the cedar-splits of the roof. It was n't her ankle that kept her awake, but her brain, busy with thoughts that swam and spun and spiralled with an odd, new disquiet. Presently she fell asleep and dreamed a strange, weird dream in which she saw a man and a girl standing in a bleak, waste place, very close together. The man's left arm was about the girl, and she saw his right swing wide and a glinting something hurtle in a long parabola among the pines.

"That," said the man, in a clear, firm voice, "is my past. I've fought it, and now it's gone."

There was a jingling, splintering crash as the thrown object disappeared in the branches, and Jacintha awoke, to hear Billy the cook, who was getting breakfast, say:

"There, goldarn my picter, that's the second tumbler I've busted this week!"

CHAPTER X

THE snow-clouds gathered in the night. By morning five or six inches had fallen, but the weather cleared again at daylight. A brand new world greeted Jacintha when she awoke to it, a world in disguise, cloaked and masked. She saw it as a delicate etching, a tracing in dark lines and splotches on a white ground. There were no longer any angles, but wonderful sweeps and curves. Every harsher outline had been modified and softened or subtly erased. Each leafless tree had borne overnight a rounded, feathery foliage which the earliest chance breeze would dislodge.

As the dawn grew, over lake, forest, and hill spread wondrous pale tints of pink, swiftly vanishing and cooling to icy blues, deepening into black shadow-patterns of tree and brake; and as the sun crept reluctantly up out of the southeast, and hung hesitant at the beginning of its low swing along the southern sky, the softer colors gave way to a dazzling glare, almost as painful to endure as the direct rays of the sun itself.

Nothing pleases a woodsman, either guide or guided, like the first snowfall. Every creature that moves leaves autographic record of its passage. Moreover, the thick snow eliminates most of the sound of pursuit. The rustling of underfoot leaves ceases, and the sharp impact of shoe-leather against stone and frozen earth no longer sends advance news of the hunter's progress. Trailing one's game becomes vastly easier, but at the same time is added the excitement of a closer approach, since one can overtake a leisurely browsing deer from the leeward only if patient and circumspect.

"If we'd just had this before the law went on!" said Jenness wistfully, since he alone among the men of the party had failed to bring in a deer, legally come by.

"You better take along your gun," said Lon. "Maybe a deer might try to bite you, an' you'd have to shoot him in self-defense."

"No, you don't, Lon Spencer," warned Jacintha. "That advice is 'bad medicine,' and you know it. Promise me you'll leave your 30-30 with Billy, Clinics!"

"Are you afraid a deer might bite Billy?" queried the reluctantly consenting Doctor.

"You had your chance," persisted the girl. "I don't call it sporting to shoot out of season. Now it's the deer's turn. Goodness, it's bad enough to shoot the creatures when you've a legal right to!"

"It's all very well for you to talk, I suppose," still Jenness debated. "You've got your buck, stuffed, mounted, and hung. There's no sacrifice in your leaving your rifle behind."

"I shot him in season, and not still-hunting at that," rejoined Jacintha. "I had my sights set at five hundred; Lon knows. He saw it, did n't you, Lon?"

"Sure did," corroborated Spencer. "'T was two seasons back."

"I've got enough; let me up," Jenness surrendered. "Here's where I stick with the art-lovers. Where's my camera?"

"This is the chance of a lifetime," Jacintha enthused. "I've waited six seasons for it; the conditions are perfect. Are you ready, Jack? Have you plenty of extra films?"

"Jack, my dear—er—Jacintha, do you think you'd better take a long tramp the first day out?" The Senator turned questioningly to Jenness. "How about it, Doctor?"

"It's up to her," said Jenness, with a trace of meekness. "If it feels all right, it is all right. Anyhow, Miss Jack, you can be like my old uncle. If you're not able to walk all the way round the block, walk half way round and come back. Use your judgment; only, remember, if you lame that ankle, you'll be laid up much longer than you were the first time."

With this warning, he picked up his pack and followed Tom Socca-basin down the loosely trodden path to the lake. Lancey and Sand were the next to leave, and Jacintha kissed her father, with a cheery wish for a lucky day, and joined McQuinn by the water-hole, where Billy the cook was busy setting a line and flip for possible fish.

The two followed the new-broken trail made by the others for several hundred yards, then swung off to the south for the landing where Side Lake Carry led away through the snow-burdened trees. Over them hung a little cloud of constraint, amounting with the girl almost to embarrassment. Jack ploughed on ahead, without looking back, kicking sturdily

into each successive drift, thereby somewhat improving the travelling for Jacintha.

Presently she spoke:

"Better let me break out a while, Mr. McQuinn."

"Not till you've tested that ankle a little longer," he snapped back over his shoulder, keeping head and eyes to the front.

Jacintha felt a little subdued. The woods were very still. The way opened up ahead of them in a series of delicious, sparkling vistas, laced with fantastic traceries of green and white. The sun-imprinted shadows, deep purple and black, lay athwart the path; the gleam of the snow was almost blinding. Showers of diamond dust, scintillant and iridescent, swirled before the eyes when little gusts of wind vibrated bush and branch. The two were powdered white on head and shoulders with the fine, sifting particles. Once a big fluff of snow dropped on the back of McQuinn's neck, and Jacintha knew that much of it must have gone down inside his collar; but beyond a little impatient shrug he gave it no heed.

The ground was lined with a thousand and one mysterious small trails of the wood-creatures. Jacintha identified tracks of squirrels, dainty imprints of grouse, and the clumsier marks of rabbits' leaping pads. All the forest was filled with fresh interest, beautiful and hitherto unsuspected delineations of a new-born, unsullied winter. Except for the muffled thrust of feet, all the sounds of the woods took on a sharp, ventriloquial distinctness. Far off to the left she heard the rattling cadence of a drumming woodpecker; there were curious snapping sounds of the frost working in the tree-trunks. From behind came an occasional echoing reverberation of cracking ice on the lake. The stinging snow-needles bit pleasantly on brow and cheek. Jacintha could see the white overhang of her eyebrows, delicately encrusted with the frost from her clouded breath.

"Are you going clear through to Side Lake, Mr. McQuinn?" she asked.

Jack stopped short and faced about, a disturbed question in his eyes.

"Why the 'mister'?" he demanded abruptly.

The query brought Jacintha up with a half-start.

"It does n't sound natural," McQuinn went on, as Jacintha failed to reply.

"Maybe you'd better get used to it, then," she returned lamely.

"I don't see why," he protested. "Are you put out with me, somehow or other? What've I did—done? Would you rather have had Lon guide you this morning?"

"Oh, no," she replied a little vaguely.

"You've got my goat," said McQuinn. "I don't know if I'm afoot or a-horseback."

He turned with an audible sigh, and went on for perhaps forty paces.

"Hi, gee! Here's a deer!" he exclaimed.

"Where, Jack, oh, where?" whispered Jacintha, stopping instantly.

"Thanks for the 'Jack,'" the man said half slyly. "Here, see them tracks?"

Jacintha gave him a reproachful glance. But the deer-tracks claimed her scrutiny.

"They're pretty fresh," he went on. "He's a big one. Shall we go after him?"

"Yes, yes," urged Jacintha.

They struck off up the slope of the "hog-back" at their left, and, stooping and creeping, followed the trail through the thick growth, every sense alert. The tracks led them over the ridge and down its farther slope into a close growth of young cedar.

"Maybe they've yarded here," the guide whispered. "No, there'd be more tracks, I guess. He's walking slow; look where he bit those tips? 'Sh!"

He crouched down in the snow, and Jacintha's quick, searching eye caught the brown and white of a throat, then the spread of wide horns, the flick of a silk-lined ear. The creature was nibbling at the young tips, making little rustling noises and bringing down clouds of snow, quite unconscious of observation.

"Don't you wish you had your gun?" breathed Jack.

"No," whispered Jacintha. "But I wish we could get a little nearer."

"Wait," warned the guide.

The buck seemed to be circling slowly, and as he followed the tempting tenderness of young cedar-tips he drew nearer and nearer. Presently he stepped into a broad patch of sunlight.

"Now," coached McQuinn; and just as a quick-springing suspicion sent the big head into the air Jacintha released the shutter.

"Click," said the camera.

"Whee-ee-ee-ew!" snorted the startled buck, and with flag erect he darted past his pursuers, crossing their path diagonally and to the right, antlers laid back on his shoulders, nose outstretched. He passed so near that Jacintha could have touched him with a stick no longer than her arm, and was off, slamming and crashing through the undergrowth in a series of teetering leaps.

"Gosh!" cried McQuinn. "Was n't he a peach! You could 'a' got him easy with that forty-four Colt's o' yours."

"I did get him!" jubilated the girl, patting her camera and twisting up a new surface of film.

"Let's go on over to'rds Side Lake," the guide suggested. "The walkin's easier, and we'll likely strike another any time."

They retraced their steps to the carry.

"Jack," said Jacintha presently.

"Yessum."

"I'm sorry I was disagreeable. I did n't mean to be. I'm worried about something."

"T ain't me, is it?" he asked, with easily returning good-nature.

"That depends," she replied. "Who are 'you'?"

"John T. McQuinn, of Fredericton, N. B."

"If that were true, I should not worry, perhaps. But I'm not sure."

"Have it your own way, Miss Bruce," he conceded, conceding nothing. "You gener'ly do. Say, it's clouding up a little."

He kept on steadily, and Jacintha said no more. But she began to study the peculiar swing and rhythm of McQuinn's shoulders. There was an entire personality expressed in that pair of shoulders and back.

"It's true, it must be true," said the girl.

"What?" asked Jack, startled, and turning abruptly. Jacintha looked him full in the eyes, and though they were very good gray eyes, well set, direct, and fearless, they wandered from hers and sought vaguely along the path for nothing in particular.

"Look at me," said Jacintha, very soberly. The gray eyes returned her gaze with a show of reluctance. "I know who you are."

The man withstood her scrutiny for a period of seconds; then he turned away, and, going to the path-side, absently brushed the snow off a prone tree and dropped upon it. He rested his elbows on his knees and supported his bowed head with one hand, while the other hung idle from a limp wrist.

"I suppose you do," he said dully. "I was afraid you'd guess it."

Jacintha traced small, irregular curves in the snow with a moccasined toe.

"Do you realize that that makes it absolutely impossible for us to go any farther? Do you know what my father would say or do if he knew who you are, as I know?"

"Yes," said the young man.

"Do you know what sort of reputation you have among decent people? Do you know what is said of you? Do you know what I was told about you as long ago as last autumn, when you were on the top of the wave as a football player?"

"I know a good deal of what you ask. I don't know what your friends said about me. I suppose they're all Yale men." He looked up with a trace of insolence, instantly erased when he saw Jacintha's face.

"No, the man was a Harvard man, one who knew what you had done for his team, and who admired you as a player. But as a man he could n't recommend you to any good girl."

"That was unfair, absurd, a lie!" cried McDunn indignantly.

"Have n't you proved it to be true?" she accused.

He made no reply.

"Mr. McDunn," she went on, determined to leave nothing unsaid now that she had found the courage and the justification for speech, "I would have been proud to count you among my friends a year ago. Though you played against Yale, you played as a fair man should play. You changed my whole idea of Harvard football. I would n't believe what they said of you. I laid it to what I thought was Harvard snob-bishness—to a social prejudice. And then I found that they, my friends at Cambridge, were right and I was wrong. I was glad you were not a Yale man, or my friend.

"If you were only what you have represented yourself to be, a countryman, a rough backwoodsman, a guide, I would give you my friendship gladly. It has taken me weeks to find out who you are, and all that time I have been giving you my confidence and my respect; can you understand where I find myself at this minute?"

"What have I done to kill your respect for me?" demanded McDunn. "I mean, as McQuinn?"

"Nothing; quite the opposite," she assured him.

"Does n't that count for anything?" he urged. "What do you suppose I came here for? To make myself disagreeable to young girls? To lie and cheat and steal friendships to which I had no right? I came here and left all of my past, that I could leave, behind me; I came here to live out-of-doors, to get back my own self-respect, and to make myself the sort of man who could command the respect of others. Could I drag a bad name here with me and have it flopping about my legs like a horse's hobble-rope? What should I have done?"

Jacintha offered nothing.

"I don't believe now that you fully realize all it meant when I did what I did last night out there on the ice. It was something besides a few drinks of whiskey that I threw and smashed forever into the trees; it was all that was low and bad and unmanly in my whole past. I felt that it was when I did it. I did it with you there as a witness—a witness who failed to see all that was included in the act. Believe me, Miss Bruce, no other witness than you would have satisfied me."

"Is it so easy, then, to flip a bad past into the air and rid yourself of it, as if it were a counterfeit coin?"

"Easy?" he repeated. "Easy! My God! Don't take the symbol for the thing signified!"

"Did you think you could throw away your name as readily as you threw away the bottle?" she went on pitilessly.

"I never intended to do that. Can't you understand—can't you understand what I've been trying to do all these months?"

"Yes," said the girl, seeing that to go further would be needlessly cruel, and torn by the wish to say what she knew she had no right to say; "I do understand—I do understand. Who am I to judge a man—to judge you? I only know you as I have known you here in the woods; oh, Jack, I can't be a prig, hard as I may try." She checked him as he opened his mouth to speak.

"Don't misunderstand me; you have been a beast. I must be frank with you and honest with myself. I cannot afford to have you think I condone or overlook too much. I have lived like a boy, grown into a woman in boyish ways, and I see things as many girls at my age could not see them. But my friends have been clean and wholesome and honorable. You seem not to have been; that's all. But you have had it in you to be, and I have known you only since you have been living the best instead of the worst that is in you. I have no doubt other men have the same capacity for evil that is yours; they have been sooner given the gift of self-control and self-respect. So I will tell you this: I shall not mention your past again to any soul, least of all to you. I will call you Jack McQuinn and try to keep your identity from my father and my friends at camp. You and I will finish this day together, and I will know you to-day as I have known you only since you have been with us here. But to-morrow I shall ask Father to start for home. That is but right and fair to him; I cannot go on deceiving him, nor would you ask me to do so. I am old enough to act for myself in this—to take the matter into my own hands for another twenty-four hours—and I will do it for you, because—because——"

She stopped, nonplussed. She had not realized into what deep waters she was venturing. At the realization, a slow, tingling flush burned upward in her face. Jack McDunn, seeing to what pass she had come, but reading into her look that which might be an intense disgust for him, or self-condemnation, or even humiliation and shame, rose slowly and, reserving the thanks which impulse and the amenities demanded, turned his face toward Side Lake and began once more breaking a path in the drifted snow. And Jacintha followed as before.

CHAPTER XI

As McDunn had said, the sky was once more becoming overcast. There was a distinct feel of snow in the air, yet the temperature remained low. Instead of the crisp, sharp, winelike quality of sunnier moments, came a harsh, searching chill. Shadows lost their edges, as all the world fell into shadow. In the softer light the white of the snow took on a subdued and restful tone. A little wind began to blow in sifting gusts.

Jacintha and McDunn made a small fire by the wayside and brewed

tea, melting snow in a quart can with a riveted handle. Jack had long ago taught the girl the woodsman's first aid to the hungry. She knew how to kindle a blaze on a wet day, when there seemed no dry fuel in all the great outdoors. She carried matches, safe against dampness in a corked bottle. He had taught her not to call her compass a liar when she must travel on its sole assurance. Men have been lost because, finding the compass at variance with their mistaken but insistent sense of direction, they have doubted its truth. Given a clear day, Jacintha could travel by the sun, plotting her directions by her watch with careful accuracy. She felt that she need not fear the forest so long as she had power to walk a determined course. She could follow spotted trails when the axe-scars had all but healed on the tree-trunks.

They sat on a dusted log, contentedly munching their bread and corned venison, sipping scalding and unsweetened tea with keen relish. For a while the talk was of the "you-make-the-fire" and "I'll-make-the-tea" variety; but presently a thoughtful silence fell between them. At length the young man said:

"You're a mighty white girl. I never knew one like you."

"How many of the other kind have you known?" she asked.

"Not many. I'm a man's man. Never cared much for girls."

"I know I'm not a woman's woman," said Jacintha.

"May I talk to you a little about myself?" asked McDunn.

Jacintha looked at him quietly, out of level eyes.

"Do you think it would be profitable?" she asked.

"It would be mighty comforting. I've never made a confidant of any one. I'm not going to say anything alarming. I want you to understand me; I don't care for the others—just yet."

"Perhaps you'd better not," she warned. "I don't want you to do anything rash. I should blame myself if I allowed you——"

"I'll take a chance," he assured her.

She made no reply, but sat absently tapping her empty dipper, in the bottom of which a few tea leaves clung to the metal. McDunn hesitated. Then—

"I guess I'd better not, too," he said after a little. "What's the use? You'd think I was crying baby."

"I think not," said Jacintha.

"Yes, you would. I don't believe in qualifying. Some one said, 'Never deny; never explain; do your work.' I guess that's a good philosophy for me. The apologetic does n't fit my make-up."

"Is n't that rather uncompromising?" asked Jacintha. In truth, she felt a little disappointed. "You run a tremendous risk of being misunderstood."

"Everybody's misunderstood—I am, you are, and Abraham Lincoln was; so was Judas Iscariot."

"Jack!"

"It's true," he went on. "Sometimes being misunderstood is a big indication of character. Does every one understand you?"

"Few do," she admitted.

"I do," said McDunn.

"You flatter me. Are n't you getting personal?"

"Have you really made up your mind to pack up and leave camp to-morrow?"

She nodded.

"I'm going to stick around here for a couple of months," he said. "Tom and I can get jobs in the lumber camps; then we are going to hit the trail for the noisy streets and the newspaper country. Tom's hoping to sign up with the Tan Sox. I don't know what to do; it's either professional ball, or a job at nine per in an office. What do you advise?"

"The job," said Jacintha, without hesitation.

"That's my dope, too. But I thought maybe you'd see the other side; you follow the game, don't you?"

"Mr. Clarke Griffith dines with us regularly," she smiled. "Father is a fiend for batting averages."

"I thought it might appeal to you as a sporting proposition, my playing in the big league."

"As a sporting proposition, yes," she replied. "As an ethical stunt, no. It's all right for Tom. But for you, it's different—somehow."

"You don't realize how awfully right you are, Miss Jacintha. I guess it's that woman's intuition. Some day I'll make good——"

"Jack, the Young Salesman, or, The Boy Napoleon of the Leather Trade, by Oliver Optic, eh?" she bantered.

"That's no joke, either," he rejoined seriously. "Come on; let's be moving. You'll be chilled if you sit still any longer."

Somehow, good feeling had renewed itself between Jacintha and McDunn, and they swung into the carry with something of the old friendliness and frank comradeship of their many days together.

"It's no use your trying to make snap-shots in this light," he said. "But I hate to go back so early. If it starts to snow we can turn and make for camp. It's the last day, you know. I wish it might be a long one."

They ploughed on for the mile remaining of the Side Lake carry. Very gently and at first almost imperceptibly the snow began falling, and they turned reluctantly toward the camp. As they completed a third of the distance to Sixth Pistol, a big animal stalked across the path. Both stopped, breathless. This was no teetering buck or doe, but a great, black, high-shouldered creature with an enormous head and vast, palmated antlers spreading abroad until one doubted the animal's

ability to force them through the thicket. Jacintha and McDunn had approached so quietly that they had not been heard, and as they were well to leeward, the great ruminant could not wind them.

Jacintha had not seen a moose during the entire season, nor had she seen one so huge at any time. Jack tiptoed forward to a point where the moose disappeared, and Jacintha, following, heard the crash of branches as it forced its ponderous way along.

"Come on, let's follow him," she urged. "I want to get one more good look at him."

They picked up the trail, and crept stealthily into the brush, telling off the great, broad tracks through a jungle of spruce and cedar. The snow was now falling more rapidly, and immediately the wind increased, driving the storm through the forest in long, almost horizontal pencilings. The moose evidently found nothing of sufficient interest to delay him, and kept on and on without giving his pursuers the opportunity to study him.

Jack looked at his watch.

"Three o'clock," he said. "It gets dark early these cloudy days. Shan't we cut over toward the lake?"

"Pretty soon, pretty soon," agreed Jacintha, the excitement of the chase in her eye, her breath coming in short, nervous cadence. "Let's go just a little further; maybe he'll stop."

The moose had led them up a long hillside, well away from Sixth Pistol, and the trail lay among the hardwood where the travelling was comparatively easy. A little deceived by the afternoon light, and the undulating nature of the country, the two found themselves in a region that the storm made unfamiliar. At four o'clock, as the tracks grew indistinct in the falling snow, Jacintha yielded to Jack's importunities to give up the chase and swing off for camp, which even now could not be reached before dark.

The snow came sifting through the trees in great clouds, and the depth of the drifts increased so rapidly that travel began to be difficult and wearisome. Jacintha's ankle set up a dull, aching complaint, emphasized by occasional sharp twinges.

"We went too far," she said. "Let's get back to camp the shortest way."

The direct line, by compass, unfortunately led them through a good deal of very rough travelling. Great tangled windfalls presented sometimes impenetrable *chevaux de frises* which they must circumnavigate, to a considerable lengthening of their journey. The gusts howled and beat about their heads, the great trees groaned and moaned, branches tossed away their loads of snow, and much of the time Jacintha and McDunn fought the storm as one fights tumbling breakers on the seashore.

And then, when Jacintha began to hope that they might soon strike the lake shore and make their last necessary fight against the sweep of the gale across the ice, came disaster, swift and crushing.

Jack, ploughing the way, mounted a fallen trunk, long since honey-combed by worm and rot. His usually certain foot broke through the shell, and he lost his balance, falling with a crash upon the farther side. It so happened that the tree overhung a gulley, or ravine, a pit-fall completely concealed by the thick-clouding snow. Jacintha heard a half-stifed cry of pain, and, following with more caution, creeping under the trunk and between its down-thrust limbs, which caught and held her as she wriggled through, peered into the ravine. It was maybe twenty feet deep, and Jack lay writhing at the foot of a bare wall of stone, trying vainly to regain his feet.

"Jack, Jack, are you hurt?" called the girl.

The man turned a ghastly white face toward her, and tried to speak, but failed, then toppled over in what appeared to be a dead faint. Jacintha worked her way along the edge of the wall until she could find a possible descent, and after ten minutes' struggle reached the side of her companion. He lay face downward in a drift, and Jacintha, seizing him by the shoulders, drew him up and held him against her. He opened his eyes, sought to stand, and crumpled down into the snow.

"It's no use, it's no use," he groaned. "My leg's broken. Don't try—to—hold me up, don't—I'm too heav——" and fainted again.

CHAPTER XII

JACINTHA BRUCE eased her wounded companion down into the cushioning snow, and stood looking at him in a sort of horrified stupefaction. There lay McDunn, who typified to her the acme of full-blooded manhood, inert, pale, a collapsed figure as futile as a rag-baby; no longer a guide and protector, but a charge upon her humanity, upon every instinct of that *noblesse oblige* which to her was more than gospel.

She awoke to her position with a shuddering realization that she was worse than alone. By herself she could find her way back to camp, or at least make such shift of self-preservation as might ultimately bring her out of her dilemma, though the process might be not without hardship; that, like Æneas, she could say, "Some day it will be pleasant to remember these things." But here was indeed a horse of a different pattern. Alone with a helpless man who was hurt, she knew not how desperately; with the darkness already shutting in so that even as she stood there she could not distinguish his features; with the snow blanketing down in overwhelming folds; and with the temperature falling, falling, as the night deepened, the prospect was appalling.

Jacintha seized McDunn and dragged him into a sitting posture, his back against the face of the vertical rocky wall of the ravine. He came to himself, groaned, and spoke.

"Please, Jack, don't faint again," begged the girl.

"I won't—I'll do my best," he said. "I'll feel all right in a minute. Just let me rest—maybe it's only a sprain."

He sought to move the injured leg, but desisted with a grunt of agony.

"No use," he said. "It's a goner, that leg. I think my foot caught in a crack of the rock when I fell, and my weight snapped the bone."

McDunn bent over and explored tentatively with his hand.

"Busted! I should say it is!"

Jacintha was kneeling beside him, her arm back of his shoulder. With her left hand she was tightening the handkerchief he wore about his neck and engaging the top button of his coat.

"Do you think you can make it?" asked Jack.

"Make what?" demanded Jacintha.

"Camp."

"We've got to, have n't we?" she returned. "I don't just see how we can travel in the dark, but——"

"We?" he echoed. "We? I did n't say anything about 'we.' I said 'you.' Have you got your compass?"

"You're crazy," said Jacintha.

"Well, maybe it would be risky; but I don't know—you'll freeze here, anyhow, but you'll keep warm travelling, and I don't think the lake's very far. The worst part will be getting across the ice to the island—you might miss it, you know."

"Jack McDunn," cried Jacintha, "do you think I'd leave you here alone!"

"You've got to," he answered. It was now so dark she could not see his face, but she sensed the fierce agony of pain that welled up in his voice. "You've got to; it's death to stay; death, I say! I can't let you. Don't waste a minute—go now; go, I tell you!"

Jacintha made no answering argument, but busied herself in scooping out the snow to make a sort of pocket against the rock, and in pulling together such detachable boughs and dead brush as she could manage. The snow-chasing wind bore down through the ravine, but Jacintha's shield served in a measure to protect McDunn and herself, and as the snow drifted in behind the barrier it formed a fairly effective break.

McDunn went on:

"You go ahead now, and tell 'em where I am, and they'll come and get me. If you stay, we'll both freeze; if you go, you may save us both. It's our only chance."

"If I go," said Jacintha, "I'll get lost; and then we'll both freeze. If I stay, I'll fight it out with you, and we'll both pull through. You know they never could find you if I got to camp."

"Then, go anyhow," cried Jack. "Go, I insist, go! You won't get lost. The lake is n't far—you've a chance. They'll be watching for you—searching for you—there'll be lights—you can scream every step. They'll come to you if you get within two hundred yards of Chipmonk. Oh, God! Why are you so stubborn!"

"I'm going to stay here," said Jacintha. "You talk nonsense. Don't you know you'd freeze to death if I left you?"

"We'll both freeze if you stay; oh, Jacintha, never mind me! What's the difference if I do? It's a nice, easy death, they say. Anything would be better than this horrible pain. Besides, I'm not worth risking your life for. I tell you you have n't a chance in a thousand, and I'm—I'm not worth the chance. Besides, you can get me saved anyhow."

He became quite incoherent with the awful gnawing pain of his leg, that shot 'way up into his body, and the even worse pain of his remorse for having allowed Jacintha to stay so late on the moose-trail, for his awkwardness in falling, for the fatal dilemma into which they had come through what he felt to be his own fault. Besides, the cold was eating into his being, for his forced inactivity made his blood sluggish. He knew that, left to himself, he should die in an hour.

Jacintha Bruce remembered a big white-birch tree that she had passed about twenty feet up the ravine from where Jack lay. She now felt her way back along the rock-face until she reached it, and with quick slashes of her knife secured a quantity of the bark. With this, and various fragments of more or less dead growth, she kindled a doubtful blaze which presently she nursed into a fire of considerable proportions, although much of her fuel proved to be almost unflammable.

It was slow work, and she stopped frequently to minister as well as she could to Jack, who, at her bidding, sought wearily to move his arms and his unhurt leg about to encourage circulation, a process bitterly painful. Jacintha even maltreated him by various shakings and poundings and rubbings, which had at least the effect of disturbing the broken limb, and so setting up a screaming agony that kept the poor fellow awake until finally the fire grew big enough to throw out a welcome volume of heat.

"Now, Mr. Jack McDunn, I guess we won't either of us freeze!" cried the triumphant Jacintha.

"You're a wonder," groaned McDunn, his pain-deadened eyes following her every motion.

In the light of the fire Jacintha was enabled to make short excursions

sions for fuel. When she had secured a quantity of dead branches, she proceeded to elaborate somewhat upon the shelter she had begun, and presently had it roofed with boughs, and from the fire blazing in front it caught enough heat to eliminate the immediate danger of Jack's freezing. She cut several armfuls of spruce and fir branches, and, when she had scraped away the snow, made a fairly comfortable bed and assisted the almost helpless McDunn to reach it. Then she made tea, strong and hot, of which McDunn drank eagerly, as did Jacintha.

"You're a wonder," said the man again, between lips distorted with suffering; "a wonder, a bird!"

"I've been a good pupil, Jack," said the girl. "You taught me these little things."

"I did n't know, when I taught you to build a fire, that I was teaching you to save my life—if I live."

"You'll live, all right," said Jacintha. "That's what I'm here for."

"Good girl!" said McDunn huskily, and quite disregarding the respect due one's employer. Jacintha poked the fire, but said nothing.

The night wore on leadenly. There was no let-up in the fall of snow, and around the beleaguered pair the drifts deepened in hemming barriers. Jacintha kept busy most of the time, gathering fuel—no small task—heating the tea which she felt must be given Jack at frequent intervals, and beating back the snows that continually encroached upon the "pocket" next the rock.

At first she talked a little with McDunn, but his responses went more and more awry, so that she saw the effort of replying must affect him badly. She wondered what the people at camp were doing, what steps they were taking to find McDunn and herself, what could be her father's state of mind. Thus, with worry and anxiety, her mental suffering must have been almost as great as the physical pain of her companion.

After some hours Jack began to talk. Two sentences proved him quite out of his head. He muttered incoherencies, curious mixtures of the jargon of the hobo and the legitimate English of a gentleman. Jacintha thought him dreaming and shook him by the shoulder.

"Wake up, wake up," she told him. He only rolled vacant eyes at her, and cried:

"You hav n't got me yet, Eli; not yet!"

Jacintha started back at this, half doubting her own ears. What did he mean? In a moment came the explanation.

"Let me up; I'll show 'em! It's that — ankle—never mind it, old man. Hear 'em yell, 'Get 'im, get McDunn!' That won't help 'em. Here, Dick, that's the wrong signal. Give Al the ball—'round this way. Now, fellahs, here's a hole for you, come on——"

Jack was back on the football field, injured, but fighting once more

that uphill, winning fight of the Crimson with the Blue. He tried to rise, but Jacintha pinned him to the ground, and held him there struggling until the frenzy passed. His cheeks were aflame with fever, his lips parched. She melted snow and gave him water, ice-cold.

So passed the terrible hours of that night. Toward morning McDunn's delirium led him into less honorable fields of endeavor, where he heard the rattle of chips and the repeated clink of glass. He babbled of things that made Jacintha ashamed for him—things of the rude, unbridled world of a young man without responsibility or restraint. And he talked hatefully and defiantly to one whom Jacintha took to be Daniel Tresperson McDunn, with unfilial and unlovely sneers; then he spoke the word "Mother," and there was nothing of disrespect, but a certain bravado and foolhardy recklessness.

But all that night Jack McDunn never spoke the name of any woman or raved of aught that might sear the leaf of modesty; truly did his ravings testify that he was indeed "a man's man."

About dawn, Jacintha, exhausted and weak with hunger, dropped down beside McDunn, who had for some time been half quiet. He roused in his fever, and said thickly:

"Jacintha Bruce, I carried that whiskey four days, an' when I'd start to take a drink, I'd think, 'Nix, Jacintha, nix, that's not a sporting proposition. It's a cinch—for the booze.' An' I'm tellin' this to you, and the rest can all go to —, for I love you, Jacintha Bruce, you big beautiful devil, an' some day, if I beat the booze, I'll get you, by —, I'll get you—"

And Jacintha stuffed her ears with her mittened thumbs, on impulse; and on impulse freed them of so much impediment to hearing, lest she should miss something. But he only laughed, a cackling unmodulated laugh that echoed in ghastly reverberation among the trees, and floated uncannily down the whistling wind. Then he stared up at the kneeling girl, and, looking seemingly through her, said:

"Well, Tom, old scout, we've fooled 'em so far; but I guess they'll soon get next. The girl's wise, Tom; and oh, Tom, when she does get my number, it's the lumber-woods for mine—only, I'm daffy about her, Old Soccsy, daffy as a loon."

CHAPTER XIII

JACINTHA'S situation when day began to dawn grayly through the snow-laden trees was complicated. She had beaten off the cold, and kept herself and McDunn alive; that was something. But her companion was in a pitiable, desperate state, and in the frenzies of his fever might do himself further harm. Jacintha dared not take advantage of daylight to go alone for help, because, although the falling snow had

measurably diminished, what might not McDunn do in her absence? He could not keep the fire going to prevent his freezing, but he could very readily fall into it should he repeat one of his already frequent attempts to rise. Nourishment was utterly wanting, except such meagre comfort as could be had from heated water. There was no more tea.

Jacintha raised her voice in a long, shrill halloo, but she had no confidence in its power to carry far through the snow-smothered forest. A searching party might be days in finding them, even if such a party found them at all before cold and starvation had claimed them. Still the girl kept up an intermittent calling, her voice thrown mockingly back at her from the forest.

She felt weak and ill from hunger and exhaustion; her ankle throbbed with increasing protest. The caking snow on her clothing had melted in the heat of the fire, and she was wet to the skin, shivering with cold, bedraggled, forlorn, and utterly miserable. She knew every possible attempt would be made to locate her and McDunn, but what were the favoring chances? Those at camp had only the most general idea of the direction they had taken the morning before.

McDunn whimpered and moaned in his delirium; sometimes he seemed asleep, then he would rouse and stare with unseeing, vacant eyes, mouthing incoherencies. Jacintha fed the fire and sought to dry herself, hopelessly and mechanically.

Finally, she came to a determination of desperation, a forlorn chance—yes, an impossibility, no doubt. It was n't even a sporting chance, she thought grimly. But there was nothing else to do.

She tightened her belt, as a man would have done; pulled her knitted cap firmly down over her neck and forehead; discarded her mittens to free her hands, which she warmed thoroughly over the fire.

Now she went to McDunn, and, seizing him under the arms, pulled him to a half-kneeling position, and before he could crumple down again, threw herself on all fours in front of him, so that he fell face downward across her hips and shoulders. She gripped his wrists with all her strength, one of his arms on each side of her neck, and then, with a straining lurch, struggled to her feet, stooping low and supporting the limp form upon her back. Then she plunged forward down the slope of the ravine, and, stumbling and staggering, swung off toward where her compass had told her must lie the frozen surface of Sixth Pistol, whether it be yards, rods, or miles away.

The night of the big December storm brought no wink of sleep to the campers on Chipmonk. As the afternoon waned and the early winter darkness closed down, the various members of the party came straggling in, filled with small anecdotes of the day; supper would soon be ready, and all were ravenous.

Billy the cook clattered pots and tin plates as he set the long table, and dished up steaming deer-meat stew in a deep agate-ware pan.

"Come on, all hands; here's yuhr grub. Pitch in while she's hot." It was his unfailing formula at meal-times, varying never by so much as a syllable.

He went to the door and thrust a sharp "Whoo-hoo!" out into the snowy darkness.

"Tell ye, she's a-siftin' right daown," he observed. "The' must be three, four inches already; blowin' consider'ble, tew."

"Funny Jacintha does n't come," said the Senator. He fell to heartily; Jacintha was not the sort of girl about whom one worries unduly.

The meal progressed, however, with an increasing atmosphere of uneasiness. If the door had swung suddenly open and Jacintha had stamped in with McQuinn at her heels, she would have been pleasantly scolded for "keeping them all waiting." There would have been no loud voicing of joy at seeing the two safe indoors; one would have had to sense the relief between the lines, to have read it in the slightly hysterical quality of the supper-time banter, in the higher key of the laughter, in the sharpened barbs of masculine irony, in speeding which Jacintha herself had come to be an adept.

By the time the meal was finished, the anxiety of the party became tangible. Billy went to the door and hung out a lantern, he also shot his long, shrill "Whoo-hoos" into the darkness with increasing frequency.

"Hi, gosh!" he grunted. "Where'n tarnation j'yuh s'pose them critters is, huh?"

He pattered about among his pots and pans, scrubbing and wiping and setting away, putting beans to soak, and washing out his towels.

"Why'n't you take that lahntern, Lon, 'n' go daown t' the landin' an' yell like ——?" he inquired.

"I was jest goin' tew," replied Lon. He went out into the snow, and presently they heard his wolfish howl as he shot it forth over the ice. In five minutes he came back.

"I yelled a lung out," he said, "done it a dozen times. I could n't hear no answer. Say, did n't Jack take no gun?"

"Jacintha told him to leave it behind," explained the Senator. "Do you mean he might have signalled with it?"

"Sure. Three shots means distress; we'd 'a' gone out the minute we heered 'em."

"They would n't carry far a night like this," said the Senator.

"Wal, I dunno. Them carbines speaks pooty sharp. I've heerd one over five mile off."

"How many lanterns have we?" asked Lancey Keane.

"Four," said Billy.

"Sand," said Lancey, "let's you and me start and see what we can see."

"You won't see nawthin'," said Sand. "I'll go ye, tho'."

"We'll go Side Lake carry way," said Sand, as he and Lancey started off with rifle and lantern. "We'll be lucky if we hit it at all. Anyhow, we're likely to meet them folks right down here 't the landin'. Prob'ly we won't be gone long."

They slammed the door, letting in a small flurry of snow as they crossed the threshold. After a while Dr. Jenness looked at Tom Socca-basin. Both rose and equipped themselves for travel. It was an hour since Lancey and Sand had gone. Lon had vainly tried to lighten the atmosphere with anecdotes that ordinarily would have been welcomed with roars of laughter, but which now only heightened the tension. The Senator continually looked at his watch. At eight o'clock the door closed behind the Doctor and Tom. A heavy silence fell, disturbed only by the gentle wheezing of Billy's briar pipe.

"I mind one time I's out in a storm like this," said Lon, "over on Porkerpine Ridge. It got dark and snowed at the same time, an' I'd a good twelve mile from——"

The Senator went unheedingly out, bareheaded, into the whirling blizzard, but returned in a moment.

"You can't see your hand in front of your face," he said. "Well, Lon, there's still an extra lantern. I guess it's up to us old fellows."

He got briskly into his mackinaw, as if the prospect of action had something stimulating, almost cheering, in it.

"I wish 't I c'd go with ye," said Billy wistfully; "but I s'pose some one's got to stay here to keep a fire and see 't some grub's warm."

So he sat smoking alone in the camp, listening to the thudding blows of the snow-laden wind upon the split roof.

All night long the searchers journeyed back and forth in the storm, each pair averaging two-hour absences. They would come in and Billy would minister to them with hot tea and bread and meat. Sometimes two pairs were back at once, and notes exchanged.

"We went clean through to Side Lake," said Sand to Jenness and Tom. "I thought we sh'd never hit the carry, but I knowed them three old stumps by the shore jest before you git to it. We hollered every dozen steps or so, but it ain't no use hollerin', seem's if."

"What do you think could have happened, Sand?" asked Jenness.

"Dunno. They may be all right—got lost out an' made up their minds to stay in one place till daylight. That'd be good sense, if they's lost, only for the cold. I reckon they'd have a fire—I dunno 'bout Jack; honest to God, Tom, is that fellah a reg'lar woodsman?"

Soccabasin shook his head.

"He is," he said, "and then again he is n't. He's an experienced hunter, and knows the woods, but he's never guided before. He knew enough to get his license, and he's trustworthy. He's a friend of mine, and I wanted to help him."

"Don't you ever let on to the old Senator, now, boys," warned Sand. "Chances was the fellah could have got away with it ninety-nine times out of a hundred—he took a sportin' chance, as the young lady'd say herself. I hope to God he hain't lost, that's all! Come on, Mr. Keane."

Lancey gulped down the last hot swallow of tea, and they returned to the search. Tom and Jenness stayed behind a few minutes.

"It looks like it's up to me, does n't it?" said the great Indian. "I recommended him; it's surely up to me. I thought he'd make good."

"Who is he, Tom?" asked the Doctor.

"Jack? Jack McQuinn?" returned Tom. "I'll tell you to-morrow if he—he does n't come back. He'd rather I did n't tell, though."

"You'll have to," said Jenness fiercely.

"Yes," said the big fellow; "I guess that's right—I'll have to. But not to-night, not to-night. Shall we start out again?"

And so it went, until the belated, snowy dawn, when the searchers found themselves all together in camp once more. They were fatigued past all telling, from ceaseless ploughing, ploughing, through the high-piled drifts. They had beaten up every path and carry leading from Sixth Pistol; had penetrated miles into the snow-smothered wilderness, often running no small risk of losing themselves. They were almost voiceless from shouting; their eyes were bloodshot with peering into the darkness against the stabbing flakes, their faces abraded by wind and ice and the lash of branches.

Yet in spite of exhaustion they were tense, high-keyed, wrought up with undimmed purpose.

"Come, Bill," cried Sand irritably. "Git a move on! Ain't you made no coffee?"

"I sure have," said Billy. "'T the — j'yuh think, huh? Think-ummer — fool, huh?"

"She's lettin' up some," said Lon. "I cal'late it's about snowed out. The' was a heap of it fell. The wind's died down. Looks like it's goin' ter clear. I never see it snow so much without the cold moderatin' none."

Each man had a story of his night to tell, but all were painfully barren of clue or sign.

"Gimme s' more coffee, Billy," said Sand. "I hain't goin' to hang around here no longer 'n I can help. Now 't's daylight, we c'n travel

better. We ain't got no time to lose, if them people is really lost. If they camped down all night an' made a fire, they'll be comin' in soon. But if they don't show up, we just got ter find 'em, by God! They hain't no two ways about that!"

The six men struck out again over the ice. There seemed nothing to do but to continue the search along the lake-borders and back among the ridges, with the aid of the now well-established daylight.

The air had cleared wonderfully, although the sun was not yet out. The snow-clouds were beginning to break; there was no appreciable wind. A hundred yards from Chipmonk the party began to fan off, and presently the three pairs of men were well separated on their way to different points of entrance to the forest.

Tom Soccabasin and Doctor Jenness were the middle couple. Two or three hundred yards separated them from their flanking groups. They made shorewards with rapid strides, running wherever the snow on the ice was thin enough to permit.

Tom, a little in advance, suddenly stopped, and pointed. Jenness, coming up, followed his indicating finger eagerly, but saw nothing.

"Don't you see?" cried Tom. "It's smoke."

Jenness strained his weary, squinting eyes; back beyond the shore he now discerned a thin, hazy blue wreath, wavering uncertainly against a dark background of the evergreens. It curled up sluggishly and made a little smutty streak above the skyline. Simultaneously Jenness and Tom Soccabasin emitted a long, hoarse yell; they began to gesticulate and point wildly, and the others, hearing and seeing, stopped and peered at the ridge. Then all six broke into a clumsy, plunging race for the shore, heading for the point nearest the source of the smoke.

"Spread out!" cried Lon. "Spread out! Don't keep too near together, but don't lose sight of each other; and yell like ——!"

Thus, in line of skirmishers, they advanced through the thick woods, diving into drifts, skirting windfalls, perspiring and sobbing with effort. It was hard going, but the speedier men held back for the slower, and preserved the integrity of the line. In five minutes Tom Soccabasin, rounding a great rock, came upon a perpendicular wall of ledge, and—

"Here, I got it!" he roared. He had struck a deep, foot-ploughed channel. Along the wall, fifty yards to his left, rose the smoke-column. The other five closed in, panting.

"They've gone—here's their tracks," he cried, and all turned and went swarming back over the plain trail that they had somehow missed in their progress up the slope.

Tom Soccabasin, leading, stopped short within ten yards of the shore. Came an awful cessation of shouting, and as Senator Bruce, the last in the line, struggled up, he found Dr. Jenness kneeling in the

snow, pulling the limp form of an apparently lifeless man from where it had lain prone across the equally lifeless body of his daughter, stretched face downward in the snow.

"Jacintha!" he cried. "My little girl! Jack! Jacintha!"

CHAPTER XIV

JACINTHA BRUCE sat in a rocking-chair made of a sugar-barrel and various odds and ends of make-shift rusticity. She looked about the same as usual, except that perhaps she lacked a little in vividness of color, such as one gets and keeps only by constant application of wind and sun. One foot, in a moccasin with a loosened lace, was propped on an empty soap-box. Jacintha was writing.

It was early afternoon. Billy the cook put away his last tin plate, rattled the stove-covers, and pushed a few sweepings out through the door ahead of a twig broom.

"Me, I'm agoin' over to Suell's Cove and set a couple o' lines, provided you don't need me here as a trained nurse no longer," he said, shrugging into his mackinaw.

"Surely," agreed Jacintha. "Go along; we're all right. Only, be sure you bring home some fish, Billy."

"I will if they're there," said Billy. "Goo'-by."

He slammed the door, and through the small front window the girl saw him trudge down the path and off over the snow-covered lake.

"I'm glad he's gone," said a voice from somewhere. "He gets on my nerves. He's told that moose and bear story three times in the last month."

"I thought you were asleep," said Jacintha, turning in the direction of the voice.

Jack McDunn lay in the great bough bed, at one end, his body parallel with the deacon-seat. He was pale and wasted, with thin, stubby cheeks. One leg was propped up and nicely adjusted in some sort of unexplainable weighted harness.

"How are you feeling?" asked Jacintha.

"Pretty fair. My nap did me good. I don't ache to-day like I did yesterday."

"Poor old Jack," said Jacintha.

"Won't you come over here?" asked the disabled guide in a purposely pathetic tone.

Jacintha set her foot on the floor and hobbled to the deacon-seat, where she sat down quite near the invalid.

"I'm a pig to make you, when it hurts so," said Jack. "But I want to have you near me—it's sort of soothing, you know." He reached for her hand, but she drew it away. "What time is it?"

"Half after one," Jacintha replied. "Are you hungry? Can't I get you your broth?"

"Not now, please. Let's wait a little while—it'll taste better then. I must be a funny sketch," said Jack, rubbing an experimental hand over his chin. "When do you think your friend Clinics will let me be moved?"

"Next week, maybe."

"I never was sick a day in bed in my life," he announced.

"I've heard you say that ten times since yesterday morning," said Jacintha. "Anyhow, you've been sick enough this time to make up for it."

"Want to read to me?" cajoled McDunn.

"What shall I read?" she asked.

"Find a love story in that bunch of old magazines—a nice mushy one."

"Oh, no, not that kind," said the girl. "Here's an article on 'Overhand Versus Underhand Pitching,' by——"

"Punk!" said McDunn.

"How about 'The Soft-Nosed Bullet for'——"

"Bunk!"

"But it's very interesting," said Jacintha.

"Pooh!" returned McDunn irritably. "See if you can't find 'Lady Laura's Lover,' or something with sentiment in it."

"Fiddlesticks!" said the girl. "Here's one you might like—sounds good—'Soldiers of Justice,' by Lieutenant Washington Wood, U. S. A. It looks bluggy as everything."

"That's the eye," said the sick man. "Commencing——"

Jacintha plunged into the tale, sitting sidewise on the deacon-seat. Presently she said:

"Let go my hand, Jack. I can't turn the pages."

"Bother the pages. That drool makes me nervous. I'd rather talk. I keep thinking and thinking and thinking—can't get it straight in my mind about that night in the snow. Must have been fun for you—were n't you a brick!"

"I thought you were over your delirium," said Jacintha, "but I'm afraid it's coming back. Better be quiet and rest."

"Think of it," went on Jack, "a big boob weighing a hundred and eighty being carried three hundred yards by a little hundred-pound sparrow of a girl——"

"You mean hundred-and-forty-pound sparrow," corrected Jacintha. "Besides, why remind me of it? If I'd had brains, I would n't have done it. It makes me blush when I realize that any fool would have known the smoke was all we needed to bring help."

"That makes no never-minds!" cried Jack. "It's the way you

did it—the amazing, superhuman courage of you that counts. How could you know they'd see the smoke? You had n't an idea we were so near the lake."

"At that, I did n't get there," she deprecated.

"You're taking a mean advantage of me," complained Jack.

"Am I?"

"Sure you are, to sit there and belittle yourself when I have n't strength enough to—to—properly resent it."

"All right, then," rejoined the girl, "have it your own way. I'm a heroine, a regular Joan of Arc, if that will keep you quiet. Only, I know better."

"Anyhow, I'm going to marry you pretty soon," remarked Jack. "That is, I am when I get a good enough job to rent a flat."

"Oh, Jack," protested Jacintha, blushing a flaming and becoming scarlet, "it's very improper to talk that way to me here."

It was perhaps the tenth time that McDunn had seized an occasion to make the same daring assertion, and the girl wondered why she could not force herself to resent his presumption.

"Old prig!" accused McDunn. "If you don't marry me, I'll follow you 'round as long as you live, like a grateful dog, and come up to you in public places, and whine pathetically."

Jacintha at this point pulled her hand away again. Queer how that hand kept straying into Jack's. She got up and limped over to the table.

"I forgot something," she said. "We had some mail while you were asleep. A couple of loggers on their way to Curtis's camp stopped here for dinner, and brought us a lot of stuff. Here's a letter for you."

"Who'd be writing me?" he queried.

Jacintha gave him a fat, four-cent envelope. McDunn gasped when he saw the superscription.

"Good Lord, it's from my dad!" he cried. "How'd he know I was up this way?"

"Maybe the letter tells," said Jacintha guardedly.

"Read it to me," he demanded.

"M-mm," she negatived.

"Why not?"

"Read it yourself; it is meant for nobody but you."

"I don't feel strong enough," lied McDunn.

"Neither do I," she rejoined.

"Look here, Jacintha Bruce," argued the invalid, "I've a reason—a big one. That letter is from my father—I have n't an idea what's in it. Ten to one he rakes me over the coals; but that's just why I want you to read it. I want you to get the truth about me as others have seen me. I've told you; now let's see what some one else says.

You read the letter; maybe when you're through you'll never want to speak to me again. Jacintha, I'm wild about you, absolutely wild; but I'm going to be honest with you, and if you throw me down after you read that letter, I'll take my medicine like a man."

"I'd rather not."

"Come, now," he cried, "it's a sporting chance; it ought to appeal to you. Open it up; read it before the rest of the crowd comes in."

He looked at her out of big, pleading gray eyes, and she returned the look direct, her own eyes sombre, lips compressed.

"A sporting chance," she repeated. "You're a good sport, all right, Mr. Jack McDunn!"

She ripped the envelope and drew out the letter.

"Here goes," she said, and began:

KALAMAWASSETT, Dec. —, 19—

DEAR JOHN:

I got a letter yesterday from Senator W. N. Bruce. I used to know him years ago. The letter told me a lot of things about you and what's happened to you lately. I suppose you're a pretty sick boy, but I hope by the time this reaches you things will be looking up. Bruce agreed to wire me if you did n't improve to suit the doctor. Lucky thing for you there is a doctor in that party.

Now, John, I'm going to try to talk a little bit in this letter as I should like to talk to you to your face, if I could; though I never had much luck that way. I'm going to try to make this letter as pleasant as possible for you to read; but first off I want to say a few things right from the shoulder that I hope you will take to heart; and if you get mad with me for saying them, I can't help it.

I want you to realize that I have been disappointed in you, and it is on another man's say-so that I hang the least hope that I won't always be. Jim Wrenn's only son, Will, is out here with Jim, helping run the bank; when I see those two going home noons to dinner together, it makes me blue as a whetstone. You're my only son, but so far you have n't been any son at all to me, except to spend my money and what you could wheedle out of your mother—

Jacintha broke in with,

"Oh, Jack, I can't. You're not fair to me!"

"Go on, go on," he gritted savagely.

—wheedle out of your mother, for rum and fast motors, or to gamble with. I never heard that you did anything worse with it, I'll give you credit for that; but what you have done is bad enough. That last scrape, the run-in with the police, a jail sentence, and all—

"Give me that letter!" cried Jack. He snatched it from the girl's hand. "It's enough."

"Shall I get you your broth, dear?" asked Jacintha.

McDunn looked at Jacintha in a kind of dazed wonder. She had never gone that far before. He passed his hand in front of his eyes, and turned his face toward the back wall of the camp, blinking fast.

"Poor old dear," said Jacintha. "It's all right. We won't read the letter now. It was a mistake. You're not strong enough. Let me get you some broth."

Jack turned his face toward her, his jaw set. He thrust the letter back into Jacintha's hand.

"Read it," he charged her fiercely. "Finish it, finish it."

Jacintha resumed reluctantly, and in a low voice that expressed a misery of her own:

—and all, was pretty near the limit. I wondered you had the nerve to come back to Kalamawassett last summer; but when we had that talk and you tore up my check, I must say I had a little bit of respect for you, mad as it made me when you did it.

But this letter of Bruce's has set me thinking. I lay awake all last night studying you, and I'm writing you from the heart to-day; you can take it or leave it, but I'm going to do justice to myself, anyhow.

The thing I'm afraid of is the liquor. But you're young and strong, and if you've got any brains you can work that problem out the same as you'll have to work out others as you grow older. I'm not offering you any advice about drinking booze, because that kind of advice is the most futile on earth.

I gather from Bruce's letter, however, that he likes you; he's discovered something in you that I seem to have overlooked; or did you take pains to hide it from me so I could n't help overlooking it? He says you've got the stuff of a man in you; your grandfather had; I have, if I do say it myself. My father was rich, but I consider myself as much a self-made man as if I'd started with nothing. If you've got the makings of something in you, it is yours honestly.

For your own sake, then, and for your mother's, and for mine—I admit it, John, I'm getting along in years, you know—I ask you to come home and see if you can't hook on with me and help me run my affairs. I can hire good help, but hired help is n't what I want. I've all kinds of interests. Maybe you could help me in the timber-land business; you may be interested to know that the very woods you were lost in belong to me, as it happens.

I'll give you all the rope you want—I'll not interfere with you or force my advice on you, though I'll help you if you ask help.

Some day you will get my property anyhow. I'd like to have the satisfaction of knowing you have the ability to manage it. There are men who'd disinherit a boy like you, but that is n't my way. If you go on raising the devil as long as I live, you'll get the money just the same, but you can imagine how I'll feel.

And now about the Bruce girl. The Senator did n't say much about her, but I'm no fool. Somehow or other, she saved your life—Bruce did n't give the details, but his pride would n't let him hide the main fact altogether, and I don't blame him.

If you fall in love with—

Jacintha pushed the unread portion of the letter into Jack's hand.

"It's no use, I can't do it," she said.

"You've got to," he urged.

"M-m-m!"

"Then, I will," said Jack. "Listen."

"No," she said. "I'm going to the door to get a breath of fresh air." She arose; Jack gripped her hand and pulled her down to the seat again.

"Wait," he said. He rapidly skimmed the remaining pages of the letter, then he handed them to Jacintha. "Read it to yourself," he commanded.

As Jacintha read, Jack watched her, and saw the warm color come scampering into her face, until she was as pink as a baby from collar to brow. She laid the letter down on the blanket.

"What's the answer?" cried Jack.

"He's right about the two years," said the girl gently, her eyes fixed on a far-away nothingness.

"I suppose so; but what do you say? The old gentleman's game, all right; and you know how I feel. Two years is a long time, but Dad's right. Come, put me out of my misery quick—please, what's the answer?"

Jacintha leaned over, her face close to McDunn's, and said softly:

"It's a sporting chance, Jack dear. I'll take it."

She kissed him once on the lips, slipping away before he could get her into his arms.

Which was just as well, for Billy the cook pushed the door open within three minutes, and began pottering around among his pots and pans and stove-lids, meanwhile rehearsing a frayed and mossy anecdote which both had heard.

Half an hour later the rest of the camping party straggled in. Senator Bruce and Doctor Jenness entered first, and the physician went to McDunn with a few questions, casually asked and as offhandedly answered. Then he felt his patient's pulse. As he rose from the deacon-seat, he turned an accusing eye on the cook.

"Bill," he snapped, "you're a darned poor chaperon."

But Senator Bruce seemed to be the only person in the camp who took the matter seriously at all.



THE MOTIVE POWER BEHIND GERMANY'S AMBITION

BY WALDO ADLER

FOREWORD

THEIR grim discipline, and the way in which yet another army corps goes forward and carries the colors into a position as soon as it is made vacant by the destruction of entire brigades, has lately made the Germans appear to us like those iron men of the American north of whom we have read in fiction, or like sagas of the old Saxon days—in whose existence we had been disbelievers. The German of American tradition, with his long, china-bowl pipe, red nose, rotund proportions, and inevitable trailing dachshund, has disappeared, and it is well that he has gone, along with the stage Irishman and other burlesques of vigorous foreign nations. In the contest now raging the German army may eventually lose to overwhelming odds, but throughout the world the war will assuredly have had one long-lasting result: it will have put the German nation before the world in high relief as a nation that is at least the equal of other European nations in the brains of its leaders, the vigor of spirit and power of loyalty of its men. Winners or losers, the future energies of the Germans will flow largely into the channels of commercial life, and therefore their capacities in that direction are now of peculiar interest.

IF you had gone, as I did, to Germany, a short while ago, thinking that you would find a nation of philosophers and quiet *gemuetlich* beer-drinking burghers, you would have found that there are still old castles and cathedrals and picture-galleries there, but that it is the new factories everywhere that stand out in the landscape and put the past into the background, just as it is the keen business man, and not the learned professor, who is the present type of German manhood. The average German is not a fat man, nor a slow-speaking one, but an alert fellow, a hard talker generally, with as lively a temper as the Latin races, and far keener than the average Latin in the pursuit of plans for industrial successes. Peasants in their gay costumes are no more typical of the Germany of to-day than are any other comic-opera characters.

The Germany of old is fading. They still sing "Lorelei" of summer nights, and there still are ruins along the Lorelei's hills sufficiently ruinous to realize the illusions of a sixteen-year-old girl. Nevertheless, it is not the Lorelei that the men who sail the Rhine look for now. What

they are looking for is a Pan-German Rhine that shall carry German commerce from its Swiss head-waters down the broad river into the Low Countries and out through the Rhine delta over the Seven Seas. The entire lower Rhineland has become an industrial zone that can be compared only to Pittsburg and its environing district. In mass production the American centre is away ahead of the German, because our ore deposits are still near to, or in many cases above, the surface; but while we are, or have been until lately, content with making billets, ingots, wire bolts, nuts, and the other raw or crude materials of commerce, the Germans have gone in for more thorough and finished work. Last year we, the world's greatest steel-makers, paid to the small German nation several scores of millions of dollars for finished steel tools and instruments. Years ago they threw themselves into the work of training chemists and chemical engineers, with the result that at the last census it was found that the United States is paying Germany nearly a million dollars every day for chemical products. If you go down to the miles upon miles of wharves that make of Hamburg a greater port than New York, you will find piled high on the wharves and in the warehouses thousands upon thousands of bales of cotton which our Southern states are selling at ten cents a pound or less to the Germans, and which we are buying back from them at four, five, six, and seven times the price originally obtained for it. The significant thing about the Rhine District in particular is that here you do not find any such city as Pittsburg in this country, or Birmingham in England. Cities of moderate size blend into one another in an almost continuous chain of plants and residences. They have, of course, made us appear like children by comparison with their intelligent planning of cities. Duesseldorf, of which one hears so often as the model city for our people to pattern after in city planning, despite its cleanliness and attractive promenades and green spaces in the poorer quarters, is one of the great factory towns of this Rhine District.

There is only one section of America—from Wilmington, Delaware, to Portland, Maine—which even approaches the German industrial zones in density of industrial activity, and they are both gainers and losers by their greater concentration. For the Germans have had the good sense to make use of the great areas of open country available beyond the larger cities as well as near to the smaller towns for building up plants of low daily capacity. These small establishments are in their great numbers huge national assets. Why should they need high daily capacity when they are able to buy unfinished products, if not raw material, from us and from the other new continents and sell them at the high prices they are to-day commanding?

The absence of tall buildings in the business sections of the larger cities is especially noteworthy because of the intensity rather than extensiveness that marks German commerce. The reason for this seems to be

that in Germany everything is so thoroughly connected up into a system that there is no need for any huge clots in the circulation. Trusts are under the special protection of Government itself; immunity baths are unnecessary, in fact unheard of, for the Government regulates them as parts of the national engine of offense. The entire point of view of the Imperial Government is that of commerce, for commerce alone is the road along which Germany can travel to success. The stores of vigor and rough strength had been depleted in the Teuton peasant of the last century and the century before by decimating wars, and the world had grown to hold the German cheap, thought him heavy of wit quite as they pictured him clumsy of body. Now it is the stored-up vigor of peasantry and burghers, informed with the rich imaginative energy of the race, that is making the German Empire truly imperial through its success in world-commerce. In no other country will you find so many good linguists, and along the Riviera, on the coast of Africa, or on the German ships that ply around the world, you will find quite as many German as American *nouveaux riches*.

It is interesting to notice that the German people think of the New World in terms of South America quite as much as in terms of our country. Their young men go out to the capitals of the rich southern republics to study the markets, open branch houses, or, as in Sao Paulo, become land-holders. He, the German merchant, prints his catalogues in the language of the people he wishes to sell to, and tells them that if he has not got what they want, he will make what they want. Is it any wonder that he took the markets of our own Continent away from us?

All this discussion of German mercantile success is only a way of saying that the Germans respect, often to a naïve extent, the expert. Does a man show capacity in any sort of business, profession, art, or science? His head is no sooner raised above the mass than the omniscient Government has noted him. He is given one of many carefully graded titles or decorations. There is a German verb *streben* which has no English equivalent. It means to try hard and continuously, and that perhaps expresses better than anything else the German national attitude towards life. The American tries hard, too, and we get there too; but Americans are like the express elevator—you never know when it is going to shoot up, but you are certain that when it does, it will go fast, and (more than likely) will soon be down again. The German method of work reminds you more of the steel-riveter that you hear with its iron pertinacity, hammering and hammering from dawn till dark. That spirit, it is needless to add, informs the man in the factory quite as completely as in the army.

When you go south into the beautiful land of Bavaria and come into touch with the southern people there, you see again startling combinations of factories, as modern as Chicago, backing up against castles and city

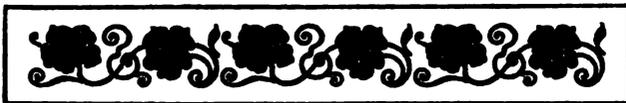
walls that were built nearly ten centuries ago. On the streets and in the cafés (that are the Germans' clubs), you see those same powerful, manly faces which Holbein and Dürer drew and painted in these very streets five and six centuries ago.

The Emperor himself—who is often as badly underestimated by the peoples of other countries as he is apt to overestimate himself—is wide-awake to the advantages of one-man rule. The very people whom his ancestors relied upon as their backers and supporters, that is, the great land-owners of the aristocracy, the Emperor does not hesitate to flout when he sees an advantage to Germany in doing so. While colonization plans were still hopeful, and while he thought that Germany's chances lay that way, he made no bones about putting a Jew at the head of the Ministry of Colonies and giving him a free hand and free access to the royal and imperial purse, so that he might carry out his plans. Now that the African wars have shown how ill fitted for governing subject races the Germans are, all efforts are bent on establishing Germany's supremacy by means of the leadership of world-trade. These efforts were not relinquished even when war with the world hove in view. German banks, German railways, German cables, German technical, industrial, and medical training schools, German newspapers, and, in the case of Turkey, China, and South American countries, the German system and German instruction in the military arts, are all means to the one end: control of the world's trade as far as is possible by Germans. To considerable extent, the Kaiser has turned away politically in recent years from the great conservative land-holders who have their huge estates in East Prussia, Silesia, Saxony, and other parts of the Empire, and has surrounded himself with a number of leaders of the industries and the great German kings of commerce. The Court is still composed almost entirely of the *Uradel*, *i.e.*, the original nobility, and to them and their families go the preferred appointments in the Guards' Regiments, in the Court itself, and in the lists of those whom royalty entertains and is entertained by. But in the Navy, in the universities, in the Courts of Justice, in the lists of those who are continually being honored for signal achievement in commerce and industry, the aristocracy is entirely overshadowed by the burghers. Among the Kaiser's close advisers are men like Ballin, head of the great steamship line at Hamburg, who is a Jew, and the Krupps, who have only recently been slightly ennobled.

The power of wealth, which was until so lately always naturally in the hands of the aristocracy, has had just the same effect on German society as upon American customs. In every small town, you will find palatial mansions erected by some newly enriched distiller, or brewer, or store-keeper, while the numbers of aristocrats who live in ill-kept chateaux, in real poverty, is large and increasing; but one should not generalize and conclude that the German aristocracy is going to seed. The remarkably

thorough training and duty which the Army and Navy require is the making of many and many a man who would otherwise be without occupation or ambition. The learned professions, which have a social standing much higher than they enjoy in America, attract many men of noble blood. And it is only a question of time before the nobility break down the conservative conventions that have kept them out of manufacturing and trade, exactly as they did in England centuries ago.

The politics of Germany are confused by the numbers of factions, that is, small parties in Parliament. Actually, public opinion is composed of the usual conservative party (in the German case, there are several conservative parties which shade off one into the other,) and the liberals, who range all the way from Free Conservatives to People's Party, with the Clerical Catholic faction holding the balance between the two in voting power, as the latter generally have at least a hundred members. The Social Democrats, who range from eighty to a hundred and twenty men, are coming away from their old irreconcilable line of action to more and more frequent coalitions with the outspoken liberal parties. If the suffrage were universal, there can be no question that the Social Democrats would control Parliament, and on this account Germany sticks to the property rights' theory of votes. It was the Socialist lion, Bebel, the one real German orator of the last part of the nineteenth century, who, almost single-voiced, awoke the sleeping giant, Labor, and fixed a great gulf between the sullen, underpaid workingman and the rest of Germany. The Socialist Party is, however, not made up almost entirely of the laboring class. The "lower middle classes" bordering upon Labor—artisans, school-teachers, even petty government officials—and the intellectuals who see the threadbare spots in the feudal system by which Germany is still ruled, are all sturdy contributors to the ranks of the Socialists. From year to year the party who believe in revision rather than overturning the present system of society have been gaining strength in the councils of German Socialism at the cost of the obstinate believers in theoretic Socialism ("platform Socialists"). The thoroughly patriotic support given the government by the "Reds" in the present crisis cannot but bring them still further into the centre of the stage, rather than remain as gallery gods who only hoot the actors. The talk one hears of Germany becoming a republic, of the end of military power, is, the present writer believes, shallow. No nation whose emotions are warm and so close to the surface can help but feel a very strong personal loyalty to its ruler. The Crown Prince has but to show a part of the executive capacity and positive personal power of his father, and he will remain Kaiser.



CONINGSBY MARTLETT PAYS

BY ROBERT EMMET MACALARNEY

CONINGSBY MARTLETT was one of the passengers saved when the S. S. *Pompeian* foundered off the Newfoundland Banks, after cutting down a schooner in the fog. To this day, the name of the schooner is a mystery, but she wreaked quick revenge upon the liner whose speeding in the murk had blotted her from the seas. Pumps kept the *Pompeian* afloat for a bare half-hour. There had been grim scenes on deck, things that made gruesome reading when the freighter *El Mochó* reached Sandy Hook with eighty men and women out of three hundred.

Martlett had walked down the gang-plank, out into West Street, paying no heed to reporters clamoring for details. He had taken a taxicab to the offices of Briggs & Martlett, in Broad Street.

Burke, the private detective, who hung around the reception hall to fend off cranks and agents, started.

"Why—you, sir?" he exclaimed. "We heard *El Mochó* would n't dock until to-night."

Young Martlett had his hand upon the knob of a door labelled, "Abner Martlett, Private." He regarded the detective keenly, including in his survey the popping eyes of an office-boy, and the furtive glance Miss Hastings, the spinster stenographer, flung at him as she emerged from the compartment of the junior partner, to disappear into a compartment of her own, whence suddenly came a sound of furiously tapping typewriter keys.

"Look here, Burke," said Coningsby Martlett, "is that the way you feel about it?"

The stout ex-Pinkerton crimsoned with apology. "Your father is all cut up," he blurted. "The wireless has been clacking. We're mighty glad to have you back safe and sound, sir."

Young Martlett turned the knob and shut the door behind him.

"Dad," he said, "I'm here!"

Abner Martlett, sixty-five and white-mustached, looked up from a pile of letters.

"Con," he asked, "there were women and children on the *Pompeian*, were n't there?"

It was the directness the son had met since the day he inquired about

his mother, and Abner Martlett had interpreted, as best he could for seven-year-old understanding, the a-b-c's of divorce. He had not spared himself in the course of the recital; even the child appreciated that. And afterward there had been unvarying bluntness between them, but bluntness blended with an affection which the banker's Wall Street cronies did not fathom.

"Sixty out of the eighty of us who were rescued were women and children," replied young Martlett.

His father leaned over the desk. "Con, three days can cook up a lot of ugly theories—about lifeboats and such things. It may sound brutal, Son, but the not knowing was almost too much for me. I'd find your name among the survivors—the papers box these things with devilish persistence on the front page—and I'd almost wish it were in the list of passengers reported lost. I'd not have been half uncertain then; I'd have felt like old Jerry Tucker. Every telephone-call means some one's saying to him, 'We knew Dick had helped the women.'"

"Dick Tucker went forward after the collision," said Coningsby Martlett. "It was too foggy to see for more than a few feet. I don't know what became of him."

"He was n't picked up?"

"No, sir. He was n't one of the eighty aboard *El Mocho*."

"How about it?" asked the banker, putting his arm upon his son's shoulder.

"How about what, Dad?"

"You played the game, boy?"

Young Martlett returned his father's gaze steadily. "There were no women left where I was," he answered. "I helped lower three boats with women in them; then, when a half-empty one, with nobody but stewards and stokers in it, pulled alongside and they yelled to me to jump, I did."

It was Burke who rapped, putting head and one shoulder within. "There's a bunch of newspaper fellas out here," he announced.

"Send them in," ordered Abner Martlett. "No use trying to dodge them. Might as well get this over with now." He paused, staring doubtfully at the frowning young man. "Whatever you say, remember Dick Tucker was a hero. There's Jerry Tucker to think of. Come right in, gentlemen! This is my son, who got in on *El Mocho*. Tell them your story, Con."

The evening papers made a hero out of Richard Tucker, who had gone forward in the fog when the *Pompeian's* smoke-room shuddered with the rest of the ship. Somehow, in the chronicling, the reporters made a hero out of young Martlett as well.

Burke, the ex-Pinkerton, bought an *Evening Gloat* extra and absorbed the first page with a dropping jaw. There was a picture of his employer's

son, in polo togs, taken at Narragansett the year before, which served as a nucleus for the interview.

"Gee!" muttered the stout detective, "there's nothing like going to it right away! If you've got to grab a bumble-bee, do it quick!"

As for the original of the polo photograph, he became conscious of being a Part of the News when the butler, apparently carelessly, laid a copy of a late edition upon the library table. Young Martlett, outwardly calm, had just sauntered downstairs for dinner.

"God!" he cried; his father glanced at the head-lines.

"Never mind, Con," he advised. "You get used to notoriety; I did. First there was the divorce, then that Throughboard Air dummy-director rumpus, and when the Ninetieth National went under, in 1907, they were even yapping about trying to indict me for Brook's crookedness. It's the price you pay for doing things that get into the limelight."

"But this is n't any time for printing circus-posters!" exclaimed his son. "There are drowned people out there in the fog; they won't sink for days with life-preservers on—*El Mochó's* skipper said so. And here's a Sunday-supplement polo picture of me, in the middle of a lot of braggadocio I never said."

"It will please Jerry Tucker," said Abner Martlett soothingly. "You and Dick were chums. You've done the second best thing one friend can do for another: you've written his epitaph as staunchly as old Dr. Johnson wrote Oliver Goldsmith's. It's been tough, though. I can imagine how you feel."

"It's been nightmare," the young man muttered.

"You can forget about a nightmare. Better run down to Palm Beach next week. A change is what you need."

Coningsby Martlett took his father's advice. It was April before he returned to town—and the Carston. He felt as awkward as a new member when he entered the familiar lounging rooms. The sound of the bell as he summoned a boy seemed surprisingly loud.

It had been different in Florida. One can always fit into the moods of a pleasure resort, after a dip into the spectacular; the frame of mind of a fun-hunting province is tolerant of anything save discomfort. There had been no raised eyebrows when the heir to the Martlett money appeared on the heels of the tragedy of the *S. S. Pompeian*. Merely a first day echo of "Lucky devil, were n't you, Con?" or "It must have been perfectly horrible, Mr. Martlett!" It was due only to the discreetness of the man who censored the resort news telegraphed north that the *Evening Gloat* did not feature him again—this time as an exponent of the tango, upon the veranda of the Mossmere, with Miss Millicent Urquhart as partner. He was tanned and wholesome-looking when he entered the Carston portals.

"Hello!" said Rawlins Richardson, coming in with Fordie Heather-

ton. He shook hands, but Heatherton merely nodded and moved toward the billiard room. And after shaking hands Richardson appeared at a loss to continue conversation.

"I have n't seen you since the—it, you know," he said. "Pretty nasty, that—eh?"

"Are you chaps going to regard me as salvage forever?" snapped Martlett. "Want to play auction?"

"Can't," replied Richardson. "Billiards on with Heatherton. See you at Squadron drill Thursday, I suppose."

Of course this all wore off in time; everything does. Young Martlett was again in the saddle for the Narragansett Freebooters that summer; nor were débutantes denied watching him resume his winter task of cotillon leading.

In the weeks immediately following the sinking of the *Pompeian*, many men and women, frozen in their life-preservers, had been picked up. But the body of Dick Tucker was never recovered. Coningsby Martlett was the heaviest contributor to the Richard Tucker Athletic Fund at Waverly School, where his chum had prepared for college. On the bronze gateway, through which eager boys with their mothers and sisters, and as eager and even more enjoying alumni, now stream when the big game is played in November with Hotchkiss, are the words an *Evening Gloat* reporter put into the mouth of Coningsby Martlett the day *El Mochó* reached her West Street dock—"He did what he could."

"My dear, it was just like Rugby and Eton and those delightfully behind-the-times English schools," declared Miss Millicent Urquhart—she had been present at the dedication of Richard Tucker Field, as the fiancée of the chairman of the gift committee. "You know, what we have always lacked in America is atmosphere. We need more memorials to generals and admirals and folks like that. It's positively stimulating just to find a D.A.R. tablet when you stop at a road-house for luncheon while you're motoring; don't you feel that way? Of course Coningsby did just what poor Dick Tucker did, only he was luckier. And I'd rather have him here than have an athletic field named after him. But he's never been the same. He even wanted to stop leading cotillons!"

Mrs. Martin Hemingway happened to be in the group which listened to Miss Urquhart. "Quite in the spirit of the memorial tablet," she remarked in the silence that ensued. "That is in the past tense, though, while Coningsby employs the present—'He does what he can.'"

"Even a spoiled old czarina," whispered Miss Orton to Percy Winslow, "has no right to use a bludgeon."

But Miss Urquhart, being genuinely in quest of divertisement herself, never tarried near one phase of utterance or contemplation long enough to analyze it. It is doubtful if she would have construed the grim matron's reply, in any event.

That very week young Martlett employed a new valet.

"Why did you discharge Hart?" asked his father—they were motor-ing to the office. "He was pretty old, and he may have hated sitting up late for you, but——"

"He'd begun to drink. I found my decanters empty nearly all the time. And this man came to me because he knew me; he was hard up. I gave Hart six months' wages. 'Ricks' is the new man's name. He was a steward on the *Pompeian*; waited on me at table, told me he'd been used to living with gentlemen."

"Ricks?" exclaimed the banker. "I remember that name in those infernal front-page lists of survivors!"

"He was in my boat," said Coningsby Martlett. "In fact, I may say he saved my life; it was he who hauled me over the gunwale after I'd jumped."

"You did n't tell the newspapers about him, boy?"

"It was only a little thing in an army of horrors," replied the young man. "Oh, I paid him well enough for what he did. He's grateful for the place, too. But there's something else, Dad, I've been wanting to tell you for several days. What would you say if some one told you I was going to marry Millicent Urquhart?"

"You mean it?"

"We're engaged. But we want you to approve."

"You get five hundred thousand and the Westchester place on your wedding day," said the white-mustached banker. "That'll show you whether I approve. She's an artificial little chit, Con—no, don't get stuffy with your dad—but I want you to marry in your own crowd. This business of importing domesticity from the outside does n't work. Go ahead; let Mrs. Martlett give parties of her own, instead of going to them. But you must rear a family. There's got to be a grandson who can come down-town and go into the firm, after his granddaddy has made use of that new mausoleum. Will she stand for my calling her Milly?"

"That's what I call her, Dad," laughed young Martlett.

The Leonards gave a dinner dance at their place on Long Island in honor of the engaged pair. It was one of those September evenings when the moon touches the mist scarf over the Sound and turns it yellow. Every one was very jolly; a lot of fellows Martlett knew, who had been playing in the Meadow Club tennis tournament at Southampton, had come over, and Miss Millicent Urquhart was extremely happy, but even more satisfied. It is nice to have one's future assured comfortably in one's own set. She recalled several finishing-school acquaintances who had ventured beyond the pale of environment to experiment in matrimony; their example had not been stimulating. She was fond of Coningsby Martlett in her way; what there was of her shallow ability to care, he possessed utterly.

They sat upon the veranda railing while he smoked, listening to the beat of the tango within. Débutantes and shopgirl belles from Slacy's fall under the same spell beside the sea; there is no distinction in appreciating a September night alongshore.

"Is n't the moon pretty in the mist?" asked the future Mrs. Martlett.

Her fiancé was forgetting to puff at his cigarette. The flush of dancing had vanished; his face was drawn; she wondered if he were ill.

"That's fog out there. It seems pretty to us, but it was n't pretty when the *Pompeian* went down!" He grasped her roughly, leaving finger-marks upon her bare shoulders. "Milly, don't tell any one, but there are dead men and women out there; they've got life-preservers on, and they can't sink! *El Mochó's* captain said so!"

The girl drew away from voice and touch. "Coningsby, you *have* been drinking!" she cried. "And you promised!"

But he danced the next number with her as if he had not remembered her flight from the porch; she found herself thinking she had imagined it. They were married a fortnight afterward.

Within a year their friends were saying, "What's the matter with Coningsby Martlett? Have you noticed how stare-eyed he's getting? Tough on the little Urquhart girl."

But it was not only the drinking—Millicent Martlett was keen enough to diagnose that. The drinking was merely a symptom of the other thing—whatever that was. Ricks, the valet, knew; but she dared not ask him. She felt afraid of this softly treading shadow of her husband; she grew to loathe his cat-like deftness, she hated the mask of vacuity with which he screened his face; underneath his deference she sensed fangs.

"Get rid of him, won't you, Connie?" she asked, shortly after they had returned from the wedding journey.

"Who—Ricks? Why, he's a splendid servant, Milly. And you forget—he saved me, really, when the *Pompeian* went down." He shivered as he held her.

"Please, don't! Never mention that horrid old wreck again!" she begged.

"You can't help mentioning things after you've been a part of them," he answered. "Listen, girl! The ship's doctor stood next to me at the rail. We'd been playing bridge when the blow came. And he turned in the fog and asked for a match. 'Nicotine will help just now,' he said. I am not sure, but he may have smiled in the mist; all of the deck-lights were n't out yet. Then he tossed the match overside; it was quite calm, you know; I could hear the stick hiss as it touched the water. 'Looks like a cold sand supper for most of us, Martlett,' he said. Just like that, Milly! 'Looks like a cold sand supper for most of us.' And I'd been bidding three in royals not five minutes before. The

looks of that auction hand stuck to me in the lifeboat, until *El Mocho* picked us up. I had four honors!"

Mrs. Martlett had freed herself as Ricks padded into the room.

"Beg pardon, sir," said the valet.

"I detest that man!" she had cried as he padded out again. "Please, Connie!"

"I can't," her husband had groaned.

At the Carston Club they merely nodded when *Town Talk* said that the Coningsby Martletts had separated. Abner Martlett had seen it coming, even from his brief visits to Westchester.

"Too bad, boy!" he grumbled. "Come down-town to the Street for a year or two. It will buck you up. It's just as well that I'm not a granddaddy, after all, I guess. And lose that undertaker valet. If you feel you owe him a ransom, pension him and send him away. He gives me the creeps!"

The stout ex-Pinkerton, sentry of the outer offices of Briggs & Martlett, whistled softly to himself when he got a glimpse of his employer's son.

"Gee!" he whispered. "He may have left *El Mocho* at her West Street dock, but he took a bit of baggage along with him, at that. And boozing ain't doing it a bit of good, either."

The Head-master of Waverly School invited Coningsby Martlett to come up to the Berkshires in June. It was the first year, since the Richard Tucker Field had been given, that Hotchkiss had been beaten at both football and baseball. Rawlins Richardson went along in the Martlett motor.

"It was like this," he told Fordie Heatherton and Percy Winslow, at the Carston, three days later. "Connie insisted upon taking his blank-faced valet, although it was inciting the prep school youth to mayhem and arson, I warned him; prep school kids ought to see a valet about as often as a dinosaur. Ricks did nothing but look after a black leather box, big enough to carry three hats. 'Is it full of loving-cups for the teams?' I asked. 'No,' he snapped; 'and it is n't a question box, either.'"

"That was rather neat, for Coningsby," said Heatherton. "I've heard about it myself, though. He takes it everywhere, even for week-ends; and he's setting an impossible millionaire custom, always bringing his own man along. He turned down the Staceys' bid because Brock Stacey told him he was n't giving a house-party for valets."

"Well, he may need that box for his haberdashery," continued Richardson. "He went about Waverly arrayed gorgeously; the kids just naturally followed like a lot of sheep. Between us, I think they admired his striped flannels and scarfs more than the fact that he'd been a fellow hero with poor old Dick Tucker. But they rallied to the other thing nobly in the chapel on Class Day. They gave Coningsby—and me; I was in the background, blushing becomingly—the locomotive cheer, and the

half-locomotive. They've got a lot of new yells, swiped from Princeton, since you and I were there, Percy. And then the Head-master, old Jonesy, tipped Coningsby the high sign.

"He looked serious enough, facing all those youngsters. Tell you what it is, you never appreciate just how terrifyingly eager kids can be until you view them in bulk from a platform. I felt ashamed of all the bar-checks I'd signed, and the auction money I'd tossed away. 'I was a friend of Dick Tucker,' Coningsby began. 'Dick Tucker, Waverly, 1900.' How the little beggars applauded! 'We were on the *Pompeian* together, three years ago. You know what happened. Dick Tucker did the best he could.' That last is the sentence on the memorial gateway tablet, you know; it's got to be a school slogan. They fairly raised the roof, the Head-master standing and leading."

"Well, get to it, Rick," grumbled Percy Winslow. "I know he mussed it up, for a cub cousin of mine who managed to burglarize a diploma hinted, in almost well-bred fashion for a cub, that Coningsby fumbled the ball."

"He simply had hysterics, right then and there," explained Richardson. "And, as if conjured out of thin air, that pasty-faced echo, Ricks, appeared and led him away. I went with them, while old Jonesy covered our exit with some gush about the memory of the tragedy being still fresh enough to upset the school's living partner in that glorious *Pompeian* heroism."

"He'd been sopping up too much Scotch, I suppose," remarked Heatherton.

"He did n't show it if he had," replied Richardson. "But he was drinking hard enough to satisfy a bankrupt bartender afterward. I came home by train, for, when Connie is too maudlin to interfere, that man of his acts as if he were named Martlett, too."

In a few more months the only country houses inviting Coningsby Martlett for week-ends were those where he had not visited since he had acquired Ricks and the black hat-box. Once in a while he would throw off the cloak of alcohol and depression, displaying the charm that had made him the most popular junior member of the Carston.

Just about two years from the September night when Miss Millicent Urquhart had watched the moon turn Long Island Sound's mist-scarf yellow, Martlett met his wife at Mrs. Martin Hemingway's. As a result, Miss Gwendolyn Orton was as indignant as she had been when Mrs. Hemingway had wet-blanketed Miss Urquhart's girlish enthusiasm over Waverly School's memorial gateway. But, actually, Mrs. Hemingway, society gorgon that she was, had devised a scheme which made her feel pleasantly virtuous. The Martlett incident had become annoying; why not glue together broken china? Such things had been done before. And what better place for readjustment than the Adirondacks? "Rough

House," the Hemingway bungalow, was really a quadrangle of bungalows, with Sacandaga lapping a beach preserved to the water's edge along its entire twenty-five miles. Invitations to "Rough House" were always welcomed, for the label of the colony was the one hint of genuine roughing-it that a guest experienced; and among the attractions was the Hemingway chef, Manhattan's only *cordons bleus* who consents to immure himself in forest fastnesses during August.

Mrs. Martlett appeared the day after her husband. Thursby Carter, who drove a two-seated buckboard to the junction to pick her up, with Miss Orton beside him, bet a box of gloves that neither husband nor wife knew in advance of the other's coming. The bet has never been paid; without interrogating Mrs. Hemingway (bravado which no bungalow visitor has yet displayed), there was no way of deciding it. Martlett was in the group which surrounded the buckboard.

"Hello, Milly!" he said. "You're lucky; the last black-fly has gone, and the bass are biting splendidly."

"That's nice, Connie," his wife replied. "When did *you* come?"

"There's Twentieth Century poise for you," murmured Fordie Heatherton to his nearest neighbor. "The Stoics had nothing on little old New York."

"But it is n't exactly pretty, now, is it?" asked Rawlins Richardson, staring after the others. "Ossification is all right to keep you from making a side-show of yourself. But you want one little bit of live nerve wriggling around in you somewhere."

"You don't, nowadays, if you want to be a comfortable week-ender," mumbled Heatherton. "Have you heard the latest about Coningsby's black hat-box? The servants say he keeps some animal pet in it. One of the maids told Mrs. Heatherton it squeaked like a squirrel. Even the chef's been keeping an eye on the pantry, to see what Ricks carries off to feed to it; but so far he can't locate the pilfering."

"See here, Fordie," exclaimed Richardson, "maybe it's the thing in the black hat-box that made Millicent Urquhart leave him! Women are fussy about pets; I had a groom once whose wife quit him because he kept white mice."

The next morning Mrs. Hemingway herded most of her guests into wagonettes and drove, over corduroy, to Fawn, to have luncheon on the rocks. Thursby Carter and the Orton girl, whom young Carter intended to marry when she made up her mind, did not go. "Come over later, by canoe," their hostess had advised. "It's only a half-mile carry from Sacandaga, and it will be a nice paddling back by starlight."

Mrs. Martlett reported a headache and slept late. Her husband had tramped off to Mossy Fly for trout, shortly after dawn. Carter, Miss Orton, and the Martletts had luncheon together; Ricks served, the butler having migrated with the Fawn party. Martlett was moody and called for

Scotch and soda more than once; Miss Orton, being very young, chattered a deal more than was necessary to cover up the awkwardness of the meal. As for young Carter, he kept an eye on Mrs. Martlett; he saw terror beginning to film her eyes. With the dessert, Martlett muttered something about being tired; the others could hear him clumping overhead—the sleeping-rooms of the main bungalow opened on a gallery. Ricks had tiptoed after his employer.

“I really prefer *Genée*,” Miss Orton was declaring, in the high key which juveniles inevitably employ when seeking to carpet the bare spots of table talk.

The crack of a pistol, from above, punctuated her remark like a full-inked period. Mrs. Martlett pitched forward upon the table; the brown tint of creamed coffee from her overturned cup spread soaking across the linen; she had fainted.

Thursby Carter seized Miss Orton by the wrist. “Come along!” he cried. “I want a witness for what’s upstairs!”

“I’ll go, Thursby,” replied Miss Orton, who suddenly seemed to have dispensed with juvenility. They clambered the clattery steps together. Through an open door, they saw Ricks kneeling, cramming shut the lid of the black hat-box. Coningsby Martlett lay upon his back, a thin trickle from his temple staining the blue rag rug.

The valet arose. “He’s dead, sir,” he announced. “He’s been trying to do it more than once. It was either going crazy or a bullet. Did she hear?” He pointed downstairs.

“We all heard,” gasped Miss Orton.

“Then she knew what it meant,” said the valet. “He hated her for not hating him. He never forgave her for that.”

The white-faced servant spoke in a monotone. He displayed no emotion; he seemed to regard the incident as closed, to be waiting for this curious young man and young woman to withdraw.

“Ricks,” cried Thursby Carter, “there’s something queer about this. Where’s the pistol?”

“In there,” the valet answered, glancing toward the black leather box.

“Open it,” young Carter ordered.

“Better not, sir,” Ricks objected. “It won’t be pretty.”

“The coroner at Northville will have to come in on this, you fool!” said Carter. “You can’t hush this up.”

He was bending, wrenching at the straps; the lid flew back. There was nothing in the box save the motor and horn of a talking-machine, with a wax record. The pistol lay beside them. Ricks reached down and would have broken the disc across his knee, but Carter stopped him.

“No, you don’t!” he snarled. “Gwen, this is the thing the servants heard squeak.”

“Every night just before he went to bed,” the servant explained

calmly. "Mr. Martlett did n't sleep, not unless he took something. You don't understand; it was his penance: he did n't drown with the others. And, being a gentleman, that ate into him like acid. I was only a steward, and grateful as a rat for a bit of plank to keep afloat. I won't break it. Let me show you!"

He took the wax disc from young Carter and put it beneath the needle. There were the premonitory screechings out of which a phonograph record always emerges.

"This is the confession of a coward!"

The valet changed the speed of the revolving cylinder, with the nice attention he might have paid to a bit of ragtime.

"Because I have seen fit to live, instead of die," said the voice, "I shall listen to this every day. There were no heroes on the *Pompeian*. I was a coward, Dick Tucker was a coward, Ricks, my present valet, was a coward; every stoker and fireman in the boat from which *El Mocho* took us was a coward; many of them were thieves."

The record whirred confusedly here. Ricks nodded. "All quite right, sir; all quite right," he muttered. "I took a gold watch myself that night."

"Hush, Gwen!" whispered young Carter. "It's going on."

"But of all these cowards, so far as I know, I was the worst," continued the voice. "There were a sick woman and her daughter in the stateroom three doors from mine. I knew it; Ricks knew it. It would n't have done any good to tell the stokers and firemen in the boat; they might have rowed off without us while we went below. It was very foggy; and the steerage passengers were trying to break up on the main deck."

Again the record paused.

"I told you it ate into him like acid," mumbled the valet, wagging his head. "He won't talk again for a quarter-minute; he must have sweated blood making this."

"And—so—we left them—below," said the cylinder jerkily. "They sank with the ship. The others had life-preservers on—they would float—for days and days—*El Mocho's* captain said so. This is the story of a coward. In a way—it makes up for not dying—with the rest. The women and children who died are better off—much better off than I. Conscience is n't enough—listening every day is better. The woman was sick—she could not have lived many years. But there was the girl—she was only nineteen. I gave her her chance. I asked her to go with Ricks and me. I often see her eyes; they drove me out of the stateroom. I never knew—their names. But she—the girl—was brave."

The record ran down with a rasp.

"You blackmailed him! That was why he hired you!" said young Carter.

"He never called it blackmail," replied the valet. "Of course I had

a claim on him. We were all yellow that night. The Tucker boy was loony with fear. He ran aft, knocking over passengers right and left, yelling that he had money and wanted to buy a lifeboat."

The valet stared at his dead employer; his lips licked back in a half-grin. "And they put up a memorial tablet to Tucker at his school," he went on. "There was a motto on it, and all the kids cheered him. Aw, what difference does it make, when there ain't enough boats to go around? It has n't made me a bug. Yet it ate into him like acid. He told his wife when they came back from their wedding trip. And because she did n't hate him for being a coward, he hated her. You see, he was near crazy then. That's why she left him—he made her listen to the talking machine every night. She'd have gone dippy if she'd stayed. It ate into her like acid, too—that record. But it never bothered me."

An hour later Thursby Carter and Miss Orton were paddling a canoe off Birch Point.

"Is it deep enough here?" she asked.

"Thirty feet—and I've got it loaded with a few stones besides."

Young Carter slid Coningsby Martlett's black leather box into the water; the merest ripple and a few bubbles told where it had sunk.

"But I did n't destroy the record, Gwen. Somehow, I felt those words ought to stand; they were penance, you know."

"Milly is wonderful," said the girl. "The funeral is to be from their old home."

Burke, the stout ex-Pinkerton, whistled again when he read the *Evening Gloat's* dispatch, telling how Coningsby Martlett had been killed while cleaning his revolver at Sacandaga. The front page reprinted that Narragansett polo photograph.

"It got him at last," said Burke to himself. When he paid off Ricks, he led the chalk-faced valet into the outer corridor of the Throughboard Building. "Now beat it, far away," he counselled. "The open season for blackmail is over. And if I ever hear of you turning loose one little blab, I'll see whether I can't do a bit of railroading up the river."

"I'm going to ship as steward again," answered Ricks. "You need n't be afraid. I was half fond of him myself. It ate into him like acid. That's funny, ain't it? It never worried me."

The morning old Abner Martlett followed a hearse to Greenwood, Henderson Jones, M.A., Head-master of Waverly School, faced from the chapel platform two hundred eager boys.

"And so," remarked the Head-master, "this tablet will always remain an inspiration to the school; perhaps your own sons may feel the uplift of the sentence in bronze relief upon the gateway of Richard Tucker Field—'He Did What He Could.'"

"There will be recitations this afternoon as usual, young gentlemen. You will march out quietly, please."

THE STREET OF STAIRS

BY ELEANOR MERCEIN KELLEY

AUTHOR OF "TOYA THE UNLIKE," "THE PRIVATEER," "THE HERMITAGE," ETC.

THE Misses Wilkins stood transfixed upon the deck of their vessel, gazing with sober ecstasy upon the continent of Africa; upon Algiers, rising white and gleaming among its tropical green; upon the noble dome of Notre Dame d'Afrique, outlined far up and beyond against the burning blue of sea and sky. Unheeded, turbaned Arabs came and went with their trays of fragrant violets, while a magnificent creature in a burnous plied a thriving trade in silver jewelry of the sort that leaves its mark indelibly upon the skin. It was Mystery that lay before them, Mystery and Romance. Above the usual noises of a landing, came to their ears the faint wailing of an Arab flute.

"The voice of the Orient!" breathed Miss Molly.

"I don't know whether Africa's the Orient or not," said the elder Miss Jane. "Let's hurry and eat breakfast. We really ought to, you know. It's paid for." But even as she spoke, the feet of her sister were obeying the lure of that Arab flute; and her own irresistibly followed.

Well in advance of their shipmates, the Misses Wilkins panted up the steep terrace to the town, accompanied by a cavalcade of burnoused infants, turning continuous handsprings, which discovered a startling amount of person.

"Is n't it too Robert Hichensy for anything?" puffed Miss Molly. "See that lovely old man in an opera cloak, with a pink suit underneath! And here's a veiled person coming, with a crocodile tattooed on her forehead. O-oh, Sister! There's a baby in her basket with the vegetables, a tiny little brown one!"

She would have stopped to pay spinster's homage to young Araby, but her sister plucked her forward. "Come on—let's hurry." It was the slogan of her clan; and it had sounded remorselessly—and still sounds—throughout the lands of the Old World.

"I suppose it's unfeeling to be enjoying poor Cousin Charles's legacy so much," panted Miss Molly, with a dutiful sigh, "but oh, Sister, suppose he had n't died! Suppose we'd never seen *anything*! And are n't you glad our last day of Abroad should be Africa? It is so much queerer than Europe, so much more thrilling to remember. There's more—chiaros-

curo." She brought out the word with some diffidence and a sidelong glance, but the elder accepted it without question.

"It's quite wonderful the way you pick up foreign languages," she commented. "After those five days in Paris, we shall not have to take a guide here at all."

She was mistaken, however. At the top of the terrace two eager gentlemen awaited them, one of whom disposed of the other by means of a neat nudge in the solar plexus, and announced himself to the ladies as their chosen companion.

"De Angleesh—ah, but *parfaitement* I spik him!" he assured them, claspng his hat to his bosom while with a magnificent gesture he laid Algiers at their feet. "All t'ings I make to see: dose Mosque, *les jardins, la danse Arabe, la bazaar, les Ouleds-naïls*"—he leered discreetly—"tutti, tutti, Signore! *Vraiment, le hull show—nicht war?*" (Miss Molly recognized in him a fellow polyglot.)

The ladies hurried on, ignoring him in their best manner. But the cavalcade hampered progress. It fawned upon them, fingering their spotless spinster raiment with hands far from spotless; gazing into their faces with avid smiles; murmuring certain caressing obscenities which fortunately were not included in Miss Molly's five-day research into the French language.

"Evidently," sighed Miss Wilkins, "these creatures expect something."

"There's that Italian centesimo we had left over," whispered Miss Molly. "Would it be quite honest to give them that?"

"Hand it here," said Miss Wilkins. With a masterly sweep of the arm, she cast it well into the street. The cavalcade pursued it to a man. Even the guide fought his way, kicking and cuffing, toward the rolling copper. The Wilkins sisters slipped briskly around a corner.

After some moments of breathless hurrying, they paused; and a voice spoke at their elbow, sad, reproachful: "*V'là, Mesdames! Zis money is not French, hein?*"

It was the victorious guide, holding out upon his palm the last of the centesimi.

Without a word, Miss Wilkins exchanged it for coin of the realm, and they pursued their way, the chosen companion irrevocably at heel.

"*V'là, Mesdames! Les magazines Arabes,*" he murmured presently.

They passed along a narrow alleyway, lined with tiny open shops like the booths at a fair, where men sat at work, or praying, or sleeping. One was embroidering a robe, handling with deft rapidity many needlefuls of gay silk. The ladies turned their eyes away in surprise, rather shocked to discover a man in such unmasculine occupation. But other men were stringing beads, making slippers; still others wove the pliable deep baskets in which Algeria carries its burdens: babies, street-refuse, rock, clothes,

coal—anything that may be carried at all by humans, who are so much cheaper than beasts. One grave ancient sat cross-legged before a great copper kettle, which he stirred absently at intervals, gazing beyond into Infinity.

There sounded a slow tinkling, as of cow-bells, accompanied by a weird and strident call.

“Oh, *la-la! Ça va bien!*”—the guide was proud, gratified. It was evidently he himself who had done this thing. “*Il y a un caravan* which approaches itself. *V'là, Mesdames!*”

It was not a caravan, but it was a camel. Spellbound, the ladies watched the passage of a genuine ship of the desert, languidly stepping, its supercilious head well lifted, the howdah and its shrouded occupant perilously a-sway. Camels they had met with before, in circuses; but not just off their native heath, as it were, not redolent of the very breath of the Sahara.

“It is a silly-looking beast,” said Miss Wilkins, who felt it to be her American duty and privilege to pass judgment on the offerings of the Old World. “It’s silly-looking, and it smells.”

Undoubtedly the breath of the Sahara was akin to the breath of a goat-shed; but Miss Molly was beyond the reach of iconoclasm.

“To think,” she whispered, “that in a little over two weeks we’ll be back in Watertown, Wisconsin!”

“There’s still New York,” said her sister.

“New York—*pah!*”

What had New York to offer in comparison with this wonder-city; its bougainvillea-draped houses, upon whose roofs the beauties of the harem appear at sundown; its sun-kissed, fragrant winds from that sea of romance, the Mediterranean; its streets which echo to the passing of the World? All nations jostled them: tourists from Germany, dressed unaccountably for hunting; English in helmets, with faces that showed their determination to be interested in nothing; Turks in *fezzes*; cuirassiers twirling their mustaches irresistibly at the ladies; everywhere proud Arabs, carrying their heads above the riff-raff with something of the superciliousness of the camel.

For forty-odd years Miss Molly had been a looker-on at life, a mere bystander; yet she still nourished in her breast the young belief that some day, somewhere, something was going to happen to her. Here the thing seemed imminent. She expected to find it around every corner. She knew that she was treading upon the very heels of Adventure.

“Sister! Did you see that Zouave?” she bridled. “He positively ogled me!”

“*Mais oui,*” murmured the guide gallantly. “Why not?”

Miss Wilkins paused. “Molly,” she whispered, “we’ve got to lose this creature. Why, he may be running up a tariff on us, like a taxi-

meter. I know!—we'll have him take us to a mosque, and leave him at one door while we slip out another."

It seemed feasible. In French which should have shamed his own efforts, Miss Molly said, "*Garçon, nous désirons une mosquée.*"

It appeared that a mosque was the one thing above all others which he yearned to present to Mesdames as a souvenir.

Alas for Miss Wilkins's schemings! The Arab at the door indicated her boots with disfavor, and pointed out a row of foot-coverings left in his charge. "Nonsense! You can't expect *me* to run around barefoot," she said; and essayed to enter.

She was plucked back by the guide, all apology. "*C'est défendu, verboten!*" he urged; and went upon his knees to pluck agitatedly at her shoe-laces. She yielded to force, and stood forth presently in all the frankness of white-soled hosiery.

Miss Molly was aghast. "I c-can't, Sister—I can't! There's a hole in my toe!"

"Remember, my dear, these are not really *men*," admonished her sister, and entered. Miss Molly, as usual, followed.

The wide, sunny stillness of the mosque was stirred by faint whisperings of prayer. Men sat at ease, fingering great rosaries; or knelt, bending at frequent intervals to kiss the ground. An old beggar mended his rags in one corner, his lips steadily moving. The visitors passed, unnoted; there was not a flicker in the dark, melancholy eyes that stared through them, beyond them, lost in contemplation of the Absolute. It was as if the Wilkins ladies were not really women; they had ceased to exist. They were no more to these Moslems than notes dancing in a sunbeam. . . . The feeling was not altogether pleasant.

As they stood there in the whispering silence, far above them, thin and clear, sounded a single human voice. Before it finished speaking, every worshipper was prostrate, facing the East.

"Behol' *la muezzin!*" murmured a helpful voice. It was the guide, with an indecent amount of foot on view amid the remnant of his stockings.

In discouraged silence, Miss Wilkins allowed him to lace her into her common-sense boots again; but Miss Molly once more presented difficulties. Her shoes were of the buttoned sort; and there was no button-hook. There was not even its time-honored substitute, the wire hair-pin. The Misses Wilkins patronized bone. In vain the guide sacrificed gallant fingers.

"Aha!" hissed Miss Wilkins suddenly. "Here—give him this franc and tell him to go and buy us a button-hook. Then—you see?"

Miss Molly saw. She explained to the guide in pantomime, and he disappeared on the run. The ladies also disappeared on the run, in an opposite direction.

Through crowds they wriggled, scudded across streets, darted around corners, doubling and turning like a pair of elderly rabbits; Miss Wilkins in the lead, Miss Molly, somewhat retarded by her shoe-tops, flapping after. At last they drew up in the shelter of a great doorway, whose carvings were almost obliterated by age. Far as the eye could see, there was no guide. They had lost him. They had also lost themselves. The Mediterranean, which had hitherto served them as a landmark, seemed to have quite disappeared.

"Who cares!" panted Miss Wilkins.

Miss Molly said dramatically, "Alone in the Orient!" She knew that the adventure for which she had waited her forty-odd years was now upon her.

About them stretched a maze of crooked, narrow streets, ascending and descending. The one in which they stood was no more than a flight of twisting stairs. Overhead, tall houses rose so close together that the upper stories almost touched, and a mere rift of sky was visible. Above several of the ancient doorways small lights burned. In the semi-twilight, the accumulation of refuse on the stairs was not quite visible; but it was evident, nevertheless.

From a barred window opposite came a soft giggle, and the ladies, looking, met a pair of gleaming dark eyes, above which the brows were painted in a straight line across the forehead. The face, unshrouded by the veiling yashmak, was round as a child's, and very pretty. She pointed a finger at Miss Wilkins's tailored trimness, and demanded, "*Est que c'est un homme ou une dame, là?*" A shower of small missiles struck their retreating backs. Miss Molly picked up one of them. It appeared to be a sweetmeat. She bit into it recklessly, germs and all. It tasted of paregoric.

They became aware of a sound which they had heard for some time without quite realizing it, a sound which had welcomed them to Algiers: the thin wailing of an Arab flute. As they ascended, it grew louder. A Zouave, coming out of a door farther up, paused to stare insolently at them, and swaggered by, puffing his cigarette. During the moment that he held the door ajar, the flute had sounded clearly.

"It's in there. Oh, Sister, do you suppose it *could* be an Arab dance?"

Miss Wilkins paused. She tried the door. It opened under her touch. "Let's go in and see," she said calmly.

Through a long black passage, they emerged upon an inner court, surrounding which rose tier upon tier of arched and pillared galleries. After the dim street, the effect was of great color. Sunlight poured down upon the central well-head, upon whose curb basked tawny cats. Clotheslines stretched from gallery to gallery, flying bright garments. Several young women leaned over a balustrade, their hair unbound, chattering

with others below. All were unveiled, and clad in revealing chemise-like garments, confined about the hips with gaudy scarves. In one corner crouched an old crone, cooking over a brazier. Against the wall sat the music maker—an ancient beggar, incredibly ragged, who turned upon the newcomers as they entered inflamed and horrible sockets from which the eye-balls appeared to have been gouged.

So much the Wilkins ladies saw, and would have willingly retired, but they were already surrounded by an increasing group of girls, exclaiming, giggling, uttering shrill phrases which the sisters did not understand, and yet felt, vaguely, to be derogatory.

“Do you suppose it’s a girls’ school?” breathed Miss Molly.

The tailor-made Jane attracted special attention. One damsel plucked up her skirt to examine the stout shoes, and even the stout calves, beneath. Another seized the spectacles from her nose and placed them upon her own, strutting about with the glee of a bad child. A third, a creature graceful as a cat, sidled against her caressingly, laid a languishing head on her shoulder, and began to stroke her cheek.

“Stop that! Behave yourself,” said Miss Wilkins uneasily. “Molly, I believe this young hussy thinks I’m a man!”

Miss Molly was in difficulties herself. A glove had been filched from her; the brooch on her bosom, the miniature of a deceased forebear, was receiving an embarrassing amount of attention; somebody tugged steadily and firmly at her hat, much intrigued by the resistance of the hat-pins.

“*S’il vous plaît*, don’t! You’re hurting me,” she protested.

The crone who had been cooking pushed her way through the group, striking right and left with her crutch, and halted in front of her, peering up into her face with a gaze indescribably malignant. “*Hei! Chienne chrétienne!*” she hissed, and spat upon the ground.

Miss Molly began to be frightened. The heavy perfume from these close-pressing bodies made her faint. Wherever she looked there were bare arms and bosoms; cruel faces, whitened and tattooed; cruel black eyes, melancholy for all their mocking laughter. Suddenly she noticed among them one pair of eyes that were not black. She looked again. The face was like the others, with lips thickly carmined and eyebrows painted in a straight bar across the forehead. But the eyes were blue.

“That’s queer,” she thought. “I did n’t know there were blonde Orientals.” And then she cried out sharply, “Help, help, Sister! They’re pinching me! They’re pulling away my shopping-bag!”

“Get out your hat-pin,” commanded the intrepid Jane. “We’ll stand back to back and keep ’em off.”

A diversion arose. The blind man, who throughout the commotion had wailed steadily at his flute, suddenly leaped to his feet with a howl of anathema. A girl had snatched the flute, and was dancing away before him, just out of reach, while he stumped after on his wooden leg, blindly

clutching. It was rather a piteous sight, well calculated to appeal to the risibles of its audience. Amid peals of merriment, the Christian dogs were for the moment forgotten.

Straight toward them danced the mischief-maker, the beggar stumbling after; and as she passed she said in very clear English, "You get out of this, quick! The door behind you!"

The sisters found themselves in the Street of Stairs, down which they stumbled, somewhat dazed, smoothing their ruffled plumage as best they might. At that moment, the lost guide would have been as welcome to their eyes as the first olive-branch to the dove from the Ark.

Presently Miss Molly, who looked back oftenest, reported the figure of a veiled woman following. A low voice reached them: "Go on! Turn to the right. Wait in the corner of the wall for me."

They obeyed in silence. The veiled woman joined them. "Why did you come there?" she asked, still in her low, rather dull voice. "It is not any place for foreign women. It is n't safe."

"Why not?"

The woman shrugged. "It is the quarter of the ouled-naïls."

"'Ouled-naïls'?"—the ladies looked blank.

"You *are* green, are n't you?" murmured the woman, and laughed a little.

Suddenly they understood. Rumors of the White Slave traffic have not failed to penetrate even to Watertown, Wisconsin, and at the sewing-circles and the euchre-parties the perils of life in the city are often discussed with bated breath. But that they, the Misses Wilkins, should have themselves been called upon to brave such perils——! It was fantastic.

Miss Molly stammered, "Oh, but the door was not locked! If those poor things had only known! They might have escaped."

"Escaped? repeated the voice behind the yashmak. "Where to? What to?"

"What were you doing there yourself? Are you a mission-worker?" demanded Miss Jane.

The blue eyes turned to her wearily. "I belong there. I'm one of them."

There seemed nothing further to say. If there was, the sisters could not have said it.

"I thought I'd speak to you," went on the shrouded voice. "It's so long since I've talked to an American woman. You're from the Middle West—somewhere near Chicago?"

"From Watertown, Wisconsin."

"Yes. I knew your voices, and the way you look. . . . Watertown! I can see it quite plainly." She closed her eyes. "Wide, dusty streets, lined with young maple-trees, and picket-fences. Big yards.

Frame houses, with porches. There'd be a drug-store where they make ice-cream soda. . . . It's a long time since I've tasted ice-cream soda. Sometimes I dream about it."

The sisters spoke together: "Have you been to Watertown?"

She nodded. "I was born there. Only it's name was n't Watertown. They're all the same—all home. . . . You're going back soon?"

"To-night."

"I saw your boat come in, this morning. I see so many ships come in, and go away again. I wish," she said in her dull, quiet voice, "that I could go home, too;" and suddenly she put her arms against the wall, and buried her face in them.

For once Miss Molly did not await her sister's lead. "My dear," she cried quickly, "you can! We'll take you home ourselves!"

"Molly!"

"Yes, we will!" Miss Molly turned on her elder, transfigured. "Jane, for years we've been subscribing to mission work. This is our chance to really do something. Afford it? Of course we can afford it. We've got to! Why, Jane"—she spoke with a certain shyness, for Deity is not often mentioned in the Wilkinses' circle—"wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

The woman had raised her head and was staring from one to the other. "Take me home?" she murmured. "You mean that you will take me with you to America?"

"Of course!"

"Yes," added Miss Wilkins slowly. "Only, you will have to come at once. The ship sails at five."

The woman drew a sharp breath. "I'm ready," she said.

As they went, Miss Wilkins glanced at her sister from time to time, incredulously, as if she saw a stranger. The little lady walked on air, busily planning out her campaign.

"Of course we can't take her aboard looking like this. You'll have to go ahead, Sister, and bring back my old rain-coat and a proper hat and a pair of shoes. Oh, and you'd better get some cold cream, too, to take all that stuff off her face."

"Yes, Molly," said Miss Wilkins meekly.

"And if it's true that all the berths are sold, we'll just have to take her in with us, sleeping turn and turn about. The one there is n't room for can stay on deck, in the steamer-chair."

"Yes, Molly."

They waited for Miss Wilkins in a little street just off the quay, where they were not conspicuous. But in Algiers nothing is conspicuous, not even the companionship of an elderly American spinster and an ouled-nail. The girl did not speak at all, but stood gazing out across the water; stared and stared, as if she were visioning far places.

Once Miss Molly asked her name.

"I have forgotten," she replied with a certain dignity; adding, "Up there they call me Myrrha." She nodded toward the Street of Stairs.

"That's almost 'Myra.' We'll call you Myra," said Miss Molly softly. "It was my mother's name."

Soon Miss Wilkins reappeared, over her arm not the old rain-coat, but her own brand-new plaid ulster; and the flowered band-box she carried contained nothing less than the Paris hat with which they had planned to stun the Sabbath eyes of Watertown, turn and turn about. Miss Molly glowed. That was so like Jane, to give, when she gave at all, of her very best!

The girl submitted passively to their ministrations, putting up her face like a child, to be cleansed of its cosmetics. It proved to be a strangely gray, lined face, and Miss Wilkins looked more than once at the black, distended pupils of her eyes.

"It's my belief," thought the lady suddenly, "that she Takes Something." (Thus delicately is a drug-habit referred to in the best circles of Watertown.)

The sandals were replaced by shoes, the veil and hood by the Paris hat, a thing of gay, iridescent plumage like a bird's wings, whose centre-front supported an enormous question-mark. The discarded garments were left behind in the band-box—"With your past life, my dear," said Miss Molly solemnly.

They ran unnoted the gamut of the pier, and reached the safety of their cabin. "There!" said Molly. "Myra, you're almost home!"

The girl gazed at them. She seemed to be waiting. "You have n't asked me any questions," she said at last. "Ought n't you to ask me some questions?"

"Just tell us anything you care to, my dear."

Myrrha gripped her hands together and began, quite simply: "I wanted to see the world. It was dull at home. I was tired of it. So I ran away to Chicago. . . . You don't see much of the world from behind a ribbon-counter. There was a man who had to go to Paris, and he wanted me to go with him. So I went."

"He—he did n't marry you?"

"Oh, no. I thought perhaps he might, but I never asked. You see, I liked him. . . . And I wanted to see the world."

"I know," whispered Miss Molly. "I know!"

"Then I got into trouble, and he did n't like that. I thought perhaps he would, but he did n't. So when I came back to the hotel one day, he was gone."

"Deserted you?"

"Oh, he left me some money," she said, oddly defensive. "But it did n't last long. The baby died——"

"Oh!" gasped Miss Molly. "To think of having a baby, and then losing it!" (It is to be feared that she grieved more over the loss of a baby than the loss of a soul.)

The girl looked at her queerly. She had been about to add, "Thank God," but she changed her mind.

"I got tired of Paris," she said. "People took me to other places. I was such a pretty girl, once. And I've seen the world. Why, I was two years on the China coast! I've seen the world; and it's just the same everywhere. Just men. . . . My God!" she said, softly and quietly, "how I hate men!"

The sisters were silent. It was not a subject upon which they felt qualified to speak.

"Then they brought me here, and I've stayed. It gets you, here. There are other places to see, of course, but I've stayed. I'm tired now, and old——"

"How old are you?"

"Almost thirty," she answered.

Miss Wilkins gulped. For the first time she felt the pathos of this girl who knew herself to be old at thirty.

Myrrha got restlessly to her feet and moved about. "What are you going to do with me there in Watertown?" she demanded. "What are you going to do with me?"

"First of all, we're going to give you a good rest and a good coddling," soothed Miss Molly. "Then—I suppose we'll find you some situation. We don't keep help ourselves, but there are plenty of ladies who do. Help's scarce, too. Can you sew or cook?"

"I used to," she murmured drearily.

"Well, I can teach you things like that, and Sister will teach you lots of other things. She's the clever one. She's going to make a good Christian woman out of you—are n't you, Jane?"

"I'll do my best," agreed the superintendent of Watertown's Presbyterian Sunday-school.

Myrrha stared out of the port-hole, gripping her hands.

The ladies produced a shirt-waist, an alpaca skirt, and other essentials, from their scanty store. "Would n't you like to put on some real clothes now? Shall we help you?" they asked.

"No, no. I'd rather—be alone." She looked about nervously. "Have you seen a necklace I had, with a small carved box hanging on it?"

"Here it is." Miss Wilkins had been examining the trifle with some curiosity. She had even extracted from the box its contents of tiny white pellets. "I knew she Took Something—I knew it!" was her thought, dismayed and triumphant.

They left her to herself. "You see, she's got some modesty left," murmured Miss Molly. "She would n't undress before us."

The fog-horn blared repeatedly, summoning in the last of the scattered sight-seers. With reluctance the vendors made their departure; he of the violets, he of the silver jewelry that comes off green upon the skin. A bell clanged. The band burst into action. They were off.

"There goes the last of it. The last of Abroad!" said Miss Wilkins, sighing.

Miss Molly replied abstractedly, "It's my belief we were led. It's my belief God called us to Algiers from half across the world. Oh, but was n't it *lucky* Cousin Charlie died!"

Her sister was gazing at the slow retreat of Africa through a borrowed glass. She gave an exclamation, rubbed the lens, and looked again.

"Molly, look! There, hurrying up that terrace to the town. Is n't it—is n't it *our Paris hat?*"

It was. The tall feather question-mark was unmistakable. There could not be another such hat out of the neighborhood of the *Galleries Lafayette*. Also, the ulster it surmounted was of new green plaid.

The sisters hastened to their cabin. It was empty. Nothing remained of their late protégée except a trace of faint, strange perfume which caused Miss Jane hastily to fling open the port-hole. Then they saw a note pinned to a pillow:

Good-by. I can't stand it. You're too good. I don't belong there any more. But thank you. Thank you.

They sat down, heavily.

"The lure of the Orient!" whispered Miss Molly. "The lure of the Orient!"

"I don't know," said Miss Jane. "I guess it was those pellets. Perhaps I ought n't to have taken them. . . . I meant to let her have them one at a time, when she really needed them. I only wanted to break the habit. It never would have done to have a girl around who Took Something."

She seemed to be apologizing to somebody.

Unheeded, the tears streamed down Miss Molly's cheeks. Suddenly she turned and hid her face upon her sister's manly breast.

"I want to go home," she sobbed. "I'm tired of Europe and the world. I want to go straight back home to Watertown, where such things don't happen!" she wailed in her innocence. "Where there never was and never could be such a place as that Street of Stairs!"

Miss Wilkins, gulping, nodded.



THE TRAP

By GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND

I

WHY Murch hated Benson is not here a matter of any vital moment. The really important factor of the case is that his hate was of very long standing, and that it was the kind which prompts revenge and torture, rather than the mere stupid brutalities of murder. Also, Murch was by brain and temperament a long-waiting, competent, ingenious man.

His hatred had existed long before the two men had been thrown together by fate on the Directors' Board of Amalgamated Zinc. The mere detail that, at the time of the looting, in 1908, Benson's testimony—and that alone—had given Murch a five-spot in Atlanta, had not appreciably intensified the passion. Beyond a certain point, no flame can sear.

Benson had got ten years' hard labor, at the same time. His wife's epic campaign for a pardon, ending in failure, had stirred the nation. Even these incidents had been slight satisfaction to Murch, for he had had no hand in the imposition of the sentence, neither could he, from his cell, help block any possible leanings of Presidential clemency. These things he sincerely regretted. He also looked forward with displeasure—though of a patient kind—to the long years which must elapse after his own release, before Benson should reëmerge into the world and once more come within striking distance.

Such are the bald, necessary preliminaries of this story. Let them be borne in mind, as you read on.

Now, it happened, at ten o'clock on the morning of March 18, 1912, that Murch was a free man once more. His "copper," or good-conduct allowance—for he had been an exemplary prisoner—had cut off eleven months and five days from his sentence. His debt to justice fully paid, he emerged into the mellow spring sunshine of Georgia, shaven head covered with a top-hat, immaculately clad, and in passable health. The prison pallor was all that told of the past, as he stood there a moment on the broad steps of the Federal Penitentiary, with Congdon, his best friend, who had come down to meet him. At the curb, his 60 H.P. car was throbbing—for Murch was still a very rich man. Congdon and he slowly descended the steps, unmindful of the curious little crowd and the shutter-snapping of the press men. They got into the car and drove

off, not even lowering the curtains. Murch held his head higher than ever. His pride was that of Lucifer.

As the car swung into Peachtree Street, he gave one glance back to the "stir" which had robbed him of more than four years of life. One glance, and smiled. For he had looked only at the West Wing, on the top corridor of which, in "Conny Row"—so-called because of the prevalence of tuberculosis there—he knew Benson still must wait at least another four years and two months.

Then the 60 H.P. growled away out of sight, toward the north; and Murch vanishes from the purlieus of Atlanta.

II

ABOUT two months from that day, Mrs. Benson received an anonymous letter which produced a series of varying and acute emotions in her desolated soul. This letter carried merely the noncommittal postmark of "Madison Square Station," and was typewritten on a machine like any one of ten thousand. Neither paper nor envelope bore any marks whereby the sender could be identified.

It read:

NEW YORK CITY, MAY 11, 1912.

MRS. MAXWELL W. BENSON,

"The Van Buren," New York.

DEAR MADAM:

Though a stranger to you, I am writing in regard to effecting your husband's escape from the Penitentiary at Atlanta. Mr. Benson is confined in the top tier of the West Wing, probably the most dangerous place to the health, of any in the prison. If he has not already contracted tuberculosis there, every chance exists that he will before his sentence expires, in 1916. I am reckoning the shortest possible time, with all allowances for the best of conduct.

There is one way, and only one, whereby he can escape. If you succeed in helping him to this, you will undoubtedly save his life. If not, my belief is that your husband will die in the Penitentiary. The guard is changed in the West Wing at midnight. A man named Kerrigan is on duty in your husband's corridor from 12, midnight, till 6 A.M. This man is elderly and a trifle deaf. Long security has loosened his watchfulness. He has also been known to nap while on duty.

If your husband were supplied with the proper steel saws and a glass-cutter, he could, with plenty of time and patience, remove the bars from his cell window and take out the glass. Four of the cells on the top tier have windows overlooking the prison yard. These are occupied by men to whom a little special consideration is shown. Your husband, as you know, has one of these cells, No. 26, next to the end of the tier.

In case he could remove the bars and the glass, he could easily gain access to the roof of the basket-shop, which stands in the yard, closely abutting the main wing. Under ordinary circumstances, this would be of no value to him, because the shop is three stories high, and a leap from the roof would only land his corpse in the yard itself. But

the plan I am outlining to you includes some circumstances which are not usual.

With your means, it would be a matter of comparative simplicity for you to have built, via an agent who should understand nothing of the matter, a special type of dirigible balloon, or air-ship, fitted with a plunging electric beam to light up objects directly below, also with a windlass, a long rope, and a cage or basket capable of being quickly pulled up. The case now becomes clear—

Mrs. Benson, pale as any ghost, stopped reading, with a gasp, and clutched at her heart—which was weak. For a moment she thought she was fainting; but she was n't. She had no time now for the luxury of a faint. Instead, with eyes that fairly leaped through the sentences, and hands shaking as with the ague, she read:

The case now becomes clear. Have your husband escape by night to the roof of the basket-shop, and then have the dirigible pick him up. It would leave absolutely no trace whatsoever, in case the ballast discharged to counterpoise your husband's weight were water, instead of sand. All that the authorities would find would be a wet roof, and no Convict No. 4,327. Probably even the water would dry up before the escape were discovered. Your husband would simply vanish, in an unparalleled mystery.

Have the dirigible make a quick flight to New Orleans. Mr. Benson could thoroughly disguise himself as an aviator, en route, and could burn his prison clothes, dropping the ashes on the way, or weight them and let them fall into some lake or river. At New Orleans he could catch a steamer for Bordeaux or South America or any one of a number of points, where you could rejoin him.

The matter of communicating these details to him is easy. Take any newspaper, and with a fine needle prick letters in succession, at varying distances, spelling out all you wish to convey. These papers will easily pass the wardens. Have him answer in the same manner, by sending you the prison paper, *The Star of Hope*. I myself will see that he is made to understand this method of communication, and I charge myself with getting the steel saws and the cutter into his hands before September. Just how, I need not explain. It will be done, that is enough to know.

You now have the whole matter in your own hands, my dear madam. You understand every essential detail. Let your affection and devotion to your husband serve as the actuating force. I need say no more.

With sincere regards and sympathy, believe me,

Faithfully yours,

A FRIEND.

P. S.—It is unnecessary for me to point out to you the necessity for the very greatest deliberation, skill, and caution in every move. If, after the plan is set in motion, any mischance should make it miscarry, the mental anguish caused to your husband would be intense beyond the power of words to express. Furthermore, in case of apprehension in an attempt at escape, he would not only lose all his good-time allowance, but would undoubtedly get another five years. In the present state of his health, this would inevitably prove fatal.

It is not my purpose to delay this tale by describing the intense emotions of Florence Benson, or all the long and complex actions and counter-actions which her quick brain and undying love—the wondrous, puissant wife-love—set in motion during the next few months.

Acting through agents who in turn acted through other agents, not one of whom knew more than a minute part of the whole, the woman spun her web, and with a master-hand perfected all details. Let these pass. Our story has other and more important matters to deal with.

Among these I mention only one—that on May 12, 1912, Murch locked his desk in the little office at 32 Broad Street, drew one hundred thousand dollars in bills from his account at the City National, and, announcing a two-years' stay in Europe, bought a first-class ticket for Havre.

He sailed on *La Savoie*. Thereafter, he vanished from the eyes of a world too busy to concern itself with one man more or less.

III

IN the intense black of 2 A.M., on the 6th of September, 1912, a still blacker shadow cautiously glided in from the north-west, over the city of Atlanta, at an elevation of about five hundred feet. Neither moon nor stars betrayed it, for the sky was shrouded in low-hanging clouds that let a fine, incessant drizzle sift to earth. From the moving, oval shadow hovering above the town, no noise descended. Specially built motors and mufflers, operating as quietly as clockwork, sent hardly a hum into the surrounding darkness. Slowly the dirigible crawled, as, guided by the lines of street-lights lying far below like sparks strung on invisible wire, it made its way toward the huge, bastioned bulk of the Pen.

In the *nacelle*, leather-clad, with cap that covered ears and neck, and goggles shielding eyes, a single figure peered alertly down. His deft hand on wheel and motor-control, he navigated like a pilot nosing in among reefs and shoals. For some minutes he jockeyed, then, with a sigh of relief, perceived directly under him the huge, star-shaped mass of the Federal Prison.

All at once—for now that the crucial moment was at hand, this risk had become absolutely inevitable—a long white ray, perfectly focussed, flashed downward. It fell directly on the roof of the West Wing, shifted, and in a moment lay steady on the basket-shop. Then, with a quick and searching vibration, it swept that roof, as though some gigantic painter, with a brush of light, were quickly covering the slates.

Almost at once the aviator perceived the man he had been sent for. Behind the southern chimney-stack crouched a black huddle. As the light touched this huddle, it arose, and moved, and became a human figure, clad in stripes; and two arms became visible, upraised imploringly. The aviator smiled as he released a lever.

With no more sound than the purring of a cat, a weighted basket of wicker shot downward, at the end of a long cord, woven of the finest hemp, strong enough to support a ton, yet flexible as a whip-lash. The basket fell straight and true. Keenly peering, the aviator checked its drop at the precise moment when it threatened to crash against the slates. He saw the figure leap for it and scramble in. Came a lurch and a recover as the air-ship momentarily staggered under the new load. Then from the ballast tanks, fore and aft, streamed the counterbalancing water, which mingled with the rain, and for a moment glistened like falling diamonds in the pure white ray of brilliance.

"Click!"

The light faded and died.

"Click!"

Another lever threw in the hoisting-drum. With a *Rrrrrr* the pawl-and-ratchet told of that swift upward surge. Like a monstrous pendulum, the basket with its human freight swung wide, cleared the higher roof of the West Wing, and yawed into empty space.

Already the powerful propellers were whirring. The air-ship reeled, staggered, and found herself.

Before the drenched and chattering figure in the basket had been hauled by the aviator's powerful grip through the trap-door that yawned, waiting, in the bottom of the *nacelle*, with a slant of planes and a fast-rising crescendo of motors, the dirigible had leaped aloft, swerved to the south-east, and like a homing pigeon was off, away, on her long, space-splitting, speed-annihilating race toward the far haven of New Orleans!

IV

At a little before seven o'clock, that same morning, the dirigible sank to rest in a deserted clearing, far from any human habitation, between Convent and Bonnet Carré, Louisiana. To southward, some miles beyond the Baton Rouge turnpike, lay the broad, chocolate-hued flood of the Mississippi. To northward, dense growths of live oak and long-leaf pine, festooned with Spanish moss that hung like vergies on a full-dressed man-o'-war. Almost due east, and forty miles away, the city stretched beneath its jetties. At the bottom of Lake Ponchartrain, in fifteen fathoms, lay a tightly-lashed bundle of striped clothes, wrapped round ten pounds of pig-iron.

Gently the great bird sank, as the aviator released her hydrogen. He checked the descent at a height of ten feet and threw out the rope-ladder, anchored, and with solicitude helped an enfeebled, coughing passenger climb stiffly to earth, among the ferns and fire-weed.

This passenger wore motor-clothes of excellent cut, heavy gloves, and goggles. A masterpiece of a wig concealed his close-clipped poll. The parchment hue of his face alone betrayed him; but this might easily

pass as a concomitant of the little hacking cough that now and then would not be fought back.

The passenger sat down under a gum-tree at the edge of the clearing, and waited. He spoke no word; his energies, indeed, seemed hardly competent for speech. In his eyes burned a fever that brightened their blue unnaturally; his nervous hands, unable to be still, fingered at the buttons of his jacket. Now and then he coughed.

Eagerly he watched the aviator collapse the gas-bag and cover the motor with oiled canvas, as though to leave it for a while. Though he said nothing, you could see the fire of haste burning his soul out. To him it seemed that every moment was an hour; for in imagination he was listening to a sound of dread—the long, roaring blasts of the Pen steam-siren that, wailing over Atlanta, now four hundred miles away, was at that very moment telling the tale: "*Convict escaped!*"

The aviator, his task finally at an end, strode off through the thin blue mist rising from the soil, and disappeared down a rough-cut wood-road at the other side of the clearing. Presently the prut-prut-put-put-put of a motor-car began spattering echoes; and soon the car itself, craunching and rocking over the villainous road, drew into sight.

The car stopped, near Benson.

"If you'll get in now, sir," said the aviator-chauffeur, touching his cap, "we'll start at once. By nine o'clock I can get you to New Orleans. After that, whatever other service you may require, I shall be glad to undertake."

He spoke with a very slight foreign accent. Benson glanced up sharply at his ruddy face and close-clipped brown mustache. The blue-goggled eyes met his unflinchingly. The ex-convict's gaze fell. The old-time look had lasted but a second. Long discipline had already broken the man's spirit, so that even a menial's request seemed a command of authority.

Wearily he arose, without life or spring, and climbed into the tonneau, the door of which the chauffeur held open for him.

The door slammed shut. Benson, terrified even in that close concealment—which at the same time seemed to him a kind of imprisonment, and filled him with repulsion—sank back coughing against the cushions.

The car grumbled forward again, down the road, passed through the strip of woods to the turnpike, swung sharply to the left, and now, with a raucous grind of clutches, leaped into high-gear.

The last lap of the strange, adventurous escape had begun. Already Benson's uncertain thoughts were of the sea, of ships, of fair, free lands beyond three thousand miles of brine—of life, and liberty, and love once more!

V

NINE deep-toned strokes had just doled solemnly from the spire of St. Louis Cathedral, when the car swerved into Jackson Square, where stands that venerable pile, and drew up at the door of the Hotel Michaelis.

The chauffeur helped his charge alight, and guided him into the hotel, which—being small and very private—had been chosen by Florence Benson as the final step in the stair of her plans, the brief resting-place whence her well-loved husband should pass on to final safety.

In a few minutes the escaped convict was installed in the back room on the fourth floor, which had already for more than a fortnight been engaged against the coming of "Mr. Franklin Holmes," an out-of-health investor on his way to Chile.

When he and the chauffeur were alone once more, Benson threw himself, fully dressed, upon the bed. His exhaustion was pitiable. Body, nerves, mind, all seemed to have collapsed, now that at length the stern necessity of keeping up was temporarily passed. The chauffeur, covertly eying him, smiled an evil smile.

"Bath, sir?" queried he. "Lunch? Little something to drink? Anything you'd like, sir?"

"No, no," coughed Benson. "I—I'm too tired even to want a nip of brandy. Sleep! I must have sleep! Here!" and he drew out the pocket-book from his new coat pocket. "Here, take this—go to Cook's—get me a first-class ticket to Bordeaux, on the *Prince Metternich*, tomorrow noon. Come back in two hours, not before. I must sleep! Now go—please."

The command trailed off weakly in entreaty. Again the chauffeur smiled.

"Quite sure——?" he began, but Benson waved a petulant hand, for silence. The other took the pocket-book, and withdrew. Behind him, the spring-lock clicked. Benson, with a sigh of infinite relief, hid his face in the pillows, and wept—the bitter, scanty tears of nervous exhaustion, like those already of old age. And always, at intervals, the dry cough racked his hollow chest.

Outside, in the dim corridor of the hotel, the chauffeur did a singular thing. Instead of ringing for the elevator and going for the tickets, he drew from his pocket a skeleton key. With this, after two or three trials, he let himself into the room next to Benson's. He seemed to know that the room would be empty.

Making sure that the door was bolted, he moved a chair up to the other door which communicated with Benson's room, when the two chambers were thrown together *en suite*. Upon this chair he stood. The shades were down, in his room, and the place was dark. Without danger of being seen, he could peek through a tiny hole already scraped in the

paint on the transom glass. To this hole he applied his eye; and as he again beheld the emaciated form of the ex-convict, once more he smiled.

The man had drawn from his pocket a photograph, and with feverish intensity was kissing it. Very wan and white his face was, almost bloodless the lips. The wig, fallen awry, disclosed the hideous prison tonsure. In the reddened eyes, the glint of tears was visible. The chauffeur nodded, and his smile grew wider. He rubbed his hands together, delightedly. For some time he watched, until at length Benson, calmed by utter lassitude, fell into an uneasy sleep.

Then, and not till then, did the watcher climb down, unbolt the door, and, locking it again after him, ring for the elevator.

In the office he said to the clerk: "Mr. Holmes is sleeping and does n't want to be disturbed. We came in all the way from Baton Rouge, this morning. Rotten roads you have down here, don't you? You 'll see that no one bothers him till I get back?"

The clerk nodded. Out into the bright sunshine of Jackson Square the chauffeur strode.

"Put the car into the garage," he commanded the door man. "We shan't want it till to-morrow."

Slowly he crossed the street and entered the park. With an intense satisfaction he strolled along the broad, curving, white-shell walls between the neatly-cut hedges. Here he stopped to look at a bed of gaudy blooms, there to watch a fountain. The mild air of that southern September morning, the sunlight, the come-and-go of the lazy pedestrians—whites, blacks, French, and Creoles—and the babble of children with their negro mammys in the park, all added to his enjoyment. Even the sparrows taking dust-baths in the pathways or splashing their feathers on the edge of the basin, pleased him. For all, everything spoke to him of liberty—and at that thought, once again his lips curled beneath the cropped mustache and a strange light flicked into his eyes.

With his motoring goggles pushed up onto his forehead, hands idling in his leather pockets, he strolled. He seemed to be thinking, considering, planning with deliberate care; and his thoughts seemed happy ones. Now and again he smiled or nodded to himself. It was plain to see something was very much to his liking.

At length he sat down on a bench facing the Cathedral. He commanded a view both of the hotel and of the Cabilda. As he contemplated the two-story adobe and shell-lime façade of this ancient court-house, his eyes gleamed.

"Five minutes," muttered he, "and officers from the municipal court, there, could get the nippers on him. He's mine, all right enough. The only question is—has he had run enough for his money yet? Would n't it gash him deeper to be taken in just as the steamer's sailing? I don't want to spoil any of the effect by slapping down my joker too soon!"

He pondered again, a few moments, then lit a cigarette, leaned back on the bench, and basked in the morning sun.

"Gad!" muttered he, "it's certainly great to be free! All the hell any man needs is 'stir'! If I'd got the same as *he* did, more than likely my spirit would have been broken, too. Lucky he could n't bawl out on me hard enough to give me a tenner. Oh, he'd have done it, all right enough, if he'd had the chance! Even as it was, I owe him four years and more. I certainly intend to pay my debt. Let's see, now—just what's to be done? Everything O. K., so far. It's worked like a charm. Mrs. B. has n't ever suspected a thing. I got the message and the tools to him, all right, and gave him the emotions of his life, sawing those bars.

"It was a hard job to hit the right disguise and follow all Mrs. B.'s operations, and the hardest part of all was to land the position as aviator. Gad! It cost me ten weeks of lathering work, in overalls and out, even to get my airman's license, so I could get Dubois to take me up and put the finishing touches on me, but I managed even that. I reckon the whole thing has set me back forty or fifty thou. McShane's bill for private detective work was twenty-six—just that, alone—and that's only one item. Oh, it's been an expensive blow-out, all right enough, but it's going to be worth it, Murch, old boy—it's going to be well worth it all!"

A while he smoked, absorbed in thought. When the cigarette was a mere shred, he tossed it away.

"Let's look at his funds," said Murch.

And from the inside pocket of his leather coat he drew the pocket-book of his long-hated enemy, now sleeping the sleep of utter exhaustion in the little back room not a block away.

VI

WITH interest Murch counted the cash given over to him by Benson. It totalled some eight thousand dollars, in bills of large denominations.

"H'm!" grunted he, replacing the money in the book, "looks as though the wad that Mrs. B. put into the clothes in the air-ship, for him, was pretty slim. My guess is that the Benson fortunes are about all in. This is probably the last squeeze. Suppose I should just annex it, and disappear? Where would *he* be, then? But no—I'm not a sneak-thief, thank God! There's a bigger game going on than anything that ever involved only money!"

Once more he examined the pocket-book, to make sure he had not overlooked anything. There might possibly be something there, still further to whet his appetite for enjoyment.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. The bulge of an inner compartment, on the other side of the wallet, betrayed the presence of a paper.

Quickly he drew it out, and opened it.

The paper was a page of the New York *Herald*. At a glance, Murch's quick eye saw that here and there almost microscopic punctures had been made.

"A message from his wife, so help me! Probably the last one he got, before the escape. He must have had it with him in the dirigible, and when he changed his clothes, he saved it. What the devil, now?"

Murch set to work to read the message. Painstakingly, letter by letter, he spelled it out. At first, only a frown creased his brow, but as he read still further, his expression changed, despite him. Midway of it, he started sharply. And by the time it was at an end, the look in his eyes was one you should have seen.

Impatiently he shook himself, as he folded the paper and shoved it back into the pocket-book.

He smoked another cigarette. The time was now at hand for him to get up and walk across the Square to the Cabilda, but still he did not go. Persistently the face of Benson seemed to rise before him. Once he remembered that face, ruddy, hard, overbearing, with a sneer upon the lips and lurking fire in the eyes. Once he remembered the man's body, robust and beefy, full-fed, vigorous.

Where was that man, now? In the wasted frame lying on the bed in the little back room, racked by coughing; in the yellowed, shrunken face, the pale and timorous eyes, the sagging droop of the mouth—what was there left of Benson?

"So she thinks there's a chance even yet, eh, does she?" mused the enemy. "She believes the last tag-end of money, got by selling out the house and everything, even to the wedding ring, will turn the trick, in the mountains of San Marino, Italy, where extradition laws don't go, what? Thinks he can still pull out of it, and make good, square everything, and all the rest of it? And then—h'm!—the other part of the message! . . . Now, *that*—"

Murch had grown perceptibly pale. Nervously his hands clasped and unclasped. With a dry tongue he licked his lips.

He glanced at the Cabilda, then across the Square at Gention Street. "That's the way to Cook's, to the ticket-office," he was thinking.

"Curse me for an infernal fool!" he gritted angrily.

Ending No. 1

Once more he drew out the pocket-book. From it he took the paper. A moment, and it lay in a hundred pieces on the white shell path.

"Almost opened the trap, did n't you?" he sneered. "Almost—but not quite!"

Ending No. 2

Then, moving almost with the unwillingness of an hypnotic subject, he arose.

"The message—it—it's opened the trap!" he whispered. "By God, I—I lose, after all! Idiot that I was, to have read the infernal thing!"

Ending No. 3

Suddenly he laughed, the harsh and mirthless laughter of a man in pain.

"Here!" growled he. "Let this open or shut the trap for me. Let *this* decide. I can't!"

From his pocket he drew a quarter.

Ending No. 1.

He rose, ground the bits of paper beneath his heel, and then, without another look, unhesitatingly strode toward the grim old Cabilda, across the sunlit Square.

Ending No. 2.

Without another look behind, he turned sharply and, in haste, as though he feared to change his mind again, swung into his stride toward Gentian Street—and Cook's!

Ending No. 3.

"Heads, the Cabilda. Tails, Cook's!"

Cursing, he flipped the coin in the sunlit air. A second it flickered aloft, then fell with a sharp clink on the pathway at his feet.

With staring eyes and a hand that shook, in spite of all that he could do, Murch clutched the coin up.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Mr. George Allen England submitted the three foregoing endings to the story, saying that we could take our choice or else print them all—as we have. We are thus "putting it up to" our readers; and we shall be glad to have any of them who will, write to us, saying which ending they prefer, and why.

INTERNATIONAL

BY THOMAS L. MASSON

"MY manners are perfect, but my morals are—well, rather deficient," said the Frenchman.

"We can match 'em," said the American.

"My stupidity is a fixed racial quality," said the German.

"We can match it," said the American.

"My craving for narcotics is part of my existence," said the Turk.

"We can match it," said the American.

"My cant is one of the seven wonders of the world," said the Englishman.

"We can match it," said the American.

"My cruelty is enduring as stone," said the Russian.

"We can match it," said the American.

"My bigotry is immortal," said the Spaniard.

"We can match it," said the American.

"We might easily," said the other unimportant nations, "enumerate the particular qualities for which we are noted, but—what is the use?"

"We can match even that," said the American. "We might easily match each one of these qualities, as you define them. But there is no use because we are now a part of all that you have been."

THE WAR AND THE AMERICAN INVESTOR

By EDWARD SHERWOOD MEAD, Ph.D.

AUTHOR OF "THE CAREFUL INVESTOR"

IN spite of editorials and cartoons to the contrary, national wars, such as the conflict in which Europe is now engaged, are not made by the rich in order to fill their own pockets at the expense of the poor. It is a safe conclusion that nine out of ten of the people who have property of any kind are opposed to war, which is carried on by the destruction of property. It is the majority which goes to war and wages war, and the majority is without means, except its earnings. Just as the property classes are forced to sustain the burden of great political changes brought about by the action of the propertyless masses, so in times like these the investors of the world are forced to sit by and see their holdings dwindle in value. What, now, is the position of the American investor in this great emergency? For the present, values have gone down. Nominally, prices have been reduced. The American stock-holder and bond-holder, because he cannot sell what he has at the prices formerly prevailing, feels himself poorer. Will this condition continue, and what will be the eventual effect of the European war upon the value of securities held by American investors?

To begin with, we are in an exceptionally fortunate position, in that we hold no European securities. Our investments are almost wholly confined to the American continent. In only a few cases, such as the Westinghouse Company, for example, have American corporations invested in foreign lands. Broadly speaking, however, we have no European investments. Consider, now, the immense advantage over the European investor which the American stock- and bond-holders possess in this crisis. European railroads have been taken over by the government. In so far as they are privately owned, their earnings have almost entirely disappeared. European industrial plants have been forced either entirely to suspend or seriously curtail their operations, due to the fact that most of their men employees have been called to the colors. European shipping has almost disappeared from the sea. Every great nation in Europe is faced, moreover, with enormous increases of taxation, which will cut into the revenues of the investor more seriously than into the income of any other class; and by enormous sales of government bonds, during and

after the conflict, these cannot fail seriously to reduce, for many years, the market value of other classes of securities. These considerations are entirely aside from the enormous losses in life and property which every nation involved in the struggle must bear. In the United States we are almost wholly free from the worst effects of the European conflict. Our foreign trade, it is true, may be for a time seriously disturbed. What we lose on the Continent, however, it is reasonably sure we shall make up in South America. Furthermore, our exports to Europe consist mainly of food-stuffs and indispensable raw materials, such as cotton. It is not believed that the movement of these products, unless European industry is to be entirely suspended, can long be interfered with. Some way will almost certainly have been found, before the publication of this article, for the release of the surplus products of the United States to their necessitous European consumers. It is also to be expected that materially higher prices for all food-stuffs will be secured as the result of the war. Indeed, that effect is already evident.

So far as import trade is concerned, the advantage is all with the United States. Europe sends us few raw materials. The manufactured products which we formerly purchased, outside of a few limited classes of luxuries, we can make for ourselves. In this respect the war will have the effect of a sudden advance in the tariff. The American manufacturer can raise his price and increase his output to supply the demand in domestic consumption, due to the closing of the continental supplies. There are a few exceptions to this general rule. The oil industry will suffer severely, because oil is contraband of war, and the European nations are the largest consumers of our oil exports. Even this situation, however, is not without its brighter side, since Russian competition with American oil must for a time disappear. Our imports of raw materials come almost entirely from tropical and semi-tropical countries. This traffic will be in no way disturbed by the European war. During the progress of the conflict, therefore, it is not unreasonable to expect that American industry will be quite as prosperous as during the past year. The large crops will be sold at much higher prices, which will give a tremendous stimulus to every form of production. The foreign trade, while changed in location and direction, will not seriously shrink in volume. All dangers of monetary disturbances, owing to the wise precautions which we have so providently taken, by the conferences of the government with financial leaders, have been averted. The American investor can, therefore, rid his mind of serious apprehension for the immediate future.

What, now, will be the immediate effect of the conflict? In this field forecast is more difficult. It must be admitted that, considered in its world aspect, the European war is an unmixed evil. It will involve the destruction of an enormous amount of property, and the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives, and the total or partial disabling of a much

larger number of producers. It is going altogether too far to expect, at least at this juncture, that the outcome of the war will settle anything, and therefore the already almost unupportable burdens of militarism, aggravated by the interest on war loans, must be continued and probably increased. The close of the conflict will find Europe weakened in every way as producers, as lenders, and as consumers. The United States cannot hope, for years to come, to draw upon the hitherto abundant reservoirs of European capital to develop our railroads and industries. Beyond this, we shall have to repurchase most of our American securities which are now held abroad. This repurchase will, for a long time, absorb a large part of our surplus available for investment. Instead of buying the securities of new enterprises or new bond and stock issues, put out for improvements by established corporations, the American investor will buy at broken prices the stock of standard American railways and industrials. Choosing the path of safety, he will put his money into approved securities, which the necessities of foreign investors will offer to him at moderate prices. In view of this situation, it is unreasonable to expect that the United States can be immune from the effects of the great war. Construction, operation, the building of extensions of railroads and development of mines, and the like, demand great sums of money. This money has been hitherto provided by American and European investors. After the close of the war, the European investor will be buying government bonds and selling American securities. The American investor will be repurchasing the securities sold in the past, and it is reasonably certain that the capital available for new enterprises in the United States will be seriously crippled. On the other hand, the vast destruction of life and property and the almost complete cessation of industrial activity on the continent, to recover from which a long time will be necessary, offers an unusual opportunity to American manufacturers and merchants to increase their foreign trade, especially in South America. There is no doubt that our American business men are fully awake to the exceptional opportunities now presented, and that they will profit by the misfortunes of Europe to build up a large export trade with the countries to the south of us. The prices of our raw materials will remain high for a long time to come, and our position in international trade will be correspondingly strengthened. The subject is too large for adequate consideration in the limits of a short article. Enough, however, is known of the effects of the war upon the United States to warrant the conclusion that the American investor will not be seriously injured by the conflict, and that the ultimate result of the struggle, as it improves the international trading position of the United States, will be certain to make for his advantage.

THAT MULE PINDERS

BY ELIZABETH BURGESS HUGHES

WHEN old Joshua Crabbe died, young Joshua stepped into his shoes with an alacrity indicating that he might have been waiting in his stocking feet outside the door. Uncle Josh, as he was familiarly known, was the sort of man who fittingly exemplifies the cynical old adage that a man who has no enemies never amounts to much.

Everybody liked him, everybody was his friend. He was imposed on scandalously; from the minister down, people contrived to feed his sense of hospitality, with the result that the old house on the hill was a sort of Liberty Hall, ever open-doored and bounteous of larder.

This hospitable spirit had always annoyed young Joshua. He regarded the offerings on the altar of altruism in the light of personal deprivation. If Uncle Josh continued to go on like this, soon there would n't be enough left to warrant his making a will!

But at last the expected—and by the village heartily deplored—demise occurred, and after the careful reading of the will by an old legal friend of the defunct Josh (a kindly gentleman with chin-whiskers and a glass eye) young Mr. Crabbe was installed monarch of what was left out of the hospitably inclined one's estate.

This was not inconsiderable, for a village; but there was a fly in the ointment. A clause in the will had caused the glass-eyed attorney to roll his unstationary optic in amazement:

I hereby bequeath to my beloved mule Pinders one thousand dollars yearly for her up-keep, my nephew, Joshua, to be executor of the same. I stipulate that Pinders be carefully and considerately cared for, and that she remain in the possession of said nephew until her natural death, or, in case of demise of said nephew, to be passed with said one thousand dollars yearly to some trustworthy person. This condition, or conditions, not being fulfilled, the remainder of my fortune is to go to the Home for Disabled Veterans.

If Uncle Josh had ever possessed a sense of humor and could have returned to the scene in his astral shape, he must have held his astral sides at the expression of old Mr. Dobson's countenance. He began to reread:

“‘I hereby bequeath to my beloved mule——’” He adjusted his glasses more firmly over his one good eye and peered down unbelievably. “I said *mule*, did n’t I? My eyesight—— It is mule!”

He straightened triumphantly and pointed a dramatic forefinger at the astonishing clause, glaring at Mr. Joshua Crabbe the younger as if he dared him to dispute it.

“Mule?” echoed that individual skeptically. “Maybe you’ve got it wrong, after all. Surely——”

“See for yourself,” advised Mr. Dobson concisely, and passed over the typewritten sheets containing the amazing instructions.

“Well, I’ll be—— Say, there is an old short-winded, spavined, one-eyed—ahem! beg pardon—I mean, an animal that I reckon would be adjudged a mule, in a close run, out there in the stables. Uncle always called her Pinders. She’s old as Adam, and if you’d ask me I’d say take her out and shoot her——”

“My dear young friend, no—no, indeed,” protested Mr. Dobson firmly. He took off his glasses and wiped them distractedly. “One cannot disregard the wishes of the dead. Perhaps Pin—er—ah—the animal may be considerate enough to die soon. You say that she is old?”

“Old?” returned Mr. Crabbe scornfully. “No, she ain’t *old*! She was born in the year thirty-six, I bet ye. When I was a little boy toddling around, I remember hearin’ ’em say Pinders could n’t last much longer, on account of her age, which, it appeared, was something wonderful for a horse—er—mule, I mean. That’s been over twenty-five years ago, and——”

“My *dear* young friend,” interrupted the scandalized Mr. Dobson, “are you not mistaken? I assure you I have never heard of any animal reaching—ah—so advanced an age. Really, it is quite remarkable. With your permission, I should like, when we have transacted our legal business, to have a look at the—ah—mule. It seems to me that I recall the animal.”

“With pleasure,” said Mr. Crabbe politely; and when the legal matter had been satisfactorily adjusted, barring the matter of the mule, they marched out to look at Pinders.

Pinders, it appeared, was in a class by herself. Uncle Joshua, who was a theosophist, had probably believed her inhabited by a friend or an ancestor. The latter seemed extremely probable—one of the ante-flood relations, let us say. Unlike many third-generation folk of this century, Pinders presented no beguiling and almost get-away-with-it appearance of youth. She was frankly ancient, and, moreover, seemed highly contented with her state of dilapidation.

“I—recall the beast,” observed Mr. Dobson dejectedly. “But I did n’t know your dear uncle was so fond of her as to——”

“There’s one good thing about it,” interjected Mr. Crabbe cheerfully;

"she can't last long. She's living on borrowed time now. Well, I'll try to do my duty by her as long as she's with us;" and young Joshua sighed forlornly.

"Well said, my boy, well said. I am sure you will carry out your dear uncle's wishes. And as you say, Pinders is so old that she cannot be long for this world."

"There's another thing," hesitated the young man, as they gazed forlornly upon what must once have been a frisky colt: "a fellow hates to be made fun of, don't you know, and if people found out about that clause in the will I'd never have another peaceful minute. It'd be sport for the millions—why, I'd *never* hear the last of it! If Tom White heard of it——"

It was Mr. Dobson's turn to sigh. His previous acquaintance with Tom White rather prejudiced him in Mr. Crabbe's favor. Really, he could almost hear Mr. White yelping across the whole of Main Street: "Hi, Josh! How's Aunt Pinders this morning?" and similar expressions of levity—especially if Mr. Crabbe happened to be walking home from the post-office with Arline Masters, a young lady visitor with whom, Rumor had it, Uncle Josh's heir was desperately smitten.

"Nobody knows about this mule business but you and the house-keeper," pursued Mr. Crabbe gloomily. "That dear old soul will do anything I ask her to, and you've got to promise me not to tell a living being about it. Why, I'd die of humiliation if everybody knew my hold upon Uncle's property rests with that thing there"—the "thing" being the ancient Pinders, who returned the epithet with a mild, noncommittal glance.

"My dear boy," said old Mr. Dobson, after a moment's profound meditation, "you may rely upon my discretion."

It appeared afterward that he might. And not only could Mr. Dobson be trusted to preserve silence on the shameful subject, but also to give sundry bits of advice as to the care of mules who were not amenable to usual stock-rules. These suggestions he rendered freely, if somewhat speculatively, and Joshua accepted them gratefully in preference to professional services, even at the risk of lessened efficiency in his dealings with Pinders, because the matter was thus kept *sub rosâ*, so to speak.

For Pinders, alas, in spite of her advanced age and her promise of longer life, appeared to be a chronic invalid. No wonder Uncle Josh had thought a thousand dollars a year necessary for her comfort. She had a fondness for attacks that began about midnight and lasted well into dawn. These unfortunate affairs started out with the mild symptom on Pinders's part of trying to kick out the end of the stable. Naturally, one could not long remain ignorant of these efforts at dissolution. It might have seemed a simple thing to let her die in one of them; but Joshua Crabbe was not a bad-hearted young man, and, moreover, he had no desire to be

reminded by the ghost of his uncle that the wishes of the dead had been neglected.

To be sure, had he wished to follow so cold-blooded a course, he would have been deterred by Mrs. Panhandle, the housekeeper, who was determined that that portion of the will regarding the mule should be scrupulously observed. Therefore, both Mrs. Panhandle and Mr. Crabbe spent much of their time trotting to and from the stables. Mrs. Panhandle would observe each time: "There, there, the poor craychure's done for this time, certain. See the whites of her eyes rollin', and feel how stiff she do be gettin', me b'y. Poor Pinders! The relief it'll be to her to get out of her sufferin's!"

Pinders's were not the only sufferings demanding relief; but after a round half-dozen attacks of this sort, which subsequently set at naught Mrs. Panhandle's sympathetic and funereal prophecies by an immediate and thorough return to health by Pinders, the old lady failed to call Crabbe's attention to the final death-agonies, and would merely sniff and remark:

"You need n't think she's in danger this time, Mr. Josh. No mortal mule could 'a' pulled through last time if they was such a thing possible as her dyin'. This time ain't a circumstance to last"—Mrs. Panhandle being one of those people who belittle present happenings as compared with the glories of the past. "Do all you can for her, of course, but don't worry—it does seem at times as if more than man was in the hands of the Lord. That animal'll be a mystery to me till me dyin' day. I'm sixty-two, and I never seen nothin' like her. She's got the constitution of a hippopotamus!"

Mr. Aurelius Dobson, going home to dinner late one afternoon, espied Mr. Crabbe, in all the glory of new spring apparel, solicitously accompanying Miss Arline Masters up the street. Miss Masters was a pretty girl—rather too buxom and brusque and straightforward to suit Mr. Dobson, whose taste ran to pink and white Shepherdess ladies, but very attractive, nevertheless. Mr. Dobson disapprovingly watched her flirting with the smitten Josh, and reflected dismally that not two hours ago from his window he had seen her flirting similarly—only rather more so—with the detestable Tom White. She was n't in love with either, of course, but she'd keep on till she caused trouble, see if she did n't. And with this direful foreboding in mind, he was somewhat astonished to see Mr. Crabbe take a Chesterfieldian but rather determined farewell of Miss Masters at her aunt's gate and cross over to him with a "stern yet brooding brow."

"Mr. Dobson, do for heaven's sake tell me what to do when a darned old mule refuses to eat!"

"You mean Pinders, of course?" The little lawyer pondered, brows drawn, as if the matter was indeed weighty. "Well, now, my boy, possibly—in fact, probably—the creature's teeth have become unequal to the

task of proper mastication. Then, of course, her general health may influence the matter. I'll tell you what: I'll drop in after supper and see her. Perhaps I can ascertain the cause of the trouble."

Mr. Dobson dropped in. He diagnosed Pinder's gastric strike as due to defective teeth, due in their turn to continued old age, and prescribed a bran-mash.

Mrs. Panhandle, invariably obliging, offered to produce the said mash then and there, the two gentlemen to remain and instruct Pinders in the gentle art of masticating this new edible. It was she who presently emerged from the kitchen with an iron spoon and a steaming bucket and delivered them into masculine hands. Mr. Dobson, expanding genially under the influence of such faith and trust, took the lead. If Joshua would kindly open her mouth, he would by means of the iron spoon make Pinders acquainted with the new delicacy.

At once it became apparent that Pinders resented this infantile method of providing nourishment; also, she may not have approved of the temperature of the mash, which in their ardor neither man had thought to allow sufficient cooling. Suffice it to say that right here the cataclysm occurred. Pinders's teeth may have succumbed before the relentless march of time, but it had n't seriously affected her heels. These latter useful members went up, and Mr. Dobson went down. The iron spoon took him in his off-eye, and there was a shiver of breaking glass. Also he had been deposited by the occurrence in a trough built with no provision for accidents, and, being wedged into it by the violence of his fall, seemed permanently settled, since no amount of frantic struggling served to budge him an inch. His yells would have done credit to a college cheer-leader.

Meantime Joshua Crabbe had undergone a still more terrific experience, for the bucket of mash, having been left trustingly at Pinders's rear, went into the air with the unerring precision and swiftness of a sky-rocket, to come down full upon Mr. Crabbe's beautiful new spring apparel, in which, as Miss Masters had said only a few hours ago, he looked like a Greek god. It being spring, and Mr. Crabbe having recently shed more or less in the way of underclothing, the hot mash instantly made itself painfully manifest to that person's cuticle. Mash covered his carefully brushed hair and clung to the end of his nose; his collar overflowed with mash, and it dripped methodically from his coat-tails.

He was doing a very intricate tango when Mrs. Panhandle, who had gone to the kitchen (presumably for more mash), rushed to the rescue. It was some time before the victims of the disaster recovered sufficiently to explain just what had happened.

Nevertheless, in spite of this intimidating fiasco, Mr. Dobson insisted that bran-mash was what Pinders needed. Being of a legal and technical turn of mind, he eventually reasoned that the mash may have been too hot, in which event, of course, one could not altogether blame Pinders.

"She won't die, and I can't give her away, because nobody'd have her," fumed young Joshua, who was deeply embittered by the loss of his sartorial decorations, "so what am I to do? If this thing keeps up, she'll outlive me. I can't let her starve, because Mrs. Panhandle would n't permit it. But she's got me goin', and no mistake."

Now, it so happened that the bran-mash idea, having been promulgated, took root and grew. Mr. Crabbe decided to administer it alone. Pinders appeared quite ailing one day, and refused to attempt other food. Really, the poor old critter was to be pitied, in a way, he thought; no teeth to chew with, and still having to live on——

However, the idea of sacrificing his raiment was far from the mind of Mr. Crabbe. Since Uncle Josh's death, he had no old clothes, but an inspiration having descended upon him, he sneaked an enormous red kimona and a "boudoir cap" belonging to Mrs. Panhandle out to the barn, and when he had carried out his bucket of mash, he donned these protective garments, and carefully approached Pinders with the iron spoon.

Pinders began to back. What recollection remained to her just then centred upon the odor of the warm mash, and she had no intention of repeating a sorrowful experience. Joshua followed her coaxingly with the spoon, a wary eye on her heels. In order to bring himself on a level with her rebellious nose, he climbed into a trough, continuing his inducements.

Pinders considered, her one eye fixed upon him meditatively; then suddenly, unexpectedly, she licked up the contents of the spoon with a forward lurch that cost him his balance. He teetered for an instant, then went backward. His kimonaed and capped person did a double somersault that no acrobat need have scorned, and landed with a bump at the feet of a pretty young woman who was standing in the doorway.

"Dear me!" said Miss Arline Masters.

Mr. Crabbe gave one wild glance, gathered himself together, and fled—fled as might the ball from the cannon's mouth, with Miss Masters watching his progress over the grounds toward the house and in at its door, his scarlet kimona flapping in the rear like the battle-flag of the retreating enemy, and the boudoir cap fluttering coquettish signals. Her cordial permission from Mrs. Panhandle to "run out, me dear, and see that old Methusalah of a mule the b'y's uncle left him," had indeed had an unlooked-for result!

"You may say what you please," said Mr. Joshua Crabbe to Attorney Dobson later, when he had related this humiliating experience, "but I'm going to shoot that old mule. The property can go hang. Life ain't worth a fig if I've got to play nursemaid to a confounded old beast that don't know enough to die."

But here the legal and technical mind of Aurelius Dobson rose and

subdued these petty rebellings. After all, it really was n't the mule's fault he fell—why, was n't poor old Pinders obediently taking the mash at the time? As for the kimona, to be sure it was embarrassing, but he 'd take pleasure in explaining that little matter to the young lady himself, delicately, you know——

“You need n't bother,” returned Mr. Crabbe ungratefully. “Let her marry Tom White,” he added recklessly. “He ain't no fool, and I am, or I would n't 'a' been trying to feed a mule with a teaspoon. I'm through with Pinders, d' ye hear me? I wash my hands of her!”—wildly waving these indispensable members aloft. “She's yours—the county's—anybody's! I'm done with her!”

Mr. Dobson, attorney, went home thoughtful. He regretted to have beheld Joshua so nearly on the road to hysteria. Really, something must be done.

At the post-office he met Miss Masters, in airy conversation with Mr. Thomas White. She left him, however, to come over to where Mr. Dobson was patiently extracting a patent-medicine circular, and after a little preliminary and attractively feminine vocal skirmishing inquired:

“By the way, is Joshua ill? One never sees anything of him these days.”

Mr. Dobson thought this decidedly bold and unmaidenly, but, after all, he had his young friend's welfare much at heart, and consequently explained just how dreadful Joshua had been feeling since the affair of the kimona, and he went on to tell her of Pinders's ill health and singular attacks, warming up to the matter of diet as suggested by himself, and the desirability of the kimona under such conditions. A mule of which the boy's uncle had been fond (no mention of the clause in the will), and, really, the poor old thing ought to have been dead years ago, but since she could n't or would n't die, somebody had to look after her, and, really, it was kind of Josh——

“Oh!” said Miss Masters, rather blankly.

Later in the day Mr. Dobson strolled forth to see if Joshua's hysteria had lessened or increased, and to offer further paternal advice. Mr. Dobson was smoking placidly as he walked along through the sweet spring air—that air so dangerous to the blood of youth and reminiscently stirring even to old age. He was thinking of many things, so that before he knew it he had bumped quite rudely into two figures by Joshua Crabbe's gate.

“Well!” said little Mr. Dobson, staring, perceiving with something like shock that the location of Mr. Crabbe's right arm made explanation necessary.

“She's promised to marry me,” informed Joshua, in an awe-struck voice.

“I did, indeed,” admitted Miss Arline Masters calmly, leaning on the gate and looking up appreciatively at the moon. “He'd been asking

me to, but I—I just could n't make up my mind, really. There were—others, you know. But when you told me about his kindness to that poor old mule—well, I just knew at once that he was a man in a million, and—*my* man. None of the other men I knew would have made themselves ridiculous for the sake of a poor old suffering beast. Why, Mr. Dobson, it was just *wonderful!*

“So when Aunt Clarice said to-night she meant to run over after supper and get Mrs. Panhandle's recipe for jam-cake, I said I'd go, too, and the minute I saw Josh I said to him: 'I've made up my mind. I'll marry you.' Oh, I'm so glad Pinders did n't die when she should have!” Mr. Dobson glanced wildly at Mr. Crabbe, but that gentleman was gazing nonchalantly at the moon. “We mean to have a veterinary examine her at once. I hope she's good for several years yet, the dear old thing! We'll see that she's taken good care of, won't we, Josh dear? And I'll never, never finish thanking you, dear Mr. Dobson, for explaining about that kimona.”

Dear Mr. Dobson looked resolutely at Joshua Crabbe until he caught that person's wandering gaze. The agonized appeal in the young man's face would have melted the heart of a crocodile. “For the Lord's sake,” it seemed to say, “don't let the cat out of the bag!”

The legal gentleman coughed slightly, gulped, and straightened. With a beaming, paternal smile, he held out his hand.

“My dear young people,” said he, “pray accept my blessing. 'God moves in a mysterious way——' Now, if you will kindly excuse me, I think I shall go pay my respects to Pinders.”

THE SORROW OF THE SEA

BY WILLIAM H. HAYNE

I WALK by the sea and muse
 On the words I have often read:
 “The former things shall have passed away
 When the sea gives up her dead.”

And I think since Time was young
 That the voice of the sea in woe
 Has said to the earth, “You claim my dead,
 But I cannot let them go.”

THE BANANA GIRL

BY LEONARD WOOD, JR.

IT was eleven in the morning, and it was humid and stifling in the banana fields of Costa Rica. The slow "chug-chug-chugging" of the fruit train, and the pony's munching of a ripe bunch of bananas, were the only sounds which reached Laura Watson's ears as she counted the green bunches of this fruit, which were piled five or six feet in height.

"Forty-eight," she murmured dejectedly to herself; and then she mounted Domingo and awaited the arrival of the train. Removing her huge yippe-yappa hat, she began to fan herself with it. She had been up since half past five, and she was tired. Her dark brown hair hung down her back in a braid; her big blue eyes were sunken in her face, tanned from having lived sixteen of her twenty years in the tropics. The sleeves of her blue flannel waist were rolled up above her elbows, showing a well-shaped but none too delicate pair of forearms. Those arms had worked and had been exposed to noonday suns and tropical storms.

The "chug-chugging" of the train was louder now. Laura looked down the tracks to watch the engine come around the bend, but the sight of the mist arising from the red-hot rails made her notice the heat all the more, and so she looked vacantly at the labyrinth of banana-plants about her.

Presently the train crept into view. She eagerly put on her yippe-yappa and endeavored to discern who was the banana-receiver standing on top of one of the cars, holding a huge black umbrella over his head. She could not quite make him out, but the minute he waved his hand and tossed her a kiss she knew who it was.

"It's Will Simons," she groaned, "and fresh as usual!"

As the train stopped before her and half a dozen Jamaican negroes sprang from the car, he commanded, "Hey, you niggers, don't load this fruit yet. Got to look it over." And then he said to Laura, as he started to climb down from the car, "How's Costa Rica's one and only lady time-keeper, the beautiful, energetic Miss Laura Watson?"

"Really, Mr. Simons, why bother to climb down from your perch? You can inspect the fruit from the top of the car as the Jamaicans pass it in," she said, ignoring his question.

"Well, as I said," he continued flippantly, "you are the only woman

time-keeper"—a time-keeper is a person who bosses the workmen on a banana plantation—"and, besides, you are the only unmarried American gal for miles around."

"Mr. Simons, I wish you would n't speak that way!" Her eyes flashed angrily. "Forty-eight or -nine bunches of bananas are there before you, and they are all cut 'two-thirds,' as the order from headquarters requested." Fruit cut "two-thirds" means two-thirds towards being ripe.

Simons made no answer, but with arms akimbo he stared at her for several moments out of his squinty gray eyes before exclaiming: "Say, you must think I am some dago, by the way you speak to me; I who——"

"Never mind saying it," she interrupted. "I'd like you a great deal better if you would not always try to thrust yourself to the front. Half-breed girls at Naranjito may put up with your flippancy because you're white——" Her voice suddenly trailed off, for she realized that she must not anger him, or else he would refuse on one pretext or another to accept the fruit.

"But I love you, girlie; honest I do," he said, coming over to her and resting a hand on the saddle's pommel.

"Please, Mr. Simons—I must hurry back to Father; he has a bad attack of malaria."

Simons was about to seize her hand when a young man whom he had never seen before came riding down the railroad tracks. The new-comer was dressed wretchedly in an old pair of khaki trousers, torn flannel shirt, and dilapidated felt hat. "Who's the bum?" inquired Simons.

"He's my assistant," she replied. "He was just one of the many derelicts floating around here. He wanted work, and he seemed ill; and he had such honest brown eyes that I could n't resist taking him into my service. You know, Father"—she hesitated—"is n't able to be up and around these days. His name is Richard Barry." And when he rode up to her, Laura introduced the two men.

"How's the fruit turning out?" asked Dick. Simons scowled, and with a taunting look at Laura he casually remarked:

"I am sorry, but I can't take that fruit. It's cut 'three-fourths.' It would rot on the way to the United States. The steamer it is to go on is returning by a roundabout way."

Dick's face hardened, but Laura's burned red through the tan. "That fruit is cut 'two-thirds,' and you know it!" she angrily exclaimed. "You've got to take it. If you don't, you're a disgrace to the United Banana Company."

"H'm!" muttered Simons, as he returned to his car. "I guess this farm is a disgrace to the country—at least, in the way it is kept up, for it's good land." And before climbing up on the card he said menacingly, "The Company knows it's good land, and since it ain't barely paying

them to have the trains go by here—well, I hope you can afford to keep your place.” He climbed up on the train and ordered the engineer to start the engine. As the train wheezed off he yelled back, “We’re going to make the loop, and around five we’ll pass about one-fourth of a mile from here. And, Laura, if you have decided then to be half decent to me, I’ll back the train up here— Oh, what’s the use of talking to the like of you! Say,” he jeered, “have a care that those discharged Jamaicans, who have been raisin’ the devil round here, don’t burn up your house by *mistake*, while looking for a possible few dollars—’cause the Company might like the house some day!”

“I’m going to report you!” declared Laura.

“And do you think they will believe you?” Simons sneered. “You and your niggers don’t know how to cut fruit. Say, Laura, I’m not as bad as I sound. Hope you’ve got a sense of humor.”

“Humor!” exclaimed Dick Barry, who had been nervously resting his hand on his revolver. “I’d like to shoot that man!”

“Fortunately, there are not many like him,” said Laura, looking sorrowfully at her bananas, which should have netted her a few dollars. “But he’ll be on duty in this district for another month. We must cater to him as much as we can endure, for, Dick, as you know, we owe our four Jamaicans a whole week’s pay, and they can get work elsewhere.”

Slowly the two rode off along the tracks, the only roads in Banana Land. Neither spoke; both were deep in thought. Presently, the horses of their own accord turned off on a trail leading from the tracks into the banana plants. About a hundred yards in was a good-sized clearing, where a one-story wooden house stood. It was painted gray, and had a green, corrugated iron roof. Its veranda was screened with wire netting, with huge patches of mosquito netting in places where the wire screening had rotted through.

A large, fat colored woman, Laura’s stepmother, was feeding the chickens in front of the house, while nearby, lying in a hammock hung from two palm-trees, was a huge bulk of a white man, Laura’s father. Upon seeing his daughter, he propped a bleary face on one arm, and shouted, “Well?”

Laura looked at him, but did not answer. His general appearance told her all she wanted to know. Turning her horse, she rode up to the colored woman and demanded hotly, “Are you trying to kill Dad? Why did you let him get hold of any more liquor? Jess, one of these days it’ll be too much for him——”

“He ain’t any more your’n than mine, an’ I’ll do what I want with him, you fresh gal!” she snapped.

Laura bit her lip and said nothing. Dismounting, she gave her horse to Dick, the one person who understood. Her father called her again, but, pretending not to hear him, she went into the house, only to hear

herself cursed by her parent for not obeying him. She realized that he did not know what he was saying, and pitied him. She was tired and disappointed. Throwing herself dejectedly into a chair, her feelings gave way to tears, and she cried silently.

There was nothing very much out of the ordinary in the sorry plight of the Watson family, that is, for Central or South America. There were many others like them. Mr. Watson was a failure, and, to forget his failure, he had taken to drink. And when his wife had died four years before, he had sent for Laura, who was attending school in the States. When she returned, she found that her father had been wrecked both morally and physically by too much drink in this hot, stifling climate. Her mother had been burdened with all the responsibilities of the plantation, and upon Laura's return they fell to her. The plantation, in spite of her efforts, was going to pieces. Big tracts of land were being left uncultivated because of lack of funds. Busy all day, she saw little of her father. Then one day, when he returned from Naranjita, he brought with him this colored woman, Jess, as his wife. He had married her while drunk. His marriage nearly killed Laura.

"What in the devil are you crying about?" demanded a rough voice from the doorway. Laura started. She had not heard him enter.

Wiping her eyes as she sprang to her feet, she faltered, "Why, nothing, Dad."

"Nix! nix!" he growled. He staggered towards her and seized her arms. "What are you crying about, Laura?"

"I did n't mean to cry, Dad. I was just thinking of Mother," she fibbed, not having the heart to tell him the truth.

"Oh, no, you were n't!" he contradicted.

"Well, then, the bananas! Mr. Simons refused them because they were n't—or at least so he said—cut 'two-thirds.'"

"That was n't the reason," snarled the old man. "I saw Mr. Simons myself several weeks ago, and—and—he wants you."

"Dad!" she exclaimed disgustedly. "I won't listen to you any more. Let me go!" and she jerked herself free.

"Listen, my young lady," he continued, "you 're mine, and I have given you away!"

"Really! And who will look after the place when I am gone. This Simons, as you know, is no fit man for a decent girl to marry. He's always getting himself into trouble, and—I won't discuss this any further. You are not sober; and Jess," she flashed, "ought to be whipped for giving you drink!"

"Simons—Simons," murmured the old man—"let me see—he said—yes, he said he would buy the place from me for a good sum, and that I could always live here."

"Father, don't you see, he would sell it to the U. B. C. for a huge

sum, and *they* would cast you out?" But she said no more, realizing his condition made him unfit to argue with, and hurriedly she left the room to find Dick.

She had only known Dick Barry for twelve days, but they were the best of friends. He seemed well-educated and a gentleman; but rather ambitionless, she thought. Being an orphan and having no family restrictions upon him, he yielded to the call of the wanderlust and—as he had explained to her—"just drifted."

She spied him stretched out under a shade-tree. He was writing in a note-book. Upon seeing her, he put it away and sprang to his feet. Admiration and pity were intermingled in the way he looked at her.

"Well, assistant time-keeper," she said as gayly as she could, "what shall we do about this morning's episode?"

"Why," he replied, "there is only one thing to do, and that is to go right in to Naranjita and report Simons to headquarters."

"But I am afraid," she said, "that they will take his word to ours. He has been in their employ for a number of years, and is regarded as a capable man. If there were only another company down here to which we could sell our fruit!"

Dick Barry saw the tears—tears of anger at the injustice she was suffering—rise in her eyes. The man in him came forth. Gently he placed an arm about her and forced her to sit down upon an old piece of matting under a tree.

"Now you just calm yourself and forget about this morning," he said consolingly. "I'll go and try to hunt up something for both of us to eat; and when lunch is over I'll take the motor-car and hustle into Naranjita."

"You're a blessing, Dick," she said sincerely.

While Dick was getting the lunch, she suddenly remembered a pair of khaki trousers which she had just finished for him the night before, and she rushed into the house to get them. It would speak badly for the plantation, she thought, if Dick made his appearance at U. B. C. headquarters in dilapidated clothing.

When she returned, he was spreading the food out on an impromptu table in the shape of a board.

"You scamp! I thought you had run away," he jokingly scolded. Helping her to be seated, he added, "This is all Jess had ready, but it's enough, I guess."

"Surely," she said, sitting down. "Look, here's a present for you. Let's hope they fit." Whereupon she held up a gray flannel shirt of her father's and the trousers. It struck them as funny—her presenting him with a pair of home-made trousers during their nomadic meal—and they both laughed over it. Then they thoroughly enjoyed their baked sweet-potatoes, fried bananas, and coffee.

The meal over, Laura went over to the shed where the motor was kept, to examine it, and Dick hastened to his room to dress in his new clothes. The shirt he found to be a trifle too large for him, as Mr. Watson was six feet three, and he but five feet eleven; but the trousers fitted beautifully.

When he reached the motor-shed, he found Laura busily oiling the engine. The motor was an engine-run hand-car, with a big seat in front and a little one in the rear. He immediately began finicking with it, and presently had it in working order. Then together they shoved the motor onto a side-track which led to the main railway.

Just at that moment several "puck! puck! pucks!" sounded in the distance.

"Pistol-shots!" exclaimed Dick.

They both listened attentively for a minute, during which the firing kept up.

"Those shots came from the direction of the fruit train," said Laura. "Remember, that wretch Simons said they were going to make the loop?"

"And he said something, too, about——" Dick tried to remember.

"Concerning those discharged Jamaicans who have turned into bandits," reminded Laura.

"Well, I am going to see what's up!" exclaimed Dick, springing into the motor and starting the engine.

"Here, wait for me," begged Laura.

"You'd better not come," he warned.

"I insist!" and she sprang into the seat beside him.

The engine sputtered, and they were off.

As they spun over the tracks, they strained their ears for more sounds of firing. As Dick was busy with the engine, Laura had drawn her pistol and held it in readiness. Presently they came to quite a little up-grade; in fact, it was so steep that the wheels slipped once or twice. Just as they reached the top they heard the faint sputtering of another motor. Dick turned off the engine and stopped the car.

"It sounds as if they were coming at a terrible speed," he remarked. "They had better be careful or their motor will jump the track."

"I wonder who it can be?"

"Some one either fleeing or in search of help," reasoned Dick aloud. "It must be some one fleeing. Nobody would dare go at the rate they are going if fear did n't make them. Ten to one that bunch of Jamaicans have held up the fruit train and robbed the safe!"

Now the sputtering of the approaching motor was quite loud.

"Here, help me turn the motor," requested Dick, whereupon both of them faced the car about on the tracks. "Now, Laura," he instructed, "hide here in these bushes, and when the motor comes into view, wave your hat to me if it is filled with niggers. I'll be at the bottom of this

incline. If it has the niggers, I 'll leave the car on the track. They won't have time to stop their car, since they 'll be going down-grade. The collision will be a mild one. They 'll either be thrown out by it, or will try to jump. Any way, they 'll be so dazed by it all that we 'll have time to cover them with our revolvers. Shoot only if you have to!"

"Trust me, Dick!" said Laura, quivering with excitement.

Dick in the motor shot down the eighty yards of incline. He threw on the brakes, and, springing from the car, half hid behind some bushes. There he anxiously waited for the oncoming motor to dart over the top of the hillock. What a noise it was making! It was very near now. He noticed Laura. She was clutching her revolver in one hand, and held the other over her mouth. Not, he was sure, that she feared she would scream, but that instinct made her do it.

"Niggers, Dick! Niggers!" and she waved her hat fiercely.

Half a minute later, with a whirr, the motor shot into view. The five or six men on it yelled a warning to one another as they saw the car below. The brakes were pushed on. One man jumped. Another caught a glimpse of Dick and shot at him. Laura fired. The brakes were beginning to work when the frightened, squirming blacks accidentally took off the brakes, and the machine went hurtling into the Watson's motor with a crash.

None of the Jamaicans were caught in the collision. All four jumped just before the impact, and were hurled several feet through the air. Dick, in self-defense, shot one dead as he rose to his feet. Another hurt himself so that he could not rise, but he fired twice at Laura, fortunately missing her. One Jamaican meekly surrendered, while the fourth lost no time in trying to get away. Dick finally shot him in the leg, and as he fell his pistol flew from him, rendering him both helpless and harmless.

"There were five," shouted Dick. "We 've got four of them."

"The first one to jump," explained Laura. "I missed him, and he fled in among the banana trees."

Their excitement and the noise of the pistol-shots had been so great that they had not heard the clatter of an engine as it drew near; but, hearing it, they barely had time to remove the wreck from the track before the engine and caboose of the fruit train hurtled by. The engineer saw them and quickly threw on the brakes.

"Them—them robbers!" shouted the Jamaican fireman. "We 've got some men hurt and must get 'em to Naranjita, *pronto!*"

He and the engineer sprang from the train and helped Dick put the outlaws into the caboose, after Dick had helped Laura onto the train. A few minutes later it was off, and as Dick sprang into the caboose, he saw Laura bending over a prostrate body.

"Dick," she murmured, "it's Simons! He's dead, poor man."

Dick said nothing, but, to distract her attention from the catastrophe,

he asked her to get some water for an injured Jamaican, while he attended to the wound. Two hours later the train arrived at Naranjita; and within another hour all except Dick were in the town's little hospital. Laura was made to go to bed. She did n't want to, but the doctor insisted. It took her several hours to get to sleep, but when she did, she did not waken until fourteen hours later.

Laura felt much better the next morning, although she found herself very nervous. She arose immediately, as she wanted to see Dick and arrange about going with him to headquarters. Then she remembered that Simons was dead; that there was no reason now for their making the call. Later, after she had dressed and breakfasted, she eagerly inquired after Dick, and the nurse informed her that he was downstairs on the veranda; that for over an hour he had been anxiously awaiting her. Whereupon, she immediately hurried down to see him, and as she was descending the stairs she was greeted with a cheery "Good morning! How are you?"

She was on the verge of answering him—but whom did she see before her? Not Dick, surely, in that smart white duck suit and panama? But there was no mistaking his smile!

"What on earth," she gasped, pointing at his immaculate attire, "does this Cinderella change mean?"

"Never mind!" he laughed, and quite masterfully demanded a kiss.

"Dick!"

"Give me a kiss!"

"Well," she smiled, "seeing that you insist, and providing that you promise to explain the wherefores of your happiness and giddy attire, we'll meet half-way and you'll kiss me."

He needed no urging, and as he held her tightly in his arms, he explained: "The U. B. C. brought me from America just to investigate the honesty of such men as Simons and several others. Headquarters had received many complaints concerning these men; and if Simons had not been killed, he would now most likely be in jail."

"You an expert detective!" she laughed, a trifle unnaturally. "And I made you a pair of trousers, which you wore with so much pride! It is a wonder *you* did n't see through their crude tailorship. How you have fooled me!"

Then he whispered something in her ear. She blushed slightly, hesitated, then nodded her head and kissed him. "And Dad?"

"We'll take him back to the U. S. A., of course. Jess, with forty dollars a month, will be more than contented to remain here in her native land."

"You darling!" And a doctor, who came suddenly to the door, took one look at them and returned as suddenly as he had appeared.

A TIDE IN THE AFFAIRS OF JONES

BY CORINNE ROCKWELL SWAIN

“DEARIE,” observed Mrs. Jones, crawfishing over to her husband to be hooked up, “had n’t we better go down next Saturday and close up the bungalow for the winter? This lovely Indian summer weather won’t last forever.”

“Good idea,” he agreed, bending frowningly to his task; adding, after a moment’s thought, “But how about Aunt Rebecca? She comes on Thursday, you know. Shall we have to postpone the trip, or could we take her along?”

“I’ve been wondering whether she would n’t enjoy it. She hates the big resorts, and ‘Bonnie Dune’ is so restful, she’d love it. I want to make her visit especially pleasant this year, because—well, I want to coax her to send her piano-player to the shore when she goes to Europe next summer. I’m crazy to have the dancing class at our house, and Maudie Swift will teach us, if we can be sure of music.”

“Great head! I should think a pleasant little jaunt would make Auntie come across without fail. She’d have a chance to see what a nice home her pet would have, and you could enlarge upon our love for music, and our remoteness from the fountain-head, and all that. Yes, honey, that’s a good proposition!”

Aunt Rebecca made no objection, though she had that genius for leaving one in doubt as to whether she was pleased or not, which is the armament of a meek and quiet spirit. On Saturday afternoon, the two-car train which ran down from the junction dropped them at the silent little Resthaven station. It was a glorious autumn day, and when the cottage was opened and aired, and the provision basket unpacked, even Aunt Rebecca looked optimistic. After a good supper, Mrs. Jones took an inventory of supplies, and arranged sleeping quarters, while her husband strolled out to the porch with a good cigar and that luxurious sense of nothing-to-do-till-Monday which is the chief joy of the week-end. He approved of the sunset, a superbly dramatic arrangement in orange and gray, and thrills of half-obliterated poetic impulse stirred within his soul. He had been the Class Poet once, and had fancied

himself more than an amateur at sonnet building. He smiled benignly upon Mrs. Jones, as she came out and stood beside him.

"Stay here," he urged, "and watch that castle of cloud, with the changing flames streaming up behind its battlements. Is n't it magnificent?"

"Lovely!" she agreed, with a slightly preoccupied smile. "Have you filled the lamps, dearie, and looked up the little oil-stove for Auntie's room? It may be cold in the night, and she's so sensitive. And have you looked to see how much kerosene we have?" He had n't. A trip to the cellar revealed an empty can and a rusty stove; and he started for the distant "general store" with a slight sinking sensation in his first fine careless rapture. On his return, his wife met him at the door and took the full can.

"I'm so sorry," she deprecated; "I meant to tell you to get some eggs for breakfast. We can usually depend on getting such nice ones here, and Auntie never eats anything else in the morning. Get some bananas too. Do you mind very much, dear?" He took the basket she handed him, and vanished silently in the chilly, deepening dusk. The sunset glory and the sonnet-rapture had departed. At the store, good old Pop Handy shook his hoary whiskers.

"No, Mr. Jones; them four eggs in the box is all I got, and I could n't rightly recommend 'em. They're storage, and, besides, they been around the store quite some time. Got some real good dried beef, though, and sardines. Bananas? Sold the last one three days ago, and ain't had time to order no more. How about some canned peaches? Looks a leetle like a no'theaster, now, don't it?"

With a load of tin cans and apprehension, Jones traversed once more the lonely street of closed cottages, to the gleam of his own light, away up on the inlet. When he had presented his offering, he brought up two more hods of coal and finished fixing the oil-stove, and then it was bed-time. The next day dawned gray and northeasterly, and the anticipated strolls on the beach gave way to sitting around a driftwood fire. Still, Mrs. Jones argued, this afforded the cottage an opportunity to make its impression; and she discoursed at length upon the subject of music to Aunt Rebecca, who sat in the best rocker, purple-shawled, a trifle sniffly, and entirely noncommittal. By nine in the evening it was raining hard; and in the midst of Mr. Jones's assertion that the theory of the equinoctial storm was obsolete Aunt Rebecca shrieked and clapped her hand to the back of her neck. Everybody looked at the ceiling of the living-room, where another drop was forming, and, with an exclamation of dismay, host and hostess charged up to the guest-room.

They found a little stream pattering down on Aunt Rebecca's suitcase, just inside the closet door, and four more little streams had found weak places in the shingles of the gable, after the long drought, while

in the angle of a door-jamb a steady trickle defied any pail to get under it. Jones hunted receptacles to set under the perpendicular leaks, while Mrs. Jones brought a basket of discarded clothing, and ministered to the trickle.

"One tub, three pails, one wash-bowl, one dish-pan; two aprons, one pair pajamas, one hickory shirt, two bath-towels, and a bunch of newspapers," enumerated Mr. Jones wearily, from the door: "that ought to hold it for awhile. Next, we fix up Auntie in our room, and bring some cots downstairs, don't we?"

The night was filled with music, of an elemental kind, but the cares that infested the day refused to fold their tents; for there were constant sorties to fix banging shutters, shift the pails, and wring out the cloths. About three in the morning, a new streamlet tracked Aunt Rebecca down. They moved her bed to the other side of the room and set to work anew, while her meek brown eyes looked on, from beneath the ample frill of her boudoir cap. She made but one gentle comment, choosing the psychological moment with fiendish accuracy.

"So this," said Aunt Rebecca, "is where you come to rest."

It was a worn and weary trio that waded through the raw orange of the wet, new-gravelled street, to the station platform, in the sullen gray of Monday morning. The local roofer was there, and while Jones seized the opportunity for an interview, Aunt Rebecca took an influenza tablet, poured a fresh supply of camphor on her handkerchief, and turned to her niece.

"Ethel," she observed with plaintive conviction, "we've had an awful time, of course, but there's one reason why I'm not sorry I came. If I had n't seen this place for myself, I might have been unwise enough to ask you to take care of my piano-player next summer. Now I know better."

NOW

BY CHARLOTTE FISKE BATES

MY life slips out its past and is-to-be
 And hugs the present tight:
 Though pain and darkness fill futurity,
 What matters it to-night?

My life and heart were dreary yesterday;
 I lived—scarce caring how!
 Smiling, I cast the memory away,
 Pressing the lips of Now!

"COME SEBEN, COME 'LEBEN"

By KENNETH GROESBECK

WASHINGTON BISMARCK JONES was perfectly happy. He had been well fed on corn-pone and molasses, the temperature in the damp cellar wavered around blood-heat, and he held three kings. And it was one of the bitterest recollections of his primitive life that his opponent should have chosen just that moment to push back his chair with an oath—for Washington Bismarck did not see the signal—and declare a misdeal. For weeks afterwards he tried to piece together the happenings that came so fast to the little crowd of negroes in the damp cellar, but his mind was unequal to the task. There had been shouts, some one had hit him, he had swung a chair—and he was in prison.

Such had been the miraculous transition from a state of bliss to one of doubtful desirability. And now, after weeks of being pushed around from cell to court-room, some one told him he was to go for five years to the turpentine camps of Florida, because of—what had the man said?—assault with intent to kill.

They marched him in chains from the wheezy train across miles of level sandy country, spotted with clumps of palmetto stubble, under the blazing sun. He carried a bundle of all he possessed, and on the top of that bundle was a possession dearer to the heart of Washington Bismarck Jones than the whole wide world—his banjo. There was just one thought in his mind as he tramped stolidly along, his eyes on the battered shoes of the convict in front of him: would they let him keep it? And they did. So when he was thrust into the big whitewashed room with thirty others of his kind, and they made no attempt to take it away from him, even when he began to pick tentatively at the strings, he muttered contentedly, "Dis ain't so bad, nohow."

Which was Washington's way of accomplishing the philosophic observation that anticipation is usually worse than realization.

The very next morning, it being Monday, he began the life which was to be his lot for five years. At daybreak they were aroused, and given a hurried "bait" of salt meat and biscuit, then they filed out of the stockade, hatless, coatless, bootless, and began their long tramp across country, an armed guard or two and a couple of hound dogs trailing along behind. Into infested swamps and marshes they plunged up to their waists, and the day's work began. It was fearfully hard work, running back and forth, back and forth, between the pine trees and the barrels

of resinous gum and pitch. By noon Washington was sure he was going to die. He was sick with the burning sun, his feet were cut and bleeding from the sharp blades of the palmetto. And when the squad filed back into the stockade, late in the evening, his mind was black with the lust for murder.

But they gave him cold beans, fat meat, and corn-bread, which he ate ravenously. And as he sat with his fellows in the dirty bunk-room after supper and fingered the strings of his beloved banjo, his anger died. It was n't so bad, after all.

So it went for a year, and at the end of that time he was quite contented. He was very strong, of a naturally cheerful and inconsequent disposition, and his banjo made him a king among men. And then the misfortune came. For one night, as the guard was passing, a half-breed negro made some remark, there was a roar of laughter, and disaster fell upon Washington Bismarck Jones. The guard kicked him savagely as he sat against the wall, which was not so bad, but—they took away the banjo. And away went his hard-earned prestige, away went the one comfort of his life.

It is very difficult to realize what a difference it makes when, having exactly one source of happiness, this is taken away. It turned Washington in a twinkling from a docile, obedient prisoner into the most dangerous man in camp. And the guard, old in experience with people of his kind, looked doubtfully at his great arms and legs showing through the tattered convict stripes as he sprawled sullenly on the floor, and temporized.

"Tell you what, Wash," he said good-naturedly, looking down at the mighty form on the floor. "You give us a good chase to-morrer—no sneakin', mind yuh—and we'll give ye back th' plink-plink. Hey?"

In an instant Washington Bismarck Jones was his old, contented self. "'Deed Ah will, boss, suh," he said eagerly. "'Deed Ah will."

He knew what it meant. The hound dogs were too valuable to lose their ability to scent a runaway prisoner for lack of practice. So once a week—and it was the worst punishment the camp afforded—some prisoner pretended to make a break for freedom. There had been cases where the ferocious pursuers had made the freedom one from the cares of this world, and others where the treacherous swamps or the crocodiles had taken their share in the game. But Washington went to sleep with a light heart, for the banjo was to be his again.

They gave Washington an extra ration of corn-pone the next morning, and, because it was Sunday, the whole camp assembled to see him start, watching him, for the most part, with dull, lack-lustre eyes. So off he ran, on the tips of his toes, his big body delighting in the imitation freedom, and disappeared from sight in a clump of low-growing marsh shrubbery. They gave him twenty minutes' start, and Washington made the most of it. He plunged recklessly through marsh and sand, doubled cunningly

on his tracks, but all the time kept clear of the open-water lakes he passed occasionally. For he knew that the dogs would lose the scent if he took to swimming, and that meant no more banjo.

Perhaps two hours later he stopped panting at the edge of a small lake, and looked around him. Faintly in the distance he could hear the baying of the dogs and the shouts of the men, and he smiled. He was indeed “giving them a good chase,” but it was nearly time to let them catch him. Would n't do to have a fool nigger show too much skill at getting away, he reasoned simply. These yere white men—they did n't like that. And then, suddenly, he lifted his head and listened. There it was again: a cry—and it sounded like a child.

He ran rapidly along the shore of the lake, and, suddenly rounding a wooded bend, he saw her. She was huddled on a tiny patch of marshy earth no more than three feet across that jutted raggedly out of the water. An upturned boat floated sluggishly near her. And alongside the patch of earth lay what looked like a log in the water, motionless, patient. Washington knew perfectly well that it was only a matter of minutes before that log would climb slowly upon the little island, its cruel eyes unwinking and inexorable, and then—— In the distance the dogs bayed again, louder.

For once in his life, Washington Bismarck Jones *thought*. If he went away, retracing his steps, they would soon catch him. It was about dinner-time, and that was when he ought to be caught. If he plunged into the water, two things would happen. The dogs would lose the scent, the white men would be displeased, and he would never see his banjo again. Also, there was that thing that lay so silent, so close to the sobbing child. What would *that* do as he swam up beside it?

Just at that moment the log moved, and the child, watching it with fascinated and horror-struck eyes, shrieked. And Washington Bismarck Jones plunged into the water, and swam, great, rushing, powerful strokes, wondering dimly at himself. “Suttenly,” he murmured as he swam—“suttenly dis am de end.”

Almost instantly the quiet lake was lashed into a tempest, centring about the foam that swirled around two mighty bodies thrashing in its centre. For the log was electrified into horrible life, writhing with great heaves of a mighty tail under the mighty body that bestrode it, whose strong black fingers clutched convulsively at the evil snout, in the desperate attempt to find the eyes. And then, all of a sudden, there was a mighty convulsion, a swirl, and the tempest ceased. And up on the tiny island crawled Washington Bismarck Jones.

Into the lake again, the child on his back—out on the other side—up with staggering steps to the great house that now appeared beyond the trees, and then the weary walk back to the stockade, through the noon silence.

Quite clear he was in his mind as to what he had done. The silence was the worst sign of all. The dogs had lost the scent, and he had lost his banjo. And dully he wondered again why he had done it, and found no answer.

They were even angrier than he had expected, those men behind the palisade. His dripping clothes told the story of how he had escaped them and spoiled a morning's sport, and they had lost a dog worth six niggers. So they broke the banjo over his head, and put him in the underground cell to think things over on an empty stomach.

To this day they tell the story of how the Governor and his little daughter came to the Turpentine Camp and took away a worthless nigger who had spoiled a hunt and killed a dog. And behind the Governor's big house, beside his own cabin, Washington Bismarck Jones sits all the day long and lovingly fingers the strings of a banjo such as never appeared to him in his wildest dreams. He does not understand, but the world is very good.

THE WHITE ROSE

BY DANSKE DANDRIDGE

I SEE in the garden-border
 A dream of beauty rare,
 For the white rose blooms, in order
 That the moon may call her fair.

In the tangled garden lonely,
 No other blooms are nigh,—
 The trellised roses only,
 And the white rose of the sky.

And all the night is sleeping,
 Except the whippoorwill,
 And the distant mountains keeping
 A drowsy vigil still.

Come out to the garden, lover,
 And drink the dreaming rose,
 And bid the moon discover
 The secret that she knows.

Then turn to the lady tender,
 And read in her eyes' love-light
 The meaning they surrender
 Of the rose, and the moon, and the night.



WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

THE PATH OF GLORY

THE Mexican war talk brought out a great deal of fine spirit, and it brought out also a whole lot of buncombe. The most vociferous son of Mars that I met, in the hot-bed which skirted the Mexican border, was a pale but fiery clerk in a dry-goods store (where he made the aisles to ring); the most quiet people were the army men and women themselves.

Those who are bred to arms know what war means. Sherman knew, and his language was plain; the South knew, and it has not entirely forgotten; and the North knew, too—although it chanced not to know all. It is strange to me that among the foremost in war spirit, in this year 1914, were some Civil War veterans themselves. Of all persons, they should be the ones to dread war, from the ground up, rather than lament the fact that their marching days were over. If it had been 1865 instead of 1914, they would have been of different mind, I fancy. Yet this is not criticism; nobody can criticise love of country and of Flag, and eagerness to maintain them. I merely would remark that war still is war; and war of 1914 is not less in its horrors than war of 1863.

The army and navy know—and know better than the clerk behind the counter, or even the National Guardsman. Yet war means more, in an attractive way (if there be any attractive way) to the officer in army and navy than to the civilian. It means promotion, activity, and the opportunity to make use of those talents hoarded and coddled for just such an opportunity. But I have failed to meet an officer, old or young, who did not hope for peace.

You might think that somewhere in army or navy circles there might lurk the spirit militant. You might rather expect to find it in the family, at least; perhaps among the non-combatants—if, when war arrives, spreading wide its ghastly field, a non-combatant is a possible quantity. You might anticipate finding it in a woman whose father had been a soldier, whose husband is a soldier, whose sons are soldiers, and whose daughters have married “into the army.” But when the news of Vera Cruz came, and the troops were hastened southward, she was the saddest woman in town. Glory? Speak not to her of glory. The Flag? Ah, the Flag. She had been born wrapped in the Flag, and her country was sacred. But the glory of war somehow did not appeal to her. When some of us spoke lightly of war, she looked as though she was listening to fools. War is only war, wherever fought, however fought, and why ever fought. To those who know, and realize that they know, it has but the one meaning.

EDWIN L. SABIN.

OUR NATIONAL RAG-TIME

IT has been said by no less an authority than John Philip Sousa that there is no such thing as “patriotic music”—the voice of a nation sounding its triumph or grief in its own tongue—and to prove this the fact is cited that all the great national anthems are stolen from the music of other countries.

This seems strange, for each city, even, has its own sounds and scents—so much so that a blind man could not mistake London for Paris, or either for New York. No doubt the tunes picked out on banjos by the untrained fingers of the Southern ducky, and said to be essentially American, would prove on investigation to be the echo of some long-dead African ear; but to us they breathe plantation love under the magnolias.

Syncoated music—rag-time—that came so valiantly in a few years ago, is surely American. Vilmos Westony, a Hungarian pianist, admires the rag because it has the American dash and vim, and he claims that no European composer can produce it. Nor can the European play it with any good effect, as Westony’s own red-coated countrymen prove very amusingly, sometimes, when they attempt it.

It is our own very patter—the dim vibration of life—that we often think we hear in the murmur of a crowded theatre, between the acts, or at a supper restaurant, when electric forces are loosed, and laughter and gay voices and the clink of glasses all chime in an odd tempo that is like the tramp of a jubilant army.

Musical discoverers, hearing this voice, have sought to set our most ringing anthems to it, in place of the stolen lilt they are now sung to. They even argue that our Star-Spangled Banner be hung on the rag-time peg, where we might bravely say we saw it through the early light of the dawn. But syncopated music was carried to a popular grave in a funereal cake-walk so far as artistic acclaim was accorded it in this country: it was associated with the stigma of vaudeville; but, again, this would indicate that it is the true voice of the people—the poetry of “the push.”

It echoes our life—not, maybe, the life of yacht-decks or country houses, but the hurrying, teeming existence of our American cities, with people thronging through the streets, eddying in and out of shops and hotels, elbowing their way into cars and motor-houses and subways, jumping in and out of taxis at smart restaurant doors in the great chase after business, pleasure, and excitement.

The very monotone of rag-time is our own echo, for if there is one characteristic of us, it is the manner in which we all seek to swim in the same pool. Keep moving—step lively—these are our slogans, and let him who dares neglect them. It means absolute failure to depart from the restless procession after something. We must choose between the quick and the dead.

So-called darcy melody, played in the odd, broken time that is called rag, comes nearer to being American music than anything that has yet been evolved. If Sousa tried his hand at it, maybe he would produce that which he claims does not exist—national music.

KATE MASTERSON.

ELECTRICITY IN THE OPERATING-ROOM

ELECTRICITY has steadily and persistently spread from the days of Faraday and Galvani until it now bids fair to displace almost every other working force. In man's hands it has entered the domains of the sea, the air, the mines, the circumambient ether, the workshop, the home, the field, the orchard, the library, and the physician's and dentist's offices.

Now it has jumped into the surgeon's sanctum-sanctorum, the operating-room. Instead of the old saw, the chisel, the hand instruments that fatigued the surgeon so that his hand often trembled and lost its efficiency, the electric bone-cutter has there taken up its convenient and permanent abode.

The drill, the hammer, the chisel, the reamer, the trephine, must now pass with the snuff-box and coats of mail into the limbo of forgotten

things. Electric-machine makers have produced a sterilizable motor for the use of surgeons, all clad in perfect aseptic apparel.

These sterilizable hand-motors are reliable and certain, and the surgeon can attach any sort of blade, drill, saw, or cutting instrument, to the motor. Dr. Walter G. Stern of Cleveland, who was acquainted with the small electric hand-drills used in the steel and iron trades, used these as models and guides and adapted them at a very small cost for surgical purposes.

The bone-cutting electric drill is fitted with a removable, universal hold which will firmly grasp and automatically centre all manner of cutting instruments of any size to three-eighths of an inch in diameter at the shank. It can be run on any kind of a street lighting current.

Dr. Stern's method of use includes the sterilizing the whole outfit in canvas bags. After the usual preparation, disinfection and manipulation of the dressings, just as is done in all operating-rooms, the operator seizes the motor firmly at the handle and inserts the precise instrument desired.

This has added greatly to the success of surgery, and the efficiency and good judgment of the surgeon. He has leisure and reserve energy enough to apply his muscles and blood to other purposes.

LEONARD KEEN HIRSHBERG, A.B., M.A., M.D.

IMEROS

BY EDGAR SALTUS

MY heart a haunted manor is, where Time
 Has fumbled noiselessly with mouldering hands:
 At sunset ghosts troop' out in sudden bands,
 At noon 't is vacant as a house of crime;

But when, unseen as sound, the night-winds climb
 The higher keys with their unstilled demands,
 It wakes to memories of other lands,
 And thrills with echoes of enchanted rhyme.

Then, through the dreams and hopes of earlier years,
 A fall of phantom footsteps on the stair
 Approaches near, and ever nearer yet,
 A voice rings through my life's deserted ways:
 I turn to great thee, Love. The empty air
 Holds but the spectre of my own regret.

LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

DECEMBER, 1914



UNCLE NOAH'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

BY LEONA DALRYMPLE

Author of "Uncle Noah's Christmas Inspiration," "Diane of the Green Van," etc.

[This is Miss Dalrymple's first story since the publication of her famous success, "Diane of the Green Van." It is complete in itself, but those who have followed the author's previous work will recognize an old friend in *Uncle Noah*.]

I CHRISTMAS EVE had touched the old plantation with a wand of cheer. Beyond the trees, silhouetted darkly against the snowy fields, the rambling house patched the dusk with squares of light. Holly wreaths, hung in the windows by the solitary old negro servant who had clung to Colonel Fairfax since the days before the war, etched upon the snow ragged shadows of leaves and berries which to Job, the fierce old turkey gobbler prowling about them in mystified interest, were sufficiently deceptive to tempt him into ineffective pecks.

For Job was restless and hungry and presently if the gentle old negro, whose shadow loomed grotesquely on the kitchen shade, did not appear and begin the nightly ceremonial of driving his rebellious pet to roost in the barn, Job would be obliged to revert to the habit of his ancestors and roost, in a supperless manner unbefitting the imperial tyrant that he was—in a tree.

For the fact that Uncle Noah had

forgotten his beloved pet, there were many reasons.

The holly-decked windows and doorways were a reason; the pantry groaning with Christmas delicacies was a reason; the spotless order of the thread-bare old house was still another reason. For young Massa Dick, the Colonel's son, was coming home from the North for Christmas with his wife, Major Verney's niece—and Uncle Noah's Christmas responsibilities had been sufficient to banish for once the needs of his feathered chum.

Ears primed for the jingle of sleighbells, the ducky hobbled to the library with a question. Colonel Fairfax rattled his newspaper, lowered his bushy eyebrows and glanced sternly at the clock.

"Certainly it's time they were here," he boomed, "unless those prancing imps of the Major's have run away with the sleigh. It's my opinion the Northern express is late again—must be! 'Pon my word, Patricia, my dear," he added, turning

to his gentle, white-haired wife, "things are not done now as they were in our day. There's a lack of conscience in things—a certain—unreliable—ha—hum!—Uncle Noah—do see to that log. The room's blistering."

Now Uncle Noah knew well enough that the Northern express was not late and that the heat of the room was largely due to the Colonel's impatience to see his son, but he mildly dabbed at the blazing log in the fireplace and cleared his throat.

"'Pears like I hain't never seen sich a Christmasy kind o' log!" he grumbled, showering sparks about, "'Pears to be all sparks an' crackle an' sich-like Christmasy fussin'." He coughed delicately. "Mebbe, sah, mebbe, Massa Dick, 'stid o' lettin' de Major bring young Massa Dick an' Missy Ruth from de Cotesville station—mebbe I jus' oughta hitched up ol' Mingo an' druv in maself. He's mos' powahful spirited, dat Mingo, an' full o' ginger jus' account o' standin' idle in de barn—"

Now Mingo, last of the Colonel's blooded stock, had been dead this many a year and Job was the hermit king of the lonely barn, but this was a flight of fancy in which the loyal darky frequently indulged in stubborn pretense that the old plantation was much the same as it had been in kindlier times.

So to-night the Colonel, a willing coadjutor, gravely shook his head.

"No, no, Uncle Noah," he said. "Major Verney *would* drive into Cotesville himself—insisted upon it—looked to me indeed—ahem! as if he might grow quarrelsome if I denied him the privilege of meeting his niece. Better open a window, Uncle Noah, 'pon my word that *is* a Christmasy log!"

Uncle Noah obeyed.

"Gord-a-massy, Massa Dick," he exclaimed, peering suddenly over his

spectacles at a shadow beneath the window, "if I hain't gone an' plumb fo'got to chase Job to roost! Fo' de Lawd, sah, if he hain't out dere, pert an' sassy as yoh please, peckin' at de shadder berries on de ground an' agobblin' away, jus' to remind me. If he hain't de sassiest bird!" he added in a glow of pride. "Hi, dar, yoh Massa Job Fairfax, yoh jus' git along an' make tracks fo' dat barn. Doan' yoh gobble at me. Hain't I goin' feed yoh soon as I git time to breathe?"

Grumbling benevolently, the old man hurried away to feed and house his pet, and the nightly chase was on. Having pinioned the squawking turkey beneath his arm with an indulgent chuckle, Uncle Noah entered the tumble-down barn where he fed his prisoner and consigned him to a roost of shingles in an ancient, dusty carriage house capacious enough to hint of gayer and kindlier days.

Outside in the quiet rang suddenly the cheery jingle of sleigh-bells and a genial "Whoa!" and Uncle Noah hobbled hurriedly to the door.

"Dar!" he grumbled in mild reproof, "Major Verney back from de Cotesville station a'ready an' I ain't had time to change dis yere ol' ragged coat, jus' sprintin' about in de snow after yoh! G'long, now, yoh quit dat peckin' at my ankles!"

A wild, protesting gobble followed the banging of the barn-door. Uncle Noah hurried back to the kitchen, struggled into his ancient company coat and was presently out upon the porch, beaming over his steel-rimmed spectacles at the laughing group about Major Verney's sleigh.

Through the crisp cold air came the sound of voices.

"Major," exclaimed young Dick Fairfax, smiling, "do come in for a minute anyway. You're nothing like so busy, I'm sure, as you look!"

The Major tugged plaintively at his beard.

"My boy," he urged, "A Christmas bachelor is a very busy man. And Grandmother Verney has built up a list of Christmas duties for me that would pave the road to Cotesville. Now mind, I'll expect you all over to Fernlands to-night. I'll send Uncle Neb over for you at seven-thirty sharp and we'll usher old Grandfather Christmas in to-night over a blazing Yule-log. Out of my way, there, Dick. I'm in a most tremendous hurry!"

"Fol-de-rol!" boomed the Colonel sternly. "Into the house there with you. There's a steaming bowl of toddy on the stove and hurry or no, you'll march in and taste it." He turned suddenly to his daughter-in-law and smiled down into the girl's great gray eyes, so like the Major's. "Ruthie," he added gently, "only you can manage the Major as you manage us all, my dear!" Which seemed to please Dick Fairfax mightily for his dark face glowed and laughing a little, he slipped his arm suddenly about the girl's shoulders.

"Uncle," begged Ruth impetuously, "please *do* come. And hurry," she added with delicate imperiousness as she adjusted Mrs. Fairfax's shawl, "Mother Fairfax's shawl is thin and the air is brimful of Christmas frost."

"My dear!" said the old lady gently as she kissed the girl's smooth young cheek, "you think of everything!"

The Major bowed profoundly.

"When the Christmas Princess wills," said he, "we all obey. Colonel," with an irresistible twinkle, "you're an atrocious old schemer. Out of the way, there, Dick! I can escort my niece indoors without the assistance of a handsome young renegade like you, young man."

Now it was that Uncle Noah, an expectant figure framed in the lamp-light streaming brightly from the

hallway, found himself the target of a hearty avalanche of Christmas greetings at which his wrinkled brown face glowed and shuffling indoors he grandly bowed the Colonel and his family into the library beyond where the blazing woodfire was sending forth its merry shadows to dance upon the pine and holly.

Now what with chuckling and rubbing his hands together—what with wiping his glasses and dropping them and patting young Massa Dick on the shoulder—what with beaming upon the Christmas Princess and wishing everybody the merriest of Christmases in an excited quaver, Uncle Noah was in such a benevolent state of hysteria that action became imperative. Wherefore he seized the poker and attacked the log until the fire leaped and roared up the chimney in a Christmas frenzy of delight.

"God bless my soul, Uncle Noah!" exclaimed the Colonel hastily. "Don't make that log any more Christmasy than you can help. Better bring the toddy. The Major's restless."

Uncle Noah obeyed. And presently as he appeared in the doorway bearing the great, steaming bowl upon a tray, there was a sudden hush. For they were all thinking of another Christmas when the old negro's devotion had mended a quarrel between the proud old Colonel and his spirited son.

And thinking thus—the Colonel raised his glass.

"To Uncle Noah," he said huskily, "and the memory of another Christmas."

Mrs. Fairfax cried a little. And the Major making a vast to-do about nothing at all—furtively patted the old man's back.

II

Now for all Uncle Noah could not remember a time when the old Fairfax house had been so warm with

Christmas cheer, save perhaps in the old days before the war, an irresistible melancholy crept slowly into his heart as he shuffled back and forth preparing supper, and later when Uncle Neb had dashed up with a festive tinkle of sleigh-bells and whisked the Colonel and his family away over the mile or so of snowy roads to Major Verney's, Uncle Noah in his rocking chair by the kitchen fire listened to the dying echo of the sleigh-bells, blinked and swallowed painfully and presently, lighting a queer old lantern, departed for the barn where Job slept soundly upon his roost of shingles.

Unusually silent to-night, Uncle Noah hung the lantern high among the rafters and seating himself upon a rickety stool, prodded the drowsy turkey with a gentle finger. At which Job, somewhat disgruntled, ruffled his handsome feathers and moved away.

"Now see yere, Massa Job Fairfax," began Uncle Noah mildly, "it's Chris'mus Eve an' I hain't reckonin' on spendin' it wif a sleepy ball o' feathers whut ain't apparently got no head. . . . Hum. . . . Whut yoh say? . . . Yoh has got a head but it's kivered? . . . No use talkin', Job, I'se spoiled yoh but—" Uncle Noah gulped and looked away—"Yoh's all I got an' I 'spect like a fool nigger, I'se used yoh mos' like a chile."

The old darky fell silent and finding that Job had relapsed into slumber sighed and buried his head despondently in his hands. Somehow the quiet that lay over the old plantation invested the night with infinite loneliness, peopling the dim and dusty barn with the ghosts of many a by-gone Christmas when Uncle Noah had proudly led the singing darkies who carried in the Colonel's Yule-log.

"Job," he burst forth, vigorously

prodding the fowl again into disgruntled wakefulness, "I doan' 'spect yoh care if yoh hain't got nobuddy belongin' to yoh Chris'nus Eve. I 'spect yoh're so proud an' haughty you doan' mind watchin' de Colonel an' ol' Miss happy wif de young folks. 'Tain't in turkey sense nohow for it to make yoh powahful lonely an'—an— out of it all but I hain't a turkey an'—an' I hain't had nobuddy belongin' to me since Mammy Chloe died. Hum! Hain't never tol' yoh nuthin' 'bout dat boy o' mine, onliest chile me an' Mammy Chloe ever had, eh, Job? . . . Doan' wish to hear nuthin' 'tall 'bout him, yoh say?"

. . . Uncle Noah's honest eyes grew stern. "Massa Job Fairfax," said he, "yoh hain't made no mistake dis time. Dat boy o' mine, he was a wuthless nigger whut took to drink an' he runned away from de Colonel an' never come back an' he broke ol' Mammy Chloe's heart! Massa Frank Verney, de Major's cousin—he got wild blood in his veins an' he drink an' game an' carry on tremenjus— an' dat po' weak boy o' mine he crazy-mad admirin' Massa Frank. 'Anything Massa Frank Verney do,' he say stubborn, 'good nuff fo' me!' An' *he* drink an' game an' carry on an' bimeby—sho' nuff, Massa Frank up and bolts away out o' dese yere parts an' dat boy o' mine he git powahful sullen and discontented. 'Tain't long 'foh he bolts away too, an' any nigger whut runs away from de Colonel ain't wuth his salt. Job Fairfax, I 'clare to goodness, sah, if yoh doan stop sleepin' I'll push yoh off de roost!"

Acutely annoyed by the insistent forefinger, Job awoke with a desperate gobble and lurched indignantly at Uncle Noah's stickpin, whereupon the scandalized darky promptly removed it to a place of safety. For this ancient heirloom which resembled a grain of corn mounted upon a

needle had been a cherished gift from Mammy Chloe.

"Foh de Lawd, Job," grumbled Uncle Noah mildly, "I 'spects yoh'll gobble in dat ol' pin o' mine yet, onliest thing whut I has o' my own. Gawd o' Massy—if I hain't plumb fo'got! I hain't got no Chris'mus gif' foh de Colonel. . . . Hum! Dat comes o' fusteratin' de house all up wif pine an' holly foh young Massa Dick. Now see yere, Job, we gotta git right down to business an' 'cide whut to give de Colonel. I'se plumb scandalized at maself." Uncle Noah frowned and scratched his head.

"Job," he demanded, "whut am I goin' to give de Colonel? Tell me dat. Yoh're so powahful smart—whut am I agoin' to give him? . . . Hum! Job," he exclaimed presently, his kindly face aglow, "foh de Lawd, sah, I believe I'se thought o' de very thing. De Colonel he'll be mos' powahful s'prised an' pleased. Jiminy Crickets! I'se a goin' to buy back de ol' family silver whut me an' de Colonel sold las' year to keep de—de li'l financial crisis a secret from ol' Mis'—de ol' silver tea-pot an' de sugar bowl whut I sold Mis' Porter an'—an' de squatty li'l cream jug an' de spoons an' ladle an' present 'em to de Colonel an' ol' Mis'." And consulting an ancient wallet, protectively girded about with yards upon yards of string, Uncle Noah fell to counting aloud his slender hoard of savings.

It was sufficient; and Uncle Noah's noisy enthusiasm at this knowledge elicited from Job a muffled gobble of reproach. And thus it was that muffled in a faded red scarf, a ragged overcoat and an old fur cap, Uncle Noah presently set forth upon his Christmas Eve adventure, chuckling and peering over his spectacles at the rising moon as it mildly played its brightness upon the ragged ermine of the Christmas world.

III

Turning at length into a steep and snowy road among the pines, Uncle Noah climbed to a farm-house in a belt of cedars where he laboriously unwound his wallet and consulted Mrs. Polly Porter, a stout and comely matron with snapping black eyes and rosy cheeks and a handsome brood of babies.

"Why, Uncle Noah," she exclaimed kindly, "I *am* sorry, dear me! I'm more than sorry. Why, bless your old heart, it's barely a week since I gave the tea-pot and sugar bowl to Aunt Nancy Cary, she liked them so. Dear, dear, that *is* too bad!" And then as Uncle Noah, considerably crestfallen, fell to winding up his wallet, Polly patted his shoulder, for Polly's plump hand was the patting kind. "Why now, Uncle Noah," she added sympathetically, "I wouldn't feel so badly about it—yet. Dear me, no! I'll give you a note to her and since it's Christmas Eve, I'm sure she'll forgive us. A new neighbor of mine on the Pine Road," she explained pleasantly—"and she lives in the old stone cottage just above here at Bluebird Bend."

So after Polly had written the note, Uncle Noah climbed on up the Pine Road. It was high and lonely up here with the sharp night wind rustling fitfully among the pines through which, far below, glimmered the lights of Cotesville and a train winding luminously along the valley. And presently with a lacery of snowy branches to the left and right, the old Pine Road turned sharply around Bluebird Bend, and below in the Hollow where hordes of hardy bluebirds wintered, twinkled the lights of the old stone cottage.

Now it was astonishing enough surely, for the cottage to have a tenant after a decade or so of desuetude, but for it to have taken on such

an air of festivity brought Uncle Noah to a bewildered standstill on the road above.

Surely the brooding wing of the Christmas Eve as it swept its way over Bluebird Bend had dropped a feather or so of cheer upon the old stone cottage below. For its checkerboard windows glinted gold among the pines—Christmas wreaths hung in the patches of light and from the cottage itself issued such a tremendous and fitful whistling as Uncle Noah fancied he had never heard before. Now it was rapid and shrill and ornamented with trills and quavers and now it was soft and clear, drifting plaintively into the call of a bluebird. Most astonishing of all, however, were certain mysterious shadows upon the window shades.

For in the intervals of silence, there appeared first at one window and then at another, a vanishing pair of shadowy legs and coat-tails, ludicrously evanescent.

Once more the window patch to the left framed a grotesque flash of dangling legs and coat-tails followed immediately by the harsh and quarrelsome call of a crow and Uncle Noah in an irresistible spasm of curiosity scrambled down into the Hollow.

"I hain't never heard no such go-in's on afore," he decided in some excitement, "an' them shanks a scitter-witterin' 'bout the windows 'thout a head, hain't no ways reasonable."

The shadowy legs flashed again in a state of startling activity, accompanied by a jumble of very long and somewhat ragged coat-tails. In growing excitement Uncle Noah cautiously made his way to the side of the cottage, hoping for a shade less tightly drawn. He was presently rewarded. Just beyond a dense tangle of evergreen mottled with snow and moonlight, the shade was up, the

checkerboard window ruddy with the shadow of the wood-fire within. And Uncle Noah stared—for somehow the picture beyond opened dim and ancient corridors of memory peopled with forgotten folk of another day.

By a table bright with holly and candelabra sat Aunt Nancy Cary—at least, decided Uncle Noah, it must be she—wondrously garbed in a flowing, old-fashioned gown of lavender brocade, frayed and faded, and a lace fichu and cap yellow with age. But Aunt Nancy's fine dark eyes were still youthful for all the snow of her elaborately coiffed hair, and the foot which peeped from the satin hem, shod in a faded stocking of silk and a lavender slipper—was the small and finely molded foot of the gently bred.

"'Foh de Lawd," murmured Uncle Noah, "if—if dat hain't jus' such a dress as ol' Mis' used to wear afore she married de Colonel. I—I ricomember dem balloon kind o' skirts."

Now as he watched, Aunt Nancy, solitary guest at this Christmas board, poured herself another cup from the Fairfax tea-pot and smilingly nodded a signal toward a shadowy corner.

Instantly there broke forth another mysterious spasm of whistling and out from the shadows where by the crumbs upon his face and clothes he had evidently been conducting a Christmas celebration of his own, appeared Aunt Nancy's entertainer.

Twelve or fourteen years old he was—certainly no more—a young negro lad attired in bright green velvet breeches and an ancient swallow-tail coat evidently built for a very tall man—for the coat-tails dragged in the rear as he walked—and he was grinning impishly, rolling his eyes about with a startling show of white, and deftly performing upon a whistling keyboard of dusky fingers. To

Uncle Noah's scandalized vision he seemed some grotesque bird who had imperative need to hold up his ragged tail—and did so whenever his whistled imitations permitted the withdrawal of half of the dusky keyboard.

And whenever he completed an especially difficult or pleasing passage and Aunt Nancy applauded, this irrepressible young darky performed a rubber-like series of hand-springs and patrolled the room upon his hands with his ragged coat-tails flying.

But even now that the eccentric shadows upon the window shades were no longer a mystery, Uncle Noah lingered, staring first at the old-fashioned lady in lavender brocade and back to the whistling blackbird who was so peculiarly balanced that he was oftener upon his head than on his heels. Somehow this firelit picture dovetailed so quaintly into his cherished memories of the old South that he was quite loath to leave it.

But presently he wiped his glasses—for something in the vivid stir of memory had made his throat ache and his heart thrill to the olden times—and at last he climbed the stone-steps at the front and rapped on the cottage door. Whereupon certain hoarse and deep-toned birds within, who had been conducting a peculiar dialogue, emitted a shrill whistle of surprise and a second later the shade nearest the porch shot ceilingward propelled by the hand of the ragged blackbird in the emerald breeches, and a pair of eyes largely made up of white rolled alarmingly in the direction of the porch.

It was such a house of mystery altogether that Uncle Noah merely awaited developments. They came speedily enough. The young darky proceeded to the other end of the room by means of three hand-springs

and jauntily returned after an interval of marking time with an ancient blunderbus over his shoulder. At which Uncle Noah, staring in some alarm over his spectacles, was minded to retreat, but reflecting that the shade had doubtless been raised for this very purpose, he merely chuckled with gentle malice and continued to wait.

With startling suddenness the cottage door opened and a deep and terrible voice demanded—

“Halt! Who goes dar? Who goes dar, I say?” and following immediately in the normal pitch of a boy's voice, “Sho, Mis' Nancy, tain't nuthin' but an ol' nigger mos' a hundred whut couldn't hurt a flea!”

“Chad!” rebuked the voice within and Chad haughtily discarded his blunderbus and folded his arms.

“Well, whut yoh want, nigger?” he demanded, rolling his eyes about with fearful facility, “rappin' at a lady's country house in dead o' night, right in de middle o' a Chris'mus party an' right middleways o' de program. Answer me dat, nigger!”

Uncle Noah cleared his throat.

“Hum!” said he uncertainly. “Hum!” Whereupon Chad, disarmed by the general benevolence of his victim, suddenly unbent and grinned.

“Sho!” said he grandly, whisking his ragged coat-tails about in a reassuring manner, “doan yoh be afeared o' me, Uncle Jim Crow. I'se Mis' Nancy's Protector an' Cheerer-up an' I has to swell about an' put on airs. An' dat ol' blunderbus”—with a muffled giggle—“hain't nuthin' like so powahful as it looks. 'Sides”—with another giggle—“'taint loaded, 'cause it goes off in de corner by itself when it is.” And Aunt Nancy's ridiculous protector grinned and rolled his eyes about and indulged in such a grotesque pantomime that

Uncle Noah, irresistibly attracted by his breezy impudence, collapsed with a wheezy chuckle.

"Doan' I git dat stuff off good though?" demanded Chad proudly. "But Gawd-o-massy, nigger, hain't dis a rig, hain't it now? Claw-hammer with a frizzled train an' plush pants! Mis' Nancy she got a trunk load o' dese yere Noah ark duds an' we's celebratin' ol' times. . . . Yes, Mis' Nancy, I'se tellin' dis yere ol' nigger to g'long 'bout his business . . . Yas'm, I'se askin' him dis yere very minute whut he wants. . . . Whut yoh want, anyway, nigger?" he demanded in a lower voice. "I can't stand yere gossipin' Chris'mus Eve. I'se got mo' business on de program to cheer Mis' Nancy up. An' lemme tell yoh, Mis' Nancy's in powahful need o' cheerin' up to-night."

Uncle Noah mildly explained that he had a note from Mrs. Polly Porter.

"Mis' Nancy, he got a note from Mis' Porter," sing-songed Chad, rolling his eyes fearsomely about, where-upon Aunt Nancy sternly commanded him to bring it in.

Chad delivered the note, spiked to the end of the blunderbus, waited with his coat-tails tucked under his arms and a ridiculous air of deference until Aunt Nancy had read it and rigidly wheeled, marking time. Through the window Uncle Noah watched him turn two hand-springs but he was properly perpendicular when he appeared in the doorway.

"Uncle Jim Crow," said he haughtily, "yoh is a mighty lucky coon! Mis' Nancy she wanta see yoh an' lemme tell yoh now, nigger, she won't see nobuddy down South yere 'cept Mis' Polly Porter. Mis' Nancy she come down South yere to live solitary, she say, an' die in peace an' she cain't have nobuddy a-both-erin' her. I is de public agent whut

conducts all de commercial 'fabulations,' a phrase of considerable obscurity. Having delivered himself of which Chad led the way indoors. By the table Aunt Nancy Cary shaded her eyes from the glare of the candles and quietly told Chad to screen the fire.

"I—I beg yo' pardon, Mis' Nancy," stammered Uncle Noah, bowing low like an ancient cavalier, "but I—I'se buyin' back some o' de ol' family silver whut we sold las' year in—in ahem!—in a period o' —o' financial mis-delusion an'—an' upset an' Mis' Porter she sent me up de Pine Road to yoh."

With a hand as finely molded as the lavender-shod foot, Aunt Nancy indicated the Fairfax sugar bowl and the tea-pot.

"They are the ones you mean, aren't they, Uncle Noah?" she asked and shifted the candelabrum so that the light fell full upon the old man's face and left her own in shadow.

"Yas'm," said Uncle Noah and once more produced his wallet and fell laboriously to unwinding it, at which Chad who had been standing by the fire with his coat-tails draped fantastically upon his arm, sniggered at the uncoiling length of string.

"Chad!" commanded Aunt Nancy, "be silent. Uncle Noah," she added, restlessly tapping upon the table with her delicate, fragile hand, "I—I can't very well sell you the tea-pot and the sugar bowl, but since Mrs. Porter knows and is willing—why, I'll gladly give them to you."

But Uncle Noah, though he grandly bowed, gravely continued the gyratory motions of his hand about the wallet.

"Lemme—lemme thank yoh, Mis' Nancy," said he delicately, "but—but a gen'man has scruples."

"I'm quite sure," urged Aunt Nancy gently, "that you wouldn't have me *sell* a gift!"

The point was irrefutable. Uncle Noah bowed again.

"I reckon yoh couldn't," he owned fairly. "Ladies an' gen'men doan' sell gifs nohow—Colonel, I reckon, 'ud sooner die—an' so in de circumstances, Mis' Nancy, I'se jus' naturally forced to 'cept de sugar bowl an' de tea-pot, but I'se a goin' to present de money foh dem to charity." And Uncle Noah once more began the lengthy process of winding up his wallet.

"Sho!" sniggered Chad, winding up an imaginary wallet, "Sho! Uncle Jim Crow, why doan yoh git a fishin' reel to wind up dat ol' wallet?" And to Uncle Noah's discomfiture Chad's heels suddenly appeared where his head had been and then his head appeared where his heels had been, after which the blackbird rolled his eyes, flirted his coat-tails about and grandly bowed.

"Yas'm," he quavered in tones that made their originator stare blankly over his spectacles. "Ladies an' gen'men doan sell gifs nohow—Colonel, I reckon 'ud sooner die an'—an' so in de—"

"Chad!" rebuked Aunt Nancy sternly. "Uncle Noah," she added gently, "you mustn't mind Chad. He mimics everyone."

Seeming to find the gentle dignity of her guest attractive Aunt Nancy fell to questioning him about the Colonel's Christmas, tactfully drawing the garrulous old negro on and on until flattered by her interest, he somehow rambled far afield, touching now upon the past and now upon the present until the clock upon the mantel struck ten.

"Jiminy Crickets, Mis' Nancy," he exclaimed, "I'se gotta go. I'se gotta collect de spoons an' de ladle yet an' de squatty li'l cream jug." And shuffling hurriedly to the door he bowed. "Good night, Mis' Nancy, an' Merry Chris'mus."

"Good night, Uncle Noah," said Aunt Nancy kindly, "and let me—let me wish that you and the Colonel and Mrs. Fairfax will have such a merry Christmas as—as you tell me you used to have." And Uncle Noah fancied her voice seemed very tired and he blamed himself for lingering so long.

Outside the house he anxiously consulted Chad about the proper disposal of the money which he felt Aunt Nancy had indirectly contributed to charity.

Chad considered.

"Humph," said he, "if yoh wanta please Mis' Nancy I guess yoh better take dat money an' make a Chris'mus foh dem five white trash Ardusi kids whut live at de foot o' de Pine Road. Tony Ardusi he run errands foh Mis' Nancy when I got mo' important business 'bout de house an' Mis' Nancy she worry 'bout him a lot. Ol' Pap an' Mom Ardusi drink lick an' young Tony he gotta mind de kids. Get along now, Uncle Jim Crow. Yoh've held up de Chris'mus program long enuff blowin' 'bout de Colonel's family."

"Hum!" commented Uncle Noah as he climbed to the road above the Hollow, "how'd Mis' Nancy know ma name was Uncle Noah? 'Spect mos' likely Mis' Porter mus' have wrote dat in de note."

But Mrs. Porter had not. And had Uncle Noah known it—had he known too that behind in the cottage in the Hollow, Aunt Nancy Cary had fallen forward upon her knees sobbing and shaking so wildly that Chad had run to her side in alarm, helped her gently to a chair by the fire and forthwith in accordance with his singular conception of "cheering up" begun the performance of such extraordinary antics of body and mouth that his mistress fell to laughing through her tears, he would have wondered greatly.

IV

Now as Uncle Noah shuffled spryly in sight of the dilapidated Ardusi house at the foot of the Pine Road, he caught sight of a forlorn and ragged little figure upon the porch. It was Tony Ardusi, staring miserably up the lonely road. Uncle Noah's kindly heart warmed to the wistful little watcher in the moonlight, then he drew noiselessly into shadow. For Tony was praying, a swift, broken murmur of Italian to the Holy Mother and when at last the boy ended, staring stonily again up the moonlit road, Uncle Noah approached and touched him diffidently on the shoulder.

"Whut—whut yoh watchin' foh, Tony?" he ventured gently.

Tony shifted restlessly, then with a pitiful glance into the sympathetic face before him he sobbed and buried his face in his hands, no longer the grave, old-fashioned understudy of an alcoholic mother with a conscience of responsibility far beyond his years, but an unhappy child facing the specter of a barren Christmas.

"Oh, Uncle Noah," he blurted with a great gulp, "I gotta sit here an' watch 'cause Teo an' Toddy an' Tommy an' Therese got sleepy an' they made me promise to watch sharp. They're afeard ol' Kris might go by without stoppin' an' all the time I know he can't never come here 'cause I—I hain't got no Chris'mus money—pop he found it." The boy's dark face reddened—then he fiercely caught his breath and hid his face again.

Uncle Noah patted the boy's head.

"Doan' yoh go foh to givin' out, now, Tony!" he crooned kindly. "Yoh is a mos' powahful brave li'l man, everybuddy say so. Where's yo' mammy?"

Tony silently nodded at a brightly lighted house across the fields from

which floated the Bacchanalian wail of an accordion and the clatter of dancing feet.

"Hum!" snorted Uncle Noah, "skylarkin' de Holy Chris'mus in, eh?"

Tony reddened.

"I—I prayed," he said in a low voice, "I prayed for somethin' Christmasy to happen—"

"Sumthin' Chris'masy goin' to happen!" announced Uncle Noah with decision and coughed delicately. "Now, see yere, Tony, I'se jus' come into a—ahem!—a li'l bit o' money (Tony had vague and thrilling notions of a vast inheritance) an' I'se agoin' to see yoh through dis yere Chris'mus. Hain't no use givin' yoh money 'cause like as not yo' daddy 'ud git it, so I'se goin' to hab a li'l Chris'mus party an'—an' a Chris'mus tree in de Colonel's barn an' yoh goin' tell dem poor chillun dat ol' Kris he done sent a messenger to yoh, 'splainin' his delay an' whut he goin' do foh yoh Chris'mus night."

Tony's great black eyes blazed.

"Oh, Uncle Noah," he choked, "Uncle Noah!" And ended with a passionate shower of Italian. Uncle Noah stared blankly over his spectacles.

"Tony," said he, "I cain't no how understan' dat heathen sputterin', but I'se goin' to collect yoh all 'bout eight to-morrow night in a—a carriage. Dem two miles is mos' too much walkin' foh de li'l chillun. An' now I'se a-goin' into Cotesville an' buy de Chris'mus trimmin's."

There was fortunately little difficulty in buying back the Fairfax spoons, the cream jug and the ladle, and presently, his heart alive with the merry spirit of the Christmas night, Uncle Noah halted before a store, bright with lights and piles of holly and asked a loungeer where he might "rent" a horse and wagon.

The lounge instantly awoke into active interest.

"Why say," said he generously, "suppose you take this outfit o' mine," carelessly indicating a cart and a somewhat angular beast by the curb, "he hain't so much on looks, perhaps, but he's big and strong—"

Uncle Noah unwound his wallet.

"How much foh de beast 'til mornin' after Chris'mus?" he queried politely.

Evidently staggered, the lounge glanced hurriedly about him and scratched his chin.

"Say two dollars," he offered magnanimously. Which offer Uncle Noah accepted.

"Hum," he demanded as he wound up his wallet again, "whut—whut yoh call dis yere ol' nag anyhow?"

Again the lounge scratched his chin.

"Oh," said he, "call him—call him Fiddle-de-dee. And when ye bring him back, just tie him to this here post outside the store. I'll be some-where about."

Beaming benevolently Uncle Noah drove off, uncomfortably conscious that Fiddle-de-dee's rump was abnormally steep, that his huge feet were rarely in perfect accord and that he was greatly addicted to snorting.

"I hain't never seen a horse like this afore!" he muttered as Fiddle-de-dee suddenly broke into a grotesque gallop. "Shanks all 'pear to work separate an' I cain't see much over dis yere mountain o' a rump ahead. Anybuddy whut sits on yo' rump, Fiddle-de-dee," he added with some disdain, "'ud toboggan off yo' head. An' Fiddle-de-dee hain't no kind o' a name for a horse anyhow."

Thus it was that near midnight, serenely unaware of a certain commotion outside the store where he had acquired the giant Fiddle-de-dee Uncle Noah drove out of Cotesville,

his cart laden with a Christmas tree and tinsel trimmings, the Fairfax silver and provisions for Fiddle-de-dee and the Christmas party. And presently as he thundered by Major Verney's fine old house, somewhat alarmed by the snorting Fiddle-de-dee's sudden heel-and-toe notions of speed, he caught the echo of the Christmas bells which far behind in Cotesville were gaily ringing in the Christmas morning.

"Hum!" said he blankly, "wonder whut de Colonel goin' say 'bout dat Chris'mus barn party o' mine. Funny, hain't had time nor wit nuff to think o' that afore."

Somewhat discomfited, Uncle Noah thundered on to Brierwood.

"No use talkin', Uncle Noah Fairfax," he soliloquized later, staring uneasily at the kitchen fire, "I'se in considerable o' a pickle, hain't no gittin' round dat. Colonel he goin' think I'se pretty pert invitin' guests o' ma own when Major Verney an' his ol' mother comin' over yere to help de Colonel celebrate de Chris'mus night. An'—an' de Colonel he so powahful proud an' stern, like as not he won't want dem white trash Ardisis in de barn. Reckon Job hain't goin' be any too pleased either. I 'clare to goodness I'se plumb kerflusterated." And Uncle Noah fell desperately to polishing the Fairfax silver. "No use talkin', Uncle Noah," he added sternly, "yoh gone an' got yo'self into a pickle, invitin' guests to de Colonel's barn. Whut's mo', yoh cain't no-how disappoint dem poor li'l chillun an'—an' I reckon yoh jus' gotta hold dat barn celebration on—on de quiet an' mebbe tell de Colonel de day after."

V

And in the morning with a giant Christmas wind rattling the old house and barn, there was a new di-

lemma to face. Fiddle-de-dee, contraband necessity for the Christmas party, was proving something of a responsibility. At dawn he had taken to drumming away on the barn floor with his hind foot until Uncle Noah, dismayed at his fiendish persistence, had crept indignantly out to his stall, thumped him mildly across the flank and muffled his clumsy feet in rags. And now as he absently prepared breakfast after a sleepless night of anxiety and furtive preparation for his party, Uncle Noah desperately fancied he could catch certain impish snorts above the howl of the Christmas wind. How account for Fiddle-de-dee if the Colonel grew suspicious!

From the library came the boom of the Colonel's deep voice:

"Well, Dick, my boy, a windy night and a very noisy one, eh? I slept but little myself—"

With a smothered groan Uncle Noah shuffled suddenly to the library and bowed the family in to breakfast.

Now conspicuous upon the breakfast table this windy Christmas morning were certain pieces of old family silver of which the Colonel had frequently thought with acute remorse while inexorably keeping the secret of their sale from his wife. And so as his keen eyes encountered first the Fairfax sugar bowl and then the cream jug, glinting cheerfully among the holly, his face turned very hot and red and he furtively wiped his glasses. When at last he could trust himself to meet Uncle Noah's anxious gaze there was a mute tribute in his eyes from which the darky turned hastily away, blinking with a sense of terrible guilt. After all he would have seen a trifle less confidence and regard in the Colonel's eyes had the latter known of the monster Fiddle-de-dee smuggled away in the barn.

To Uncle Noah, tortured victim of his own benevolence, it was an unforgettable Christmas. In the barn Fiddle-de-dee drummed with a rag-muffled hoof, snorted fierily and invented an endless variety of barn noises. Finding presently that hourly portions of oats appeared to quiet the incubus for a time at least, Uncle Noah fell desperately to feeding him. But Fiddle-de-dee's capacity, like his general architecture, was unusual; moreover, he increased alarmingly in girth, whereupon the distracted darky, fearful of his eventual inability to get the ridiculous animal through the barn doorway, abandoned the stuffing process and thereafter made as much noise in the kitchen as he could preparing dinner.

Thus the Christmas wore away with the wild wind rousing spectral phantoms of snow-dust from the barn-roof. And at half past seven, Uncle Neb brought Grandmother Verney and the Major over from Fernlands. So at last with the Colonel and his guests drawn up around a blazing Yule-log in the library, Uncle Noah stealthily drove the muffled Fiddle-de-dee forth to the Pine Road.

It was not yet eight. A fitful moon scudded wildly before the winter wind.

"Mebbe now, mebbe Mis' Nancy 'ud come to dat Chris'mus party o' mine," mused Uncle Noah, glowing. "Aye, golly, I reckon me an' ol' Fiddle-de-dee 'll jus' gallop up de bend an' ask her afore we collects dem Ardisis."

Again the cottage at Bluebird Bend was bright with lights and window wreaths; again from the Hollow came the muffled imitation of hoarse and quarrelsome birds unknown to man; and once more as Uncle Noah climbed the stone steps, the nearest shade shot ceilingward revealing Aunt Nancy in her laven-

der brocade and Chad, who threateningly swung back the door, rolled his eyes and shouldered the ancient blunderbus with a giggle.

"Well, whut yoh want now, Uncle Jim Crow?" he demanded loftily. "Hain't no mo'n started up de program dis time an' Mis' Nancy's powahful sad. . . . Mis' Nancy, Uncle Jim Crow he come climbin' up yere again an' Lawdy! he got an ol' green swaller-tail on hisself an' white gloves an' holly in de button-hole o' his over-coat."

Aunt Nancy sternly commanded Chad to bring the Christmas visitor in and was obeyed.

"Mis' Nancy," began Uncle Noah, bowing, "would yoh"—he cleared his throat—"would yoh mebbe come to ma Chris'mus party in de Colonel's barn? I'se got a tree foh dem poor Ardusi chillun out o' de—de charity money—an'—an' a dinner an' evergreen an' holly an' candles. I spec's it goin' be mighty fine when I lights up dem colored candles."

Aunt Nancy made a swift gesture of dismay.

"No, no, no, Uncle Noah!" she exclaimed. "I couldn't go, indeed I couldn't! I'm sorry, but I don't go out at all except now and then to Mrs. Porter's." Aunt Nancy's fine old face went very white and with trembling hands she shifted the candlelabrum.

"Mebbe," urged Uncle Noah, "mebbe yoh'd jus' come along in de cart an'—an' inspect de Chris'mus decorations if yoh couldn't stay. Dey is—dey is certainly splendiferous. I stayed up mos' all de night, Mis' Nancy, trimmin' up de wagon house an'—an' Job, ma ol' turkey, he hain't none too much pleased 'bout de holly fixin's on his roost. An'—an' de Colonel he doan know nuthin' 'tall about it—'clare to goodness he so powahful stern an' strict I doan' dare tell him. If yoh'd jus' come

along an' look at de Chris'mus rig-gins whut yoh presented to charity, I—I'd be mos' powahful pleased." And the wrinkled brown face beneath the fringe of white wool was very anxious and expectant.

Aunt Nancy shook her beautiful snowy head.

"No, no, Uncle Noah," she said faintly—"we couldn't—indeed we couldn't. It's good of you to think of us, but Chad and I, you see, we have these queer old-fashioned things on to celebrate Christmas."

"Hain't nobuddy gwine see yoh, Mis' Nancy!" urged Uncle Noah wistfully. "Hain't nobuddy knows!"

Aunt Nancy glanced furtively at Chad—he was standing by the fire with his ragged coat-tails over his arm, his eyes alive with boyish interest.

"Sho', Mis' Nancy," he burst forth eagerly, narrowly averting a catastrophe as his coat-tails dropped in the fire. "Sho! Hain't goin' be no harm if Uncle Jim Crow bring us straight back up de Pine Road. I'se mos' powahful anxious to see dat party." And because to-night was Christmas and Chad's faithful regard for his mistress worthy of suitable holiday reward, Aunt Nancy weakened. Surely a truant glance at the Colonel's barn could harm no one! And so a little later Uncle Noah bore Aunt Nancy and Chad off down the Pine Road.

From the Ardusi house ahead floated presently the lively strains of an accordion, the clink of glasses and the hum of voices and laughter as Niccolo Ardusi and his friends made merry within.

Chad snickered.

"Tony, Teodoro, Tommaso, Toddy and Therese!" said he, glibly naming the Arduis. "Ol' Mom Ardusi long on de letter T. I calls dat shack de T-pot, doan' I, Mis' Nancy?" And in truth with the

lurching chimney upon the roof from which smoke faintly curled, the Arduci domain did somewhat resemble a gigantic battered tea-pot with its steaming spout awry.

Now if Uncle Noah and his guests had not been so greatly alarmed by Fiddle-de-dee's sudden terpsichorean attitude toward the Arduci accordion, they might have noticed that the juvenile exodus from the T-pot was a very furtive and silent one. On behind Tony, who had washed and combed and dressed his little brood into Christmas presentability, marched a ludicrous quartette: Teo in a ragged suit of Tony's which needed considerably more leg below the knee logically to complete it than Teo possessed; Tommy conscientiously muffled in a faded red table cover which served as hat and coat in one; and Toddy topped by a startling black skull-cap rescued from a rag-bag from which his generous ears, protruding, testified to the excellent sandwiching qualities of Mom Arduci's disciplinary thumb and forefinger. Tiny Therese in deference to her sex wore holly in her hair.

Very gravely Tony marshaled his obedient brood to the cart and helped them in, four pairs of solemn black eyes riveted expectantly upon his face for orders as he joined them. Then with skilled glance he reviewed the silent line and halted at the skull-cap.

"Toddy," said he severely, "fold your ears in!"

Meekly Toddy folded in those lobular nuisances beneath the skull-cap.

Thus with Uncle Noah in his green swallow-tail mildly fuming at Fiddle-de-dee's steep rump outlined in vision-interfering angles against the moon, with Chad, himself singularly accoutred, performing upon his whistling keyboard of dusky fin-

gers for the staring Arduci, with Aunt Nancy, a little pale, nervously drawing her cloak about the lavender brocade, the cart set forth. Once the irreverent wind meddled to some purpose with Toddy's skull-cap and instantly—

"Toddy, fold your ears in!" came from Tony. Meekly Toddy obeyed.

So Uncle Noah's Christmas party rumbled stealthily into Brierwood.

VI

Having disposed of his cart and steed in a patch of shadow beside the barn, Uncle Noah led his guests to the carriage house. And as he hurried about lighting a pair of ancient lanterns and the colored candles in the Christmas tree, Aunt Nancy, heartily praising it all, glanced at the rafters twined with holly, at the old oil-stove fanning forth a vivid search-light across the floor—at the barn-windows diplomatically veiled in squares of cheese-cloth—and then back again at the glorified faces of the speechless Arduci and the delighted face of the old negro by the Christmas tree—and her eyes grew very moist and bright.

Brave little Tony and his eager brood! Only Job appeared to find in the Christmas trimmings about him excellent cause for grievance for he emitted offensive and critical gurgles and planned attacks upon the holly-berries about his roost.

Cheeks aflame, Tony unwrapped his staring quartette. At which Toddy rebelled. Having folded in his ears with uncommon snugness he flatly refused to doff the skull-cap.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Aunt Nancy, who had gently removed Therese from a mysterious wrap of great fuzziness, "the child's dress is on wrong side out, Tony!"

"Yes'm!" owned Tony politely. "I did it. She's cleaner with the dirt turned in."

Aunt Nancy's laugh had the ring of tears in it.

"It's all so wonderful, Uncle Noah," said Aunt Nancy presently, "so warm and bright and full of Christmas cheer that I hate to leave it all—indeed I do—but Chad and I must go." And Aunt Nancy, who had been a little restless ever since their arrival, glanced at Chad who curtailed a particularly difficult hand-spring and looked dismayed.

"Golly, Mis' Nancy," he protested, "we hain't no mo'n squinted at de decorations whut it took Uncle——"

There was an unexpected interruption.

The barn door swung noisily back and a tall and gaunt mountaineer swung in, cracked his heels together and spat hostilely upon his hands.

"Horse-thief!" said he. And spat again.

The silence was electric. By a common instinct four Ardisis foregathered about Tony's knees. Aunt Nancy drew back into shadow.

"Whut—whut yoh mean?" demanded Uncle Noah at length, staring horrified over his spectacles.

"Hain't I follered you down the Pine Road here?" demanded the interloper elaborately. "Don't I know his shadder agin the moon? Hain't he tied out there now with his hoofs muffled in rags? Stole him last night ye did—and I hain't had a single clue till I watched ye gallopin' by Porter's farm!" And the visitor forthwith removed his coat, danced upon it, whooped to the negro's utter dismay and announced his unfriendly intention of taking it out of Uncle Noah's hide.

Now whether or not this peculiar surgical operation would have been consummated or not remains a matter of doubt. Flushed and panting, Mrs. Polly Porter suddenly appeared in the barn doorway, her eyes snapping fire.

"Bill Porter," she said flatly, "you're a fool. Uncle Noah, don't you mind Bill. He's my brother-in-law from the mountains and he's quarrelsome by nature." She turned fiercely to the wilting pugilist. "I've run after you all the way down the Pine Road to tell you how that loafer Ned Scruggins rented your horse to Uncle Noah last night for a joke. You cover ground like an ostrich. Billy Scruggins came to the farm to-night for milk and bragged about it to my Joey. Can't you see the dear old man is as honest as he is scared? Bill Porter—March!"

Crest-fallen Bill Porter marched. From the driveway came presently the rag-muffled thud of hoofs as he claimed his own. It was Aunt Nancy who awoke to the exigency of the situation.

"Uncle Noah," she cried, "they mustn't go—No—No! Don't you see it's the only way Chad and I have of getting home?" She was at the door now staring wildly into the dark.

In an instant Uncle Noah was beside her. "Gawd-o-massy, Mis' Nancy," he whispered, "doan' yoh go foh to callin' out. Colonel he got queer ears. He mos' always hear whut yoh doan' mean him to hear."

"Call out!" exclaimed Aunt Nancy, blanching, it seemed, at the very thought. "I—I couldn't, of course. I—why, Uncle Noah, I—I wouldn't *dream* of such a thing."

"Sho' Mis' Nancy," broke in Chad, secretly delighted at the mishap, "cain't we stay de party out now? Bimeby I'll hoof it into Cotesville and git a nag to take yoh home. I—I 'clare to goodness I'se mos' pow-ahful interested in Uncle Jim Crow's party fixin's an'—an' he say he gotta roast turkey an' need me to help serve de chillun."

"Chad," exclaimed Aunt Nancy impatiently, "I can't—I can't indeed—"

"Nobuddy else goin' see yoh an' Chad in dem clothes, Mis' Nancy," urged Uncle Noah, "now dat wild heathen pusson got his nag back. Gawd-o-massy, I'se all o' a tremble. Hain't no sense o' him rarin' up in de door-way an' makin' all dat terrible confustication over Fiddle-de-dee. 'Clare to goodness I—I wouldn't have dat nag foh a gif'."

Aunt Nancy glanced furtively at Chad's eloquent eyes. After all, the Christmas at Bluebird Cottage had not filled all the holiday hunger of youth. And Chad was young and faithful for all his impudent antics. Chad saw her face relent and inverted himself with a muffled whoop.

So it was that Chad served the dinner which Uncle Noah stealthily bore from the Fairfax kitchen.

There were candies and oranges at the end for the saucer-eyed Arduis who had eaten their way steadily through the party in petrified silence and in the midst of it all to Uncle Noah's unspeakable pride Job flapped his wings and gurgled his immediate intention of fighting Chad who had conceivably been disporting himself too freely on his hands in lieu of feet. And with every eye bent upon the bristling turkey and Toddy surreptitiously folding in a truant ear, the barn door swung back.

"Uncle Noah," boomed a deep significant voice, "there is a gentleman here who accuses you of kidnaping his children!"

Slowly Uncle Noah swung round on quaking knees, his spectacles hanging perilously upon the end of his nose. It was the Colonel! At the head of the Christmas table Aunt Nancy shielded her eyes with her hand.

"Gawd-o-massy, Massa Dick," stammered the flustered negro desperately, "I—I hain't been kidnapin' no chillun—'fo' Gawd, sah, I hain't."

"He came ringing my door-bell,"

boomed the Colonel sternly, "and he says he traced his children to my barn through the clue of one—Bill Porter."

A heavy silence fell upon the barn. Shadowy feet shuffled uneasily behind the Colonel. Uncle Noah adjusted his spectacles and scratched his white poll despairingly.

"Massa Dick," he confessed, "I—I'se goin' tell de truth. I'se in considerable o' a pickle. Dem poor Arduis chillun didn't have no Chris'mus—ol' Nick Arduis he drink licker—an'—"

He was interrupted by the rushing entrance of Mrs. Arduis who flung a soiled apron over her head in hysterical abandon.

"Madonna mia!" she shrieked, "the poor bambini! No hava da Chris'mus day—no hava da Chris'mus day!" She fiercely shook an inconsistent fist at her husband and fell to sobbing and wringing her hands in a belated outburst of maternalism. At which the younger members of her truant brood promptly raised their voices in a chorus of howls and joined her.

The Colonel held back the door.

"Nick," he said, "hereafter I shall personally keep an eye upon these children of yours and if I find them neglected—" He raised significant eyebrows.

Niccolo Arduis, in whose heart lay dormant the love of the true Italian for his children, shuffled guiltily and looked away.

"Si, Signor," he said sullenly. "I unnastan'."

Crooning and chattering hysterically, Mrs. Arduis wrapped up her weeping babies and departed. And from the driveway as they went floated Tony's weary voice.

"Toddy," it said, "fold your ears in!" Conceivably Toddy obeyed.

The Colonel turned expectantly to Uncle Noah.

"Uncle Noah," he begged politely, "may I be enlightened as to the—er—mysterious leg-shadows upon the barn-windows to-night? Have you—"

"Gawd-o-massy, no! Massa Dick, tweren't me!" exclaimed the mortified darky, dropping his spectacles. "Dem weren't ma ol' shanks. Dat—dat were Chad yere. He powahful light-headed, sah, an'—an' can't keep on his feet."

The Colonel glanced keenly about him, stared at Aunt Nancy and bowed.

"I was unaware that you were entertaining," he said with gravity. "I beg your pardon." The barn door creaked upon its rusty hinges as he departed. Uncle Noah weakly mopped his forehead. That was the Colonel's way. There would be a reckoning later.

White and trembling Aunt Nancy rose.

"Uncle Noah," she whispered, moistening her lips nervously, "I too must go now. I—yes after all I am quite sure I can climb the Pine Road."

Again the barn door swung back and the Colonel's head appeared.

"Uncle Noah," said he, "if you could manage to spare me a minute or so presently my own guests are in need of some light refreshment before they return to Fernlands. Ah, Major," as a footstep sounded on the walk behind him, "anxious to finish that game of chess, eh? I'll be there directly."

"Find Nick's kids?" demanded Major Verney, laughing. "Grandmother Verney's dying with curiosity." The Colonel moved aside.

"Uncle Noah," he said, "won't mind, I'm sure, if you look at his tree. He's entertaining."

Now at the sound of Major Verney's deep voice, Aunt Nancy's hand had desperately slipped to the old-

fashioned pocket at the side of her gown and as he peered within, his eyes twinkling at the homely cheer of the picture, she stood with one hand clutching the table, a trembling figure of another day holding a faded lavender mask before her face. And as she did so, Uncle Noah knew why the picture behind the firelit window of the cottage in the Hollow had brought stirring memories of the olden South, for, oddly enough, the lavender mask was a link in the chain of memory. Swiftly the old negro's thoughts went winging back to a snowy Christmas eve when the Colonel was young, when the young people of the old plantations about had gaily danced the Christmas in at a masquerade here at Brierwood, when Grandmother Verney's beautiful young ward, Phoebe, the child of a distant kinsman, had eloped with the Major's wild and handsome cousin, Frank. And Phoebe Verney had been the Major's sweetheart . . . and the Major had never forgotten. That was why old Grandmother Verney, grim and unforgiving, still held her solitary sway at Fernlands. So in the silence of the Christmas-bright barn, Uncle Noah stared and stared. For the lavender brocade was the gown of Phoebe Verney!

Swiftly the negro glanced at the men in the doorway. The Major's face was quite colorless.

Faded mask and lavender brocade! Save for the snowy hair and the delicate wrinkled hand, it was the wilful girl who had broken faith with him that unforgettable Christmas Eve to leave her place in his life but an empty memory. Only the face had changed and that Aunt Nancy's hand had masked with a memory link ironically familiar!

The Colonel drew back.

"Phoebe!" said the Major, a great choke in his throat, "My God!"

Aunt Nancy pointed at the barn door, her hand shaking pitifully. Only the eyes behind the lavender mask blazed in a sudden agony of pleading.

"Go!" she whispered. "I—I cannot bear it." At which Chad loyally shouldered his way to Major Verney.

"Cain't yoh hear her say 'Go!'" he demanded truculently. "Hain't I Mis' Nancy's protector! Hain't she had trouble enough livin' poor an' lonesome all dese years?"

"Chad!" rebuked Aunt Nancy, but the rebuke was a whisper and Chad did not hear.

"Hain't she come down home yere 'cause her poor heart breakin' o' loneliness?" went on the boy fiercely. "Hain't she say to me, time an' again—'Oh, Chad, Chad, I cain't never see my folks agin, 'cause I hain't never treated 'em right. Now I jus' wanta die down South yere by de dear ol' home. Ol' mother, she say, stern an' proud, she doan' never wanta see me agin'." Unconsciously the negro lad with his graphic power of imitation had caught the heartbreaking inflection of Aunt Nancy's voice. A silence fell over the old barn alive with pitiful ghosts.

"If Mis' Nancy doan' wanta see yoh," finished Chad doggedly, "yoh gotta go. I'se her protector an' cheerer-up." But something in the Major's face made Chad draw closer. And staring wistfully up into the kindly eyes, he ignored, Aunt Nancy's trembling gesture of rebuke.

"Mis' Nancy," he blurted with a great boyish sob, "I hain't goin' to shut up. He—he doan' mean nuthin' 'cept kindness. He got good eyes an'—an' he powahful hurt an' upset too. She—she hain't got money 'nuff to live good," he went on, "'cause Massa Frank Verney he use it up an'—an' run away an' las' year he come back sick an' die. An' de

money gone. An' she share all she got with me ever since she picked me out de gutter, a good fo' nuthin' pickaninny whut ol' Gran'pop always walloped when he had licker in him. An'—an' I cain't never do 'nuff foh her, 'cept jus' whistle an' dance an' dress up in dese yere Noah Ark duds when she sob an' cry 'bout de ol' times an' need cheerin' up—"

"Phoebe!" said the Major huskily, but the mouth below the lavender mask was proud and unrelenting for all it quivered.

Now in the silence there came the impatient rap-rap-rapping of a cane upon the walk and the voice of a terrible old lady muffled in a cloak.

"Edward," snapped Grandmother Verney tartly, thumping her stick upon the walk, "I've lost all patience with you. If you and Dick find Christmas kidnapings so absorbing, I don't. And why doesn't Uncle Noah come in and make the coffee?" She stared sharply in through the door at the Christmas tree. "What's all this?" she demanded. "Why are you all staring like a crowd of lunatics? And who is this absurd little negro yonder in plush knickerbockers and a claw-hammer coat. Lord save us, he's a sight!" and then her gaze fell suddenly upon the masked figure in the lavender brocade and she halted, staring like the rest.

And as Aunt Nancy Cary looked mutely into the eyes of this terrible old lady who had mothered her orphaned girlhood, the proud look about her mouth relaxed. Unheeded the lavender mask fluttered suddenly to the floor and with a great, heart-broken sob of homesickness and longing, Aunt Nancy fell forward upon her knees, wildly clutching Grandmother Verney's cloak where it trailed upon the door-sill.

"Mother Verney!" she choked, "Mother Verney—it—it is I—Phoebe!"

The stick fell heavily from Grandmother Verney's hand.

"Phoebe!" she muttered with a swift keen glance at her son, "Phoebe?" But the Major's white face was answer enough and Grandmother Verney, frowning, turned away from the imploring in his eyes. Still, for all her stern old face hardened and she bit her lips, a great tear splashed down upon her cloak.

The Major touched her shoulder.

"Mother," said he, "it is Christmas day. And Frank has gone to his eternal accounting."

There was an electric interval during which Grandmother Verney seized her stick and seemed about to rap her way back fiercely to the house—then her face flamed red. Trembling she bent and touched Aunt Nancy upon the shoulder.

"Phoebe!" she said abruptly, "get up or I'll be crying myself. It's Christmas day and we're all too old to quarrel." With a terrible rasp she cleared her throat. "Edward, Dick," she snorted indignantly, "stop staring and open the door. A barn's no place for heroics. And get Phoebe's cloak." She beat fiercely at Uncle Noah's turkey with her stick. "Infamous bird!" she boomed, venting her emotion upon Job, "stop gobbling. Uncle Noah, you'd better pick up your spectacles and quit staring or you'll step on them. And hurry in and make the coffee—it's nearly midnight."

Grimly Grandmother Verney waved the silent party from the barn and followed with a prodigious thump of her cane.

Uncle Noah picked up his spectacles.

"Humph!" said he shortly, "'pears like I hain't got much party left."

Which seemed to impress Chad considerably for his eyes were sympathetic. And suddenly with a preliminary handspring or so, he be-

thought himself of his gift of "cheering up" and straightway the barn was musical with the call of many birds. A strange, officious turkey gobbled threateningly at Job who bristled responsively—then with a muffled giggle, Chad thrust his fingers in his vest and swelled forth his chest.

"Uncle Noah," said he sonorously, "there is a gentleman here who accuses you of kidnaping his children!"

Sandalized Uncle Noah stared.

"Gawd-o-massy, Massa Dick," floated fluently from Chad's lips in an unmistakable quaver, "I hain't been kidnapi' no chillun. Fo' Gawd, sah, I hain't!"

The ragged coat-tails described a dizzy arc across the barn. The perpendicular result spoke with the wail of Mom Ardusi.

"Madonna mia, the poor bambeanie, the poor bambeanie, no hava da Chris'mus day—no hava da Chris'mus day!" Chad rolled his eyes. "Toddy," he added sternly, "fold your ears in!"

Once more the coat-tails flirted their ragged way across the barn and Grandmother Verney's indignant boom demanded knowledge of the absurd little negro in plush knickers at which Uncle Noah seized the inverted cheerer-up by an indelicate segment of the said knickers and assisted him to unexpected perpendicularity.

"Yoh is a mos' powahful pert pickaninny," said he sternly, "mock-in' yo' elders. Now yoh jus' turn dem scitter-witterin' shanks toward de kitchen an' he'p make de coffee."

It was a radiant Christmas party to which Chad and Uncle Noah presently bore their steaming trays of coffee with Aunt Nancy, her wrinkled cheeks aglow, in a great chair by the fire and the Major bustling about the dying log with a poker. And if this Christmas log could

have told its story, it would have crackled forth tears and laughter, talk of the olden days and talk of Chad's faithful devotion to his mistress; it would have showered golden sparks of benediction upon kindly hearts too wise to withhold forgiveness—all in all a Christmas tale of readjustment punctuated with the impatient rapping of Grandmother Verney's cane.

Now as Uncle Noah lowered his tray to the library table, he was conscious of a sudden hush in the hum of reminiscence and looking up he saw that all eyes were full upon him. From his arm-chair by the table rose the Colonel with much the air of a general who has some monumental task upon his mind.

"Hum!" said he. "Hum! Bless my soul that's a most persistent frog in my throat to-night. Uncle Noah," he gently touched the old man's arm. "Er—what do you think of this absurd little darky here anyway?"

"Yoh—yoh mean Chad, sah?" Uncle Noah glanced mildly over his spectacles at the ludicrous apparition at his elbow whose face was largely teeth and rolling eyeballs. "Well, sah," said he fairly, "he hain't so much on looks, Massa Dick, dat's a fact!—an' he's powahful loose and pert with his shanks an' his tongue—doan' 'pear to have no reverence foh nobuddy—but dere hain't no gittin' round it, Massa Dick, he mos' powahful smart! I don't ricomember ever seein' any such pickaninny afore."

"Smart and faithful!" nodded Aunt Nancy warmly and wiped her eyes. "Though to be sure when I need his heels the most, he's on his head."

The Colonel cleared his throat again and drew forth his handkerchief which, finding no use for—he replaced.

"It's most astonishing," he began,

"most astonishing. Aunt Nancy herself knew nothing at all about it until we put two and two together."

But the Colonel was getting nowhere in his conversational ramble; wherefore he cleared his throat once more and began afresh.

"Uncle Noah—er—what—w h a t was your name—er—before"—with ready tact—"before you took the family name of Fairfax?"

"Benson, sah. My daddy—he born on de Benson place."

"Hum—Benson—to be sure, to be sure. Knew I was right—knew I was right of course. Amazing—most amazing! Uncle Noah, Chad here has a ridiculous stick-pin, I'm told, a white and yellow bead on a pin like a grain of corn—got it from his granddaddy—and Mrs. Verney—er—Miss Phoebe—er—" The Colonel coughed and floundered again.

"He's been calling me Mis' Nancy," corrected Aunt Nancy.

"And Mis' Nancy never dreamed of it until now when she told me, but I know you've got another such ridiculous old pin and Chad's name is Benson—and—and—Oh, God bless my soul, Dick, what a mess I'm making of this to be sure. Come here and help me."

Blue eyes kindly, Dick Fairfax joined his father.

"Uncle Noah," he said, "Dad's mixing things badly. The whole truth is just this. Years ago when your son ran away, it was at Frank Verney's bidding. Aunt Nancy remembers well how he wrote for him and to cover his dishonor likely in luring away another man's servant, he swore to her that the wild young colored lad who worshiped him so belonged to his father.

"Whut—whut yoh mean, Massa Dick?" whispered Uncle Noah, shakily touching Dick's arm, "Chad Benson—dat—dat were my boy Chad's name whut runned away."

"Exactly," nodded Dick. "And having patched a number of things together we feel sure that this ridiculous little devil here in the claw-hammer coat whose name is Chad Benson—is your great-grandson."

But Uncle Noah heard no more. The old library had vanished from his sight and he saw a moon bright above a field of cotton. There was a line of negro shacks. Somewhere faintly a banjo was playing, but Mammy Chloe was crying for Chad—for the runaway boy who had never come back. . . . And the darkies were singing a song of the old South, the dear old South that would come no more. Great tears welled swiftly up to the old negro's eyes and coursed heavily down his wrinkled cheeks. And with trembling hands upon his eyes—he swayed.

"Oh, Mammy Chloe," he whispered, "Mammy Chloe."

Dimly he was conscious that they were all gathering about him. Through the mist he caught the kindly eyes of young Massa Dick's pretty wife.

"Poor, poor old man!" said the girl and her wonderful gray eyes were like velvet. Then he felt the Colonel's hand upon his shoulder heavy with the affection his years of faithful service had inspired.

They were all talking of Chad—of a stick-pin—yes, Mammy Chloe had given one to her son and one to her husband years ago. . . . The sound of the strumming banjo was fainter . . . the moon above the cotton, the singing darkies but a memory.

"Married and drifted away from us," Aunt Nancy was saying, "and then he grew so wild and drank so much he was always in trouble. He kept coming to Frank for help or we would have lost track of him completely. And one day—a year or so before he died—I found him

beating Chad—he'd been drinking again—and I took the poor little fellow away and kept him."

"Brace up, Uncle Noah," exclaimed the remorseful Colonel, "I have made a mess of things."

The mist vanished. The old man stared up into the kindly circle of faces about him, his face working piteously.

"Massa Dick," he whispered, "yoh—yoh doan' mean I'se got blood kin—dat I hain't alone?"

"I mean," said the Colonel huskily, "I mean that Chad here is the grandson of your boy—Chad Benson."

"And we'll have to share him," put in Grandmother Verney. "He'll be near you right at Fernlands. But he's got to mend his ways"—with a rap of her cane—"he's got to mend his ways. Ridiculous monkey!"

Uncle Noah gulped courageously and wiped his glasses, whereupon the Colonel cleared his throat and promptly wiped his own.

"Poor Chad," said Uncle Noah, "poor, foolish lad. He done broke Mammy Chloe's heart. And he run away from de Colonel."

Now in the hush that followed, Chad 3rd suddenly inverted himself with a muffled whoop of celebration.

"Sho," said he, between inversions, "I gotta great-grandpop. Sho', hain't I glad! Sho'! I hain't never had a great-grandpop."

Uncle Noah straightened himself with a sudden air of authority. And when he spoke there was the dignity of kinship in his voice.

"Chad," he commanded in a terrible voice, taking refuge from his emotion in stern command after a fashion of the Colonel, "quit scitter-witterin' 'bout yere. I see yo' grandpop's gotta take yoh in hand. An' serve de Colonel's coffee."

The Yule log crackled. Rolling his eyes the Blackbird served the Christmas coffee.

THE TEN-THIRTY FOLKESTONE EXPRESS

BY SAX ROHMER

Author of "The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu"

[Additional interest is lent this story by the fact that the author, whose real name is Arthur Sarsfield Ward, wrote it expressly with a view to aiding the Belgian Relief Fund and other funds established for the assistance of those who must suffer from the war. All that the author receives from both the publication and motion-picture rights of the story will be devoted to this purpose.—EDITOR.]

I GLANCED at the clock on the mantelpiece and noted that one a.m. was already past. My work began to worry me, my brain was growing dull, and I decided that the article upon which I was engaged could not be finished that night as I had hoped.

My hand was actually upon the switch of the table-lamp, when a familiar whistle reached me from the roadway—two bars of an Oriental strain which bore my memory back to Cairo. That summons, so wholly unexpected, brought me to my feet in a trice; and, the household having long since retired, I ran to the door and opened it—to admit a ruddy-faced, clean-shaven man, whose well-cut tweed suit served to show off his spare but athletic figure, and whose blue eyes shone the more brightly from contrast with the sunburnt skin.

"Rider!" I cried—and gripped his extended hand.

"Rider, it is!" he said, with the odd, one-sided smile which I knew.

I drew him back to the study, seated him in the armchair, and brought out whisky, siphon, and cigars, with a celerity which only reflected the delight occasioned by his arrival.

Rider helped himself liberally, without apology, his unhandsome countenance revealing keen appreciation of my hospitality.

"My dear man!" I cried, "it is sheer luck that you did not find me in bed and asleep!"

"We are brother owls," he replied, the blue eyes twinkling. "I gambled on finding you up, and my plunge was justified."

How good it was to hear his drawling voice again. Ours was a true, if peculiar friendship. To the confusion of those who claim that our secret service is conducted by glorified constables, I advance the instance of my friend, Rider. "Rider Pasha" they called him in Egypt, and, although he was a popular member of both the Cairo clubs, I could swear that not another member knew the exact nature of his duties, his official position, or true sphere of activity. Furthermore, I am ignorant of these matters to this day. Yet I knew and have evidence to prove, that Rider Pasha is a secret service agent—a higher detective. As one of his most intimate friends, I can add that I have not the remotest idea to which Government department he is really attached.

"I didn't know you had left Cairo," I said, watching him as he smoked and drank with that appearance of satisfaction peculiarly Rider's own.

"My good chap," he replied, "I have been in Cape Town, in Rangoon, in Hong-Kong, in St. Peters-

burg, and in Paris, since you last saw me at the Turf Club in Cairo!"

"And now?"

"Now, as you see, I am in London."

"And the business?"

"The business, my boy, at the moment, is murder."

"*Murder!*"

"You have based some ripping yarns upon former inquiries of mine, and, incidentally, have brought your powerful, if undisciplined imagination, usefully to bear upon the business side of certain cases; I invite your co-operation once more; because—A—" (He ticked off the point on his finger) "the present case is one wherein I rank your views above those of a constable; and—B—" (He raised a second finger) "it is a mystery which I feel sure, suitably disguised, will make excellent copy."

"You spoke of murder—"

"Murders, you were about to say, are outside my province?"

"This particular one—"

"I have a cab at the corner, and I am about to ask you to come and see the body!"

"The body! What! now?"

"At this very moment! Are you coming?"

Undoubtedly I was going; for a case in which Rider was concerned must necessarily be of exceptional interest. Ignorant as I was of his real official position, I knew, or had divined, that he was no ordinary detective. This murder of which he spoke must therefore possess a political interest.

Three minutes later we were in the cab, which waited at the corner, and were speeding I knew not where, for Rider had merely given the direction: "Back again."

Our course, then, lay southward, in a line, roughly, following the railroad. It took us through the more desirable suburbs into a network of

slummy streets. At the end of one of these, occupied by a long block of dwellings bearing the title "Morley's Buildings," we stopped.

"It is the third house," said Rider, taking my arm and pointing. "You see the light shining from the window there?"

I glanced up at the window indicated—it was otherwise no different from those adjoining it—and noted that a light showed through the dingy blind.

"We do not enter the house," continued my companion, "but we proceed to the corner."

This we did; and the block proved to terminate upon a stretch of waste land. That is to say, there was a gap, with some kind of factory rising dimly beyond, and on the right through the gap a dismal patch, a hundred yards or more in extent, with the telegraph poles and network of wires bounding it which showed that a railway embankment ran parallel with Morley's Buildings.

Rounding the angle of the end house, Rider and I stumbled through the rank weeds for some fifty or sixty yards. A light flashed suddenly in my face; a constable was directing his lantern upon me.

"All right, officer!" said Rider.

The constable raised his hand in salute.

"Nothing suspicious?"

"Nothing sir."

"Look!" said Rider. Then:—"Shine your lantern on him, constable."

As Rider pulled my arm I looked down into the tangled mass of weeds and grasses.

A man was there, almost at my feet—a man who wore rough and ragged clothes and who lay, or rather half knelt, with his elbows dug into the soil and his head lowered grotesquely so that his face was hidden. He seemed to be crouching, as if for

a catlike spring. But the back of his skull showed, in the light of the bull's-eye, as one ghastly wound—a blurr of blood-matted hair and shattered bone, difficult adequately to describe, frightful to remember, impossible to forget.

“Dead!”

“Over an hour, sir.”

It was the constable who had answered me.

“About twelve o'clock, then?”

“According to the doctor,” said Rider, grimly, “yes. His wife found him.”

Momentarily I was too horrified to speak. Then:—

“Who is he?” I asked huskily.

“He is, or was,” answered Rider, “one Dan Wiley; something of an undesirable, but none the less, poor devil!—”

“And he lived?”

“At number 3, where you saw the light in the window. His wife is up there. I pity her.”

“He was drunk, sir—” began the constable—

“Yes,” interrupted Rider; “he reeks of drink now, but—” he pointed significantly—“it was not drink that killed him.”

Another silence; then:—

“What are the particulars?” I asked, and began to move away.

“Don't go yet!” snapped Rider, taking my arm. “I want to ask you if you notice anything peculiar—”

“In what way?”

“Just study the scene; I won't prejudice your views; but just take in all the details whilst I tell you what I know.”

A sense of nausea was assailing me; but I repelled it and sought to do as Rider directed. Meanwhile he continued:—

“Dan Wiley was a ne'er-do-well, and one of the most dissolute characters of a dissolute neighborhood. He had no regular work, and was rarely

sober. He lived with his wife at number 3 Morley's Buildings. I fancy that the poor woman contributed more largely to the upkeep of the establishment than did the departed. It was his almost nightly custom to get obstreperously drunk at the King's Head in Grenville Street, some little distance off on the other side of the line. On leaving, or being ejected, he would take a short cut home by scrambling over the fence, crossing the railway line, and thence going through this waste patch upon which he was found to-night.

“Sometimes he would fall asleep on the way, but never—so strangely does Providence protect the drunkard—upon the line! On several occasions, however, he has been found asleep on the intervening stretch of waste ground upon which to-night—it was no unusual adventure, poor creature—Mrs. Wiley came out about twelve o'clock to search for her husband. She found him as you see.”

“Had there been any quarrel at the public house?”

“None at all. He was only moderately drunk when he left the bar for home, and nothing of an unusual nature had occurred, although he was naturally a quarrelsome man.”

“But he is not facing towards—”

“Towards home?” snapped Rider, tensely. “Right! I am glad you noted it. It was the first thing that struck my attention.”

“Someone attacked him from behind.”

“Someone who came, not from the railway line, but from the direction of Morley's Buildings? Exactly!”

“You have inquired?”—

“I have made such inquiries as were possible without exciting undue suspicion. Do you note anything else of a peculiar nature?”

I shook my head. The brutal and revolting crime sickened me; and I was incapable of considering coolly

the circumstances attendant upon it.

"Then we will just have a look around number 3," said Rider, "and afterward, if nothing strikes you, you have my leave to return home."

"Thanks!" I said, ironically. "This is scarcely the sort of case, Rider—"

"Don't be too sure," he interrupted. "It looks a brutally unimaginative affair, I grant you; sordid it is, I admit. But although—and frankly I am disappointed—you have overlooked them, there are points about it which place the crime in a class quite by itself."

I said no more, until, in answer to my friend's knock, a rather slatternly woman, whose plain face was rendered yet less attractive by eyes red with weeping, opened the door. She offered us no greeting, but turned, in a pathetically aloof manner, and walked up the uncarpeted stairs ahead of us.

Rider took my arm again.

"You note the door upon the right?" he whispered. "It communicates with a sort of ground-floor—actually the basement. There are three steps down, and two rooms below. The front one is only a foot or so below the level of the street, the back one is virtually a cellar. One window, high in the wall, looks out upon the waste ground and the railway. The Wileys leased the house, but they only occupied the top floor. The middle floor is vacant and the ground floor, to which I have referred, is rented by one Zahdoff, a cabinet-maker. I have seen Zahdoff; he had merely a nodding acquaintance with his landlord—Dan Wiley; and his limited English vocabulary does not admit of a protracted conversation."

"He is a foreigner?"

"A Polish-Jew, according to his own account."

We mounted the stairs to the top floor; a miserable abode it was.

"You see," said Rider, quietly, "it is typical enough of its kind. The poor woman does charring, and her husband used to drink the proceeds. There is nothing much to learn here. Do you think so?"

I shook my head; and Rider, with a few kindly words to the unhappy woman, who sat in the one practicable chair, staring before her with unseeing eyes, descended the stairs with me.

"The neighborhood knows nothing of the matter as yet," he told me. "We have succeeded in keeping it quiet. But I must make arrangements for the removal of the body to the mortuary."

In the street he stood facing me for a moment.

"I won't ask you to worry about it, to-night," he said: "but in the morning, get all the facts in line, and jot down your impressions. Oh! I am not joking; you have the type of mind which, not being confined in certain grooves, such as mine is, can frequently cast light into dark places. Jot down your impressions; I am most anxious to have them. The cab is waiting at the corner, and is at your service."

II

I cannot say that I slept well, on my return; for the vision of that splintered skull persistently haunted me. Yet no occasion arose to jot down impressions as Rider had requested, for saving that blood mist of sordid brutality which hung over the affair, there was nothing, so far as I could perceive, in the nature of a clue; there was nothing showing this ghastly crime to be a link in a chain, to be a move in some wider campaign such as would call for the services of Rider Pasha.

Towards dawn, sleep still defying me, I had an idea to which my mind obstinately clung; in short, it oc-

curred to me that Rider, or those who instructed him, must know something of the antecedents of the man Wiley which gave him a certain importance not perceptible to me.

Before I had finished breakfast, Rider appeared carrying a tremendous bundle of newspapers. He waved to me in his airy fashion to continue my meal, and throwing himself into an armchair, began rapidly to scan the columns of the journals.

He quite ignored my remarks until this task was accomplished; then, dropping down the final sheet upon the mound already littered at his feet, he turned to me.

"There was barely time," he said, "to arrange for the suppression of the news, and I feared that it might have found its way into print despite my activities. It has not, however."

"You attach a singular importance to the murder of the man Wiley?"

"Then you are still in the dark?"

"To me it has the appearance of a typical slum crime."

"And you may be right. But yet—there are points . . ."

"I have quite failed to detect them."

"Consider the circumstances: What could be the object of such a crime? Who could profit by it?"

"It is mysterious, certainly."

Rider leant against the mantelpiece, both hands deep in his pockets, and his jaw thrust forward truculently.

"It is!" he snapped.

He stared at me vaguely for some time in silence; then:—

"I want you to come along to-night," he said, "and go over the ground once again with me."

"Why at night?"

"Because, assuming the murderer to reside in the locality—and one may fairly assume so much—I do not wish him to observe us."

A while longer Rider remained, talking of matters purely personal; then, arranging to meet me at a point near to Morley's Buildings, at ten o'clock that night, he left me to my work—which progressed none the more favorably by reason of his visit and the disturbing ideas which it had engendered.

The place which Rider had selected for the rendezvous was a certain tavern, bearing the sign of the Two Feathers. I must explain that I was no stranger to this type of nocturnal adventure; and my costume, when, a few minutes before the appointed hour, I entered the private bar of this establishment, was not of a fashion which I should have chosen for a business visit to Fleet Street.

Rider—an expert—has assured me that I make an excellent loafer; and when on the stroke of the hour my companion joined me in the bar, I was forced to concede that a more undesirable looking ruffian I had never encountered.

Picture us, then, as, typical of Morley's Buildings, we slouched across the open ground behind those unsavory tenements in the direction of the railway line.

A certain sordid activity was noticeable in the street at this comparatively early hour. Many dirty children still continued their play in the gutters beneath a fire of shrewish screams from bedraggled mothers. Lights showed in many of the windows, and practically all the front doors were open.

We were already upon our way to the scene of the crime, when Rider, suddenly tackling me in Rugby fashion, threw me heavily to the ground, and, prostrate upon my body, held me there!

"Not a word!" he hissed in my ear. He loses his drawling speech in moments of action. "I don't think she has seen us!"

I succeeded in raising my head. A vague and shapeless, muffled figure was approaching from the railroad, and must pass close to the spot where we lay amid the tangled vegetation.

Rider's nervous excitement communicating itself to me, I crouched, scarcely breathing, whilst the figure came nearer and nearer, drew level with our hiding-place, and passed on.

It was that of a woman, poorly dressed, and having a furtiveness of manner very singular and noticeable. A vague light had shone upon her face as she passed me; and since this was a strangely dark night, I craned my neck to ascertain from whence the light had come. Instantly I perceived that we lay just without the radius of this faint illumination—which proceeded from a little window partially masked with tangled weeds in one of the houses of Morley's Buildings.

"The basement window of number 3!" whispered Rider—"watch!"

Indeed I was watching to the best of my ability; for vague as the light had been which had illuminated the face of the furtive woman, nevertheless it had served to show me that her clothes were as false a clue to real identity as were our own.

She was very dark and had a pale and distinguished beauty, with large flashing eyes, and a type of clear-cut features which for some reason set me thinking of Vienna. And my imagination was still straying through the brilliantly lighted streets of the Austrian capital, when the mysterious woman gained the window, stooped, and evidently entered into conversation with one who stood in the room within.

"Zahdoff!" whispered Rider in my ear. "Did you see her face?"

"I did," I replied. "She has beauty, of a dark sort—"

"White complexion, with strangely black eyes?"

"Yes."

"From where I lay, I could not see her, unfortunately." His voice spoke of excitement restrained with difficulty. "But, by God! I believe I'm right!" he added, strangely.

"What do you suspect?"

"Impossible to go into that now. Surely even you will admit that this incident lifts the case above the sordid level to which you had assigned it?"

"It is very mysterious—certainly."

"Quiet!" whispered Rider. "See! she is going!"

Indeed, as he spoke, a figure in black silhouette moved across the window and was lost in the shadows of the buildings. Then for a moment it reappeared at the corner—and was lost again.

"Is *he* looking from the window, now?" hissed Rider.

"No," I reported.

"Then come on!"

My companion leapt to his feet, and stood, clutching my arm.

Faintly, in the distance, I heard the drone of a starting motor engine.

"Too late!" he muttered. "Let's see what we can find here," and went on some dozen paces to the spot where Dan Wiley had been found.

"Stand between me and the buildings," he directed.

I did as he desired, and he, kneeling amid the tangled growths, directed the ray of a pocket-lamp upon the ground all about.

"Keep your eye on the window!"

I was watching the window intently, and, even as he spoke, a shaggy head appeared thereat, sharply outlined by the light in the room behind it.

"Ss!"

Rider extinguished the lamp as I dropped on my knees beside him. We both turned and looked back at Morley's Buildings.

A man in the basement of number

3 was staring out intently across the patch of waste ground.

"Do you think he saw the light?" whispered Rider.

"Impossible to say, but I think not."

"I hope not," snapped my friend, "for if he did—"

"Well?"

"I am gradually collecting the threads, I think; and unless I am greatly mistaken, we have to deal with one of the cleverest rogues in Europe!"

"But surely you know—"

"I have never set eyes upon his face; his real face, I mean. Few have. He has a reputation—! If I can round him up, it may mean the difference between—"

He paused.

"Between?"

"I must not say too much," added Rider, "more especially as I may be wrong; but—"

The figure vanished from the window, and—

"Come on!" snapped my friend, seizing my arm.

We hastened across to the corner of the buildings and again adopting the slouching gait fashionable in that vicinity, passed along by the houses. The door of number 3 was closed, but from the grated window at our feet, a faint light shone up.

"The worthy cabinet-maker," said Rider, "works late."

Half an hour afterwards we were both seated in my study, and Rider was addressing himself to the whisky and soda with that air of joyous satisfaction peculiarly his own. For my part, although, now, I divined that the murder of Dan Wiley was no common crime, I was completely mystified at all points. The cabinet-making of Zahdoff clearly was but a mask to other more deadly operations. But who *was* Zahdoff? If Rider knew that the man had a crim-

inal history, why was Zahdoff not arrested? Who was the woman with the remarkable eyes? What part did she play in the drama? I scarcely knew where to begin my inquiries; but—

"What do you know of the man called Zahdoff?" I asked abruptly, pushing a box of cigarettes towards Rider.

He glanced up with his odd smile.

"Unfortunately," he replied, "I know nothing; I merely suspect. There is a certain individual of international notoriety who might—it is conceivable—be hidden beneath the bearded Zahdoff. In certain quarters it has been suspected for some time that this individual, whom we will dignify by the title of Colonel X, was concealed in London. I may even go so far as to state that I came to London expressly to look for him! The death of Dan Wiley presented certain curious features which induced me to glance in that direction. In this way I made the acquaintance of Zahdoff, Polish-Jew and cabinet-maker. He interested me, although I flatter myself that I did not display this interest; but there was not the slightest ground of suspicion; I hadn't a scrap of evidence to connect Zahdoff with the murder, and I hadn't a scrap of evidence to connect Zahdoff with Colonel X. But I have certain instincts or intuitions. Pursuing these random ideas, I blundered upon my first real clue—not necessarily to the murderer of Wiley, but to the identity of Zahdoff with Colonel X!"

"Who is Colonel X?"

"Let us say for the moment that he is head of a gang of international criminals. Although, as I have already mentioned, the appearance of the real Colonel is quite unknown to the secret service men throughout Europe—a tribute to his protean genius—he has been traced on more

than one occasion and identified, by reason of his association with a certain woman”

“Madame X?”

Rider shrugged his shoulders and lighted a cigarette.

“Suppose we give her the benefit of the doubt?” he said, smiling. “At any rate she has been less successful in disguising herself than has the Colonel. She is a woman of considerable beauty, though of a distinctly vampirish sort; a dull white complexion with very dark eyes and very red lips—you know the type?”

“It was she!” I cried, excitedly.

“I am disposed to agree with you.”

“Then Zahdoff—”

“Is Colonel X? Again, I think so.”

“And Wiley?”

“Wiley is a stumbling block; I cannot disguise that fact. As I have told you, I blundered upon this den of the cabinet-maker—sheerly blundered upon it. I do not claim that in the murder of Dan Wiley I perceived a clue to the whereabouts of the man for whom I was searching; I looked into the case merely because I was on the spot at the time, and because it presented unusual features. If I have found my man, it is more by good luck than by good management.”

I crossed the room to where the siphon stood upon the side-table, and, squirting soda into my tumbler, threw to Rider the query:—

“You have spoken several times of these unusual features. What are they?”

“Since your imagination would appear to have lost something of its fertility, they are these:—The entire absence of any motive, and the position of the victim’s body.”

“He was practically kneeling.”

“I am convinced that he was *actually* kneeling at the time that his assailant came upon him from behind.

He was kneeling with his head lowered to the ground.”

“Well?”

Again Rider shrugged his shoulders.

“I do not know *why* he was in that attitude,” he confessed, “but I am determined to find out. Since the *motive* is at present lacking in the scheme, I take it that he was murdered *because* he was kneeling in that way!”

“What?”

“It seems absurd, I know; but I feel that the clue to the labyrinth is dangling before our eyes.”

There was a silence of some minutes.

“What steps are you taking?”

“I am arranging to watch Zahdoff.”

“Why did you not follow the woman to-night?”

“Because I had not provided against the possibility of having to do so.”

“What do you mean?”

“She had a cab or a car waiting in the locality. I heard it drive off. How could I hope to follow?”

“True,” I said. “What is the nature of the arrangements you have made?”

“I have leased the vacant floor of number 3,” replied Rider; “and some time to-morrow, whilst Zahdoff is absent, for he goes out to purchase certain necessary provisions daily, I shall cut an opening in the boards at a point immediately above the tall cupboard which I noticed in his room, and make a spy-hole in the very dilapidated plaster of his ceiling. It is even possible that some of the existing holes will serve my purpose.”

“Can I assist you in any way?” I asked eagerly.

“I am relying upon you,” replied Rider. “For my own part I might be called away at any time; I should

then look to you to keep watch on our friend until my return. In order to provide against that emergency, I have given out that I have leased the room for myself and my brother and that we are both very irregular characters! A few necessary items of furniture are being installed, and here are your keys!"

Gravely he handed me two door keys, then, screwing his face into that odd smile of his, lighted a second cigarette.

He left at eleven o'clock to return to his temporary chambers, and to resume more decent raiment. About midday, on the morrow it was that I next heard from him. He rang me up.

"My precautions were taken only just in time," he said, "I have my orders for Budapest, and am now off to catch the train! I look to you, brother owl, to devote several evenings during the coming week to the spy-hole at number 3 Morley's Buildings. Oh! I've made it—yes! It has just occurred to me that the real activities of Zahdoff probably do not commence until the neighborhood is sleeping. You understand what I mean?"

"Quite well," I replied, grimly. "I must sleep during the day if I am to remain up half the night!"

"I will communicate with you at the earliest possible moment. Make notes of anything which you may observe; and don't forget to lock the room door when you leave. To spur you to enthusiasm, I may add that *if* Zahdoff is actually identical with Colonel X, his activities are inimical, not merely to individuals, but to the future of the British Empire!"

III

That night I took possession of my apartments in Morley's Buildings. At an hour when the dirty children and their bedraggled watch-

ers had already departed from the gutter-way, I inserted the key in the lock and stepped into the stuffy little passage with its mingled odor of fried bacon and lamp oil. It was perfectly dark as I entered, but at the sound of my footsteps the depressed door on the right opened, and the figure of Zahdoff, the cabinet-maker, was blackly indicated against the light from the room behind him.

Of his height I was unable to judge, since he stood considerably below me, but he possessed a great breadth of shoulder, and with his shaggy hair and bushy whiskers, presented a striking silhouette, markedly leonine in character.

He muttered something which may have been a greeting, to which I responded with a gruff "good-night"—and passed up the stairs.

As I mounted, Zahdoff reclosed his door, and in utter darkness I had to grope my way to the upper apartments. The door communicating with the front room was locked, in which I recognized a precaution of Rider's, since one had to pass through this front room in order to reach that at the back, the real scene of operations.

I lighted a match and surveyed my demesne. The "furniture" to which Rider had referred, consisted of a deal table and two chairs! Entering the second room, I observed a carpet upon the floor, and a pallet bed over by the window. A small ricketty table, bearing a common brass lamp, completed the "appointments" of my chambers. I was unaware of Mrs. Wiley's position in the matter; I did not know whether she was our accomplice, or whether she believed me to be a bona fide lodger. Rider had neglected to advise me on this point, and I determined to take no undue risks in regard to my landlady.

Having lowered the dirty linen blind, I rolled up a corner of the carpet and began to search for the spy-hole. Since I had never been in Zahdoff's apartments, I did not know upon which side of the room, beneath the cupboard referred to by Rider was situated; therefore I searched two sides of my floor in vain, but finally I found a section of boarding neatly cut out and readily detachable by means of a little brass screw which had been placed in it for the purpose. I was diplomatic enough to know that to commence operations immediately would be unwise, and I did not even remove the board; in fact I replaced the carpet over it—just as a loud rap sounded at my door!

Lamp in hand, I crossed the front room and threw open the door.

The light shone upon the pale, bearded face of Zahdoff; and a singular face it was—large featured and lined with innumerable furrows. Pale blue eyes he had, seeming abnormally large behind the pebbles of his spectacles, and a high, broad brow; this sufficiently singular countenance was crowned, surrounded, and, as regards the mouth and jaw, masked, by such a riot of reddish-brown hair as I had rarely seen upon any human being.

A moment he confronted me so; then:—

"It is Mr. Grimes?" he said, speaking thickly and with a strong accent—"that comes to live here?"

"That's me!" I replied in my broadest Cockney.

"I am glad to know my neighbors," continued Zahdoff, and held out an angular and sinewy hand.

I grasped it with my own, which was artificially dirtied, and wondered what this visit might portend. In the next instant its object stood revealed. From a capacious pocket Zahdoff took out a blind-roller.

"You will find that your blind," he explained, thickly, "it is broken—no good. I come to fix you a new one."

Not an instant did I hesitate.

"Right oh! my old buck!" I cried, slapping him boisterously on the shoulder—"get on with it!"

I stood aside for him to enter, and this he did with alacrity. But little more he had to say for himself, whilst, with deft fingers, he took down the old roller (which appeared to me to be in perfect working order) and substituted the new one. I busied myself in the outer room, giving Zahdoff every opportunity to inspect the inner one—for which purpose, I doubted not, he was come. I had taken the precaution, however, of placing the rickety table directly over the spy-hole, with the lamp upon it!

His act of disinterested kindness performed, Zahdoff retired, casting a final keen glance about ere he did so. I had sufficient confidence in my make-up and acting to believe that he had accomplished nothing by his visit. Shortly afterwards, a great noise of carpentry arose from below, and this continued until long after midnight—when it ceased abruptly. I had locked my outer door and extinguished the lamp. Now I began, cautiously, to raise the blind of the back window; and, as I did so, the roller supplied by Zahdoff emitted a formidable squeak.

With my hand upon the cord, I stopped. Was this squeaking roller installed with design?

I had raised the blind no more than three or four inches, and I determined that my best course would be to raise it fully, let it squeak as loudly as it might; for if I desisted on the first squeak, it would show that I had hoped to act secretly; and it might be that this was the purpose of the contrivance.

Amid a perfect wailing, I fully

raised the blind. Peering down upon the waste ground, I was in time to see a muffled figure gliding into the shadows of the building.

That my first vigil was rewarded, I ascribed, at the time, to the success of my manoeuvres; I am disposed to believe now that Zahdoff's activity was dictated by an imperious need for haste. Lying prone upon the floor, then, with my head thrust tortoise-wise through the opening and my eye but a few inches removed from a rent in the plaster below, I viewed the workshop of Zahdoff that night, and I saw strange things.

As was to be expected, a quantity of timber lay about upon the floor or was piled against the wall. The cupboard, over the top of which I looked, was open; and when first I began my spying, the room below was empty—silent.

Then, *out from the cupboard*, came Zahdoff bearing a basket, evidently heavy. Its contents I was unable to perceive. But if his appearance from the cupboard had surprised me, his next movement was even more mysterious. He lifted the basket on to the ledge of the window, and someone—someone who must have stood outside on the waste ground—received it from him. It vanished . . . and Zahdoff, shouldering a heavy piece of timber, re-entered the cupboard. Silence followed.

Where was he?

Cautiously I stood upright. Zahdoff's cupboard was set in that side of the building backing upon the waste patch; the window also was on this side—as has already been noted—and to the left of the cupboard. I crept to the window and looked out.

This was a moonless night, during the brief heat-wave which visited us in the memorable summer of 1914; but under the blaze of the stars, I

saw a vaguely outlined figure returning from the direction of the railway embankment with the basket—now evidently empty! I watched until the bearer of the basket passed in below my window.

It was a woman.

When I returned to the spy-hole—Zahdoff reappeared, dragging a second basket. Tantalizingly enough, although I could see Zahdoff and at times see the basket, I could not, strain as I might, obtain a view of its contents. These mysterious operations, then, I watched far into the night. My weariness, and a certain quality in the atmosphere, warned me that dawn was nigh, when the baskets made their final journey, the woman disappeared, and Zahdoff extinguished the light in his work-shop.

I left the house about five o'clock, locking my door behind me.

On returning home, I slept until late in the morning. A telegraphic message was delivered at midday. It had been tendered in Paris, and read as follows:—

"Dan W. may have been listening. Listening." (The word was repeated.) "Wish had perceived this sooner. Search for earth newly turned upon waste ground and embankment. Observe greatest caution. Importance of W.'s case increasing hourly. Expect return any moment. "Rider."

IV

Ensued those dreadful days of suspense—of waiting from hour to hour, almost from minute to minute. for the words of the War Minister which should penetrate to every corner of the civilized world; which should advise the Powers, some to their consternation, others to their gladness, that the sword of Great Britain was unsheathed.

So wholly had I succumbed to the oppression of those anxious hours

that the mission entrusted to me by Rider was, I regret to say, temporarily neglected. Three times, now, I had sought my apartments in Morley's Buildings; on each occasion Zahdoff had greeted my entry in truly neighborly fashion; and upon three nights I had watched the pseudo cabinet-maker bearing timber into his cupboard and bearing laden baskets out. I had gone so far, whilst the detective zeal was upon me, as to search the waste ground between the houses and the railroad one morning whilst the occupant of the ground floor was absent. To my notes, bearing upon the murder mystery, I had added, as result, this item:—

"Great quantities of stone, clay, and newly turned soil, have been recently deposited upon the railway embankment behind Morley's Buildings."

Obtuse I must have been at this time; for I frankly confess that up to the moment of the declaration of war I had failed to associate my new discovery with the baskets which nightly came forth from Zahdoff's cupboard, and which were passed through his window to be received by the woman who waited!

Incredible it may appear, but that I may eat of the bread of humility, I confess it.

Swayed by the common excitement which had all England in its grip, I had relegated my amateur detective exploits to the limbo of things forgotten; when one evening some time after Britain's position in the Great Struggle had clearly been defined, I found myself a unit of the crowd thronging Downing Street . . . and I found myself face to face with the woman of Morley's Buildings—the woman whom Rider had suspected of being Madame X!

She was in a nervous hurry, and was very elegantly dressed, so that her really remarkable beauty excited

comment on all sides. But she thrust her way resolutely through the crowd and seemed bent upon gaining the end of the street.

Some momentous idea struggled for admission to my brain; and, whilst yet unable to embrace it, I, in turn, forced my way through the throng and followed that conspicuous figure.

I was only in time to see her being driven off in a large and opulently appointed car.

A new turn had been given to my ideas and an hour later I was seated at my study table with my notes opened before me. The nebulous was becoming substantial. If I had been excited before, I was trebly excited now.

Where was Rider? If these new ideas were well-founded, why was he not in London?

Suddenly it came home to me like a thunder-clap, that mighty issues were concerned. It appeared, nightmare fashion, that the structure of the British Empire rested upon my shoulders; so that, mentally and physically, I tottered and grew sick with dread.

My notes before me, I sat, longing ardently for my 'phone bell to ring, or for that familiar whistle to sound from the street.

But the bell did not ring, nor did I hear the whistle.

Ten minutes earlier, a company of Territorials had tramped past, visualizing England's readiness. Full well I knew that Civilization's self tottered upon the brink of an abyss. Already the news had leaked out that a British Expeditionary Force, for the first time since the dread shadow of Napoleon lay across Europe, had landed on the Continent. As a pressman, I knew more of the fact than could be available to the general public; and I knew that the peace of Europe veritably might depend upon

the action, not of a field army or an army corps, not of a regiment or a garrison, but upon the action of a single man.

Now I perceived, and perceived with horror, by this process of elimination, that that man might well be—*myself!*

The 'phone bell rang.

With a hand not too steady, I snatched up the receiver—I heard Rider's voice.

"Quick!" he snapped, "I am at Charing Cross. You have been watching Zahdoff?"

"I have!" I cried.

"Particulars! Omit nothing. But be brief."

I spread my notes under my hand and commenced to read through them from the time that I had first entered upon my campaign of espionage. My very soul shuddered when I contemplated what my recent neglect might mean!

Rider never once interrupted me, save by—"yes, go on!" I had almost reached the end of my notes, and I was just explaining how I had found the clay and newly turned earth on the railway embankment, when, upon the drawn casement curtain before me, I perceived a shadow!

My windows were fully opened, and by the light of the street lamp at the end of the front lawn, this shadow was clearly perceptible—for a moment only, but long enough to show me that the shadow was that of a woman—who had fled.

How long had she been crouching outside my open window? Who was she? I could not doubt!

"Go on, go on!" cried Rider—"why do you stop?"

In a great gush of words, I told him. Then:—

"Join me at H— Station!" he directed tersely. "I shall be waiting with a car . . ."

It was in a frame of mind unreal,

dreamlike, that I performed the journey to meet Rider. The streets through which I passed were dream-streets; the lights, the groups about the paper-shops, the unusual number of khaki coats amid the throng—all were phantoms. I seemed not to belong to this world about me. I was aloof from it, detached; a creature apart, marked out from my fellow men by a mighty responsibility which Fate had cast upon me.

At the station Rider waited, standing beside a powerful touring-car. A Territorial was on guard at the foot of the stairs, a curious group surveying him wonderingly.

"In!" snapped Rider—tossed half a crown to the man who had driven me, and literally dragged me into the car.

The chauffeur started so suddenly as to jerk me back upon the seat. Clearly, he had his orders; and a glance at Rider's face confirmed, if confirmation were necessary, the awful seriousness of our mission that night.

A sort of dusky pallor showed itself through the tan of his skin and his eyes were more nearly gray than blue, widely opened, set, and alight with an expression which I can only describe as one of deliberate ferocity. His fingers as he gripped my arm closed upon it like a steel vise.

"I was detained," he began, rapidly. "These last two weeks have been hell for me! . . . Then, suddenly, with a thousand difficulties to overcome before I could return, I saw that my post was here, in London. God! what I have done to get back! Some day I will tell you . . . On the way I have pictured everything that you told me just now. I saw what a fool I had been, I saw what it all meant; everything—everything—down to the tiniest item, fitted into the fiendish scheme!"

"Wiley—"

"He fell asleep there—on the waste ground. He was awakened by the sounds beneath him—"

"*Beneath him!*"

"Damn it, man, damn it! You surely understand? He heard them cutting the *tunnel* below! In his semi-drunken state, some cry escaped him. Then *they* heard *him!* . . . Whilst he still lay, listening for further sounds, Zahdoff returned to his cellar, selected a heavy piece of timber, and crept around behind Wiley. There was no time for half measures. He knew, to within a day or two, at any rate, when he had to be ready; he dashed Wiley's brains out—"

"Then Zahdoff—"

"Is Dr. von Kotter, the cleverest and most unscrupulous spy in Europe! German War Office . . ."

Rider spoke the words disconnectedly, all the time gripping my arm with those steely fingers.

"Why, in heaven's name, was I so blind?" he cried. "A search of von Kotter's room would have revealed the whole accursed plot! Now!—"

He pulled out his watch.

"Merciful God!"—the words were barely audible—"only ten minutes!"

The car pulled up with a jerk. Rider threw himself out, dragging me after him. I found myself at the corner of a mean street which I remembered to have passed before in my journeys to Morley's Buildings. Similarly to the latter, it lay parallel with the railway line, but at a rather more northerly point. Rider went racing along it madly, and I followed him. Those grouped about the open doors of the houses stared at us in stupid wonderment; but straight on went my companion, turned to the right, down a narrow courtway, and was out upon a continuation of that belt of waste land which, five hundred yards lower down the line, I knew so well.

A signal-box loomed directly

above us. In the light from its windows, Rider consulted his watch.

"Ten - forty - four!" he hissed, breathlessly. "Five minutes!"

Then with a bound he was up on the embankment and scrambling for the ladder of the box!

"*Halt!*"

There was a sentry on duty by the signal-box; Rider had been almost beside him ere he was perceived! Now the man stood with his bayonet but a few inches removed from Rider's chest!

I have never seen such an expression as that which crossed my friend's face: anger and horror mingled in it strangely.

"It is life or death!" he almost screamed at the man. "I am on secret service business here! You understand?" He thrust out a card.

"Halt! you cannot pass!"

"God in heaven! this is awful—I shall go mad! I tell you I *must* enter that box . . ."

There sounded the distant clang of metal. A groan burst from Rider's lips.

"The signalman has cleared the line!" I heard.

But the bayonet never moved. The man was a private in a London Territorial regiment, and clearly he was doubtful respecting his duty in such a situation. I think he perceived that Rider was in deadly earnest; yet I could not reproach him. He had his orders, and, up to a point, he adhered to them.

"Come on!" shouted Rider—"there is one other chance!"

"Halt!" The sentry stepped in front of my wild-eyed friend. "You cannot move. I must arrest you both and hand you over to the guard!"

Then, in that unlikely spot, a blow was struck and a martyr made for England.

Rider, with a serpentine movement, twisted under the threatening

bayonet and delivered the sentry a left-handed blow placed with deadly accuracy upon the jaw! The man pitched forward like a pole-axed bullock and without a cry rolled heavily down the embankment and lay at my feet.

Like a deer, Rider made off, and, with my heart thumping fiercely, I followed. We covered the five hundred yards to Morley's Buildings as one traverses the ground of dreamland. There was no light in Zahdoff's window. Around an angle of the building raced Rider, and into the street. At the door of number 3:

"The key!" he panted.

I thrust the key into his hand, and in a moment he had the door open. Zahdoff's door was closed. Rider threw himself upon it. It was locked!

"Stand back!" he rasped, huskily.

I stood back against the wall, as, pulling a Browning pistol from his hip pocket, he blew out the lock! There was a crash as he kicked the door open. Then we were blundering down the steps and into the darkened, cellar-like room. A beam of light shone out from Rider's pocket-lamp; it shone upon the open door of the mysterious cupboard.

Then I saw that this cupboard was different from other cupboards in that, where the back should have been there showed only a gaping cavity! Rider glanced all about the room and all about the cupboard. Then, for the last time, pulled out his watch.

"Ten-forty-eight! *We have one minute!*"

He leapt into the cavity and went blundering forward. I followed and found my feet upon clay soil. Dimly, in the reflected light of Rider's lamp, I saw that this was a crude passage cut through the damp earth and upheld at intervals by roughly placed timbers. Bent almost double, for the roof was low, Rider pressed on. A dull and distant rumbling

came to my ears, and the place seemed to shake.

We were come to the end of the tunnel.

On a wooden ledge, placed across from side to side, stood a square iron box about a foot in diameter, and attached to it was a contrivance which reminded me of a taximeter. Above the ever increasing roar, which, now, I recognized, I could hear the *tick-tick-tick* of the clock-like thing.

"Hold the lamp!"

Rider's voice now was icily cool. He thrust the lamp into my hands, and as I directed the ray upon the machine on the plank, he set to work with deft fingers.

Tick-tick-tick-tick!

What he did, I do not know to this day; I only know that it was well done, that it was executed as though Rider were regulating a watch. My eyes, whilst they perceived the fingers rapidly at work with the mechanism of the machine, yet were fixed upon the clock face set in it . . . and this registered:—

10.49.

Tick-tick-tick-tick!

I knew that 10.49 must be, almost to a second, the exact time!

Tick-tick!—and the ticking ceased.

It was done!

Rider pulled out from a crevice in the contrivance the ends of two pieces of flex, which descended from the roof . . . and collapsed at my feet.

"Gun - cotton!" he muttered.

"Those wires connect to the electric main!"

The muffled roar became deafening. The place about me quivered and rocked. My ears seemed to ache with the sound. Then it grew fainter—more faint—and died away.

I glanced down at Rider. Pallid, his face showed in the lamplight.

"The ten-thirty Folkestone Ex-

press!" he whispered hoarsely. "Bearing the Field Marshal commanding the British Expeditionary Force."
 I clutched at the wall to steady myself. Rider Pasha swooned.
 "But—"

IN ARCADIA

BY GEORGE B. MOREWOOD

"OH, Echo! sweet nymph of the rock and the wood,
 Come give me some counsel—I'd smile if you should!"
Echo: "You should!"

"I long have believed every sibyl a sham;
 Are you eager to tell me how foolish I am?"
Echo: "I am."

"Fair nymph, I'm prepared to believe all you say,
 And to do as you bid me—advise what you may!"
Echo: "You may."

"Then a secret I'll whisper: sweet Echo, I love!
 Am I wise in my course, or do you disapprove?"
Echo: "Approve."

"Her eyes are deep azure; her lips, Cupid's bow;
 And of all womankind she's the fairest, I know!"
Echo: "I know."

"Her laughter is music—her speech like the tune
 Of some fair mountain streamlet. You'll hear it eft-soon!"
Echo: "Eft-soon?"

"Since she promised to meet me, I know she is near,
 But so light falls her foot that no rustle I hear."
Echo: "I hear."

"Her poise is so graceful, no nymph it would shame,
 And the wind, through the leaves, to my ear breathes her name!"
Echo: "Her name?"

"Ah, at last I can spy her!—She comes through yon dell.
 If, Echo, I whispered her name, would you tell?"
Echo: "You tell!"

"No, I don't think I'll trust you—you are not discreet;
 And the things that you hear you're too apt to repeat."
Echo: "Repeat?"

"Yes; and now, lest my love catch me flirting with you,
 I am sure 'tis but prudent to bid you adieu."
Echo: "Adieu!"

MOVING AND FEEDING AN ARMY

BY MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN F. O'RYAN AND CAPTAIN
W. D. A. ANDERSON

[The problems of transportation and supply are among the most important ones that confront leaders of armies, but outside of military circles they are little comprehended. The following article, which is taken from the authors' forthcoming book "The Modern Army in Action," throws light on a subject that should be more generally understood at this time.—EDITOR.]

SO enormous are the supplies that must be furnished to armies of the size with which modern wars are fought, that their campaigns are largely governed by this consideration. In the days of Napoleon great wagon trains were formed with convoys of troops to protect them during their march to the front. The breakdown of this service, due to the failure to make proper allowance for the difficulties of traversing the dirt roads of Russia, was principally responsible for the collapse of the campaign against Moscow in 1812. Prior to the last decade campaigns of large forces were entirely limited to theaters of war that could be readily supplied by rail and water routes. The development of automobile transport extends this sphere to include regions of paved roads. But not even this improved transportation can overcome the obstacles of mud or mountains.

In the American Civil War President Lincoln was particularly interested in the advance of the Northern armies from Cincinnati to Knoxville, in the valley of the Tennessee, in order to support the local population that was largely Unionist in sympathies. Every commanding general was urged by the President to prosecute this campaign. In spite of every support of numbers, equipment, supplies, and administrative backing, every general reported this move as an unwise waste of forces due to the

impossibility of maintaining supplies when dependent solely upon wagon transport along the long line of communications over the dirt roads of the low country and over the rocky roads of the mountains. Due to a rail route for supplying the army, it was a less difficult military problem to conduct a campaign of six hundred miles through Louisville, Nashville, and Chattanooga to Knoxville than it was to advance two hundred and fifty miles on the direct line over the mountains.

So dependent are military operations upon lines of railroad that the major portion of the rail development of central Europe during the last sixty years has been determined in route and location by military requirements rather than by commercial needs. A glance at a map of Germany will show a network of railways in Alsace and Lorraine, although the commercial demand is very small. Between Cologne and the Belgian border is another similar network, but one more warranted by the amount of local traffic. One of the French conditions for the large loans to Russia in recent years was reported to be the construction of strategic railways to the Polish border.

Not only are railroads necessary for the supply service, but also for the rapid transportation to the front of the corps that form the army. So absorbed is interest in the activities of the troops after their arrival at

the front that we overlook the problem of transporting them. To move one single army corps with its supplies and field transport requires one hundred and sixty railroad trains. These cannot be moved forward one behind the other; they would congest the track for twelve miles. An experience like this occurred at Tampa in 1898, during the dispatch of the first expedition to Cuba. This small movement of seventeen thousand men swamped the rail facilities of the Florida seaport. Every switch was filled, yet cars were stacked up along the track for miles.

The main line of the railroad is not the only need; there must also be an ample supply of side tracks long enough to hold a complete train so that all cars may be unloaded at once. For the prompt and convenient concentration of a corps 160 of these side tracks would be required. But each separate command of the armies of a large nation contains four to six corps. A careful time chart must, then, be worked out for routing trains in both directions so as to get the empty cars out of the way of the loaded trains. And this reduces the capacity of the railroads so that the rate of concentration at the frontier becomes approximately an army corps every three days for every single line of track.

In this preparation for concentration Germany leads the world. Since 1909 her principal rail development has been the construction of great concentration yards at the rail centers in Lorraine and in Rhenish Prussia. France followed suit in the district south and east of Nancy, but had not provided facilities equal to those of the Germans when the War of 1914 broke out. It was this provision for the rapid delivering of armies on the border that aided Germany in concentrating such enormous armies on her frontier within

a few days of the outbreak of war.

In the transportation of such immense armies as are involved in this war every detail must fit in like clock-work. If any cog slips it may stop the whole works. Plans are made up far in advance and are kept up to date by yearly revisions. A schedule is made out for days counting from the date of the mobilization order. Every day has its assigned duties for every organization in preparation for mobilization and for entraining. The complete time schedule for the train is prepared ready for use when the state takes over the railways for the war service. The destination of every regiment is planned, as is the assignment of its units to the twelve trains required for its transportation. The exact hour of departure is scheduled, and so are the times and places for taking on water and coal, for passing other trains and for stopping for meals for the troops. Even the stations at these meal stops are prepared to furnish definite amounts of water, coffee, and hot soup at definite times to the troops as they come through. The stop is only for time sufficient for each man to fill his canteen, cup, and pan; bread is served and the meal is eaten while under way.

All of these plans are completely prepared to the last detail by the branches of the General Staff and the Supply Corps during times of peace. Every regimental commander has his complete orders filed at his headquarters. Just as the British fleet was started against Germany by a brief wireless, reported as being "Go ahead," so at the outbreak of hostilities the war office of each nation needs only to send a short message directing the execution of the orders already filed.

The influence of rail routes on campaigns is most notably shown in the Manchurian campaign of the

Russo-Japanese War in 1904-1905. The whole fighting was limited to the one single-track railroad from Dalny north to Mukden. The battles consisted of contending lines squarely across the railroad, while the few detached moves were based on the railroad and were sent out only far enough to maneuver against the enemy's flank.

Next to railways, water routes are most necessary for military campaigns. The importance of navigable rivers in facilitating the advance of armies is shown in the two-year campaign against Vicksburg, where the advances by land were checked at Shiloh, Iuka, Corinth, and Holly Springs. It was only after control of the Mississippi was gained that the advance down the river enabled the Union Army successfully to carry out the campaign that had seemed well nigh hopeless by land.

In Grant's campaign against Richmond in 1864 his plan of campaign was based on keeping in touch with water transportation. At Spottsylvania Courthouse his army was based on Acquia Creek and the Potomac River; for the next advance the base was moved to Port Royal on the Rappahannock. Later it was moved to West Point on the York River, and finally to the James, as the successful advance reached the vicinity of Petersburg.

Command of the sea is of immense strategic value in enabling the dominant nation to strike where it will. Such was the condition that enabled Great Britain, during the Seven Years' War of Prussia and Great Britain against the rest of Europe to capture and hold her present great dependencies, Canada and India. It was British naval predominance again during the Napoleonic era that protected the nation from the fate that overtook the continental countries.

In the campaign under General Kitchener in 1898 for the reconquest of Khartoum and the Soudan the essential factor of the British success was the use of the Nile for transportation, supplemented by the special military railroad built during the campaign to parallel its banks and to carry supplies around its rapids.

Whether the supplies be forwarded to the advanced base by rail or water, the final distribution must be made to the companies by wagon or auto truck. The wagon has the advantage that it can get through almost any difficulties of road or ground, where the auto would be hopelessly stuck. The auto truck, though, can carry as much as five wagons and can go ten times as far. When the mules or horses are tired at the end of their fourteen-mile haul the wagon must stop. The automobile, however, needs only a change of chauffeur to keep going for as long as gasoline and a relief of chauffeurs can be provided. For a country of well developed highways like France or Germany the auto facilitates greatly the supply and also the transportation of troops. It supplements and augments the rail service and increases enormously the mobility of armies.

For the maintenance of the fighting strength of the army at the front it must be furnished a steady supply of food and a sufficient store of ammunition to keep it always ready for vigorous physical efforts and for the fullest possible development of rifle and artillery fire. A man can easily fire three hundred rounds of rifle ammunition during a battle, while a field gun is limited only by the number of shells that can be supplied during the course of the engagement.

No country can hope to manufacture during wartime the large amount of ammunition used up in the first battles. It would cripple her ar-

mies from the start and would expose them to defeat by equal forces aided by better equipment. After a couple of months of war the factories can expand their facilities sufficiently to supply the steady demand, but the munitions for the first few weeks must be provided in times of peace and stored ready for war.

Complete stocks of rifles, field guns and their accessories are manufactured or purchased in sufficient numbers to equip the largest armies that the nation will have call to put in the field. They are then labeled for assignment to special organizations on mobilization and are stored in separate groups, ready for prompt issue when the emergency arises.

Food supplies are more difficult to store, but are more easily obtained in case of need. Consequently no large stocks are maintained in times of peace except at the fortresses along the frontiers. Since the headquarters will be strained to the limit by the ordinary demands of mobilization and concentration, it can ill afford at this urgent time to be burdened with the provisioning of these strongholds. Consequently each fortress maintains even in peace times a store of hard bread, salt meat, flour and dried vegetables, sufficient to subsist its garrison for several months in the event of a siege. In this way the forts form supporting points along the frontier, ready to check and delay any sudden invasion of the enemy, thus gaining time for the concentration of their own armies in rear.

Such a function was performed by the fortress of Metz in 1870, which by its control of the direct rail route, delayed the German advance on Paris until their military engineers could construct a by-pass from Remilly to Pont-a-Mousson to carry their trains past Metz without coming under the fire of its forts. Such also was the part played by Liège and Namur at

the outbreak of the present conflict.

In order to be ready for war the supply department must keep track of all available food supplies and must be prepared to obtain prompt possession of such as would be needed on the call for mobilization. In order to provide for the large and continuous demands when the armies take the field, great depots are formed at the rail centers, where provisions of all sorts are collected. These are then forwarded as needed to advanced bases close to the battle line.

When large armies are in the field they will quickly eat up all stocks of provisions if the communication with the home depot is broken. At the same time they cannot be burdened with the immediate care of large stocks of stores that would not be needed for a number of days. Such excessive trains appreciably limit the mobility of the command and detract from its fighting value.

It was this factor that helped to delay the success of the British campaign against the Boers in 1900. The Boers lived on a simple ration, largely collected in the theater of operations, while the major part of the British columns were incommoded by long trains carrying the supplies which their troops were accustomed to demand. The lighter equipment enabled the Boer commandos to attack in one place, and then move rapidly to deliver another attack in another district. This activity made it necessary for Great Britain to send to South Africa a force several times the strength of the Boer armies before she could overcome them.

While the army must reduce its baggage trains to the minimum, it must also take precautions against a failure of the supply of food. This is done by the maintenance of the advanced bases at the railroads or at the nearest boat landings. From this

point the supplies are sent forward in trains of wagons or automobiles, which are organized so that each train carries enough rations for one division for one day. A constant stream of trains between the advanced base and the front is thus kept up, the aim being to keep always within reach of the troops enough rations for three days. The schedule of service is laid out so that a loaded train will arrive at the front just as the one already there is emptied of its stores. This latter then returns to the base to replenish and to continue the service.

So important is the safeguarding of an army's supplies that it demands a care and attention only exceeded by the strategic planning of maneuvers to defeat the enemy. The feeding of an army is necessary to its fighting; the best of troops cannot survive the physical weakening and moral strain consequent upon deprivation of proper nourishment. The general in command, while watching the enemy in front, must also keep an eye on his line of communications, for any move against this line threatens him in a vital point. The line of communications is like an artery nourishing the arm; if the artery be cut, the arm loses its striking power. Only if the flow of blood be quickly restored, can the limb be saved from destruction and its fighting power be restored.

At all times the supply trains en route to the front require a guard to prevent thefts, and when in a hostile territory this protection requires a large armed force. The trains stretch over a great deal of road, about one mile to every hundred vehicles. When in an invasion the trains are exposed to raids of the enemy's cavalry, their defense may require a small army. Their capture may seriously influence the whole campaign.

In the invasion of Austria by Fred-

erick the Great in 1758 his campaign was defeated and he was forced to abandon the siege of Olmutz on account of the capture of a great train of three thousand wagons. In the consequent retreat to Prussia he had to detach one half of his army to protect the four thousand wagons that carried his war materials and supplies.

In 1846, at the beginning of the Mexican War, General Taylor found the supply of his army on the Rio Grande opposite Matamoros so threatened by the Mexican detachments in his rear that he had to take his entire army, except one regiment, to march back twenty-five miles to the base at Point Isabel in order to bring forward in safety the supplies needed for the maintenance of his troops.

In December, 1862, Grant's campaign against Vicksburg had advanced to Oxford, two hundred miles south of his base at Columbus, Ky., and thirty miles south of his advanced base at Holly Springs, Miss. In the last two weeks of the year the Confederate cavalry leader, Forrest, cut his communications by destroying sixty miles of railroad near Jackson, Tenn., while Van Dorn captured the base at Holly Springs. By hard marching on half rations Grant's army escaped to Memphis, but the campaign by this route was defeated.

Rail communication must likewise be thoroughly protected from interruption in order to permit a vigorous prosecution of the campaign at the front. In the campaign of Sherman from Chattanooga to Atlanta in 1864, he reached the latter city with 82,000 men. The guarding of the long line of rail back through Chattanooga to Nashville had caused the detachment of 115,000 men.

All of this preparation and organization is to the end of supplying

daily bread and meat to the soldier at the front, the man who does the fighting. He is already loaded with a nine-pound rifle, 150 rounds of ammunition, with blanket, rain cape, raversack, mess kit, and an extra pair of shoes. His total pack runs from fifty to sixty pounds in the various countries. Hence by furnishing rations daily this addition to his load is kept small.

However, prudence dictates that he shall have a certain provision in case of a failure to receive rations when due, and this is provided by requiring every man to carry, in addition to the day's subsistence, a second full ration, and one or more emergency rations. These last are compressed cakes of chocolate, biscuit, and dried meat. A cake the size of a man's hand furnishes nourishment for a day if divided into three morsels, but it is far from satisfying.

The staple items of the ration must necessarily be such that they will stand heat and storage without serious loss in nutriment or flavor. In all nations these consist of about thirteen ounces of salt meat, twenty-six ounces of hard bread and seven ounces of rice or peas, with small portions of sugar, salt, and coffee. Every effort is made to supplement the diet by fresh meat and vegetables, levied or purchased in the immediate vicinity of the troops. This living off the country is carried much further in Europe than it is in the British or American practice. The collection of all available supplies in the district occupied is especially the duty of the supply officer of every division. The forwarding of the necessary additional items from the depots is a routine matter in which he is only an agent. He is immediately responsible for the full utilization of the resources of his district.

The importance of this method of subsistence is twofold. It varies and

improves the diet of the men and, still more important, it relieves the line of communications of the transportation of supplies to a large extent. It is rare that complete subsistence can be obtained by this means and then only for a limited time. The deficiencies must in every case be made up by supplies forwarded from the depots.

Two methods of utilization of local resources are used. One is to estimate the stock of food in the district and then to levy all that can be taken without immediate privation for the residents. Since the cities will have a smaller proportion of food than the countries, their deficiency is made up by cash levies. In home territory or a friendly country the supplies are paid for at once; in a hostile district they may be taken without payment.

The other method, always used in Europe as far as possible, is to billet the troops upon the householders. Every householder is assumed to be able to feed and shelter a number of soldiers equal to that of his family for a five-day period. Thereafter the billeting is continued for shelter, but rations are furnished by the military supply service. This system also saves the supply service the burden of providing and carrying large stores of tentage. In the home country the payment for billeting is so liberal that it is sought for during maneuvers by the housewives as a moneymaking proposition.

When billeting cannot be carried out the companies mess as units whenever possible. The meat and vegetable components are put in together and are made into a stew in the big boilers and fireless cookers with which each company is provided. The fireless cookers, built into carts, are loaded up in the morning, and at the noon halt have a supply of hot coffee and soup ready to supplement the bread that the men have

carried in their haversacks. It is even attempted to provide fresh bread at intervals as a relief to the monotonous diet of hardtack. Field bakeries are provided, one for each division, which catch up with the armies for every prolonged halt, and start a regular bread service.

So enormous is this task of supplying armies in the field that unless every detail is carefully provided for, the operations of the armies may be seriously embarrassed. It can be handled only by spreading out the responsibility, by decentralization. This is done by making each army corps independent in its service.

The chief supply officer, on the staff of the corps commander, has entire charge of the advanced base for his corps and of the automobile and wagon transport for forwarding supplies from the advanced base to the front. He sends into the nearest general depot timely requisitions in order to maintain in the advanced base a ten-day supply of all classes of supplies. The railroad service or communication service is then responsible for delivering the stores in bulk, by the train load, to the commander of the advanced base. The organization there divides up the items and makes up the shipments to the divisions and regiments.

While the ration service is more emphasized above as being the largest problem, the supply of ammunition, clothing and forage is carried out in a similar way and by the same organization.

Ammunition is forwarded from the advanced base only when combat has made necessary the replenishing of the stock at the front. The columns for the service are made up of the caissons used with the field artillery so that the individual caissons can take their places in batteries to replace those whose supply has been used up. Similar caissons are pro-

vided to haul the rifle cartridges to the infantry, but ordinary vehicles can be used if necessary.

Hay is enormously bulky; consequently the continental armies attempt to furnish only grain for the animals. These are expected to pick up enough "roughness" to balance their feed. On rapid raids or forced marches the conditions are especially hard on the horses. To exhaustion is added insufficient feeding; the consequent wastage of animals amounts to large figures.

The issues of clothing form an item whose importance is easily overlooked. Conditions of campaign use up clothes fast; every three months the soldier will need a complete new outfit. Shoes seem almost to melt away in the marching in dew and mud. Any Civil War veteran can tell tales of the "fadeaways" of the issues of that period. The life of the best shoes in campaign hardly exceeds thirty days.

To these difficulties further complications are added by winter. Modern wars require that fighting shall go on irrespective of the weather, so extra precautions must be taken to mitigate the hardships of the season. Heavy overcoats, mits, hoods, and foot wrappings must be furnished in abundance. The service is enough to tax sorely the resources of the state.

Since every wagon, truck, and gun carriage must have a driver, since the railroads and military arsenals must be manned, working forces must be provided, and guards everywhere, it is readily seen that the supply service uses up a large part of the enrolled military strength of the state. This total service, called the service of the rear, easily uses up twenty per cent. of the men called into service. However, the older men are used for these duties, so that the pick of the fighting strength of the state stays with the fighting line.

THE CAPITULATION OF COBB

BY T. UZZELL

THE day England declared war against Germany the old veteran broke his custom of thirteen years by rising at eight o'clock instead of at ten and by glancing at his newspaper before he had had his coffee or had gone through the sacred ceremony of filling his four pipes and laying them ready to hand on the mantelpiece. From my little room above I heard him roll off his cot, rustle the newspaper a moment, and then limp into the back area-way to proclaim the news to his wife.

"Mol, this means war!" he shouted. His old wife was very deaf. "Hengland 'as declared war. An' its agin them dishonorable Dutchmen—the Kaiser, pfoo! There'll be fightin' for sure now. They'll be blastin' the bugles and callin' the boys! Mol, ain't ye glad?"

Molly was not glad, as I well knew, and she kept silence as she went about her work. How often during those last days of terrible suspense had she told me, on bringing me my coffee and toast in the morning, that the world was full enough already of "onkind deeds and sufferin' folks without men should 'ave to set about to gun each other to death." She understood Sam's military mania and nourished a fearful concern lest the excitement rouse him to commit some strange madness.

Grumbling at women's dishonorable neutrality and general incompetence when matters of great moment are to be decided, the old veteran stamped back to his basement bedroom, kicking the dog on the way. Kicking the dog was a record for Sam, for, though he cordially hated

the animal, he had never before shown his ire in any way but in the use of barrack-room vituperation. Now the dog howled dismally, ran to Molly and cowered by her skirts for protection. Sam had declared for war and Molly against it; Sam had crossed the frontier by kicking Molly's beloved Tody—something was bound to happen.

That evening Molly and I were staggered to hear the lame old veteran declare his intention of enlisting to fight the Germans.

Our queer little family sat in silence in the tiny basement kitchen. The low, age-browened ceiling, clean, uneven floor and smooth-rubbed furniture fitted closely and appropriately about the gaunt, quiet, home-loving personality of my landlady. Here we had been accustomed to sit each evening for years; old Cobb re-read his morning paper, tapped his pipe from time to time on the black fender and recharged it from an old salt sack dangling from a coat button; Molly knitted or darned Sam's socks or gazed yearningly yet resignedly into the twinkling grate. Tody, his rusty muzzle snuggled over his four paws, dozed on the hearth, springing up occasionally, as if something expected had happened, pouncing upon his own person and nibbling savagely.

Molly cooked and slept, with her "darlin' Tody," in the little, odorous cellar kitchen, while Cobb kept himself, his cot, charred pipes, framed pension diploma and sacred library of half-penny papers in the even smaller room next to the kitchen which opened on the area-way below

the street. Other cherished possessions of the old soldier were an old, faded service uniform, shako, and rusty bayonet which he had preserved from Egyptian campaigns. There was also an "honorable retirement" certificate, some yellow war maps and a single, coverless, curly-edged book, Shakespeare's jingo play of "King Henry V."

Cobb was a sterling patriot.

Aside from his ardent military and patriotic leanings and his arrogant pride in having once been "an honorable member" of the Queen's Own Hussars, the rheumatic old soldier possessed a pension of a few shillings a week, a bad temper, a chronic distaste for work and an intolerant hatred of Molly's "collie" dog. His wife was totally shut out from participation in any of his sympathy or affection, all of which was bestowed upon a grand contemplation of his heroic past and an imaginary affiliation with military and titled figures who figured conspicuously in the newspapers.

Each morning he spent three hours blue-penciling the court news and items concerning London's famous men and women; after which he folded his paper up neatly, put it under the old boot on top of the pile on the coal box and wheezed forth into the Lane, across Kensington Gore and into Hyde Park. There I had often seen him sitting in his accustomed bench near Rotten Row whence he closely observed the royalty and titled and military horsemen, all of whom he knew at sight and greeted by saluting or raising his hat. As they galloped by, he noted down their names and titles in full with his stub of blue pencil.

At dusk, groaning aloud at some new stiffness discovered in his leg wounded in battle, he hobbled through Albert Gate, drank his two pints of ale at the "Old Cock" and

came home for dinner. How mean his surroundings then seemed to him, how cruel his fate, how disgusted he became at the frail, soft-voiced, tender-handed figure of Molly, his ministering and devoted wife!

The old veteran's fingers began to tremble that evening as he read; his puffing, which before had been deliberate and meditative, suddenly came spasmodically in clouds from his lips, until he dragged himself from his low seat, swept the little kitchen with a stiff, swimming motion of both arms and shouted:

"We've got to fight them Dutchmen. Belgians nor Frenchers can't stop them devils. It'll take the Queen's Hussars to settle this war!" He leaned over and shouted into Molly's ear: "I'm goin' to 'list, do y' 'ear? I've got one leg and a toller'ble good eye—do y' see that harm!" He bared a hairy forearm and ran on with his declamation oblivious of his Molly and of me and our detestation of human slaughter. He carnavaled far afield with clashing swords, neighing, wounded horses and the groans and shock of battle.

Molly, helpless, dismayed, let her knitting fall through her trembling fingers, gazed at her gesticulating husband, and finally collapsed in her chair. Her house of hope had tumbled about her ears when it seemed to be completed and secure. She did not want her Samuel to go to war.

The knocker on the floor above rattled loudly through the silent house. Tody, who served as door bell to his deaf mistress, scrambled into the hall, waking the echoes with his tumultuous barking; Sam swore with soldierly eloquence, and I bore off to my room, while Molly opened the door upon a cockney neighbor who had dropped in "for a bit of a chat, Mrs. Cobb."

The visitor chattered of her neighborly generosity in wanting to come and sit by the grate with Molly for a few minutes, "bein' has she hain't 'ad no comp'ny since comin' to Cockpit Lane." Molly hesitated. The redoubtable Sam never allowed Molly to have company while he was home; and when once he discovered a "foreign 'airpin," incriminating evidence that a visitor had come in his absence, he persecuted Molly for her "igh treason and treachery."

Molly's caller willy-nilly led the way below. I stood at my door and listened. Sam, his wrath rising, was waiting for them.

"What d'ye want 'ere?" he challenged belligerently, as the two women appeared. "Don't ye know yet that the King's at war? This ain't no time to be gossipin' and yarin' by the fireside."

The visitor interrupted timorously: "Mayn't I set a moment, sor? Molly said as she be lonely nights, an' bein's I be without no folks and afraid now that the soldiers—"

"'Tis against my orders, mum?" interrupted Sam, expanding with rage. "I'm a soger o' the Queen, and I'm retired honorably on a pension by 'er Gracious Majesty; this 'earthstone is my castle and I'll not 'ave it trajuced by no foreign beggars an' cockney potwallopers. Take 'er out, Mol. Lave the premises at once, mum, or I'll do sommat—"

The two women crept back up the narrow stairs. As the ejected visitor passed my door, I heard her mumbling to herself, "Devil toike sech a 'usband; I'd pisen 'is dum beer, I wud, I'd pisen—" The women parted in silence.

The next morning before Sam had awakened, I sat by my window waiting for Molly to bring me my coffee and observed with sinking heart what effect the awful war was having on the life in our quiet little Lane.

Cockpit Lane was one of those pleasant little backwater eddies that sometimes manage to hide themselves on the very brink of one of the broad, roaring streams of traffic which sweep down the curving thoroughfares of the West End. It was more like a Latin Quarter than Soho itself. Already the war spirit had penetrated to this peaceful region of flat-chested, two-story brick houses and smoking chimney-pots. A drove of blooded horses commandeered from Tattersall's for English officers' use in the field were stamping and whinnying by the curb. Trunks, bed clothing and bric-a-brac belonging to German roomers who had been forcibly ejected, littered the sidewalk. A stout costermonger's wife sprinkled with flour was tacking an improvised sign over her door: "Germans not wanted."

Molly Cobb, accompanied by her dog, entered and arranged the fragrant toasted scones, tiny, steaming coffee pot, and dainty pats of butter bedewed by the ice-box. Her timid anxiety to please was touching.

"I say," I shouted horribly, "has Mr. Cobb really decided to enlist?"

"Aw, the naughty dog!" she replied. She was too sensitive ever to tell me when she did not understand and she feared constantly that Tody might disturb me.

"Come 'ere, Tody, I soi!" she called, with an effort at sternness in her voice. In spite of my protests, she sank to her knees and peered under the bed. "Ah, 'e's the troil o' my loife! I'll 'ave to whip 'im, sir."

She pushed the canine into the hall, closed the door and soon I heard her slapping her knee, simulating the whipping the dog might have received. A few minutes later she had the big, stiff animal in her frail arms kissing it and pouring out words of wistful endearment.

Poor, kind, childless Molly Cobb! How painful and pathetic were her tremulous efforts to find someone, something by which she might satisfy her hungering and yearning for sacrifice. She had no means of giving herself, of expending the affection which for years she had smothered within her. She lived alone, imprisoned within herself, abandoned by all save by her mongrel, over-fed, rusty-haired dog. Tody was indeed her one consolation and joy, and though he was, to my mind, a silly and unprincipled canine, he nevertheless wore the human character of kinsfolk.

"Aw, Molly Cobb," old Sam had told me once, "she kin crisp a chop not bad, sor, but otherways she's just a sheep-witted, no account she-femile. She ust to narrite 'er troubles, but she wearid me bones and I minded 'er to keep 'er peace. She ain't spoke much since."

As I sat thus, and mused, I heard the old soldier wake as usual with a snort, growl to the dog to "go lay down, you flee-chasin', milk-suppin' sheep-houn'" and shout for his coffee. Instead of settling himself to his newspapers and his pipes, he floundered about, swearing, and rummaged in an old chest which for years had rested untouched beneath his cot.

An hour later I was dumfounded to behold him stride forth into the Lane clad in the faded, ill-fitting regimentals worn by the Third Lancashire corps of the Queen's Royal Hussars in the Egyptian campaigns of 1884. Breeches once crimson were stuffed clumsily into cracked and dusty boots; a blue blouse, now far too small, drew his shoulders back, forced his arms out at his sides, and gaped open by several buttons over his ample stomach. A shako rested jauntily on one side of his head; a rusty, naked bayonet dangled

at his left hip and a huge, murderous-looking cavalry pistol hung half out of a trouser pocket. He might have been taken for an ancient figure from an abandoned wax works. At sight of him I knew not whether to laugh or give way to tears.

The old soldier marched off up the Lane towards Hyde Park. I seized my hat and followed. Other people were so absorbed in reading their newspapers and cheering the busloads of troops that whirled by on their way to the railroad stations, that the old veteran was scarcely noticed, though a policeman and a boy here and there gazed at him in amazement.

He marched out upon the open green between Rotten Row and the Serpentine River where Lord Kitchener's officers were recruiting the eager, patriotic young men of England. The burning August sun struck silver gleams from the Serpentine among the big cottonwoods, and flashed in radiant and picturesque splendor on the helmets and metal trappings of the officers.

The old veteran straightened his arms down at his sides at the sight and quickened his gait. Here for years had he beheld the brilliant and imposing reviews of the Imperial Guard by the King; over this beautiful piece of greensward he had often gazed in adoration at the royal children, escorted by equerries in scarlet doublets, doeskin tights and fluttering, black beavers; here on this sacred soil he himself was now marching to join the colors and fight for England.

An officer prancing by on a foam-flecked bay beheld the queer military figure and drew up before him. Sam Cobb's boot heels came smartly together. He saluted. The officer respectfully returned the salute, exclaiming, "Well, comrade, what's this? Off to the war?" The officer

dismounted and the two engaged a moment in earnest conversation. Then they walked toward the center of the green where long lines of civilians were drawn up before shouting officers and military clerks seated before stacks of paper on deal tables.

The eyes of two thousand young Englishmen were turned on the old veteran. Not one of them laughed or made a single gesture of ridicule.

The recruiting captain spoke with the officer, shook the old veteran by the hand, placed his arm on his shoulder, faced the lines of recruits and addressed them. His words, which I could not catch, produced a subtle and magical effect. This military ghost of the past, this visible representative of the most glorious fighting days of Imperial England mellowed their tragic earnestness and filled some of their eyes with tears. As old Cobb was led away by the officer, they all, laborers in jumpers, cricket-players in white trousers, clerks in top hats, straightened up, clenched their fists and instinctively saluted.

Molly, as she opened the door to me an hour later, trembled as though with the ague. "Oh, sir," she cried, clasping and unclasping her thin, pale hands, "'tis an awful mess we're in. Tody 'as et up 'is honorable dismissal and made game with 'is pichers of the blessed Queen. I was out a-shoppin' and locked the door on Tody, because, you know, sir, 'ow 'e runs mad on the street and gets under the wheels o' the vehicles. Oh Lordy, 'tis a foine pickle we're in. 'E shouldn't 'av left 'is chest open. Dear Tody h'is a proper little dog and 'e know 'is place; but 'e ain't never been learned not to eat honorable diplomas and portraits o' the Queen. 'Hi'll tie a knot in the dum dog's tail,' 'e says. Pore Tody! 'E says we're henemies o' Hengland an'

that 'e'll desert us.' Oh Lordy, Lordy!"

By the next morning the story of Sam Cobb's adventure with the recruiting officers had reached all the gossips of the Lane.

It was at that quiet hour when Sam Cobb, together with our whole little snuggery of foreign lodgers is generally asleep and only the cockney landladies are abroad shaking rugs, chalking the front doorsteps and, like Olympians, distributing caustic censure liberally among lamp-post lovers, absconding Germans and bibulous husbands. The Lane had been cleansed of Germans and cavalry horses and the women who could not read were listening to the news of the war from those who had taken an early glance at some lodger's newspaper. Molly was among them, watching their lips with painful attention, visibly struggling against her embarrassment and smiling graciously, though she understood nothing.

Suddenly, a colossal woman with huge red arms and a head bald save for a tiny dough-like wad of white hair on her crown, leaned over Molly and shouted in her ear:

"Yer 'usband ain't no good fer a soger, Mrs. Cobb, I 'ear. I 'ear 'e 'as a wooden leg. Like it is 'is 'ead, Mrs. Cobb, eh? I know what 'usbands be. Let 'im toike the dog out a-airin'; there's no danger in that; the dog knows 'ow to git 'ome, ha ha!" She laughed with innocent, peasant heartiness.

Molly must have understood, for she began to reply soberly: "'E'd not do for sogerin' now, and I think this 'ere war is 'orrible what would toike awy our 'usbands—." Just then a look of horror overspread Molly's face. She looked transfixed at the window beneath which the old pensioner smoked and slept, and, mumbling something about Tody, hastened into the house.

Behind the door Molly paused, listening. Sam had already risen an hour before his time and was floundering about like a grampus, swearing at the barking Tody: "Go lay down, you flea-chasin' rat! You'd eat up the Queen, eh?" And a heavy boot banged against the wall.

A few minutes later the crash came.

"What 'er them she-idjuts talkin' o' out there?" bellowed Sam, as Molly came below.

No answer. Molly seldom spoke to Sam except to warn him that it was chilly out, that she had sewn a button on or had done something else for his lumpish ease.

"I 'eard 'em talkin'," he continued. "What right 'ave them bloomin' fools—" I tiptoed to the stairs and looked over the railing and down into the kitchen, the door of which stood open. Sam Cobb, coatless and collarless, stood beside the table, his florid cheeks distended with rage, his jaw moving from side to side, his stiff, short fingers curling into fists and straightening again. Molly sat on the hummocky sofa looking at him as though hypnotized with fear. Tody's head was in her lap, his dumb, pitying eyes fixed on her face and his bushy tail beating a tattoo against a chair leg.

The old soldier's decrepit intellect wrestled desperately with the new problem of publicly insulted dignity. "You've made a public fool o' me, madam!" he mouthed, using, in his impotent rage, the imagined language of his lord and lady patrons. "These vermin cockneys—pfoo!" He spat.

Molly cringed and clung to Tody's long rusty ears. She suffered in silence. She was used to it.

"You've trajuced the honor of a soger o' the Queen!" thundered Sam, "and I'll not stay, dummed if I do. 'Tis good-bye, madam. Mark that!"

"'Tis oight year agone, Sammy," interrupted Molly, full of sobs within but unable to burst into tears, "'tis oight year since you and me—there, you've gone and split that neckband agin—let me 'av it to-night and I'll —" I tiptoed back to my room.

The next day Sam Cobb gathered up his bizarre personalia and prepared to depart. He stuffed all his newspapers into huge dry-goods boxes; his faded uniforms, pipes, tarnished snuffboxes, rusty cartridges, soiled postcards of royalty punctured by Tody's teeth, he tied into various bundles, numbered carefully, and deposited on the floor by the door. He found his meals at the taverns for three days, but postponed his departure. He came in grumbling and potted about like a nervous bear; a true Tommy Atkins, long retired into private life, and now miserable, pulled up by the roots!

Molly Cobb made her beds, filled the lamps and scrubbed the dog in utter silence and gloom. She never went out on the street, but sat alone through the long evenings with her heavy dog in her arms. Once in her absent-mindedness she let Tody escape and the two of us gave chase to capture him. We found the scatterbrained animal racing like mad down a fashionable thoroughfare with a mighty beef roast in his jaws and a fat, gesticulating butcher in hot pursuit. The butcher, happily, was a German, and no one listened to his claim for damages.

"Is he going?" I wrote on my paper one morning.

"'E ain't gone yet," Molly replied mournfully.

"Why is he waiting?" I wrote again.

"'E can't find no other place to suit 'im, I fancy, sir. You see, we 'ave got so used to one another. An' 'e loikes 'is evenin' chop, sir. It ha' taken years to learn, sir. Then, mind

you," continued Molly, "it toikes twelve bob a week to feed 'im, and 'e gives me only seven of 'is pension pay. 'E needs the other shillin's for 'is beer. 'Tis a good thing, I'm for thinkin', that I've always taken roomers."

"Does he know that his pension money does not pay for his keep?" I wrote next, while Molly put her hand mechanically to her ear, as though I were speaking to her.

"I 'ave no wy o' knowin', sir. I fancy 'e don't know, tho' 'e'll find out now, sir, 'e will."

The next evening at the time when all England shook with the sobs and passionate, heart-broken farewells of parents and lovers with soldiers departing for the front, I entered our little house in Cockpit Lane about dusk. I halted, terrified, on the threshold. I heard a wail of weeping that stopped the beating of my heart. It was the cry of a woman who had known a life-long smouldering sorrow, but had never given way to it in tears. If I were God, I'd make it a fixed rule never to permit women at Molly's age to cry as she was crying when I reached home that night.

Tody had been run over and killed by an omnibus filled with troops. Old Cobb had happened along Kensington Gore just in time to see the crowd gather. The Juggernaut hooted along, reckless, determined, driven by that already historic command of Kitchener, "Victory now means rapid traffic; let England clear a way for the troops!" The old soldier brought the carcass home and laid it gently on the coal box in the area-way.

Poor Molly wrung her hands; gathered the stiffening body into her arms, rubbed her pale, sunken cheek against the silky ears, and sobbed hysterically, murmuring over and over with passionate tenderness,

"Tody, darlin'est, sweet'art, baby, my baby, O, mother's love, mother's baby love—"

Old Sam and I stood by looking on with huge lumps choking our throats and tears dropping from our cheeks, too stricken with sympathy to think of producing a handkerchief to wipe them away. Then I did not think that this flood of emotion released within Molly's breast had something in it of a blessing. She was crying freely and easily and with the loss of tears she lost her burden of smothered sorrow. I turned and fled into the Park. How could one shout consolation to a deaf woman!

When I returned an hour later, I witnessed an amazing sight. Old Sam had hobbled to the meat shop and bought eight big mutton chops; had made a fire in the little stove, and when I arrived, was making a great bustle, puffing and clattering about, coatless, amid an enveloping cloud of wood smoke and heavy odors of burning fat.

I stood silently at the door of the tiny kitchen. The old soldier plunged a grimy fist into a jar of flour, dashed all that remained under his fingers into a smoking skillet, and, flopping a chop in after it, folded his arms grandly over his stomach.

"I used to be able to shuffle a chop meself in old commissariat days," he muttered grimly between his teeth. He brandished aloft a huge, dripping spoon and mopped the perspiration from his eyes with his sleeve.

A movement at my elbow caused me to look around. It was Molly. She had been in Sam's room crying, but now stood watching him with swollen, reddened eyes, smiling. Smiling! Dear, quiet little landlady—the first genuine, happy smile in all the years I had known her! And her "precious, darlin' Tody" lay stiff and cold in the area-way.

"There's a patriot for ye!" exulted Sam, hands on hips, smiling at Molly. "The troops must go to the front and they killed the dum dog a-doin' hit. They wouldn't let me fight, so Mol she give her dog. Weren't it grand, sor? See, she's smilin' now. She's done sommat for Hengland and I'm a-gettin' up a feast, sor, in 'er honor. 'Devil toike ye,' says I to Jake, 'give me the finest chops in Hengland to-night. We're a-celebratin' for the old woman whose a-grievin' of 'er dog. None of yer 'orse meat,' says I. Come on, Mol, 'ere's yer place. Set 'ere, an' ye may wipe yer eyes with

the table cloth to-night, ye may."

Radiant in smiles, Molly, as if in a dream, took the chair Sam offered her in the middle of the kitchen, ever following him adoringly with her kindly, blue eyes, as he hobbled about, preparing dinner.

During the feast that night, Sam, from time to time, lumbered out into the area-way to take a look at the dead, and each time as he returned he stepped up to his wife's side, placed a great, heavy hand softly on her gray head and repeated his tender benediction: "'Tis sommat done for Hengland, Mol. The dum dog died for Hengland."

JESUS AND JOAN

BY STEPHEN PHILLIPS

WHEN Jesus greeted Joan in the after-twilight;
 When the Crucified kissed the Burned;
 Then softly they spoke together, solemnly, sweetly,
 They two so branded with life.
 But they spoke not at all of cross, or up-piled flaming,
 Or the going from them of God;
 But he was tender over the soul of the Roman
 Who pierced his side with the spear,
 And she was whist with pity for him that lighted
 The faggot in Rouen town.

THE MEDDLER

BY JESSIE W. McGRIFF

MUCH to her own chagrin and the amazement of the Literary Editor, Miss Mallory laid her head on the little pile of manuscripts before her and wept hysterically. To decide upon them—even to read them—was revolting. Nerves and body and brain, after many years of entire reliability, refused to do anything but stupidly throb and ache.

The Literary Editor behaved very creditably about it, continuing to mark proof until her last gasp was exhausted, when he turned and told her very kindly that "in view of her long and faithful service to the House" she could have three weeks' leave on full pay—to brace up and recover her deftness in picking out literary plums.

When she returned that evening to her tiny bachelor apartment, she found her unexpected freedom weighed heavily. It was too early in the season to go anywhere, and the rattle and bang of New York was something not to be idly endured. For the first time in her life she felt utterly and desperately lonely. Suddenly it occurred to her that she might visit her niece, Isabel Blair, whom she had not seen for so long that she was ashamed to think of it.

Fifteen years before, just as Virginia Mallory—then a pretty, self-centered, enthusiastic young person—had landed a coveted position on a big New York daily, there came the pathetic, tremulous appeal from the death-bed of her only sister, begging that Virginia renounce this first step towards large literary achievement, and devote her best years to bringing up little Isabel.

"Don't do it, Virginia, unless you want to," wrote Isabel's mother, "but, oh, my dear, try, *try*, to want to. You are all she has in the world, but she could never really belong to you if you remain in New York and live as you are doing."

For several days Virginia had writhed on the horns of her dilemma, then she finally decided that she would be deliberately evading her destiny should she permit dormant maternal instincts to overrule her active literary ones. So little Isabel was given over to Mrs. Gentison, a widow, who was a close friend of Isabel's mother, and who was striving to make both ends meet in a college career for her son, and Virginia returned to New York.

Of course it had not been Miss Mallory's intention to relinquish all claim to her niece. Indeed, for at least a year she made a point of writing to her once a week; then gradually the periods between letters lengthened until such time as Miss Mallory's stories began to appear in a few second-rate magazines, when she mailed these to Isabel, and thus altogether got out of the habit of writing. But Isabel, being a faithful little soul and hungry for affection, wrote with more or less regularity through all the years, often wistfully suggesting that her dear aunt arrange to spend her next vacation with her.

Miss Mallory's vacations, however, seemed to her much too rare and precious to bear secluding in a languishing New England town. She must, in justice to her Art—Miss Mallory mentally spelled it with a

capital—secure a flash of color and animation now and again at Atlantic City, Saratoga, or during several weeks at a Bohemian Camp in the Adirondacks with a few kindred spirits. So Isabel was permitted to wait hopefully on.

Now, after making this tardy decision to visit her niece, Miss Mallory dropped off to sleep with the comfortable feeling of doing just the right thing. She was surprised to find that she actually yearned for fresh milk and new-laid eggs and bed shortly after sundown—and Isabel.

On her arrival at Sunville she found her niece grown into a slim, pretty creature, with eyes as tenderly blue as newly-opened forget-me-nots, and a riotous mass of tawny hair. "Insipid," pronounced Miss Mallory at first sight of her, but later on she caught occasional hints of cool, quiet depths in the girl which caused her to suspend surface skimming and lower her line of investigation. Miss Mallory never failed to dredge up from the bottom of human nature what she could not grasp easily on the top, regardless of the discomfort to the nature dredged.

On the fourth morning following her arrival, as she sat chatting with Isabel and Mrs. Gentison in the library, Dr. Gentison, the widow's son, entered with his overcoat on his arm. He was an energetic-looking man, with sensitive gray eyes behind slightly smoked glasses, and a square, dogged chin, deeply cleft. His clever, lean, brown face gave the impression of a man upon whom the responsibilities of maturity had fallen early, at the expense of a normal, happy boyhood.

He handed the overcoat to Isabel with a preoccupied air and stood with right arm thrust out behind him waiting for her to adjust it for him.

Miss Mallory, watching the un-

conscious intimacy of the proceeding with quiet amusement, smiled broadly when Isabel finished with a soft, proprietary "There!"

Half an hour later, when the young girl sat beside her with a darning-basket, Miss Mallory pounced upon her quite suddenly with:

"Isabel Blair, you're in love with that man!"

"Aunt!" Isabel's gentle blue eyes opened wide in startled protest, while the clear pearliness of her skin deepened to a rosy pink under her aunt's cool scrutiny. "How *can* you?" she reproached.

"Very easily," returned Miss Mallory. "Take, for instance, that sock you are mending. It is Dr. Gentison's, beyond a doubt, but why don't you let his mother attend to it?"

"Because—her eyes are bad—and—besides——"

"You love doing it yourself," interposed her aunt triumphantly. "The air of consecration with which you accomplish it is unmistakable: You needn't tell *me*, my dear."

"I'm not telling you, Aunt," disclaimed Isabel, with a smile that began in derision and ended in disaster.

Miss Mallory reached forward and took the work out of the girl's fingers, which were trembling a little: then, lifting the girl's chin, she gazed deep into the startled young eyes.

"Why don't you marry him?" she asked boldly.

Isabel drew back and sat stiffly erect, struggling for composure; and when she spoke at last, her apparent distress had subsided into merely a little pulse that throbbed in the side of her neck.

"You have no right to speak so to me, Aunt Virginia," she said. "Arthur Gentison has been a good, kind brother to me ever since I can remember."

"Brother fiddlesticks!" snorted Miss Mallory.

"I have known no other," replied the girl quietly, "and, besides, he's nearly old enough to be my father. And as for loving him, as you say, even if I did, which I don't, I wouldn't admit I cared for a man unless I knew he cared for me. I don't think it would be—" she hesitated for a word—"womanly."

Miss Mallory threw back her head, and her pleasant laugh sounded through the house. "Really, Isabel," she said, wiping her eyes, "you are entirely too young to be twenty. You needn't look so lofty, child, nor blush so furiously. Don't you know that when the poor little ostrich buries her head in the sand she puts dust in nobody's eyes but her own?"

"But I'm not burying my head," defended the girl stoutly. "I don't need to."

"Nevertheless, any one under the same roof—save Mrs. Gentison, who's half blind, or the stupid dear himself—would know what I know. But there is nothing to be ashamed of, my child. It's no more shocking for a woman to be in love with a man, than for a man to be in love with a woman. Personally, I think it much more dignified for a woman to admit frankly that she loves a particular man and to start out openly to win him, than to stalk him in the creep-mousy fashion of some of your so-called 'nice girls.'" She stopped long enough to search the young face again before she continued:

"You are not the first girl, Isabel, who has lived in the same house with a man so long that he has grown to accept her along with the family plate. Stories built round that interesting problem come to the office every week or two. The difficulty, I notice, is always solved in one of two ways: the girl either throws herself at the man's head with such aimless precision that she completely bowls him over, and then drops her

flower-like face on his bosom, overcome with the sweet shame of her self-betrayal, or else she goes to him with some trumped-up story about the neighbor's saying it's improper for her—being she—and him—being he—to live longer under the same roof, because—and she generally breaks off there and leaves the rest to his imagination."

Isabel laughed so frankly at this that her aunt felt encouraged to go on:

"Now, here is Dr. Gentison, an eligible bachelor, so occupied with the ills of the world that marriage never occurs to him. All women, in consequence, appear to him merely as feminine specimens of the *genus homo* and interesting only in a pathological sense. I suppose he never notices what one has on, or how one's hair is fixed, or when one is looking particularly nice?"

"Never! Never!" exclaimed Isabel, with conviction.

"Exactly. Some men are like that." Miss Mallory paused a moment as if uncertain whether to continue, then plunged ahead impetuously. "I am very glad, after all, my dear, that your affections are not involved."

Isabel looked relieved. "Of course they couldn't be—with a middle-aged person like Arthur Gentison."

"Just how old is he?" asked the other curiously.

"Why he must be nearly as old as you, Aunt—thirty-five or thereabouts."

Miss Mallory accepted this with admirable fortitude. "Even at that," she replied, "he's scarcely decrepit; but, at any rate, I'm more than glad my first impressions were incorrect, although it makes a certain confession of my own a bit more difficult, because it's always difficult to confide in one whose experience is in

no wise similar. And yet"—she leaned over and picked off a thread from the girl's skirt—"I want to be perfectly frank with you, Isabel."

Isabel laid her hand timidly upon her aunt's knee. "Maybe—" she hesitated. "Oh, Aunt, maybe you mean to be married yourself!"

"Ah, but you think I'm too old," Miss Mallory reminded with a quizzical smile.

"But you don't *look* a bit old," reassured Isabel heartily.

"I'm forty," announced Miss Mallory grimly. "Forty! And what have I to show for it? Husks. Husks. I shall never attain the kernel of literary achievement. I feel it—and so—yes, Isabel, I mean to be married—if I can."

"I am so glad!" cried Isabel, impulsively slipping to the floor and laying her head upon her aunt's knee. "Tell me about it. Tell me. I will understand."

"There's little to tell, my dear, except that at your age I was obsessed, like your doctor, with the notion of being married to my profession. But with forty and gray hairs staring at me, I've come to believe there's more recompense in darning a man's socks. When I was a girl like you, Isabel, I deliberately threw away my chance of happiness, because the man I cared for was too proud to agree to my earning my own living in my own way. He wanted my heart and body and brain for himself—and his children; and so I sent him away, and another woman became the mother of his children, before I awakened to the fact that it is more worth-while to be mother of a good man's babies than author of a flimsy story-plot."

"I see perfectly," said Isabel softly, caressing her hand. "But now you've met some one else and are going to marry him and be very happy."

"Yes. It's a wise plan to strive

mightily to get what you want from life, and if you are denied in one direction, then turn all your energies towards something else, if you're sure you want it. And I'm convinced I do want it—him."

"Whom, Aunt?"

"Doctor Gentison."

Isabel got on her feet with a jerk and stood looking at her aunt in breathless incredulity. "Doctor Gentison? You? Oh, Aunt!"

"Sit down, my child, and don't look as if I had exploded all the canons of respectability. I am in reality quite a proper person, although, perhaps, not a prudish one. Doctor Gentison interests me more than I should have conceived possible. Beneath his preoccupied gravity, I believe a mere man is thumping away, clamoring for a feminine touch to release him. But a delicate touch will never do it, Isabel. I was convinced of that when I saw you help him on with his coat this morning. Nothing short of a jar will rouse him. That is why I have broached the subject to you. I wanted to start out fair and square—your touch against my jar. But now, of course, since your feelings are not involved, the situation becomes much less complicated."

Isabel continued to stare at her aunt with horror-stricken, fascinated eyes, but Miss Mallory, not in the least discomfited, sank back gracefully in her chair, bringing into prominence a remarkably pretty silken-clad foot and ankle. Isabel's gaze fastened on the foot, then traveled slowly over her aunt's person—her trim figure, her clear, wholesome skin, her intelligent brown eyes with little hair's-breadth wrinkles about them that showed only when she laughed—and suddenly it burst upon her that Virginia Mallory was not only a very attractive woman, but a very determined woman as well.

The knowledge brought her a little stab of pain which she closed her eyes to hide.

"You won't give me away, Isabel?" Miss Mallory caught the girl's shoulders lightly with both hands. "Isabel, you won't give me away?" Something in the tone and something in the provocative expression of the mouth convinced Isabel that her aunt was perfectly aware of the turmoil going on inside her and was decidedly amused at the performance.

A change passed over the girl's face—a shrinking, like the slowly folding petals of a sensitive plant when roughly handled. She made a hurried movement to leave the room, then, her chin held high, her eyes bright with suppressed tears, turned and looked steadily at her aunt.

"No, Aunt Virginia, I won't give you away. I'd be ashamed to."

The words were inscrutable—and so were Isabel's eyes.

Miss Mallory went up to her room and locked herself in. After making herself comfortable in a loose kimona, she sat relaxed before the open window, to think. When at last she rose and moved gracefully over to the little mahogany desk Isabel had removed from the parlor for her convenience, her eyes, too, were inscrutable, and her lips set. Taking up a plain sheet of paper, she laboriously printed upon it the following:

MY DEAR DOCTOR:

I wonder if you have at least one human attribute—curiosity. If not, I beg that you consign this note to the fire immediately.

You won't? Then, I am emboldened to proceed with your case. Did it ever strike you, you unenterprising savior of bodies, that you are neglecting a valuable professional asset by ignoring, as you do, the impulses and emotions of the human *beings*—not bodies—that you are thrown with? I know that your profession is everything with you, but I know, too, that you will never attain your full professional stature until you learn to look

for psychic correlatives in your physical diagnosis. You are totally unable to do this at present, because you are interested in symptoms rather than the people behind them. But believe me, the people are vastly more interesting, if you will only condescend to take a peep at them.

Are you interested to go on? Then wait until to-morrow.

This note she read over with much satisfaction, not so much at the choice of words as at the subtlety of the attack, the leading him on to professional ground before disclosing, even, that her weapons were feminine.

The next day the note she wrote was a shade less guarded.

Now that you have proved that your interest can be roused above the anatomical, I feel amazingly courageous. Dear me, there are so many things to say to you crowding my pen-point that I am quite bewildered. But when I recall your overwhelming unapproachableness, your graceless way of looking at a body and not seeing her, why I tremble at my temerity. I am trembling now. See how wobbly my printing has become? But I forgot. You never notice human weaknesses, except bodily ones. Oh, you poor man, there is so much a woman could teach you if she dared! Dare she? Tell me. If you do not scorn what I have written, wear to-morrow a purple tie. I shall see it. Be sure of that.

CANDIDA.

P.S.—"Candida" is not my real name.

On the following morning Miss Mallory and Isabel were finishing their breakfast when Doctor Gentson came in. He had been called twice during the night and his eyes were blood-shot, with bruised-looking marks beneath them, and his hands were unsteady, giving him the appearance of a sort of consecrated dissipation. After brief greetings to the two women, he sat down and unfolded his napkin with deliberation.

"I'll take my coffee black this morning, please, Isabel," he said, passing his cup.

Isabel, busy with the coffee-urn, looked up and fixed a curious stare upon his bosom.

"What a perfectly dreadful tie you are wearing, Arthur!" she commented.

"That?"—he squinted down at it. "It is rather a striking thing. Old rose, eh?"

"Old rose?" Isabel derided. "It's purple."

"Are you sure? Is it purple, Miss Mallory?"

"It's vociferous," she assured him, smiling. "A purple riot that heralds its approach from afar."

"I asked for purple, but I wanted to be sure," he confided, between hurried gulps of hot coffee. "No, nothing more, thank you. I must be off."

When he had left the room, Miss Mallory, for no apparent reason, laid her hand gently upon Isabel's, which remained quite passive under the caress. Miss Mallory sighed.

"You think me quite a sordid, scheming person, eh, Isabel?"

"I am trying not to think, Aunt Virginia. I wish you wouldn't remind me."

"You blame me, then, for trying to retrace my steps and wrest from life that which I was silly enough to renounce in my youth?"

Isabel pushed abruptly away from the table and stood with hand pressed against her throbbing bosom.

"Why do you speak of it to me? *Why?* Her lips quivered piteously. "Oh, Aunt, I thought you would be so different;" and she fled from the room.

During the following fortnight Miss Mallory seemed capable of producing or withholding the purple tie at will. Nor was this her only satisfaction. The Doctor's face had taken on an eager, expectant look, and he whistled blithely as he went in and out of the house, which so em-

boldened her that she decided, since her vacation was drawing to a close, to proceed more vigorously with her pen.

Do you know it's just two weeks since you became acquainted with me? On paper, I mean. There are other me's whom you know more or less intimately by sight, and other me's again whom you never dream of.

Man-alive! You are waking up, aren't you? I'm glad—glad! How do I know? Ah, that's my secret, along with another. No, I shall not tell you, and you could never guess, you dear, stupid owl! And yet, how gladly I would tell you if I dared. There is just one thing more fearful than having the courage of your convictions, and that is, not having it. I haven't quite the courage of mine. A woman's a woman for a' that. How I ramble on—but it's such a joy talking to you like this, through the key-hole. Would you like to peep? No. You haven't won the right—yet. But to-morrow I may give you a key—just a little one, which, with perseverance and instinct, may be made to unlock the door between you and

CANDIDA.

On the morrow she penned the key to him in this simple sentence:

"Thou art so near and yet so far."

CANDIDA.

P.S.—I shall not write again.

For a long time she sat looking at what she had written; then, quite suddenly, she stooped and kissed the page, and when she raised her face her eyes were full of tears and her cheeks were flushed like a girl's.

"How delicious her cake seems to a woman after she has thrown it away!" she said softly to herself as she stamped and sealed the missive.

She was pinning on her hat preparatory to mailing it when she heard Doctor Gentison ascend to his room.

Concealing the letter in the pages of a book, she slipped from the house to the nearest letter-box. But when she opened the book to mail the letter, it was not there. For a moment she stood transfixed, then she hur-

ried back, her eyes riveted on the ground. As she approached the house, a sudden conviction that she must have dropped the letter there, and that Isabel might spy it, caused her considerable discomfort, and the fact that she neither found it in the hall nor on the stair, nor in her room, added to her dismay. Then she heard the front door open and shut, and she stole noiselessly down to the first landing and ensconced herself behind a tall, old-fashioned clock which stood there. From this point of vantage, she could see through the archway which divided the hall from the living-room, and there, with his back turned, stood Doctor Gentison, reading her note. She watched him finally fold it carefully and put it in his pocket, and then he laughed, a low, rapturous laugh, thrilled through with exultation.

The sheer joy of the laugh brought Isabel from the room beyond, where she had been quietly reading a book.

"Oh, it's you," she said in a tone intended to convey the impression that she had expected something more worth-while. She started to withdraw, but he halted her.

"Isabel! Come here."

She walked reluctantly to within a few feet of him. "Well?" she asked, raising her eyes to his.

"Come *here*." He tapped the floor with his foot.

She hesitated an instant, then walked straight up to him and stood with her hands behind her. "What do you wish, Arthur?" she asked soberly.

He laughed again in exultation and laid his hands upon her shoulders. "I wished to make you come the rest of the way," he said.

"The rest of what way?" she asked, trying to shrug her shoulders free from his grasp.

"Isabel, Isabel, you precious

rogue!" he shook her gently. "You demure kitten, I've caught you fairly at last. I've known almost from the very first. I suppose I'd have guessed sooner, if I hadn't been a dunce."

"Guessed what, Arthur?"

He did not answer, but stood looking down at her so steadily that the blood crimsoned her clear, white skin, and she turned her head away.

"Look at me, Isabel. Don't be ashamed. Don't pretend that it isn't true. Do you think that because I've been a blundering mole for years I couldn't feel the source of the sunlight when it fell upon me?"

Her white lids trembled, then lifted with difficulty, as if conscious of the weight of his gaze, but the eyes she raised to his were steadfast as she faltered:

"You have been told—you have found out that I—that I—care for you?"

"I mean that *you* have found out that *I* care for you," he corrected softly. "That I love you—adore you."

"You?" she stammered. "You? Wait!"—as he endeavored to draw her into his arms.

He seemed puzzled for a moment, then his face cleared. "'Thou art so near and yet so far.' I had forgotten. Now, may I?" He bent towards her, but she stayed him with her hand and gazed up at him with the pleading look of a little child.

"You see," she said, with a little catch, "I'm so terribly happy right now I can't bear any more just yet. It's all so new and unexpected."

"Unexpected?" The puzzled look returned to his face. "But, Isabel, darling, you must have known when you gave me the key that sooner or later I would use it."

"Key?" she repeated blankly.

"Yes, key. 'Thou art so near and yet so far'—in your note."

"My note? What note, Arthur?"

He gave her a look of reluctant admiration. "You cunning witch, I'd like to shake you! What note? This note, Madam, and this and this." He pulled half a dozen square envelopes from his pocket and thrust them into her hands.

She read them one by one very slowly, growing whiter with each.

"I did not write them," she quavered at last, huskily.

"But, Isabel," he protested with a frown of half displeasure, "I picked that last one up on the stair just now. You must——"

She laid her hand on his arm. "Listen, Arthur. If you can believe in your heart that I wrote those notes, then"—she paused for a moment, then went bravely on—"I am not the woman you love."

He caught her hand and held it against his breast. "You are the only woman," he said vehemently. "There has never been any one else. There never will be any one else. I don't care whether you wrote the notes or not."

"But *I* care," she replied, withdrawing her hand. "Everything depends upon it. I must be Isabel Blair to you, or nothing. If you can believe I wrote those notes, I am not Isabel Blair to you. Don't you see?"

"Of course, they never seemed quite like you, Isabel, but, then, if you didn't write them——"

"*If?*"—her eyes flashed. "I'll have no *if's*, Arthur. *I-did-not-write-them.*"

"Well, then, since you didn't, who did? Who wrote them, Isabel?"

Before she could answer, there was a slight commotion on the stair, and Miss Mallory descended upon them, laughing, with outstretched hands.

"Let me answer him, Isabel, you precious goose!" she cried, throwing her arm about the young girl's waist.

"I was coming downstairs, and couldn't help hearing what was going on between you. I wrote the letters, Doctor."

"You?" he cried, aghast.

"Rather a daring liberty I took with you both, I'll admit, but the ends justified the means. I just couldn't bear seeing you two stupid owls travelling about in the same circle and never catching up with each other, when it required only a friendly push to send you in the right direction. Can you forgive me?" She held out her hand to him. He grasped it eagerly.

"Forgive you?" he cried. "Miss Mallory, I'm the most grateful fellow on earth. 'I had eyes and saw not'—you know how it goes. I can't find words to thank you enough."

"You don't need to. I thoroughly enjoyed doing it. And now, since my mission is ended, you must excuse me, both of you, while I pack my trunk."

"What? You're not leaving just when we are all getting acquainted?" protested the Doctor.

Before answering, she glanced swiftly at her niece, then all her aplomb deserted her, and her face and figure relaxed into lines of premature middle-age.

"Yes—yes," she stammered hurriedly. "I must go. A telegram came this morning from my people, suggesting that I return to my desk at once. A woman of my age, you know, can't afford to leave her cupboard too long, or she'll find it bare, like Mother Hubbard. Besides"—her arm fell from Isabel's waist; she looked very tired, and her eyes were hungry. "Besides, I don't think Isabel has forgiven me for meddling. Have you, my dear?"

A look of compunction swept Isabel's face. "I don't mean to be unkind, Aunt," she said, offering her hand in a constrained manner.

Miss Mallory held it awkwardly for a moment.

"I did what I could—as I could," she said, and as she turned to leave them, added, "You know, beggars can't be choosers."

Isabel looked after her uncertainly for a moment, then rushed up the

stairs, her constraint utterly gone.

"But, Aunt," she whispered, halting her upon the stair-landing, "you said you wanted him yourself."

Miss Mallory smiled inscrutably and patted the girl's cheek.

"I said I wanted him, and I did—for *you*, Isabel."



NATIVITY

BY CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

NOT only far away and long ago,
 With wondering joy and prescience of woe,
 Came God to man on that transfiguring morn,
 But now, but now, with wordless ecstasy,
 Yet trembling for a grief that is to be,
 In every mother's bosom Christ is born.

THE BLOT ON THE 'SCUTCHEON

BY MARY BRECHT PULVER

BACK in New England's witch-burning days, one of John Stannard's ancestors, Miles Bradford by name, was convicted of ameliorating the sufferings of one of the witches, by a mercifully smuggled cup of cold water. Tradition fails to state whether said witch was young and pretty, but it relates that the colony scapegrace, having expiated his crime in approved fashion, took to his heels to the woods, to live in ungodly manner to the end of his days, and serve ever after as a shocking blemish in the otherwise fair fabric of Stannard's ancestry.

Miles Bradford's family, of course, repudiated him, and continued to rear its young scions to an appropriate horror of things non-Puritan—especially of the feminine gender. But a sport on the ancestral tree may eventually bear fruit despite pruning.

At twenty-six, John Stannard, the present-day Puritan, apparently all that the most conventional of his family could wish, found himself, a little contemptuous, pursuing the elusive dollar in New York.

By day he wrote up statistics for a publishing company that was bringing out a book on eugenics. By night he reposed in the third-floor front of a third-rate boarding-house, where, if a reliable though microscopic income, a superbly enfolded family-tree, and a New England conscience are any kind of soporific, his dreams were peaceful.

A woman would have called Stannard good-looking, in a collected and

well-groomed fashion—if he had let her look at him long enough. But woman interested him little—least of all here in New York, where she violated so many of his ideals.

His wife was already selected—a distant cousin, Elnora Bradford, a fine, large, blonde type, whose picture stood on his dresser, and who shared his background and traditions; who owned also the family-seat, a big, four-square white house up in New England, with green blinds, a tall hedge, and peacocks on its lawn. In time, when he had won his spurs, he would ask her to marry him, as their family expected. And it was very suitable and pleasing to Stannard, though the thought never interfered with his blood pressure.

He was, of course, aware that there were other lodgers in the house. He passed them frequently going in and out, but for any interest he felt they might have been shadows.

One evening, because of this indifference, he ran squarely into one on the third stairway. It was a petticoated shadow—a woman who roomed down at the end of his hall. He had an impression that the room was very small.

It need not have been large for the comfort of the slim little creature with whom he collided. She was in the half-dark, but he realized her smallness with a start of compunction, and apologized becomingly.

She thanked him, lifting her eyes to his with a little smile. The hall light fell on her face, and a sudden disgust seized John Stannard. A

moment before she had been a shabby, childish little figure he had blundered into in the dark; now he saw only one thing—not the beautiful soft eyes that suddenly read his expression, nor the thinness of the young cheeks, but the paint—the paint on them! All that was Puritan in him rose up and revolted from her. He chewed off his apology abruptly and hurried on.

The girl went on to her room. Stannard's impression had been correct. It was a small room—small and exclusive. She went to her mirror and stared into it a full minute—at her garish face and pencilled eyelids. Then she laughed—a half-sneering little laugh, a little tired and dreary, yet having in it an unspoiled undertone that suggested many things not found in city boarding-houses—bird-notes or a busy little brook, for instance.

She poured some water into her hand-basin and washed her face hastily. It came out in all its truth—too thin, too white, with real violet shadows under the eyes. She considered it, head on one side.

"I agree with you, Mr. Owl—*heartily*. But, you see, it won't do—not in my business. A death's head isn't a hit," and she laughed again, a good-natured laugh this time, quite as though she found herself amusing.

Then she carefully "made-up" afresh.

John Stannard came down with the grippe next day, and for a full week had his own reflections for company. It was a dreary week. On the second day Mrs. Downey, coming up with fresh towels, paused in her ministerings to grumble out her troubles. It seemed it was going "all over"—this grippe business. Girl down the hall had it quite bad—worse'n he had, a whole lot. If she didn't improve by to-morrow, it would be the hospital for hers.

Stannard chafed under all this information. Surely it was not his affair whether the painted Jezebel down the hall went to the hospital or not. He had his own woes to think of.

Coming presently into a white and shaken convalescence, he was unwillingly aware that his fellow-lodger was also apparently recovering. He had half-glimpses at times of a little dressing-gowned figure slipping through the dark hall from the bath; and once on a sunny morning he quite involuntarily got a peep into her room. She was sitting cross-legged on her bed, in a very red kimona that exactly matched a blooming geranium on the window-sill. Her head was bent above some work she was doing, and he could not see her face, but he told himself dryly that its coloring probably matched the kimona—she would see to that.

He heard her coughing sometimes on still afternoons—quite rackingly. Once it was so bad he started up impatiently, with some crude, unformed notion of stopping her—whether by proffer of assistance or by rebuke, he didn't quite know. But, listening to it and remembering the slightness of her, he marveled that it did not destroy her.

To restore his poise, he sat down and wrote to Elnora. At this hour she was very likely drawing tea for Aunt Caroline and herself by the sitting-room fire. A cosy picture. Ah, well, some day— He wrote briskly, busily, to drown out the sound of that pathetic coughing down the hall.

When he was well, he attacked that eugenics matter with renewed energy. It was a matter with which he was heartily in accord—his projected marriage could certainly raise no slightest ripple on his conscience. As for the little, painted creature on his floor, he thought no more about

her, save idly sometimes as he saw a thread of light under her door, or heard her dreary coughing in the night.

Then, coming home one day at noon unexpectedly, he found her at the stair-head, drooping helpless against the wall in a paroxysm that racked her utterly. A sudden compassion welled into John Stannard's heart as he saw her fragile shoulders shake.

"I—I'm afraid you are very ill," he said gravely.

Her coughing stopped gradually, and she looked up with tear-blinded eyes. She was painless now; and he saw how white and ravaged she was.

"I'm just—getting—well," she said huskily. "*Getting well*," she repeated more firmly.

"One must be careful," said John inanely, "in convalescence."

A little smile flickered into her eyes.

"*This* one must," she conceded dryly; then, as though reading the pity of his eyes, she put up a hand before her colorless face and turned away.

"If there is anything I could possibly do——" ventured Stannard, on a wholly unaccountable impulse.

She faced him like a little whirlwind, her face all a-sparkle.

"Oh, there is, there is," she cried, "if you only would! I've—I've often almost asked you through Mrs. Downey—while you were shut up in the house. It would have been very dreadful, of course—but not so dreadful as the loneliness. Oh, you can't *know*—what *weeks* of it are like—and you keep hoping—and hoping——" Her voice shook oddly, then she steadied it with a soft little laugh. "What I mean is—would you come in to see me?"

A sudden embarrassment came upon Stannard. He felt a decided

distaste with the idea, however disarming and harmless she might seem.

"I am sorry you have been lonely," he said quietly. "Perhaps you would like some reading matter. I'll stop at your door with some magazines this evening." Then he went on with a formal little bow.

Yet when night came, and he took his offering to her door, he found himself quite unaccountably entering the tiny room and seating himself on the little couch-bed, with its couple of gay pillows and worn Bagdad cover.

His hostess occupied the single chair—a big rocker—a soft pillow behind her head. She apologized for this selfishness duly, but Stannard guessed accurately that she was taxing her strength merely to sit up.

"The doctor," she laughed, "will have me baby myself. He thinks I must be *so* careful. Nonsense! I've had these spells before. I'll soon be out again—I've got to, any way. I must get to work."

He found himself suddenly admiring the fighting pluck that vitalized her. She was so small, and, except for that one blemish of make-up, so feminine, it seemed unfair that she should have to do battle. He looked at her hands—finely shaped hands, with their telltale record of sickness; at the soft, dark hair that curled naturally around her face; then back at her make-up. There was a glaring discrepancy about the thing.

"You—you perhaps had better go home," he suggested lamely.

"If I *could*!" she breathed, her eyes softening. "But, you see, there isn't any 'home'—except this"—she glanced about the little room, then laughed and shrugged—"and there won't be this if I can't get out *soon*."

"You mustn't be pessimistic, Miss ——" Stannard faltered. He hadn't meant to betray any interest in her name.

"To the profession, Marie Desbrough; to my friends—when I can afford 'em—Molly Miller," she supplied, with her whimsical laugh.

Stannard glowered. *Exactly* what he might have expected.

"So you are on the stage?" he said sternly.

"*Was* on the stage, to be exact. In the chorus. *This* has cost me my place. Company went out on the road yesterday—you may have heard of it—'The Belles of Paris'—magnificent scenic effects—pretty show-girls—song hits of the season—popular prices—a banquet for the Tired Business Man—fresh from New York—that sort of thing. Very effective, I assure you."

She watched him mischievously from under her lashes. Stannard's frown deepened.

"And you like it?"

She shrugged.

"Like it?" she repeated, with a little rueful smile. "'One does what one can, monsieur.' *Like it!*" she scorned suddenly.

"But you keep at it——"

"Yes, I'll keep at it—if I can. I have my doubts. I can't act a bit; and I'm too thin for the front row now."

Stannard winced.

"And without my war-paint"—she laid a finger on her cheek—"when I see myself without this, I shouldn't blame any manager for calling the dog—if I were foolish enough to let him catch me without it. Why, it keeps up my own courage, so I daren't rub it off."

"I see," said John gravely; "but—er—do you think it's a very satisfactory substitute?"

She looked a little wistful.

"No, it's pretty poor, I guess. All right for the managers, but nothing between the acts. But I hate the way I look—and I used to be pink—I used to wear real 'country pinks.'"

Stannard smiled.

"And you would again if you had a chance. Why not try something else?"

She shook her head.

"I have. Went through normal school with what was left me and tried teaching—Mother was a teacher. But the chalk dust got my throat. Beastly throat I have—chases me off everything. So I gave that up and tried library work, and day-governess work, and the stores, and finally the chorus. And I'm a *great* success, as usual"—she laughed a little forlornly. "I've had two whole engagements. But I guess there's only Minnesota left."

"Minnesota?" asked John.

"Yes," nodded Molly. "Sounds horrible, doesn't it? My Aunt Winnie lives out there—and she's a dear old thing, too. Any time I'm ready, she'll send me carfare and have me out with her to live. It's a wheat-farm she lives on—miles from anywhere—and her husband—he's her second—is a Swede with a kind heart. I've never seen him, but he probably eats with his knife, and says, 'Skoll I help you to more herrings?'—and there *may*," she added impressively, "be *wolves*, for anything I know."

Stannard relaxed into laughter.

"I don't blame you for hesitating."

Molly began to cough. "I'm talking too much. It's your turn, anyhow, Mr. Stannard—you see, I know *your* name."

So very shortly John found himself, quite oddly, giving an account of himself—a light, sketchy account that touched briefly on matters Bostonian, and the Bradford and Stannard families, and Harvard—Molly's eyes grew round and admiring here—and lastly on the publishing house and that work on eugenics.

Molly listened, fascinated, her head tilted on one side. Yet when

he finished she breathed a little regretful sigh.

"It—it sounds just beautiful—like a chapter from a best-seller, Mr. Stannard; and I'm awfully glad you've told me. Yet—do you know?—I hate to part with Mrs. Downey's version—*there's* a woman with imagination. You should have heard her translation of you," she laughed. "You see, I've *got* to gossip with some one, if only a poor but honest landlady."

John smiled, then suddenly pulled out his watch. More than an hour had slipped away, and he rose in consternation. But Molly's pleading eyes caught him.

"Oh," she said tremulously, "you don't know what it's meant—having you come in and talk to me."

"Why," said Stannard, with another of his unnatural impulses, "I'll come again—if I may." And he looked down quite softened toward the little figure in the big chair.

Back in his own room, it struck him with a peculiar sense of bigness and bareness.

"It *is* lonely," he announced, as one making a discovery. "I've been too busy to know it. I probably need some companionship myself."

Yet as he untied his cravat he cautioned himself that one must not be too precipitate. Advances of the most innocent kind, especially in New York, were so likely to be misunderstood.

Nevertheless, on the Saturday following he dropped in at Molly's door again. He had a bottle of wine with him—some of Aunt Caroline's dandelion, with which she had insisted on stocking him against the rigors of the New York climate. Molly rippled with grateful happiness over it. She was not so well to-night, and was wrapped in her red kimona and a big white shawl. Her cheeks were even redder than usual, and she

called his attention to them with frank pleasure.

"I've left off the paint these last few days. I'm not needing it any more—I get a beautiful color every evening now. Dr. Watcomb says it's not a good sign. He thinks I ought to give up and go away, but—I'm still fighting." She laughed.

"You're very brave," said John, with admiration in his voice.

"Fudge!" she jeered contemptuously.

He stayed quite a while that evening. It was his pleasure, for one thing, to enlighten her more fully on his Colonial background—a subject that always these days gave him certain pleasing titillations.

Molly listened most delightfully. For, as she said with humility, she hadn't an ancestor to her name—"any one of the name of Miller, you know"—and she positively gloried in them—other people's.

"But what I'm wondering, Mr. Stannard," she said innocently, "is—just who *were* the Pilgrim Fathers?"

"Who *were* they?" repeated John dazedly. "Why, they were the founders—the Colonial founders;" and he started patiently to explain.

"But no," she interrupted, with a touch of impatience; "I didn't mean that—I know *American* history. What I meant is, who *were* the founders before there was any colony to found? Weren't they rather—*nobodies*? I've heard that hinted—"

John's senses nearly forsook him. He had never heard such a thing discussed—one never went behind the back-drop. Great heavens, was any prying, vulgarly-born wench to rend with vandal hands the sacred veil that draped the altars of his family gods? He felt he ought to fly into a dudgeon. It was outrageous! However, he controlled himself and

with wounded dignity led her to more stable ground.

He told her about that four-square white house up in New England, with its tall hedges and insolent peacocks, and about the fat pony which Elnora drove on her charitable missions. He promised he'd show her some snapshots of them next time.

And when he went back to his room it was bigger and emptier than ever.

He took the pictures, as he had promised, and she looked them over delighted. The very last one was Elnora's—which he had added for some vague, undefined reason. He had a slightly uncomfortable feeling that she ought to *know*. Yet when Elnora's face turned up he found no words to introduce her as his future wife. Only Molly's quick intuition helped him.

"And this is—the *girl*," she breathed, studying it. "I knew all along there was one. Isn't she lovely!—isn't she beautiful!"

Stannard agreed. He had never noticed especially, but of course Elnora was inevitably all of these things.

"And she lives in that lovely old house, and drives the fat pony, and knows what *home* means, lucky girl!" envied Molly. "You'll be awfully happy." She smiled into his eyes.

John felt it quite possible; but at the moment Elnora bored him a little. It *wasn't* quite fair that she should be so big and healthy and protected and comfortable, through no virtue of her own, while other people—He had one of his strange impulses.

"Perhaps," he suggested—"I know Elnora would like it—she's very kind, always—perhaps we could arrange for you to know Elnora, and to visit that 'lovely old house,' when spring comes."

"How *sweet* you are!" said Molly

fervently. "But it wouldn't do." She shook her head. "We wouldn't get along. The Puritan and the Chorus Lady! No, we wouldn't fit—we're too different. You see, she's your kind."

It was this remark that stuck in John's consciousness like a barb. He could not gainsay it; yet it wasn't exactly necessary, he reflected disagreeably, to rub it in like that.

In the next ten days he went to see Molly very often. And always he found her propped among her pillows, making her pitiful pretense at convalescence.

"Dr. Watcomb's taken to calling me names," she laughed, "beautiful names—and I guess he isn't far wrong. He says I'll never get well here; that I have all kinds of chance if I go away—go where there's oxygen, and the sun shines, and there's good food. He says I'm too young to go out, and that I've got a perfectly bully constitution."

"Why don't you obey him?" asked John, with an odd sense of oppression at his heart.

She smiled.

"Oh, I'll go—after a while. But I've got to go through the formality of deciding."

He tried to cheer her—not hard while actually with her, though he suspected the dark despondency of her lonely hours. He had half a mind to write to Elnora about her and get some advice. But he thought better of it.

When he paid his calls he took her some trifle—a book, a magazine, grapes, flowers—always of vivid color, for somehow he realized that the bright hues were her favorites. Once he stumbled on a bunch of old-fashioned "pinks," running the gamut of all the reds from blush to deep maroon. She cried out joyfully and pressed them against her hectic cheeks, and John, watching, had a

strange, moving pity at his heart that he did not understand—as though his heart were coming alive and climbing out of his chest.

He told her much about his work and himself on these visits. Somehow these brief hours in the bright glow of her little room, with Molly's vivid face reflecting every changeable mood, lent a peculiar savor to the precise routine of his days. He found a keen pleasure in listening to her comments, in waiting for the gallant, ready little laugh with its bird-notes. But when two weeks had passed, quite suddenly it ended.

In the first place, the book on eugenics got itself finished quite nicely, and there wasn't anything more to be done for the publishing company. And right on top, like thunder following lightning, came a letter from Cleverbridge & Mason of Boston, offering him a long-sought place with them at double his present earnings.

So, you see, it was the end of noisy Gotham and the beginning of the real things. For this was the first step in the ladder that climbed to his eventual dream. It led to everything he'd always counted on: Boston, and the shelter of the family tree—and Elnora. He tallied it all off quite carefully, then he went to tell Molly. She'd rejoice at his good fortune, poor little thing. Somehow, he himself felt very little like it.

He found her all white and gone-to-pieces in her chair.

"I've—I've just had a telegram from Aunt Winnie. I've given up, and I'm going out to Uncle Ole Larsen and the wheat-fields and the wolves." She tried to laugh, but he saw the tears on her lashes. "I'm going Monday."

"Monday!" cried John, with sudden consternation. "But I'm not going until Thursday."

"Oh!" she cried, startled. "So you are going, too?"

John told her—he might have been describing the demise of all his friends. Molly paled, then sparkled bravely.

"It's lovely!" she cried. "Lovely! Oh, you'll be so happy! And you deserve it. You've been so good to me! I—I wish I could ever tell you——"

John felt he could bear no more. He'd had no idea he was going to feel this way. He got up abruptly to say good-by. And there, looking down into her wistful eyes and little white face, he felt a mist coming before his eyes, a strange throbbing at his heart, a wild, primal impulse of defiance possessing him. He looked as no respectable Puritan ever looked—perhaps as one of the ancient cave-dwellers let himself on occasion. He towered over Molly. She rose, half-swaying, and faced him with white lips. In common with all her sisters, she needed no key to the cave-man's language.

"Oh!" she cried, and her voice sounded shrill and thin. "Think of all you're going to have! Think how you've always wanted this—think of Elnora—think of the house—and the pony—and the peacocks—think of Elnora," she repeated piteously.

He made an inarticulate sound.

"Don't say anything," she begged passionately. "Don't say anything. Think of Elnora—and the Pilgrims. Think of your family." She half sobbed.

It was like a dash of cold water in his face. He pulled himself out of his madness.

"Good-by," he said almost sternly.

She put her hand behind her.

"Good-by," she faltered faintly, "and—God bless——"

He did not hear her. He was finding the door. Perhaps if he had looked back—at her face—— But he did not; he went out quietly. And Molly dropped back into her chair.

He was on the top step when he heard it. At first he thought she was coughing; then he *knew*, and the madness came back.

A minute later he was kneeling by the big chair, his arms around the little, sobbing figure.

"Molly, Molly," he murmured, "I've come back. I cannot leave you, you little, little thing!"

She thrust him from her sternly.

"You must—there's Elnora."

"Elnora!" he scorned. "She loves me as much as she does the town pump, and I—I only found out now—I love *you*, Molly. Oh, Molly—"

"You mustn't love me," wept Molly. "It's not according to eugenics."

"It will be," he vowed. "I'll see that it is. You're going to have

everything you need—and not in Minnesota. Oh, little Molly, what a blind ass, what a fool, I've been!"

"I have no ancestors," wailed Molly.

John Stannard turned poet.

"How could you have, when you're made of thistledown and sunshine and a sweet May morning?" He kissed her thin little hands.

"Tell me," he said, "do you love *me*, Molly?"

She could not answer, except with her eyes.

In such a voice might an explorer have saluted the new-found Pole.

And so that was the end—or the beginning of the "throw-back," if you like. Evidently, in spite of all hereditary strait-jackets, that long-buried Bradford came into his own.



ALCHEMY

BY SARA TEASDALE

I LIFT my heart as spring lifts up
 A yellow daisy to the rain.
 My heart shall be a lovely cup
 Altho' it holds but pain.

For I shall learn from flower and leaf
 That color every drop they hold,
 To change the lifeless wine of grief
 To living gold.

ON THE TURN OF THE COIN

BY E. LAWRENCE DUDLEY

IT was noon when Philip Dahlgren gained the crest of the hill, and, pulling up his horse beside a clump of bushes, stared down into the shallow valley before him. He had been riding for hours, and his trousers and his officer's jacket, and even the three days' stubble of beard on his chin, were caked with dirt. As he paused, the dust clouds, rising on the hot wind behind him, powdered his back and the flanks of his horse, and drifted out again, lazily, into the sunlit reaches of the road beyond.

Hidden somewhere below was the man he was hunting. But it was not of the man that he was thinking now. It was of the valley itself, and of the boyhood he had spent there—and left there forever, in the care of the little mother who had given him to his country. And now she was gone, and their house was in ruins and their lands a wilderness. And all because men had differed in opinion, and had decreed that there should be war; and he had chosen the side which he had believed was right, and had been called a traitor by his neighbors.

His glance, shifting down the road, instinctively sought the broad façade of the first house beyond; and its white columned portico, rising against the fresh green of the trees, seemed to stare back at him with an insolent contempt. Yes; those who lived there had been his neighbors—once. And there had been a time when that house was as much his home as his own, and its daughter even dearer to him than his mother. But that was when war was still in the making; and before young Lan-

ier, fresh from college and town, had laid claim to the favor which Dahlgren had believed was his, and they had quarreled; and Dahlgren had challenged and fought young Lanier over a fancied insult.

It had been a farce, that duel—a cruel farce. They had met at daybreak, in the three-cornered field by the ford, and the gurgling of the brook, the sleepy calls of the birds, the loud wrangling of the seconds as they had come to their absurd decision to toss for shots, were still inextricably mingled in Dahlgren's ears. He recalled the triumphant leer on his opponent's face when the turn of the coin had given him the preference, and the look of baffled rage when he had fired and missed. And the savage joy of mastery had leaped in his own breast as he had acknowledged the shot and levelled his weapon to return it. . . . And it was then that she had run out from the bushes—a slim figure in white—and with a cry of horror had torn the gun from him.

He could still see her face, pale with scorn and contempt, as she had upbraided him, called him a coward, a bully, and before all those present had kissed young Lanier on the lips. He could still hear the titter of the seconds as he had swung on his heel, and, half-blinded with shame and wrath, had left the field to his rival. And by that night the whole countryside had been told the tale; and men had smiled as he passed them, and pointed him out as one who had been tricked and flouted by a woman.

This had been over five years ago; but the memory of it had lost none

of its bitterness. And as he gathered up his reins the grim smile died on his lips, and the square lines of his jaw grew fixed and determined. He was on his country's business now—the tracking down of a spy. But there would be a time when he would come back to settle his own private differences. And for this, and for his ravaged fields, he would hold the valley accountable.

He drew the reins tight, and, turning in his saddle, looked over his shoulder. The road behind, stretching like a dusty thread into the distance, lay deserted in the sunlight. He nodded his satisfaction. His men were following his instructions well, keeping to the cover of the woodland as they closed in on the valley. Within an hour they should be at the ford. And if their quarry had not then been caught, it would be an easy matter to drive him before them through the westward gap and into the closely patrolled lands beyond.

The success of the campaign lay in the capture of this elusive, mysterious personage who for three months had stolen plans, intercepted dispatches, learned the inmost secrets of the army's heart, and had transmitted them, one and all, to the enemy. A civilian, high in the enemy's councils, said some, a soldier, others, and pointed to the crescent-shaped scar on his cheek—the sole clue to his identity—in confirmation; but, soldier or civilian, they were all agreed that he had the ingenuity of the devil. Well, it would tax the ingenuity of the devil to break through the meshes of a net like this. . . .

Again Dahlgren nodded, and, touching his horse's flank, urged him into a gallop. It was a ten-minute ride to the ford; and there he would pick up the trooper whom he had sent ahead to reconnoiter. . . .

He caught a glimpse of dusty hedge-rows, and of the line of sycamore trees standing behind them, and then, as the road dipped toward the house beyond, and the broad vista of lawns opened out before him, something tiny and white toddled suddenly into his path, and stumbled and fell; and through the swirl of dust a child's rosy face laughed up at him.

He tried vainly to halt, to turn, and then, with a choking cry, leaned swiftly from his saddle and plucked the child from under the horse's feet.

"My God!" he gasped, and found himself shuddering as he pulled the horse suddenly to a halt and stared at the rumpled bundle in his arms. "Hurt, sissy?" he asked anxiously after a moment.

"Ain't sissy," the bundle retorted, and with a gurgle of delight flung itself on the horse's neck. "Likes horsey," it asserted. "Wants for to take a ride."

Dahlgren's mouth twitched as he recaptured the child awkwardly. "Very well," he agreed. "Suppose I take you home."

"Don't wants to go home. Wants to go ridin'—like Daddy," the child insisted, and made an unsuccessful plunge at the reins.

"Who is your Daddy?"

"Who?" The boy looked up blankly; and then, his eyes suddenly glistening, "Buttons!" he exclaimed, and, grabbing at the officer's jacket, lurched unsteadily to his feet. "Daddy got buttons, too." And a chubby hand, reaching up, wrapped itself lovingly over the topmost button of Dahlgren's coat.

The man's arm tightened about the round little body. "So Daddy's a soldier, is he? Well, where does he live?"

But there was no need of an answer. He saw the woman even as he spoke. With a quick intake of his breath, he stared at her as she ran

toward them across the lawn, then stiffening rigidly, turned away his head. It was only what he should have suspected; but for some reason even the possibility of it had escaped him; and in the grip of surprise he felt curiously confused and helpless. . . . Meanwhile, the boy, hauling himself up by the button, was clawing at his ear in a desperate endeavor to get at his cap. This, at least, he could stop, and, lifting his arm to do so, revealed his face to the woman.

She halted on the edge of the lawn, and with her hands at her breast gave a little cry.

"You!" she exclaimed. "You here!"

He nodded slowly. "The boy was in the road before I noticed him——"

"I know. I saw it all from the house—all but the—your picking him up. I thought he was crushed." The agony of the memory swept across her face as she repressed a shiver. "It was wonderful," she said simply.

"You taught me the trick yourself," he answered, and stopped.

It was no time now to evoke the past; there was too much in it which could only be painful to both of them. Yet her smile, as she glanced up, was entirely frank and straightforward.

"You mean on Peter, the pony? He's still living, you know. He belongs to Vic now—*this* Vic. Doesn't he, pet?"

She had come to his side, and, catching the boy's hand in her own, pressed her lips lovingly against it. A half-satirical, half-wistful look flickered in the man's eyes as he gazed down at her. There had been a thousand times in the old days when she had come out to him like this, and had stood by his horse, and talked—and even held his hand as she was holding the boy's now.

But they were young then, and alone, with no child between them. . . . And of a sudden he realized that the child *was* between them—an eternal barrier; and the look in his eyes died as the thought of young Lanier clutched again at his heart.

The woman, raising her face, was scrutinizing him closely. "You've not been home since—since your mother died."

He shook his head.

"We did what we could——"

"We?" he interrupted. "You mean . . . ?"

"Aunt Jane and I. We went over every day while she was ill. She was calling for you—at the end. It—it was very pitiful."

"Yes," he assented, and, turning his gaze from her, stared at the blue haze of hills beyond the gap.

Her hand, hovering over his, rested on it lightly. "Poor Philip!" she murmured.

The warm pressure of her fingers sent a thrill through his arm; but he steeled himself against it. This was no time for sentiment. He owed her something for her kindness to his mother; but for the duel—for the way she had flouted him—there was no forgiveness.

He drew his hand away almost roughly. "I must be getting on," he said.

"You will not come up to the house?"

"I can't."

"But they will be so disappointed," she persisted. "Father and Aunt Jane——"

"And Victor?" The words rose to his lips before he could stop them. But she had seen his smile and the sarcasm in it, and drew herself up stiffly.

"And Victor above all," she returned, "if he were home. But he left this morning. . . . He's a soldier, like you," she added with

pride; then, pausing suddenly, stared at his jacket, as though she had just realized what the color of his uniform meant. "One of your men rode by several hours ago," she stated abruptly.

He nodded. "I sent him ahead."

"On business?"

"On a—mission."

"I see. Then, you are not staying in the valley?"

"No; only passing through—on my way to the west."

"On this same—mission?"

"Yes."

Her glance dropped from his; and for a moment she stood with bowed head, pondering. And as he looked at her, a sudden fierce desire to snatch her up in his arms and gallop away with her seized him. She had been created for him—she was his by every right. And in that instant of passion he could have killed Lanier—throttled him as one would throttle the meanest thief. . . .

The surge of emotion ebbed; and he was conscious of her eyes again, wide now, and misty with appeal. And when she spoke a note of pleading was vibrant in her voice:

"That morning at the ford, Philip—"

"Please!"

"But I must—I *must* speak of it. I can't ask you to forget—what happened—it can't be forgotten. But I do ask you to believe that Victor had no hand in it. Whatever was done I did myself—without his knowledge. . . . You will believe this, Philip? You *will* believe it, and remember it—always?"

She halted; and as he turned to her he felt her glance searching his face as though for some sign of assent. But the old sense of reserve had come back to him; and he met her look squarely, challenging her scrutiny with his own.

"What difference does it make?"

he demanded, "what I believe? The past is fixed, unalterable. Nothing can change it."

"But that's not the point," she insisted vehemently. "Don't you see—"

"It's the only point that matters," he declared, and, bending over the boy, who had possessed himself of the reins, drew them from his protesting fingers.

She noted the action and what it signified, and with a little gasping breath leaned toward him.

"But if I swear . . . ?"

"Why should you?" he cut in. "I believe what I've seen—and know. And that's all you can expect of me." And, lifting the boy from the saddle, he reached him down to her.

She would have spoken again. But there was something in his glance which withheld her; and she fell back slowly, clutching the child to her breast.

He raised his hand in salute. "Good-by," he said; and as he put the spurs to his horse he was once more conscious of her eyes, half-piteous, half-desperate, and with a strange haunting fear rising in them.

Where the road swung down in a broad sweeping curve to the ford, Dahlgren found his trooper awaiting him. And as he reined in his horse the man, riding forward, saluted.

"The fellow's ahead, sir," he reported.

"The spy?"

"Yes, sir. I had just dismounted by the ford, and was hidin' in the bushes, when he came down the road at a gallop."

"And crossed the stream?"

"Yes, sir. And went straight on to the gap."

Dahlgren's glance, following the direction of the trooper's finger, traced the course of the road as it skirted the three-cornered field be-

yond the ford, and then, twisting upward, and with the stream brawling past it, plunged into the rocky gorge at the end of the valley.

"Did he see you?" he demanded.

"I'm afraid he did, sir. He looked back once, right at the place where I was standin'."

"And then?"

"He whipped up his horse and disappeared in the gap. That was an hour and a half ago, sir, and I've been watchin' ever since. But he hasn't come back."

"And it's three miles through the gorge—and the further end is guarded. . . . He should be captured by now."

"Yes, sir—if he rode through."

"You mean . . . ?"

"That he'd be more apt to hide somewhere, and wait till nightfall—especially if he knows he's bein' followed."

"You're right." Dahlgren frowned thoughtfully. "Well, we'll take no chances," he went on, and, turning in the saddle, cast a last glance behind him, then wheeled his horse down toward the stream. "You will wait for the rest of the troop at the ford," he commanded, "and tell the sergeant to bring them on through the gap. He may go as slowly as he likes, but he must keep his eyes open, and let no one get by him." He paused by the muddy shallows. "Do you understand?"

"Perfectly, sir. And you . . . ?"

"I shall ride on alone."

He nodded curtly to the man's salute, and, splashing through the stream, climbed the winding road briskly.

The road, bending upward through walls of sheer rock, grew narrow and muddy. Here great moss-covered boulders reached out to strangle it; here it escaped into a dense strip of woodland; and here again, for an instant, it rolled through a clearing.

But the fugitive's hoof-prints never once swerved; and as Dahlgren followed them the keen zest of the hunter possessed him.

He had felt it before, this wild joy of the chase, but never with another man's life as the stake, and his own life in the balance. . . . And suddenly he wondered where the man would be hiding, and then, as suddenly, discovered that the trail had ceased, and, with a muttered oath, brought his horse to a standstill.

As far ahead as he could see, the road ran through thick underbrush. But in the lower growth on the left there were signs of a passage; and, turning, he drove his horse straight into the bushes. His progress was slow; but the course held true and at length led him to the edge of a tiny opening. And there, half-hidden in the brush, he found the fugitive's horse tethered.

He rode forward cautiously. The horse raised its head and snorted, then threw back its ears as he felt of its coat. But the sweat was dry; the beast had been standing for an hour at least.

Dismounting, Dahlgren stared about him in perplexity. In front rose the granite walls of the gorge; on either side and behind him stretched the network of tangle. It was in there that he must search. But where? And in what direction?

He had circled the enclosure, and was pausing near the rocks, before he found what he sought—the faint track of a foot in the mould. There was another on the very edge of the underbrush, and another still imbedded deep in the dense growth beyond. They were pointing due east; and as he frowned at them he remembered that there had once been a path which ran back through the brush to an old ruined cabin on the road below. The cabin was still there: he had seen it through the

woods as he had ridden past; and with the hoof-prints leading on he had not thought to examine it. But now . . . He rose swiftly to his feet, and, leaving his horse, forced his way into the thicket alone.

Even in the days of its usefulness it could have been called a path only by courtesy; now it was scarcely perceptible, the merest thread of a trail, twisting aimlessly eastward, and choked with creepers and briars. He lost it once and found it again, then finally abandoned it altogether, bearing off to the left where the bush-lot ended, and where, through the sparser trees of the woodland, the gray ribbon of road showed dimly. Here, turning once more, he swung to the right, and from the skirts of the forest peered out at the desolate cabin in the clearing before him.

It was fairly rotten with age. The rough hoarding of its walls was seamed and warped. Its roof, sagging heavily, had fallen in at one end; and through the jagged opening bleached timbers protruded. Like a pair of sightless eyes, the two windows, closely boarded, stood out from its gaunt front.

Its door-step was gone; but the worm-eaten door still clung to its hinges. And he noted with satisfaction that it opened inward, and that some recent effort had been made to secure it in its place.

He waited until his glance had taken in each detail, then, drawing his revolver, stole out from the trees, and, creeping through a wilderness of weeds and thorns, approached the cabin from its unguarded side. In the shelter of the wall he halted again and listened. Except for a murmur of air in the pine-tops, and the low elfin chuckling of the stream in the distance, the stillness was unbroken. He stooped cautiously, and, turning the corner of the house,

slipped past the front windows; then drawing himself up, he levelled his revolver, and with a quick thrust forward, flung his weight against the closed door.

It fell ajar with a rasp of hinges. He stepped in swiftly, and, closing it behind him, stood blinking in the gloom. A shaft of sunlight, striking through the hole in the roof, cast a dusky glow over the bare interior; and as he watched it breathlessly, a gleam of metal flashed in it, and a man's tall figure emerged from the shadows beyond.

Dahlgren stared at the face in amazement. "Lanier!" he exclaimed.

"Exactly." The other smiled faintly over the barrel of his revolver. "You weren't expecting me?"

"Hardly. The scar——"

"A kick by a horse two years ago." The man's smile broadened. "But I was expecting you."

"You mean . . . ?"

"I saw you go by on the road yonder. . . . What do you think of my ruse?"

The assurance of his tone stung Dahlgren's pride; but this was no time for anger.

"I can't see that you've profited by it," he returned evenly. "You're here in a trap, cornered——"

"Yes; but with the advantage of having you covered, and so being able to escape when I wish."

An ill-disguised triumph smouldered in Lanier's eyes; and Dahlgren, flushing hotly, closed his mouth with a snap. He had been tempted to disclose the approach of his troop; but common sense forbade him. It would bring the affair to a crisis before he was ready; and his one object now must be to fight for delay. . . .

Then a new fear confronted him. How would his men know that he was here? He had left orders that

they were to keep a sharp lookout. But with the trail in the road to lead them past, would it occur to them to stop at the cabin? And if they did not . . .

He became suddenly conscious of the death-like silence; and raised his eyes to the figure before him. Lanier had halted in the patch of sunlight, and, with his head thrown forward, was watching him with a satisfied smile.

"You must admit the advantage," he said.

But Dahlgren was not listening. There was something in the other's attitude—something disagreeably familiar—which had driven his thoughts back to the day when he had stood as he was standing now, with the man's revolver staring him in the eyes, and the man's mocking grin behind it. And the pent-up resentment of those five long years stirred again into life, rose like a vast eddying wave within him. He felt it swell up through the great veins of his neck, surge into his brain; and as the blind rage possessed him he forgot life, honor—everything—in the mad craving to annihilate that cold, haughty face. Slowly he raised the revolver at his side to the level of his hip. . . .

"None of that!" Lanier's voice cut the air with the keen incisiveness of a knife. "Drop that gun or I'll shoot!"

"Shoot?" The word burst derisively from Dahlgren's lips. "As you shot once before—and missed?"

An ugly light flickered in Lanier's eyes; but he spoke quietly.

"This is no stage duel," he returned. "We're not play-acting now."

"No, we're not," Dahlgren flung back at him. "I've neglected the accessories. There's no one to rush in and tear the gun from *your* grasp and call *you* a coward—a bully——"

"My God!" Lanier's face had gone a livid white, and he was quivering with anger. "If you dare to say——"

"Do you dare to deny it?" Dahlgren caught him up. "*Can* you, when every one knows it was a trumped-up farce—prearranged by you—even to the choice of shots——"

"It's a lie!" Lanier cried. "A lie on its face! We tossed——"

"And you won, and I lost. And you fired—and I couldn't. . . ." Dahlgren's hand, still resting on his hip, twitched nervously at the revolver. "I have that shot yet," he went on, bending forward. "I've saved it for years. And now, with God's help, I'll take it!" He crouched suddenly to the ground, and with a quick upward twist brought his weapon to bear. "Now fire, you cur—fire if you dare, and prove the truth of my words—show what you are, a trickster, a coward . . ."

He paused, breathing thickly; and through the red haze before him Lanier's face grew distorted and gray. The ugly scar on his cheek turned suddenly crimson; then the blood flushed back, and the scar faded, and with an angry oath the man hurled his gun from him.

"Take your shot—and be d——," he said, and, stepping forward a pace, drew himself up disdainfully.

Dahlgren rose slowly. The strange haze was still before his eyes. But the first stifling flood of passion had worn itself away; and he was calm now—curiously calm—with a cold, stern sense of the justice in the thing which he had to do. It was no savage revenge, this, but a righteous retribution, commensurate to his own wrongs and to those of his country.

With infinite care he sighted his revolver, training it on the second button of Lanier's jacket, then shifting it to the left breast, and dropping

it a trifle to allow for the upward jerk. The heart would lie there—and he had but one shot. He must make no mistake. . . .

He waited an instant for his hand to grow steadier; and as once before in the past the low gurgling of the stream, rising through the tense silence, crept into his consciousness. But then it had seemed to mock him, as the woman had mocked him; and now it was urgent and coaxing, and the woman was absent. . . .

He bent again over his weapon. Yes; she was absent—nor could she come if she wished. His men would see to that. . . . Besides, his quarrel was with Lanier—not with her.

And again he discovered that his hand was trembling; and again he paused. It was his nerves, he imagined—the result of his outburst of anger. . . . Still, he was sorry that he had met the woman—vexed that she had spoken as she had. It had accomplished nothing—*nothing*. . . . And then, quite suddenly, the vision of her face flashed before him—her face as he had seen it last, piteous in its appeal, and haunted with that strange, unnameable terror. . . .

But it was not strange to him now. He knew what she had feared. And her fears had come true. He had trapped the man whom she loved—her husband—the father. . . . His glance, rising swiftly, sought Lanier's eyes; and he choked with horror. They were the eyes of the child—*her* child—the boy whose little body had nestled in his arms, whose chubby hand . . .

With an agonized gasp he flung up his revolver and fired at the roof.

"I've taken—my shot," he announced, and, suddenly conscious

that he was shivering, groped at the wall for support.

There was an instant of silence. Then Lanier laughed sneeringly.

"And missed," he taunted him. "Yes; you *have* taken your shot, you blackguard! You've had your fair chance. And now, by the Lord, we're quits!" He stooped for his weapon, then, pausing abruptly, drew himself upright. "What's that?"

And through the breathless hush they heard it clearly: the noisy clamor of shouts, the under-drumming of hoofs. And as Dahlgren listened his heart leaped within him. His men were coming in answer to his shot—were coming here—to the cabin. . . . He turned as Lanier, seething with rage, swung upon him.

"So that's your game, is it?" he snarled. "You cowardly hound! You hadn't the nerve to kill me yourself, and arranged the shot as a signal. It was a trick from the beginning. A trick! Good God! And you claimed I tricked *you!*"

"Stop!" Dahlgren, writhing under the accusation, lunged forward. "Stop! Or, by Heaven, I'll—"

The shouts of the troopers, rising again, close by, swept the words from his lips; and his voice died weakly. They had left the road, were crossing the clearing. . . . He caught one glimpse of Lanier's scornful eyes, then, wheeling swiftly, flung the door open.

"Go on!" he cried, motioning vehemently to the men. "Go on—up the gorge! And ride like the devil!"

He waited while the troopers, swinging back at this command, disappeared up the road in a flurry of hoofs, then faced Lanier sternly.

"Go home," he said, "to your wife. And tell her I've forgotten."

ON WALKING HOME AT NIGHT

BY RICHARDSON WRIGHT

IT was Confucius or De Quincey, or Tchekoff, or some such master who voiced the golden counsel for him who would walk: that he must walk alone. A dog may trail at his heels, but it must be a dog that has trailed at those heels many a mile. And this holds, it would seem, in tramping either by day or night. For walking is a march of conquest, and little satisfaction is there in it save one be the sole conquerer, sharing none of the fight and none of the spoils. We must set forth upon it as on a solitary enterprise—we must be privateers of the road.

To thread one's way through a town's pretty suburbs; to plunge over the countryside, across field and burn; to swing, lusty and masterful, down a crowded city street; such walking is delight incalculable if we walk alone. Aimlessly our care-free feet carry us along; we are aliens in a strange land; and the end of the road is wherever we will make it.

To tramp with an objective is an entirely different affair. Then haphazard wandering becomes serious work. Then is drawn that subtle dividing line between those who only tour and those who travel. The one has a way to follow, a place to reach; and ever he is homesick for his home. The other never has a way, for all ways are his; and wherever he halts, there is his place, his home.

Many of us are only tourists, folk who go from place to place. From town to town we pass, down roads that other tourists have gone, and oftentimes the beauty of the interve-

ning stretches is withholden from our eyes.

And most of us who walk home at night are just that—tourists. In our mind's eye, naught but that house, that gate, that face at the window. Perhaps it is well. Contentment, though, is a dangerous boon. Often it means resignation; and resignation spells defeat and the end of questing. Far finer is it to be a traveler always, for then always do we reach our homes in amazement—simply by going on!

For some of us, walking home at night becomes a task, a drudgery, a burden bitterly borne, an added weight to the day's labor. But those who know the secret of the traveler say that it can be made the day's best hour. To go homing through the night is, for them, ever a journey fraught with high adventure; one is ever the discoverer. He comes to his dooryard with the satisfaction of one who has seen and done mighty things, the first to have trod that way.

And therein lies the secret of the traveler: that every road, however common to man and familiar to him, is a new road, and every city street a street in a strange land.

II

I have often attempted to analyze the psychology of walking, and what has been set down in the foregoing paragraphs is the result of seeking for the reason why I have been able to tolerate some streets down which I have been obliged to pass from time to time in my life. To-day it happens to be city streets. Once it

was the streets of a new and lusty suburb, and time and again it has been country roads here and in a dozen different lands. Although the deductions may sound arrogantly selfish, I can find no other way of saying truthfully what I honestly believe—that the best way to get the most out of a walk is to walk alone and without recognizing a definite objective, albeit that objective does exist.

In this busy work-a-day world such counsel may sound oddly out of place. On city streets we have to dodge through long queues of traffic, and we move or halt at a policeman's signal; in the suburbs and often in the country our solitary peace is disturbed by the rancorous, cacophonous honk of Juggernaut motor-cars warning us of impending destruction. For that reason I have found it wiser to be only a tourist by day, dodging about from office to office. Then when night closes down and the day's work is done, the spirit of the traveler creeps over me. The way takes on a new form, and I enter upon a new atmosphere.

A magician of passing splendor is the Night. How marvelously spreads its blue mystery over the world from dusk to dawn—"gloom out of gloom uncoiling into gloom." In countryside, in city, and even in suburbs that are dull by day it works a change almost unbelievable.

Do you remember Whistler's description of dusk in the city? "When the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campanili, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairyland is laid before us, then the wayfarer hastens home . . ."

To the city Night brings the reviving, immortalizing touch of Nature, as if to remind us that even

dead stone and steel can live. It sends the elf people trooping down the streets. It hangs eerie lights on skyscrapers, makes giddy phantasmagoria of the elevated trains, and transforms into a masterful being the man who by day is swallowed in the mob.

To the raw scenes of suburban life it lends an air of age and urbanity. The newest house by night appears old, and the sleek, straight, new streets assume vistas that reach far into the past and stretch on into the future. For the suburb is distinctly a thing of the present, whereas Nature would have it and every habitation of man a thing of all time.

And by night, more than ever does the countryside become a living, throbbing world. Then is it busily intent upon its work. A thousand eyes look around at your footfall. A thousand little creatures halt in their labor to watch you pass. And there is the hum of new sounds. Lying behind a hedgerow one night last spring, I counted more than two score different sounds that I had never heard by day. They were the whirl and clash, the drone and chatter of the country's night life.

III

It can never be—and one could never wish it—that a walk should lack the touch of human relationships. There are others on the road, only one's relation to them depends upon where the road is and if it be day or night. The human relationships of the road by day spring from friendship, and have a glory of their own; the relationships by night are founded on the instinct of self-preservation and defense. In the city you know no one; in the suburbs everyone knows you; in the country you know everyone.

My street of wonder in the city for the past two years has been a

ON WALKING HOME AT NIGHT

block-length of an avenue in the old heart of New York. Over it hangs a glory of days gone, remnant of ancient aristocracy. A long line of brownstone houses with basement areaways and balustraded steps. A peg-post policeman and an arc-light stand at each end, and two arc-lights in between. A thoroughly respectable, seemingly uninteresting stretch on the whole. Yet romance dwelt in that street, and high emprise, and each night there was a new romance and a new adventure. Life by night there was like a moving-picture film unrolling now a tragedy, now a comedy, now a pretty glimpse of some short and simple annal.

Drifted in from the highway would be the flotsam and jetsam, men and women in rags who sat on the steps of the aristocrats, like Lazarus at Dives' table. I never saw a crumb fall, however. Now and again a policeman would be enjoying a forbidden smoke. The private policeman always smoked. A gay Lothario was this private policeman. He seemed to know every housemaid on the block, but with a fine sense of the proprieties would he exercise his charms. Often have I seen him lingering beside a gatepost in evident meditation though in reality only waiting for the housemaid to bid her coachman friend good-night. Then would the Arm of the Law stroll humming up the pavement. A low whistle; and never the time but the whistle was answered. Somehow, housemaids must be frightfully fickle!

One night I found a burglar—a modest burglar. With assiduity was he driving his trade when I chanced to pass the areaway. There was no time to ask questions or to summon help, for the private policeman was busy at the other end of the block talking to the minister's cook. So I went on to a point of vantage whence

I saw him gather up his tools and scurry away into the darkness, like a rat.

Women too walked that street. Some, I felt, were thinking of the men and women who would walk there in days to come. Other women just walked.

Once the lights were bright and I waited to see the bride come forth; twice an undertaker's wagon stood there.

Down that street I passed each night for two years, and never did I speak to a soul. In the city, you know no one—save the angels that hover of rainy nights around the arc-lights, and cover their faces with their wings. . . .

If one can only grasp it, walking home at night in a suburb is like playing a role in a farce. The suburbanite has always made himself a caricature and it seems that he always will. There is so much conscious effort about a suburb and the suburbanite invariably seems to be pretending to be what he is not. Across the stage of its life at night strolls a medleyed cast: the ebulliently eupeptic commuter staggering under a load of bundles; the ebulliently narcotic commuter staggering under a load of his folly; dazzling matrons who have slept all the way out in the theater train; sleepy children; and, quite sufficient unto themselves, young couples to whom life is still a honeymoon.

One by one they scurry off the main street and seek their homes. You follow them with your eye, and when their front doors bang, you utter a sigh of relief, for you felt it was a bit unsafe for them to be out so late.

You pass a house that heretofore has been darkened at that hour. What! What! sputters your thought. What can Jones be doing up at this time of night? You are

amazed, and you pass on your way muttering incoherently.

Over a porch doorway you see a light burning, and instinctively the rueful thought comes that that neighbor of yours is going to have a wallop on his gas bill if his women-folk are not more careful.

The dangers of suburban streets are akin to none in the world. Serenely are you marching along, when suddenly your foot hits a snag and you are hurled into a maelstrom of flying wire and iron. It may be a lawn guard, but like as not it is a tricycle left out by some child. Where else but in a suburb can one be hurled headfirst over a tricycle?

And here the human relationships are at their full.

Walk down your suburban street late o' nights and count how many folks pass and fail to speak. In the suburbs everyone knows you, they know your personality and your personal affairs. Your well-being is part of theirs, and each man arrogates unto himself the unspeakable but none-the-less obvious counsel on how he would do the thing if he were doing it.

But there is one final and glorious spell that grips the night life of the suburb: the race for the last car. Between supper time and the hour the last car pulls out, a spirit of suppressed anxiety holds the town in thrall. As the minutes approach, doors open, out scurry young and old. The street sees dignified matrons panting down the hill; young girls dashing through the darkness, a yard of chiffon flying in their wake; and men lumbering along like ice-wagons.

To go home through such an atmosphere and not see the cosmic joke of it all is to be blind. Valiantly is Nature striving to give an air of age and urbanity to the suburb, and like an adolescent full of *faur*

pas man blunders in his naïveté and spoils it all. . . .

It has always been a moot point with me whether I enjoy going home at night in the country best, or in the city. In the latter, one is raised to a plane higher than he is by day; in the former, it would seem that he were a degree degraded.

I am always conscious of being an intruder when I walk across country at night. I have the same sensation I do when I walk into a man's office on his busy day. Just so in the country. There is no such thing as strolling along a country road at night, if you will remember. One has to be brisk, to keep moving, to state one's business and pass on. It would seem that the busy country permits you there only by right of your having arrived there. The shadows of the road frown upon you and the trees threaten. You are a spy, they seem to say, and until they are sure of you, they will have none of you.

In this instance I was thinking of how once the countryside accused me, and how I fled before it in terror.

Midday had found us at Boom— Boom of the brickyards and the long bridge over the sleepy Scheldt under which drifted the master of wayfarers, Stevenson, on his "Inland Voyage." At tea-time we dropped into an inn and supped on flat beer and indescribable sandwiches. The man behind the bar eyed us dully. The dog and I were strangers to the section and he seemed uncertain of us. After the second scrap of gristle, Jack grew uneasy. There was work ahead, he seemed to say, stern, dangerous work; and he took his stand by the door whence he threw back anxious glances. Yes, it was stern work. As I rose to pay the score, he of the bar became actively solicitous that we stay the night. I mumbled some sort of ex-

cuse and passed out. I knew he watched us from the window.

A few yards, and the village had faded back into the night. We were alone, save where on either side the road stood "at attention" the stiff ranks of sentry poplars. They seemed ready, waiting for some signal of alarm. And there was alarm enough: overhead the Zeppelins of God wheeled across the sky and a flying star volplaned down through space. Their twinkling lights were quite distinct. Now and then from a concealed hollow rose a puff of cloud smoke that veiled them; then on they sped, flashing, terrible, serene. Behind us and before, the ranks closed together. Already they were on the march.

A mile farther we passed a bivouac of forested trees that tossed and rustled like men in troubled sleep. Then, dragging up a hill, where stood a lone outpost poplar that nodded to us to pass the line, we went down into the open meadows. Trenches scarred the field on every hand. There had been a battle there that day. With ploughshare and harrow had men fought against the unyielding soil. Under cover of night they had retreated, leaving behind them, tilted in the trenches, the engines of their warfare.

Beyond the trenches we halted for a sound. No sound came. I swept the horizon for a light. None was to

be seen save where the watchful Zeppelins wheeled in space. Withering terror struck me. We could be seen, and yet could not see. We could be heard, and yet could hear never a sound. Spy! the accusation came from every side. Spy! shouted the hedgerow and the trench: Spy! In cowardly desperation I leaned down a hand, and a wet snout snuggled consolingly into it.

Suddenly out of the darkness ahead, a scuffle. The outpost of the enemy? Were the lines so close together to-night? What vigilance above! What vigilance below! Came the sound of song: a woman's voice. Then out of the night a form. Noiselessly we crept on. The song continued. Who could be so buoyant in such times? The words became audible—a lullaby. It was a mother and a child, and the child was in her arms.

That was the road to Malines as we tramped it one night some years ago, my little fox-terrier and I—Malines where we found our home, where the kit bags and the blessed books were being held in bondage.

The sentry trees, dispatches say, have been felled lest they obstruct artillery fire. And where our feet trod now rumble grim ammunition trains and thud a host of armed men.

The woman? Does she still trudge homeward through the night crooning to her baby? I wonder.



THE RAKE'S PROGRESS

BY MAY EDGINTON

ORPINGTON, pale and a little haggard, but, as ever, the last dandiacal word, was shown in, and stood before his betrothed. He bowed, but made no attempt to speak.

"Well, sir?" said Constance.

"I take it," he answered at once, "that I am here on my defence; that you have sent for me thus to tell me—to inquire into——"

"I have no questions to ask," said Constance, biting her under lip. "I have sent for you merely to tell you——"

He moved forward, looking into her face.

"To go, sir."

There was a silence, while his white face grew whiter, and his knuckles strained his sword-hilt, and loosened again spasmodically. He adjusted the fringe of lace that fell over them, flicked a minute speck of dust from his shoe-tip with a silk handkerchief, breathing rather heavily. Constance sat with her hands clasped tightly in her lap, and her head bent. Her hooped skirts rose round her in a great wave of flowered brocade, and the jewels scintillated with the rise and fall of her breast. He looked at her thus for nearly two minutes, while the stillness oppressed.

"God!" said he.

"No blasphemy, no excitement, for lud's sake!" said Constance. "I cannot bear it. I am acting on my parents' orders——"

"Your parents' orders!" said Orpington, instantly beside her. "And you, my dearest? Your own heart? Tell me what that says. Tell me——"

"It obeys the orders of my parents, sir," said Constance.

She moved away a little, biting her lips and trembling, but they were still so close that their two pairs of eyes stared into each other, with barely a couple of feet between them. He was equally agitated.

"A heart cannot be ruled, dearest. If you gave me yours, it is still mine own, unworthy as I am to the possession of such a treasure. Unworthy I know myself to be, but ——"

"There is no 'but,'" said Constance rapidly, looking away. "My parents were averse to our betrothal; you know that. As a younger son, and therefore well-nigh penniless, it behoved you, surely, to do all in your power to further your interests with His Majesty, when you were commissioned to his army, and admitted to his personal bodyguard. Instead of which——"

Orpington reddened furiously, playing with his sword-hilt.

"Instead of which, you would say, I have ruined myself. Listen, Constance. I tell you, I was in the St. James', with others, when the Prince came in. He was drunk. Well, then, well—we were all drunk, as you like. It was over the dice that he picked a quarrel with me. I, not forgetting a whit that an indiscriminating Heaven had made him a Prince, struck him as I would strike a commoner. What could follow between gentlemen but instant arrangements for a meeting? The Prince——"

"Madman!" said Constance, clasping and unclasping her nervous hands. "Madman! The King has

his German friends about the Court and the clubs. You know that. It was certain that he would be instantly apprised of what was happening, and equally certain that he would have you clapped in the guard-house to await his punishment. You cannot fight a duel with royalty. What are you now, sir? A penniless officer, disgracefully dismissed from His Majesty's army, and forbidden the Court! My father refuses to allow me to receive you again. My mother also advises me likewise. Your wild habits, your debts, your gambling, have always displeased them. They gave way only at my fervent solicitation. Now——"

Orpington, deadly pale again, answered nothing.

"Now," said Constance faintly, "there is no more to be said. A marriage with you is impossible, as you must see for yourself, sir. I am—accustomed to society. You are henceforth banned by it. I need my luxuries, my dress, my coach, my pleasures—sir, you have not, nor will have, the wherewithal to provide such. I—am not born to poverty. I—cannot flout my parents' wishes. I—in short, it is all over between us."

"Not so," he breathed. "Not so, Constance."

She stood up, seeming to force a difficult resolution on herself.

"Go, if you please. Go. . . . Good-by."

He stared at her, and, putting both hands on her shoulders, turned her round to face the window. The light fell full upon her face, and showed it ghastly pale by contrast with the little whig patches on her right temple. Her lips quivered, and she bit them furiously. Her lashes swept her oval cheeks.

"Look me in the eyes," he whispered.

She resisted mutely for a moment, then obeyed, so that he saw the tears.

He put his arms about her and held her.

"My dearest! My sweet! My heart!"

She put her hands up over her face, and lay against his shoulder for a moment.

"You love me?" said Orpington hoarsely.

"I—have—loved you——"

"And do yet. Answer me, Constance."

"N—n—no . . . N—n—no . . ."

"Your eyes denied that! It is not true!" he said, with exultant passion. "It is that, like your parents, you are afraid of my poverty, my so-called disgrace. Disgrace! My father has cast me out, my King has cast me out—now you would! And in spite of it all, I hold up my head and maintain that 'disgrace'; which has never touched an Orpington yet, has not touched me either. My dearest, do you not love me well enough to withstand your parents, withstand the dictum of fashionable society, to wait while I seek a chance of reinstating—of righting—myself——"

"There is no such chance."

He knew that, desperately. He released her, and they stood looking at each other. Constance averted her eyes from his bitter face.

"I have no hope left in life."

"I am sorry," she said faintly. "I am sorry. What more is there to be said? You have incurred the King's direst displeasure—you are disgraced, a ruined man. Your father has cast you out. You are a born gambler, and your excesses have been for months the talk of the town. What more is there to be said? I obey my parents——"

"You were not always so complaisant to them."

"What do you mean, sir?"

He stared at her with eyes suddenly charged with suspicion.

"I mean—God! I think, I mean I see something else in this, Constance. Your mind for me has changed. It is not only this trouble. You want your 'luxuries', your dress, your pleasures; I, erstwhile a poor officer in His Majesty's army, had never the wherewithal to provide such. You are not loath to obey your parents' commands. You want a rich husband."

"You misjudge me," she faltered.

"I do not, and you know it," said Orpington. "Some man has come between you and me. Constance, who is it?"

Looking at her, he read the affirmation in her face, and was seized with a kind of despairing fury.

"God's sake! Constance, who is it? So that I may seek him out, challenge him, meet him in Hyde Park Ring at sunrise to-morrow—"

She met his eyes steadily.

"That would be impossible, sir," she said slowly. "No gentleman would meet you, and you know it."

After the pause that fell, "Heaven forgive you for that," he said hoarsely, "and Heaven knows it's true! I am humbled to that—fallen so low as that! I am no longer an honorable target! But again, Constance, I demand his name."

She moved away up the room; he followed, and caught her by the wrist, so that she was forced to stand.

"I will not tell you," she answered.

He waited a moment, his brain working. Then, "By heaven!" he said. "Blessington!"

"And if it is?" she said stormily, trying to free her wrist.

"Blessington!" he said, a sort of sullen mask clouding his face. "Blessington! Twenty years your elder, but with his fat pockets well lined with German gold! You will have your luxuries, your coach, your dress, your amusements, and—Bles-

sington! Lord! What a woman will do for wealth! So you are to marry Blessington. You were on with the new love before you were off with the old, hey?"

She compelled her overweening pride to her aid, wrenched her hand away, and answered:

"We heard yesterday of your disgrace. The town was ringing with it. Everywhere I went, in the shops, in the Mall, at the Duke's drum, my acquaintance spoke of it. I will not be humiliated thus, sir. I realized all was over. Lord Blessington met me—'twas at the Duke's—I—he——"

"Curse him!" said Orpington furiously. "'Twould be like him to stab in the dark a man who is down through no fault of his own."

"I promised to consider his proposals," she flung it out recklessly. "He is coming here this very day for my answer. And now leave me, sir, and good-by."

Orpington took one or two hasty turns up and down the room. She had retreated to the hearth, where one or two logs burned redly, and stood making a pretense of warming her foot, but watching him under her long lashes. She loved him, and she knew it, but she was a fashionable beauty, who would scorn to own to the existence of a heart. Moreover, he "had not the wherewithal to provide" such things as were the breath of life to her. She drove her teeth into her full under lip, quelled its trembling, and maintained an icily serene front.

He suddenly came to a full stop in front of her.

"Good-by, then," he whispered, and turned away.

The woman in her overcame the worldling for an instant. She caught at the lapel of his coat.

"Where will you go?" she asked, as low. "What will you do?"

"I have nowhere to go and nothing to do." His dark eyes looked somberly out at her from his white face. "But a man can soon find both. In any case, it will matter little to Lady Blessington, I take it." She still held his coat, and he heard her long, quivering, irrepressible sigh. "My God!" he said passionately, turning and taking her in his arms, "how I've loved you! How I love you, dearest! Well enough to know myself not worthy of you. Well enough to be glad, Heaven grant, by and by, that you thus dismiss me! If I thought that Blessington—if I thought this made for your real happiness——"

"It does! It does!" she quavered. "It is what I—wish."

"Kiss me good-by," said Orpington.

She avoided his eyes, lifted a cold cheek, and he kissed it. "Is that all, then?" he asked.

"Go! Go! Go!" said Constance.

"Give me something to take with me, to wear on my heart," he said.

She was wearing a black velvet ribbon round her white throat, threaded through a jewelled locket. He put up slow hands and unfastened it, lingering reluctantly over the task. Constance stood like a statue.

"Good-by," he said, the bauble lying in his hand. "It might have been a talisman. It can be but a bad souvenir. Good-by."

He went to the door, and turned there, for a last look—a brave figure in gray satin, powdered hair tied in a queue at his neck, silhouetted against the dark oak. Constance was by the hearth, motionless, her eyelashes almost resting on her pale cheeks.

"Good-by, then, my dearest. It is the last time—good-by."

He lingered a moment for the response that did not come, and went slowly out. Constance sat down,

sighed, and wept a little. Presently, when her tears had stopped, she went to her room, to repair the damage to her complexion, change her gown, and put another jewel at her neck. A clever tirewoman had soon done it all in the shortest possible time, and a radiant image faced her again from the glass. The traces of tears had been bathed from her eyes, a touch of rouge applied to either cheek, and her hair elaborately piled and freshly powdered. She had chosen with care a long green brocade gown, and put a single great ruby at her throat. The heartache underneath lessened while she looked steadily into her glass, and into the future which her mental vision conjured up. Lord Blessington's wife would be a leader of fashionable society, feted in political circles, honored at Court. Orpington's wife would have been—she shuddered slightly.

There was a knock at the door, which the maid answered. She came back into the room, bearing a magnificent bouquet of white roses.

"Lord Blessington's lackey has brought these for you, my lady," said she, "and begs to say that his master sends his compliments and will wait upon you in half an hour."

Constance sat still. Perhaps head and heart fought for a moment or two, but there was no sign of that battle in her serene face.

"Give me the roses," she said.

She took them, smelled their fragrance. She was thinking—thinking—thinking—of the answer she would give to Blessington. She hardly wavered before, drawing out half a dozen of the pure, perfect white blooms, she fastened them into the bosom of her green gown. She rose and looked at herself, and saw how beautiful she was.

"Put the others in water," she said. "Take care of them. I shall

carry them to-night, for Lord Blessington will take my mother and me to the theater," and so went down to await him.

II.

So Harry Orpington, that graceless prodigal, the younger son of the Earl of Orpington, was summarily expelled from His Majesty's army, his name struck from the club books, and his reputation a byword in the society of the day, which, in King George's time, kept up at least a superficial respectability when the monarch's eyes were on it. His friends fell away, and his enemies rejoiced. Frederick, Prince of Wales, that good-natured debauchee, swore, as soon as his muddled head was clear again, that Orpington had been hardly dealt with, and that an apology to himself would have met the case. To which Orpington's acquaintance, who knew the man, replied that no apology for the episode could have been wrung from him under any consideration, and His Majesty grunted that his court was well rid of a hopeless young rake. Orpington disappeared, and conjectures as to his whereabouts soon dropped for lack of possible answer. In any case, a man is soon forgotten as soon as he was gone well under.

Topics that interested London shortly after were Lord Blessington's wedding, and the bold raids of a highwayman within a radius of twenty miles or so from London. The wedding was a splendid affair, and Lady Blessington's beauty thereat a wonder to beholders, but the ceremony was soon over. Not so the other excitement. Travelers came daily into London telling deplorable tales of robbery by a masked man in black, mounted on the finest strawberry roan in England. Such a fellow he was, daring to madness, brave to desperation, cool to a mir-

acle, and he could not be identified with Galloping Dick, Red Ned, Tom Toms, Old Nick, or any known and feared Gentleman of the Road. Day by day, week by week, month by month, his reputation grew, and the tale of his deeds multiplied. His petty robberies were numbered in scores, and the soldiery scoured the country for thirty miles round the city. Plans were devised, and traps were laid for him, but if he rode in, he rode out of them again, on the red roan mare. Rumor had it that in the broad daylight of a November afternoon he held up the Prime Minister, and four shivering (and armed) post-boys, while transactions infinitely satisfactory to the highwayman were carried out. He ordered pistols to be handed over, and the post-boys, quaking in their boots, obeyed, in spite of the curses of the great Pitt, who thereupon turned his carriage, galloped back to London, and called out the soldiery; to such little avail, however, that even the next day, while their search parties still scoured the heath, the highwayman "held up" no less a person than the Archbishop of York, on precisely the same route, and by precisely the same tactics. The Archbishop, driving from London to York, pursued his journey a sadder and wiser man, and the tale was soon flying round the town. It was not long after that the audacity of the highwayman asserted itself in the case of His Majesty King George II. That little German gentleman, hunting in the vicinity of Epping Forest, was momentarily parted from his bodyguard. He found a strawberry mare loping easily beside his own stout mount, a black shoulder pressing beside his own august one, and a pistol perilously near his ear.

"Pull up, Sire!" said the highwayman.

A ruler of men knows when to

obey, and George pulled up. But he spluttered with rage.

"Gott! fellow, take your cursed pistol from my head! I am the King of England. Hullo, Blessington! Frederick! Hul——"

"Silence, Sire!" said the highwayman.

The King looked down that polished barrel, and held his tongue. Horses' feet galloped near.

"Your purse, Sire!" said the highwayman rapidly, but in no wise distressed by the pressing need of hurry. "Your ring. Your snuff-box—no, Sire, the diamond one. King or no king, I'll shoot before three seconds if——"

They were his one second before the Prince of Wales and Blessington came shouting into view, and he turned the mare and flashed into the forest.

"Damme!" cried George, suffused with rage. "How dare you, sirs! Where were you? *Gott in Himmel!* I don't want your lies! I have been robbed, sirs, in broad daylight, the King of England robbed by one of his rebel subjects, and you near! After him, all of you, I say! After him!"

The whole hunt was after him, in hue and cry, and they sighted him down a ride, the roan mare galloping easily and strong. He turned in his saddle a moment, waved his hand airily, doffed his hat to His Majesty leading the van, and sent the mare on, flying neck or nothing. Not all the king's horses and all the king's men could have caught him then. It was a spicy tale for the town, but diplomats did not dwell upon it at Court.

"Who is the fellow?" the question rose afresh. "He showed a knowledge of the King's snuff-boxes, they say—would take the diamonds. Who is he?"

As usual, nobody could answer

that question. They nick-named him "Black Harry," because of his funeral garb, but did not know how near they had struck the truth. Things went thus for nearly a twelvemonth.

There was racing and chasing on Blackheath.

The day before, a particularly audacious robbery had roused London, and a captain and half a dozen men, on picked horses, were told off the next morning to catch the rogue, or give the reason why. News of him had been brought to the barracks by a watchman, who declared that, in the small hours of the morning, a black-habited man on a roan mare had actually ridden through the streets, and headed, apparently, for Blackheath. About three o'clock on a gray October afternoon, the troopers on the heath sighted a solitary rider against the sky-line, and pursued at a gallop. The rider pulled up, and stood, so that they got a clear sight of him. It was undoubtedly Black Harry on his famous strawberry roan. Knowing the man, and wary of his ready fire, they slowed down and approached him cautiously at a trot, out of pistol range. Their captain, making a trumpet of his hands, while the highwayman thus stood stock still, surveying them, shouted:

"Throw down your arms, sir, and surrender, in the name of the King!"

Then the race began. No sooner had the words left the captain's mouth, than the roan mare was wheeled round as if on a pivot, and started over the heath. The soldiers spurred in pursuit, and the highwayman began to ride in a circle, dodging, galloping, jumping, now disappearing behind tree clumps, now emerging, well out of range, and playing with his pursuers till the air resounded with their oaths. The mare had a marvelous turn of speed,

and it was evident that the highwayman could break away when he chose. Now and again he turned in his saddle, waved his hat, and shouted derision. Then he would ride off at top speed for a half mile or so, while they spurred and panted in pursuit. It was a ludicrous game he played during that October afternoon with seven blowing, swearing soldiers of His Majesty's army. He seemed to know, inch by inch, the geography of the heath. By and by he headed northwards, shot away, and they lost sight of him, but, mindful of instructions, they kept doggedly on.

He galloped on, singing. He laid the reins on the mare's neck, patted her, and let her go. She went, strong and untiring, until she caught a fore-foot in a rabbit-hole, and came down, flinging him over her head. He rose unhurt and caught her bridle. She essayed to rise, grunted, groaned, whinnied a little, as if to say it was not possible that she should ever rise again. Her foreleg was broken above the fetlock, and she lay, sweating and panting, turning piteous soft eyes upon him. He stood up, motionless a moment, and turned his head towards London. On the wind came the faint distant, steady, dogged galloping. He was pale and sick with the stunning fall, but his lips set wickedly under the mask, and his dark eyes snapped through the eyelet holes. So he stood motionless, and turned the situation about in his quick brain. The mare sighed, and cried a little. He bent down to the saddle, drew a pistol from the holster, caressed her head, her velvet snout, her long wet ears, gently, then, putting the muzzle into an ear, shot her dead. The galloping was ever nearer. He listened to it, defining it with the craftiness of the hunted. It was not all from one direction, and somewhere was the

rumble of wheels. He loaded his pistol, his eyes lightened, and he laughed a little. Then, walking cautiously away from the carcass, he sought the concealment of a sparse clump of gorse-bushes, dropped on one knee, and stayed, listening. The sun was setting in one red splash in a gray sky. October dusk crept on.

III.

Lord Blessington's carriage, traveling fast over Blackheath, swayed suddenly, as the horses shied at a large, dark, inert object near their path. When they had shied, they stopped, and stood trembling and staring, snuffing the air.

"A dead horse, by the look o' it," said one post-boy to the other, peering down the twilight. "Whip up, and get them past."

But it is hard, sometimes impossible, to get horses by a carcass of one of their own kind, and the whipping and spurring and swearing that ensued were not efficacious. My Lord put his head out and joined his voice to the commotion.

"'S death, fellows! What are you stopping for? Drive past the plaguy thing, or through it, or over it, alive or dead, whatever 'tis. Stab me, you're pretty riders if you cannot take a pair of horses across the heath. Get on, I say, or we'll be meeting some of these gentlemen who——"

"God! my Lord!" shrilled a post-boy. "'Tis Black Harry's roan—and 'tis Black Harry himself!"

Lord Blessington turned his head hastily, and looked down the shining barrel of a pistol. A black-clothed, black-masked man had stepped out from behind a clump of gorse, and stood by the carriage, a pistol in either hand. One covered the trembling post-boys, who had already dropped their reins and flung up their arms. The other was turned

on Blessington, as he hung from the carriage window. A moment's staggered silence, and then Blessington's hand flew to his hip.

"Hands up!" said the highwayman, and up they went, instantly. The earl hung from the window, pale as death, and faced the blask mack.

He began stammering futilities.

"What d'you want, fellow? What d' you want? Devil take me if this isn't a pretty thing! Get your pistols out, you cowards, and pepper him, I say——"

"Silence, my Lord," said the highwayman. "Keep your hands up, boys. It's Black Harry right enough, speaking to you, and he says, keep your hands up."

They knew enough to obey. The name was a name to conjure with. The highwayman stood, holding his pistols steady, and staring into Blessington's face. His own was hidden behind the mask, save for the set mouth and dark eyes.

"My purse?" said Blessington, after a pause, rolling his tongue round dry lips. "I cannot get it, curse you, with my arms above my head."

"I will leave you your purse, my Lord," said the highwayman rather thickly. "There are reasons why I will not rob you save of what is necessary. It is necessary that I have one of your horses, and at once. The near-side chestnut looks about my stamp, and should be able to gallop a bit. The King's men are out after me, and my mare lies dead there. I request you, therefore, my Lord, to throw away your pistol into that gorse-bush and to order your servants to do likewise with theirs."

"Curse me! this is a pretty thing," raged Blessington, bullying and chafing, and sore afraid down to his very marrow.

The highwayman's voice rang out: "Down with your arms, or, by the

Lord, I shoot! And no tricks with them while you have them in your hand. I've got you all covered. Right or left, I can aim as straight, and a man more or less matters little in my account."

Three pistols were tossed into the gorse-bushes.

"Your word of honor, my Lord, that you carry no other arms."

"No more, devil take you! No more!" fumed Blessington.

"Order that the chestnut there be taken out," said the highwayman, "and my saddle put upon him."

A post-boy slid off the chestnut, trembling.

"God! man, 'tis impossible!" cried Blessington. There was a new entreaty in his voice. "We are traveling post-haste, my wife and I, to Lewes, and the delay is life or death. We cannot spare a horse, were the whole English army and the devil himself after you——"

"My Lord——"

"Our case is urgent," said Blessington rapidly, "we cannot make any progress with but one horse. I tell you, your demand is impossible."

The pistol-barrel had wavered a moment.

"Do you say, my Lord," asked the highwayman, rather huskily, "that Lady Blessington is in the carriage?"

"Bring your head in from the window," cried a woman's voice. "Do not stand parleying there. Open the door, that I may speak with this gentleman, show him our need, beg his pity. Ah, sir——"

"Open the carriage door, my Lord," said the highwayman.

Blessington obeyed, and Constance leaned out. She had a dark traveling-cloak about her, and a thick veil tossed back from her beautiful white face. On her bosom lay a tiny breathing bundle lapped in silks and laces. The highwayman's eyes

darted to that instantly, and the pistols wavered in his hands. Her own eyes, big, bright, despairing, searched the black-masked face. Her voice choked and sobbed.

"You delay us, sir, and it is life or death. We are traveling with my baby to Lewes, to a great doctor who unfortunately left London yesterday. The child has been seized with illness, sir, is dying, is——"

Her hungry arms clasped it, her cheek was against its soft, waxlike face. There was no lack of feeling, of emotion, of love, of passion, in her own.

"My baby will die!" she cried. "Lord God! my little child will die, while you parley here, rob us of our horse, stop us on our road. Pity, sir, pity! Pity! Pity!"

"You stoop to plead to this rascal?" said Blessington furiously.

The highwayman stood stock-still.

"I plead to you, sir," she said, disregarding her husband, and leaning out. "I beg you—I pray you as I would pray Heaven, not to hinder us, not to—to——My little child will die! Mercy, sir! Let us go!"

The robber spoke very slowly. "Get back on your horse, boy. Madam——"

The post-boy scrambled back and seized his reins. Blessington stared, chafing. Constance, looking into the dark eyes through the mask, caught her breath and wondered at her own sudden heart-pang.

"I would not delay you," he said softly. "But first"—he dropped the pistol from his right hand, felt under his neck-cloth, and withdrew something—"first let me see the baby's face a moment——"

She turned the infant to him, and he looked down an instant at its closed eyes, its waxen pallor. Bend-

ing forward, he was between her and Blessington. He laid something down lingeringly on the baby's breast, and, glancing at it, she caught it up—and knew him. It was a jewelled locket threaded on a black velvet ribbon.

"Harry!" she whispered, so low that Blessington could not hear. Her breath was on his cheek a moment. He drew back and closed the door.

"God bless you," he said. "God bless your little child. God keep you always."

He fell back a pace.

"My Lord," he said to Blessington, "your horses like not my poor mare. Allow me to lead them by, and to wish you a speedy journey."

He had his hat off to the trembling woman, and the setting sun glorified his tossed brown hair. He went to the horses' heads, patted them, spoke to them, urged the quaking beasts by the carcass, and saw them start off at a hand-gallop southward. He stood to watch them out of sight, till the growing dusk swallowed them up.

With the dying of the sounds of their wheels, came other sounds, the steady, insistent rhythm of galloping hoofs. The King's men came riding over the heath, shouted at him, called to him to surrender. He stood by the roan mare's carcass, and answered them to keep back. Knowing him, they did so. He was out of bullet range—except from his own trusty pistol, and that was in his hand. He looked down at it, smiled, took off his mask, and lifted the pistol to his temple, while the wavering soldiery peered at his dim shape through the dusk.

"Well, well," said he, "'t would be a hanging matter if they took me;" and, turning to the west, saw his last sun go down.

DISILLUSIONMENT

BY CRITTENDEN MARRIOTT

Author of "The Isle of Dead Ships," "Out of Russia," etc.

ON the twenty-third day of Crenshawe's illness he had seemed on the high-road to recovery; but on the twenty-fourth he suffered a severe and sudden set-back.

The doctor—not Doctor Merton; Doctor Merton had long since been discarded—the doctor could not understand it. True, Crenshawe had been badly injured, and it necessarily took a long time for his broken bones and torn sinews to heal. But this could not account for the relapse. The doctor suspected some mental strain, but his questionings only excited his patient, and elicited no intelligible response.

He was right, however: Crenshawe had been mentally stricken. He had suddenly realized that he had no right to get well; that it was a sort of treachery for him to be alive at all. At first he had forgotten; and it was only when he was convalescing that he had been abruptly reminded that he had been allowed to win the game on the understanding that he was dying; and he had not died. The fact that he was innocent of any intention to deceive did not alter the situation.

The fault had really been Doctor Merton's. Doctor Merton was present when Crenshawe was injured, and Doctor Merton was very young and very sure of himself. He had just been graduated from a famous medical and surgical college at the top of his class, and he had not as yet been chastened by actual contact with the suffering world. To him the human body was as simple as an

algebraic equation; certain injuries were curable; others were incurable. He examined Crenshawe's injuries, and decided that they were in the latter class, and that Crenshawe must die. He would give him one hour, perhaps two; then——"

From his point of view he did right in telling Crenshawe what he felt certain was the truth. He knew Crenshawe was a man of great wealth and large affairs, and naturally supposed that he would want to use his last hours in setting his affairs in order. Doctor Merton knew nothing of Crenshawe's feelings for Edith Norcross, and probably would not have thought much about them if he had. Youth considers its own love affairs of tremendous importance, but seldom takes other people's seriously. Certainly he did not take Edith's gratitude to Crenshawe into account.

It was Edith's niece that Crenshawe had gotten off the railroad track the infinitesimal part of a second before the train struck him. When told he must die, he had promptly called for Edith.

As the girl knelt at his side, she tried to say something, but the situation was beyond words.

Crenshawe looked at her longingly. Never had he been more anxious to live than at that moment. "Edith," he said faintly but distinctly, "the doctor says I'm dying. The moment they try to move me, the end will come. You know I love you. Won't you marry me—before I go?"

The girl gasped and drew back. "I can't! Oh, I can't!" she cried.

But Crenshawe would not give up. "It's only for a few minutes," he pleaded.

But she shook her head. "I can't," she reiterated miserably. "I can't. I'm very fond of you, Frank, but I—I don't love you in that way, and—oh, it breaks my heart to refuse, but—you didn't know I was engaged to Mr. Hitchcock, did you?"

The light died out of Crenshawe's eyes. "No," he answered. "No."

But Edith hurried on. "Don't misunderstand me," she begged. "I am not engaged to him now. I gave him back his ring last night. But it isn't right. It can't be right."

Crenshawe's eyes flashed. "Broken off!" he exclaimed. "Then—Oh, yes, yes; it is right, Edith. It—it isn't as if I were going to live. And it would let me die happy, believing I had helped you. Money is a useless thing sometimes—when a man is dying, for instance—but it helps while one lives. You mustn't mind if I say that I know you have needed it sometimes, and that I want you never to need it again. But—but I'm afraid there is only one way to make sure. I've got some rather hard kinfolk, and I'm afraid they would try to break any will I made. But if you'll marry me—here, now——" He broke off and gazed pleadingly into the girl's face. "It would be only for a little while, dear, and it would make me very happy," he finished weakly.

Edith had grown very pale. Jack Hitchcock's handsome, flushed face rose before her as it had looked when he had bade her an angry good-by less than twenty-four hours before. It seemed to beg her not to do this thing—to wait and trust to him. And yet—and yet——

She had known Frank Crenshawe

all her life. If it had not been for Jack, she might have loved him, and no one knew better than she what his money would be to her.

She and her mother were poor—if poverty is measured by one's inability to have the things one's friends have. They lived in a cheap apartment, and kept only one half-trained maid. More than anything else Edith's mother deplored the half-trainedness of that maid. But she came cheap, and Mrs. Norcross could not afford a better one. Her one hope in life was that she might keep her social barque afloat till Edith should make a good marriage—"good" having but one significance in her vocabulary—and she put up with the incompetent maid and with many other unpleasantnesses because to do so enabled her to hold out a little longer.

Jack Hitchcock was poor and Frank Crenshawe was rich, but Edith loved Hitchcock, and she did not love Crenshawe. She had known him too long and too well—he seemed a brother rather than a lover. And now he was dying; he had given his life to save that of one dear to her; and he wanted to marry her and make her rich. In spite of herself, the thought of all that his money would mean to her rose in her mind.

Meanwhile the moments were flying; and Crenshawe was waiting, anxious eyes fixed upon hers.

"I won't bother you long, dear," he insisted once more, a little grimly this time.

Edith looked at him. "It isn't that," she answered slowly. "It is——" She paused; one cannot dissect motives or split hairs with the dying. "Let it be as you wish," she finished.

Only a few moments after Edith Norcross became Edith Crenshawe.

Crenshawe signed a brief will leaving his entire fortune to his "beloved wife."

And then, after all, he did not die! The doctor, it seemed, had been mistaken. The time came when it was morally certain that in a few weeks he would be as well and as strong as he had ever been.

Through all his illness Edith had done her duty by him—done it with apparent gladness. No doubt she was glad, for she and Crenshawe were very old friends. From the first she had stayed at his side, not attempting to interfere with the regular nurses, but being always at hand to help on his convalescence by a cheery word. No outsider suspected that she was an unhappy or an unwilling bride. Even Crenshawe, remembering dimly what she had said when he asked her to be his wife—even Crenshawe felt no real misgivings.

Then came the revelation. One morning, Crenshawe, sitting by the window, gathering strength in the September sunshine, remembered something that he had forgotten to tell Edith. She had just left him and had gone into her own room adjoining. Since the accident he had not walked unassisted, but now the notion took him to follow her and surprise her by his strength. He rose from his chair and limped triumphantly to her threshold; then paused, suddenly stricken.

The door was ajar. Through the crack he saw Edith, stretched across the table, face down, arms outflung, shoulders shaking with dry sobs. Faintly he heard the despairing words, "Oh, Jack! Jack! Jack!"

Dismayed, despairing, Crenshawe tottered back to his chair, where the doctor found him, collapsed, half an hour later.

During the days that followed he

fought the matter out with himself. He was no longer under any illusion. He knew that Edith had married him partly out of gratitude, partly out of pity, partly out of pique, partly, perhaps, for money. She had not married him because she loved him; and she had not expected him to live to claim her. And he had lived! What to do he did not know!

But first he must get well.

At last he did so. By that time silence in regard to his marriage had grown into a habit hard to break. Yet it must be broken. The matter must be threshed out or both his life and Edith's would be wrecked.

It was Edith who brought matters to an issue. They were talking on some indifferent subject, but the thoughts of both were far away. Edith was speaking, but the syllables came more and more slowly, and at last they stopped. "Oh!" she cried, in a sudden despairing outburst. "Oh! This must end! I can't bear it any longer."

Crenshawe flushed, then he paled. "Yes, it must end," he echoed quietly. "I have done you a great wrong, and I must do what I can to repair it. If I were the hero of a romantic novel, the solution would be easy. I would shoot myself and thus set you free to marry Jack——"

"Oh!"

"But I am not the hero of a novel. I am just a plain man, who has gotten himself and the woman he loves into a snarl by his selfishness——"

"Oh!"

"Yes, it *was* selfish, Edith, and I ought to pay for it. I'm only sorry that you will have to pay, too. I don't feel a bit like shooting myself" —he smiled sadly—"and I'm afraid it wouldn't mend matters if I did."

Edith shook her head slowly. "No, it wouldn't mend matters," she

agreed; "and it wouldn't be fair. It's just like you to take the blame, Frank, but it doesn't belong to you. You did nothing but what was kind and generous. The fault was mine."

"Yours?"

"Yes. Oh, let's be honest this once. Don't try to gloze the truth because I am a woman. We've known each other for nearly twenty years; surely we can speak as equals for once. The fault was mine, but you must help to pay the penalty. I had no right to marry you for your money when I loved another man."

"Edith!"

"I did it. Oh, you big men, you splendid, trustful American men! How you idealize us women! You think us good, noble, pure-minded, unmercenary. You are wrong. We women want the fleshpots even more than men do. Only, we have learned to conceal our wishes. I want money—all my life I have wanted it. But I have had no way to get it except by marrying it. When the chance came I took it. That is the truth of it. Despise me for it." She ceased, panting.

Crenshawe stared at her in wonder. "Despise you?" he echoed. "Despise you? Nonsense! I don't believe you!"

"Why not?"

"Several reasons. First place, I've known you too long."

"You think you have. You never knew the real me."

"Oh, yes, I did. The best proof is what you have just said. Nobody as mercenary as you say you are would have confessed it."

"I confess because I am miserable. I sold myself. It was nothing else. I didn't love you. I married you because—yes, I'll be fair to myself—partly because I was grateful to you and wanted to please you, but mostly because I thought of all I

could do for Jack with your money. There you have the whole shameful truth!"

"Not quite all, I think." Crenshawe's face was gray with pain, but he spoke calmly. "Not quite all. You are saying things you don't quite mean, just because you are worn-out. You've been under a cruel strain, little girl, and you're mightily close to a nervous breakdown. Don't I know it? There isn't any question of blame between us. We are not lovers; we are just two old, old friends who have gotten into a snarl and are seeking a way out. We will find one, never fear!"

The girl looked up, a flash of hope on her face. "You mean——"

"I mean that there are ways out. The simplest is to have our marriage annulled."

"Annulled!"

"Yes; it can be done easily. I don't mean that we can be divorced. Divorce isn't necessary. Our marriage isn't a real marriage. Marriage is more than a few words said by a minister. I am not a lawyer, but I am sure that any court in the land would declare our marriage null and void—no marriage at all. You would be entitled to alimony——"

"What?"

"Certainly. To a very large sum—one-third of my estate, I believe, under the New York law. Then you and Jack could marry and——"

"Stop!" With blazing eyes the girl tottered to her feet. "Stop! I may be vile, but I am not quite so vile as that! And you think that of me! Frank! Frank!"

Crenshawe laughed gently. "So you didn't tell me quite all, after all," he remarked, quizzically.

Edith's eyes rounded. For a moment she groped for the explanation. Then she found it. A look of wondering surprise dawned in her face.

"Why! Why!" she sighed, almost happily, and dropped back into her chair. "Why," I don't believe I am as bad as I thought I was!"

"I know you're not!" Frank laughed outright. Edith could not see how great an effort it required.

"But—but how did you know, Frank? How could you know?"

"I knew you—the real you! Well, if you don't like that way out of our trouble, we must consider another. Don't you think you could learn to— to care for me?"

The smile faded from Edith's lips, and the hope went out of her eyes. Slowly she shook her head. "I'm afraid I can't, Frank," she said. "I do love you now, but not in that way. There's nobody like you in all the world—not even Jack. For years and years you've been everything to me—everything! Why, I haven't had a single trouble in all my life, from the time I broke my first doll till to-day, that you haven't stood ready to help me. You are the dearest, sweetest fellow in the world. But—but I *love* Jack."

Her tones were awed.

Crenshawe said nothing. He saw that she had more to say.

"Jack isn't half the man you are, Frank," she went on. "I know it perfectly. But I love him! I love him! Oh, Frank, Frank! Why do we women have hearts? Why can't we love where we should? Why can't I love you? Everything would be so simple if I could."

"Yes, dear; everything would be very simple then. Well? Shall I go away, Edith—on business, of course—and forget to come back?"

"Oh, no, no! Don't leave me!" The girl started up in terror. "Oh, no! Please don't leave me. I should die if you left me!"

Crenshawe smiled. He had not had the least idea of going away. "Then——" he began.

But the girl broke in. "Frank," she exclaimed, "perhaps—perhaps I might learn to love you, after all, if you'll give me time. It's only Jack that's in the way, you know. He fills my heart now so that there's no room for any one else. But perhaps in time I can get over it—if you'll help me. 'When half gods go, the gods arrive,' you know. I'll try very hard if you'll give me time and help me! Will you, Frank?"

"You know I will, Edith."

"And I may come to you and tell you when the pain gets very bad?"

"Yes, Edith."

"It won't be altogether easy for you," warned the girl. "I'll be pretty bad sometimes, and when I am I'm afraid I'll hurt you. I'm hurting you now, I know. Every word I'm saying must hurt you. Oh, Frank, Frank! I'm not worth it."

"Oh, yes, you are; mighty well worth it. So it's a bargain, is it?"

"Yes, it's a bargain."

A bargain it was, loyally carried out on both sides, even though the pain sometimes seemed too great to bear. Edith found occupation in managing Crenshawe's big house and in entertaining, while Crenshawe found distraction in his daily work. But often he would go home to find Edith crumpled down in a corner of a sofa or in an armchair, shuddering, sobbing. Often he would be summoned home over the telephone by a small pitiful voice begging for help. Always he gave it, at what cost to himself, no one knew. If, after a while, Edith grew less despairing, the number of her calls upon him did not decrease.

Jack Hitchcock had been a visitor at their house from the first. He had been a friend of Crenshawe's and Edith's for years, and their marriage made no difference, at least, so far as the surface was concerned.

Hitchcock accepted the situation, and came and went like any other friend. Besides, both Edith and Frank thought it best. "I want to contrast him with you, Frank," the girl had said. "It may help some."

Weeks grew into months, and conditions did not change. Frank was as tender as ever, but hope was slowly dying in his heart.

Then came the election. Jack Hitchcock was nominated for district attorney on the reform ticket. Edith read the news in the papers and went to Frank with it. "Can't you help him, Frank?" she asked wistfully. "I—I think I owe it to him."

"Help him!" Crenshawe repeated the words vaguely. "Oh, yes, of course. Certainly I'll help him."

Edith looked at him strangely. "You're always paying my debts, aren't you, Frank?" she questioned gravely.

"It's the inalienable privilege of the American husband," returned Crenshawe lightly.

Edith did not answer. It occurred to her that paying was the only privilege this American husband had ever had.

Crenshawe plunged into the reform campaign. For reform itself he cared little, feeling that it seldom lived up to its promises. But about Edith he cared a good deal. It occurred to him that Hitchcock had always been the "under dog"; perhaps to put him on top might break the spell. He put himself at Hitchcock's service; day after day and night after night he carried Hitchcock in his automobile from hall to hall, listened to Hitchcock's speeches, and led the applause at Hitchcock's periods. It was hard; it was especially hard when Edith went along and clapped her gloves to tatters. He did not know that her applause was more and more due to

self-condemnation. Hitchcock did not shine as an orator, nor stand very high among men.

The last Saturday night of the campaign came; Sunday and Monday were to be days of rest, and on Tuesday was to be the balloting. Hitchcock was on his way to make his last speech. He and Edith were on the back seat of the automobile; Crenshawe and the chauffeur on the front. The car, driven rapidly, shot across the surface tracks and darted up the Bowery. As it passed close to a newsstand beneath the elevated railway steps, a girl of eight or ten ran out in front of it. The car caught her and flung her a dozen feet.

The chauffeur doubled himself across wheel and brakes. Crenshawe, not waiting for the car to stop, made a splendid vault clear to the street. Hitchcock stood up, clutching the back of the seat in front of him, and gazing panic-stricken at the helpless little body and then at the gathering crowd. Finally he followed Crenshawe to the pavement. Edith scrambled after him.

As Crenshawe stood up with the child in his arms, the crowd closed in. From every side voices assailed him. Men shook their fists in his face and shouted abuse. Another crowd had closed in around the automobile, threatening the chauffeur. "Lynch 'em! Kill the money-bugs!" rose the cries.

Crenshawe did not heed them. Holding the child, he turned toward the machine, and found Edith by his side.

"Give her to me," she ordered.

Crenshawe's heart dropped even lower than it had been. To his anguish for the child was added fear for Edith. The crowd was very threatening. But there was no time for argument.

"Get back into the car," he ordered. "Quick!" Then to the crowd: "Out of the way, there! We must get this child to the hospital."

Suddenly the crowd gave way, letting the three pass. A big man in muddy clothes trod on Crenshawe's heels. "You don't get away!" he shouted. "You for the police station! Ain't I right, friends?"

"Sure!" echoed the crowd. "Lynch the murderers!"

Edith climbed into the car and took the child in her arms. As Crenshawe tried to follow, a woman burst through the throng. At sight of the child she began to scream.

Crenshawe lifted her into the car and sprang up in front. "To Bellevue Hospital, quick!" he ordered. "Here!"—to the crowd. "Here's the child's mother. Get out of the way."

Very quickly they were at the hospital. As they drove in the child opened her eyes; and two minutes later a surgeon declared that her injuries were trifling. Crenshawe gave his name and address, and quieted the mother by assurances of care and proper compensation.

It was not until they were again on the street that Crenshawe started.

"Good Lord!" he exclaimed. "Where's Hitchcock?" He looked at Edith.

The girl did not answer. The chauffeur, however, was less reticent. He had been badly frightened and badly shocked, and he had not had time to get over it.

"The damned cur ran," he snarled. "He jumped and ran! The coward!"

"Peters!" Crenshawe's tones brought the man to his senses.

"He did! He did!" he repeated sullenly.

Crenshawe glanced at Edith apologetically, "I'm sorry, Edith," he said. "You mustn't blame Hitchcock too much. He probably remembered that if he were recognized it might hurt the ticket, and so he thought it best to get away."

"Don't apologize!" The girl's color was high and her eyes bright with anger. "Don't apologize! Peters is right. The damned cur *did* run. I saw him."

And after that, nothing remained to be said.



A GERMAN PROPHECY COME TRUE

BY COLONEL H. FROBENIUS

[The book, soon to be published in this country, from which this article is taken, appeared in Germany just a few days before war was declared. The writer, an officer in the German army, was warmly commended by the Crown Prince for his work.—EDITOR.]

IT is remarkable that Homer Lea, in his work "THE DAY OF THE SAXON," makes absolutely no mention of France. That is rather humiliating for the latter, as it excludes France from any competition with the British Empire. She has lost all importance on the sea as regards England since the latter succeeded in the Eighteenth Century in beating her navy and wresting from her her considerable colonial possessions which were just beginning to flourish. The fact that France has, in the meantime, acquired considerable new possessions in other parts of the globe does not seem to trouble her former enemy, Great Britain, as the latter has been able to retain a certain superiority. It was under this pressure that France had to give up her rights in Egypt and her designs on a colonial empire right across Africa from Senegambia to the Red Sea (Abyssinia) at the very moment when she thought she had effected the connection with her Eastern possessions by means of Fashoda. This was the only case in which her efforts to expand came into conflict with the British Empire, and the latter lost no time in putting a spoke in her wheel with brutal emphasis.

Although this treatment by the Island Empire in 1898 was deeply resented by France as a national outrage, the impression very rapidly disappeared and was lost to view behind the desire of revenge against

Germany, which has prevailed since 1871, on England stepping forward to help her in the Morocco question. What is the reason for this hatred of the German Empire, which, based on revenge, causes all other matters in France to be relegated to the background whenever there is a demand for its settlement?

The French pretend to attribute it to the ancient contest between the Gauls and the Germans about the western bank of the Rhine. In order to justify the robbery of Alsace and Lorraine from Germany by Louis XIV they have put their own interpretation on history and have so stubbornly stuck to it in the schools that not only the French but also the inhabitants of the Reichsland, who derive their instruction from them, are completely permeated with this idea: *i.e.*, since the partition of the Empire of Charlemagne—who is treated by them as a French monarch—the Reichsland has been a shuttlecock between the princes and the nations so that it could never rest in peace and fully develop until King Louis XIV took pity on it and incorporated it in his Empire, when it was enabled to enjoy peace and the blessings of civilization. Even if this were so, and it is quite contrary to all historical facts, it could not be denied that the population of the Reichsland was and still is to-day entirely German and not Gallic. In addition, the Alsatians and Lorrainers have never

been acknowledged as entitled to full equal rights in France. On the contrary, they have ever been treated as subjects of foreign origin, and have been held up to ridicule and contempt.

But the defeats of 1870-71, which terminated in the reunion of the Reichsland, deeply wounded the French nation in its tenderest spot, its vanity. That is the root of her indelible hatred. She could get over the destruction of her navy by England, and the loss of her colonies, as she still retained her superiority on land, which was created by Louis XIV and raised by Napoleon I to the utmost possible limits on the Continent; from that date the "Grande Nation" considered herself as the imparteur of culture, the ruling power in Europe. When her boastful arrogance under Napoleon III was met by the unexpected resistance of Germany, and the latter country (formerly despised for her division into little states and dismemberment, and jeered at for her want of civilization and culture) rose in determined unity and unexpected might and capacity not only on the battle-field but also in industry and commerce, in art and science, and herself took the lead, then the French nation, discovered in its weakness and ousted from the throne of its presumptuous might, was deeply hurt in its vanity. *Hinc illæ lacrimæ.*

The fighting powers of the inhabitants of the Reichsland are of some importance in view of the fanatical wish to win it back, as they are the descendants of old German races distinguished for their courage, who have always preserved warlike inclinations and virtues. They have furnished the French Army with many of its best soldiers and most celebrated generals. The approximately two million people of the Reichsland are of importance having

regard to the decrease in the population of France, and would be of substantial assistance as regards the deficiency in officers in particular, if entry to the French Army were again open to the inhabitants of the Reichsland.

In spite of a noticeable temporary cessation of the hostile spirit (which does not prevail all over France and to an equal degree amongst the whole population), the French Government, whatever views it may have held, has always persisted in completing and perfecting her army and fortifications. That is to be attributed to two reasons: sufficient protection of the open frontier left after the loss of the Rhine frontier, and the endeavor to keep her own active force on an equal footing with the German Army. A chain of four strong ring fortresses was built on the 250 kilometers (155 miles) of the German frontier on the Meuse and the Moselle, of which the two barrier chains of Verdun-Toul and Epinal-Belfort serve as defensive positions on the wings and flank the gaps of Verdun-Longwy (50 kilometers wide, 31 miles) and Toul-Epinal (70 kilometers, 43.4 miles). Primarily designed to support the advance of the French Army against the much more rapidly mobilizable German Army, these fortresses, now that the French hope to mobilize more quickly than we do, constitute a great stronghold in a war commencing by an offensive movement. The position of Verdun-Toul in particular is extremely favorable for a defending army in consequence of its situation on the edge of the Cote de Meuse, from which steep declivities descend to the opposite plain, and this would certainly have to be penetrated by us. When Italy joined the German-Austrian League the Alpine frontier had to be more strongly protected against the former; and

therefore an abnormally strong fortress consisting of pass-barriers and strong defensive positions was erected in this neighborhood which not only defends all the roads over the mountains but also numerous by-roads. Finally they had to obviate the possibility of an invasion of German troops in violation of Belgium's neutrality or penetrating by way of Switzerland, so that the resisting powers of their old fortresses on these frontiers had to be improved and strengthened. Thus France has kept up a line of fortifications on the whole of her eastern frontier some 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) long, which should stay a surprise invasion of a hostile force. It will be quite impossible in any future war to pass these fortresses without paying them any attention as in 1870.

The erection and constantly necessary repair and modernization of these fortifications could very well be carried out by means of the necessary large grants which have always been forthcoming. But the maintenance of the army on the same basis as the German Army was a more difficult matter, as this could not be attained by mere expenditure, however lavish, but only through numbers, and of that France possessed no such superfluity as she did of money. As long ago as the 'seventies she had fallen behind Germany. With approximately the same area she had at home in 1875 only 36,900,000 against Germany's 42,700,000 inhabitants. Since then her population has only increased by 7.6 per cent. to 39,700,000, whereas Germany has reached 67,500,000, an increase therefore of 58 per cent. Consequently France could not keep pace with Germany in the annual embodiment of recruits even by constantly lowering physical requirements. She was compelled to reduce the strength of the units—in the first instance of

the companies—so as to maintain the same number of battalions and afterwards also to employ men of inferior physique, substituting them for many who were engaged on indoor work, as orderlies, etc.

But owing to the small number of recruits the number of efficient soldiers who could be called upon for mobilization showed a deficiency after taking into account the reserves of the German Army. If universal service had been enforced to the same extent in Germany as in France the German Army would have had an enormous advantage in trained troops. But the increase in size of German battalions and consequently in the number of recruits has not kept pace with the increase in the population, so that the balance was not disturbed to any considerable extent. This would enable France to obtain an advantage, at any rate temporarily, should she succeed in bringing her standing army up to a higher figure than is at the disposal of her eastern neighbor. The number of trained men capable of being added to the recruits in case of war could of course not be increased, and her neighbor's preponderance in effectives could not be disputed, but the prolongation of service with the colors from two to three years secured an addition to the standing army of at least 200,000 men and the further advantage of a much more thorough training than is possible in Germany, not only of the men in general but also of those who aspire to become officers of the reserve, who are also kept for three years.

After the introduction of the three years' term of active service the French standing army reached a strength of non-commissioned officers and privates of 768,300 (inclusive of 80,000 army service corps, 24,000 gendarmes and 31,300 colonials), whereas our army had only 619,000,

and even with the large increase which brought us near to universal service again, we have not yet quite overhauled the French, as we have only about 751,000 troops with the colors.

The three-year term of service was carried out in a peculiar manner not without importance for the next few years. As those born in 1890 who were in the second year of service refused to remain a year longer, and voiced their sentiments by gross acts of mutiny, it was decided to discharge them in the autumn of 1913 and to embody two annual drafts of recruits at one and the same time: namely, those born in 1892 and 1893. Consequently, two annual drafts will have to be trained at the same time by means of those who have already served one year, a state of affairs which will make it almost impossible for the French Army to engage in war at the present moment. But as the commencement of service was put back a year, *i.e.*, from the year of completion of the twenty-first year to the previous one in order legally to carry out the premature embodiment of the 1893 series, those born in 1894 will have to be called up in 1914. And as those of 1891 who are now in their second year are bound for three years, it will probably be possible to keep them for 1915 also. Consequently it will be possible to have not only three but even four annual drafts in the standing army next year, *i.e.*, a greater battalion strength than is required on a war footing. Mobilization could accordingly be effected much more easily and rapidly, as not only would the various units possess their war strength, but they would be able to tell off a considerable number to form the basis of a reserve army.

France will once again in 1916 have the opportunity of playing the same game, as the two annual drafts

called out in 1913 will not be discharged till the autumn of that year. If by that time she has not attained the object of her mighty preparations, and has not succeeded in dragging Russia and England with her in an attack on Germany, she will have temporarily to forego her war of revenge if she does not want to be ruined commercially.

The condition of France due to universal three years' service is nothing less than a continuous state of readiness for war. Even if a wealthy country can bear the financial sacrifice required for this state of affairs—the personal sacrifice becomes too great, having regard to the fact that not only is the peasant torn for so long a period from his plough and the artisan from his trade, but the whole youth of the country, whose scientific or technical education is of indispensable importance to the State, must have its studies interrupted for three whole years, and has got to commence again at the beginning. This youthful energy uselessly sacrificed to the idea of *revanche* would avenge itself most bitterly if it were not actually used up for the war of revenge. *Therefore it follows from the military measures of France, that she will have to insist on war against Germany in the year 1915 or in any case in 1916.*

But France is not content with having more than 2 per cent (including officers) of the whole population in her standing army. She is endeavoring to get auxiliary forces from her colonies so as to be able to attain the necessary superiority in numbers without the assistance of other countries. As long ago as 1870 the "most civilized" nation drew into the ranks against us all sorts of savages from Africa, but even more can be done in this direction. In Algiers, Senegambia, and the West-

ern Soudan especially, there is a population estimated at about thirty millions which can be of considerable assistance, and the aims of their colonial administration are primarily directed to this purpose. A German traveler who is very well acquainted with the conditions in the Soudan confirms this in the following words: "Neither commercial nor colonization schemes are sufficiently encouraged. On the contrary, their political efforts are directed to making the colony subsist on black power, black intelligence, and black money, and to produce French citizens of black blood by thousands, hundreds of thousands and millions. And, naturally, all these millions are to furnish good, enthusiastic, and patriotic French soldiers."

There are already twenty-eight battalions of so-called Senegal Guards in existence, and every year sees an increase in the planned organization. These black troops can, of course, not be transplanted to a European climate just as they are; nevertheless the attempt to make use of them on the North Coast of Africa gave apparently good results, so that the European or Arab troops stationed there will undoubtedly be transferred to the European theater of war and be replaced by Senegal Guards, and it may even be possible to bring over the blacks who have been acclimatized on the North Coast of Africa. In any case they will possess very considerable forces in the Soudan for the purpose of making an attack against our African colonies by the routes laid out thence and from Equatorial Africa, and attempting to take them from us, which would be well worth their while. There are already 20,000 men ready for such an enterprise.

The activity with which preparations for war are being conducted in Algiers may be gathered from the

constant increase of the Algerian battalions of Guards which are to be increased from five to forty-eight by annual additions, and which are already thirty-nine in number. But in addition to her African colonies France has looked for assistance elsewhere so as, notwithstanding her own want of men, to overhaul the strength of Germany's forces. Aborigines have been brought from the Antilles, it is true only to succumb in great numbers in the South of France. They were consequently shipped off to Algiers, but even there the climate did not seem to suit them. But after such attempts we should not be surprised if, during the next war, the German troops were confronted with Annamites and inhabitants of Madagascar and Cambodia.

In the year 1912 the number of trained French troops available was stated as between four and one-half and four and three-quarter millions, *i.e.*, 11.3 to 12 per cent of the whole population. As not more than 17 or 18 per cent of males can be considered as of serviceable age, it follows that, after mobilization of such a number, only children, old men, and weaklings would be left for civil purposes. That would mean that all civil occupations would be at a standstill for the purpose of carrying on a war in such numbers. But as this is absolutely impossible in the interests of the army we had better not reckon on such an exorbitant number. Russia, with her 190,000,000 of inhabitants can submit to such a sacrifice of men, but not France.

In any case the French army, or rather the French armies if the number of army corps is doubled by the embodiment of reserves, will, even without the territorial army and its reserve, require such a large area for its operations that the Franco-German frontier would be much too

short to allow it to pass through at one and the same time; thus one army will have to be employed behind the other or the outlets will have to be increased and widened.

And here the question of Belgium becomes of first importance. Her sympathy with France is so well known that she can hardly be expected to offer any opposition to a march through her territory which as a neutral state it is really her duty to do. At any rate this would be a dangerous game for Belgium to play, as whatever the result might be it would probably put an end to her independence. But England also appears, as we have seen, to count on disembarking her expeditionary army at Antwerp. And they would have to join forces with the French in neutral territory—naturally under the pretext of protecting Belgium against the rapacious German Army even if the latter's troops had not yet set foot on neutral territory.

Homer Lea gives us some points with respect to neutrality which are very significant of Anglo-Saxon ideas. He thinks that the occupation of neutral territory, such as Holland and Belgium, might call forth violent opposition in England in case of a war with Germany. "That is unjustified," he says, "as the British Empire can make no impression by the sanctification of neutrality. This only forms a means of withdrawing from responsibility and imposing it on those nations who give way to the self-deception that such declarations of neutrality are inviolable. And in that respect no nation has more frequently violated neutral territory nor has any nation more often excused itself from the duty of observing neutrality than the British. . . . Should the Anglo-Saxons occupy these frontiers that will only mean territorial but not a moral violation of the neutrality of

those countries. . . . Neutrality of countries under such conditions has never been and never will be a factor to be reckoned with in a war between the nations. That kind of neutrality is a modern illusion and indicates eccentric aberration." But I do not believe that England will exhibit the opposition assumed by Homer Lea to a violation of neutrality. I rather think that his opinions will be shared there.

France has, in the course of the last few decades, which she has undoubtedly devoted to preparing for war against Germany, had to suffer many disappointments: she has been overtaken by us in the construction of guns, and the discovery of her much vaunted smokeless powder has been a fiasco. When the Lebaudy was proudly reckoned as the sole unrivaled airship of the world, there appeared simultaneously in Germany no less than three air dirigibles all of which proved to be faster than the French one, and when the French applied themselves with great enthusiasm to the construction and development of flying-machines their triumph was short-lived, as the German machines were able to show similar results within a few years. The reasons lie in the natural qualities of the French: they are intelligent, inventive, courageous, and lay hold of a new idea with great skill and enthusiasm; but they are not careful workmen, and lack the untiring patience of the Germans, who, unlike the French, satisfied with a momentary success and then taking up something new, are not content with their results and are always striving to attain something better and more perfect.

But one weapon the French know how to wield with adroitness: the fostering of insurrection in our border country, the Reichsland. I must lay emphasis on the fact that in the

coming war, at any rate in the first days of preparation, this is destined to play a fatal part, but will not prove a blessing to the poor inhabitants if they do not resist this unholy influence.

A PRAYER TO PARNASSUS

BY JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

COME hither, Muse. A word within thine ear.
 Why should we soar the loftier atmosphere,
 'Mid currents crossed the Soul knows nothing of,
 When here below we have such themes as Love,
 And Joy, and Helpfulness, and Brotherhood,
 And countless others quite as true and good?

Why seek the upper regions for our themes
 When here on earth are things surpassing dreams—
 The hills far-flung, with all their massy length,
 Fit emblems of a vast, eternal strength;
 And dreamy vales beneath them, safe from harms
 Within the shadow of their circling arms?

The Sea, the Mill-Streams, and the Rivers fair,
 That do man's bidding, and his burdens bear;
 The acres broad, all teeming with the spoil
 That comes to him who calls it forth with toil,
 Until all-fruitful to man's hand we see
 The earth a smiling, golden granary!

The love of lad for lass, of lass for lad;
 The heart of man by woman's eyes made glad;
 The gifts of life; the genius of the pen;
 Earth's secrets yielding to the minds of men;
 The eager thirst for learning, and the chase
 For laurels won through service to the race!

Why soar to heights to please the studious few
 When there be countless multitudes in view
 Who thirst to hear the simpler songs they bring;
 Whom God hath sent his promises to sing;
 Who ask but some soft mitigating strain
 To give Nepenthe to some hour of pain?

Let others sing for Pedants, O my Muse!
 Let others seize the laurels that they choose
 Who soar above, and soaring thither find
 Some abstract note to thrill the wondering mind.
 I am content to dwell on planes apart
 And sing the simpler songs that reach the heart!

THE BETTER HUSBANDS CONTEST

BY ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

Author of "Pigs is Pigs," etc.

NOBODY, I'm sure, could ever have thought of the idea but Miss Tandy, for she always thinks of the *noblest* things to do, like investigating the plumbing of the proletariat and sending really edifying books to hospitals. And she does look so efficient and—and Minerva-like, with her hair brushed straight back and the first tortoise-shell rimmed glasses ever worn by a female in Riverbank.

I was trotting along to the Friday Auction Club, in a perfect glow of happiness because Richard had announced our engagement only a week before and my new two-piece suit was a perfect fit and I had just decided how to have my going-away dress made, when Miss Tandy caught me up. She catches everyone up, she has such an efficient stride, due partly to noble ambition and partly to not caring how wide her skirts are, while the rest of us have to mince along or have such slits in our skirts that we would be in danger of arrest.

"Oh! Miss Sophia!" I exclaimed, "have you heard that Dicky and I are to be married?"

"I heard it," she answered without a single congratulatory smile. It was quite as if she had said, "Another poor misguided lamb to the slaughter!"

"Isn't it glorious?" I cried. "Just to think of a splendid, big, noble fellow like Dicky picking out little me!"

"Nonsense!" she exclaimed. "It

is a thing that is happening every day, all over the world. The average husband——"

"But Dicky won't be an average husband," I said. "Dicky will be the very best husband in the world. He is so fine, and splendid, and noble——"

"I hope so," she said, in a tone like a Number Six, English last, flat-soled shoe coming down on a stone pavement. "I'll observe the future with interest. I have been giving husbands some attention."

She didn't mean it that way. She mean't it in the same sense she would have meant "I have been giving the plumbing of the proletariat some attention."

"The average husband is an untutored beast," she said with vigor. "What specialized education has your Dicky had to fit him to be a husband? You went to cooking-school, didn't you? You took a course in domestic economy, didn't you? You have fitted yourself to be a wife, haven't you? You can sew? You can cook? What can Dicky do?"

"He can—he can——" I said. I couldn't remember anything very special in the husband line that Dicky *could* do. "He can earn his own living," I said proudly.

"So could you, if you wished," said Miss Tandy. "Where are you going now?"

"Mrs. Middleton's. The Auction Bridge meets there."

"I am on my way there," said Miss

Tandy. "I asked them if I could come, and they said I could. They were not enthusiastic."

"Oh, I am so glad you are going to learn Auction!" I said. "They will need another hand while—while Dicky and I are on our trip. I know you'll love it."

"Bridge! Fudge!" said Miss Tandy. "I have better things to do than waste my time over senseless games. Some of the husbands of the poorer classes are shocking creatures."

I had no doubt they were but I did not dig into the subject then because I was not especially interested in the husbands of the poorer classes. Even the plumbing of the proletariat does not interest a girl with a brand-new engagement ring and such a hurry-up-please fiancé as Dicky is. And we were at Mrs. Middleton's door.

We went in and Miss Tandy was received with gentle regret well hidden under politeness. She refused to take off her hat, probably because it would lead to the unnecessary labor of putting it on again, and why waste time in such trivial matters when the proletariat is still suffering from enclosed plumbing and coal in the bath tubs? Miss Tandy stood in the middle of the floor, hat and all, and addressed all of us.

"You all have husbands, except Dolly, and she will have one soon," said Miss Sophia, "and you represent the best society of Riverbank, and that is why I am here. The average husband of the poorer classes is poor stuff. I have seen him, and I know. Three-fourths of the misery of the poorer classes is due to the poor quality of the average husband."

"Some of them—dear me!" said Mrs. Middleton, raising her hands. "Such husbands!"

"Exactly!" said Miss Tandy. "And why are they so? Because no

attention has been given to their improvement. The world lets a woman take a husband and then forgets him. It does nothing to uplift and better him. It raises up no standard for him to strive to equal. He has no incentive."

"And often," said Mrs. Bigelow, "he takes to drink and beats the poor creature. I have read about it in the newspapers."

"Unfortunately," said Miss Tandy, "I have no husband. If I had I would have trained him to be such a standard. That is why I have come here. You, who have husbands, must take the lead in the great work of reform. You must start the campaign for Better Husbands."

She looked around the circle. Everyone seemed puzzled. I felt a tremor of fear and hoped Miss Tandy had not come to get the Auction Bridge Club to band together to insist that I have a better husband than Dicky. She had not.

"The only way to have Better Husbands among the poorer classes," said Miss Tandy, "is to arouse the competitive instinct and play upon the instinct of pride. We must make wives proud of good husbands and ashamed of bad husbands. I have induced the Better Husbands League of America to donate a gold medal and a silver medal and a bronze medal to be awarded to the best and the next best and the third best husbands in Riverbank. We will have a Better Husbands Contest and Exhibition in the town hall and——"

"Oh, dear Miss Sophia!" I begged, "Please don't have the contest until Dicky and I get back from our wedding trip! I know Dicky will win the gold medal!" "Someone will win it," said Miss Tandy, noncommittally. "The best husband exhibited will win it. But, in order to arouse interest in all classes we must have entries

from such as the ladies forming this club. That is why I am here."

"It is a perfectly lovely idea!" exclaimed Mrs. Middleton enthusiastically. "I will enter Mr. Middleton. He is one of the best husbands in——"

"I will enter George against any husbands in the world," said Mrs. Bigelow. "For twenty years he has never forgotten to put out the cat or lock the door and——"

"Augustus will be there," said Mrs. Catherton grimly. "Augustus never opposes my wishes."

They were all enthusiastic. Mrs. Briggs and Mrs. Diggles and Mrs. Van Dolsen and Mrs. Featherby and Mrs. Pelk and Mrs. O'Carthy and both Mrs. Vogels and Mrs. Trainor, and all the rest, were wildly eager for the contest to occur.

"But, please, please, Miss Tandy, don't have the contest until Dicky and I get back!" I begged. "I want Dicky to win that medal."

"I presume the number of years of husbanding will count for something," said Mrs. Bigelow rather squelchingly. "Your Dicky will be a very new broom, my dear child. That will be taken into account, Miss Tandy?"

"Of course," said Miss Tandy. "An unprejudiced committee will judge all husbands. Charts will be furnished, with the proper percentages for various merits. A husband winning one hundred points would, of course, be a perfect husband. And, of course, none would win one hundred points."

"Oh!" exclaimed all the ladies, and I exclaimed it louder than all the rest. Then we all said, in a chorus—"My husband would win one hundred points."

"You see," said Miss Tandy, with pleasure tingeing her pale cheek with red, "how it arouses the competitive instinct? Even the wives whose hus-

bands lose this year will try to have them win next year. The husbands will try to be better husbands in order to win next year. The effect on the proletariat——"

"Can we enter our husbands now?" asked Mrs. Briggs eagerly.

"Immediately!" said Miss Tandy.

"Then I'll enter Dicky," I said, "and if you have the contest before we return I'll never forgive you, Miss Sophia! Never! How many points does time of husbanding count?"

"Four points," said Miss Tandy, referring to a list she had in her hand. "Except that a divorced husband's years with his second wife does not count. Divorce is a sign of a poor husband and——"

"Beg pardon?" said Mrs. Pelk.

"A husband if ever divorced loses the four points," said Miss Tandy.

"Then," said Mrs. Pelk arising and leaving the room, "you will please consider that I will have nothing more to do with the silly affair."

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Middleton, "I didn't know she was a second wife. I wonder if she thought a divorced man could compete with a steady husband? Go on Miss Tandy."

"The use of liquor in any form deducts six points," said Miss Tandy.

"One moment!" said Mrs. O'Carthy. "I wish to say I consider this contest the greatest nonsense of which I have ever heard! I wish you good day!"

So out she went. Miss Tandy went on.

"The hen-pecked husband loses five points," said Miss Tandy.

"I shall refuse to permit George to enter any such childish affair," said Mrs. Bigelow haughtily. "I thought from the first it was a crazy idea. If I had been given a chance to say a word I should have said so before this."

She withdrew with stately tread. Miss Tandy looked after her with surprise.

"Selfishness in money matters," she said, "will cost a contestant——"

"Pardon me!" said Mrs. Briggs, arising, and Mrs. Diggles said that if Mrs. Briggs was going her way she would walk with her; that it was easy to see that this whole affair was a fiasco.

Miss Tandy seemed annoyed.

"Sullenness and gruffness without apparent reason, anger when buttons are not sewed on, harsh words before breakfast and general bearishness will deduct five——"

"What nonsense!" said Mrs. Van Dolsen to Mrs. Featherby. "Do they expect husbands to be more than human? Even the best of men at times——"

"Of course they do!" said Mrs. Featherby. "I'm going your way, my dear, if you have heard enough of this silliness."

"Points are also deducted for staying late or going often to the club," said Miss Tandy, and both Mrs. Vogels departed, "for complaining about meals," and here Mrs. Trainor left, "for carelessness of dress," two more ladies left, "for coldness and seeming lack of affection," three more ladies departed, "for flirting——"

Mrs. Middleton was the only married person left, and it was her house, so she could not go away without unusual rudeness to Miss Tandy, so she set her lips in a hard line and glared.

"Points are also deducted for——" Miss Tandy went on, but Mrs. Middleton interrupted her.

"I presume," she said coldly, "you did not come here with the cold-blooded intent of breaking up my auction afternoon, but you seem to have done so, Miss Tandy. I think that will suffice, without reading

more of that impossible nonsense. It is evident that that list was made by someone that never knew what husbands are. Can't you see that you have insulted all the ladies, and that they have gone?"

"Dear me!" said Miss Tandy, "So they have! They have *all* gone."

"And what else can you expect when that list of marks has evidently been made out especially to hold our husbands up to ridicule as imperfect?" asked Mrs. Middleton. "I supposed that when you said Better Husbands you meant chest measurements, and height and weight, and that sort of thing. I certainly should not allow Mr. Middleton to enter any such contest. No indeed! None of this club's husbands would be allowed to enter such a contest. Never! Do you think they are angels? They are men—if you can call husbands that."

"But the proletariat?" said poor Miss Sophia. "How can we teach the proletariat husband to be better if we have no Better Husbands contestants from the—from the upper ranks? How can we have a contest if——"

"Oh, dear, dear Miss Sophia," I begged, "please don't have the contest until Richard and I return. I'll enter Richard. I know Dicky will win. If you'll just wait until we get back and——"

Suddenly Miss Tandy turned as red as fire. She was reading the small print at the head of the paper she held.

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "Oh, I've been a fool!" and she read what was printed at the head of the paper.

"Notice!" she read, "The particular attention of those wishing to hold contests in the Better Husbands Competition is called to the necessity of limiting such contests to husbands married within six months of the date of the contest. The entrance of

husbands of a year or longer standing invariably results in such low averages of merit that the contests serve to make the husbands of the lower classes feel self-satisfied and complacent. The object of the Better Husbands Competition is to bring to light the Perfect Husband as an example to others, and experience has taught us that the only husband even approaching perfection is the brand-new husband.' Well!"

"And you *will* wait until Dicky and I get back," I urged.

"I will!" she said grimly. "And I'll let each bride judge her own husband. I've got to exhibit a perfect husband. For the good of the proletariat."

"Well, of course," I said doubtfully, "Dicky isn't *quite* perfect, you know."

"No?" she asked, rather scornfully, I thought.

"No," I admitted, although I hated to say anything against dear Dicky, "he does have such poor taste in choosing his neckwear."



MISUNDERSTOOD

BY ANTOINETTE DeCOURSEY PATTERSON

DAY has a kindly, loving heart, they say,
 While night is made of cold and silent hours:—
 But often, after night has gone away,
 I've found her tears upon the grass and flowers.

THE DRAMA IN TOKYO

BY JESSIE E. HENDERSON

THEY played Shakespeare in Tokyo last summer.

Time was when Japanese theaters were content to be little one-story, quaint-gabled structures, hung with gay lanterns. The audience checked its shoes at the door, where Americans would check their hats, and shuffled to its respective cushions on the floor. Sometimes the cushions had low fences round them—the general effect being something like box-stalls. There was a raised aisle at one side of the auditorium down which the actors clattered to the stage—the blackness of the villain's heart was frequently gauged by the noise of his progress. Between acts the players strolled to and fro among the spectators. Fierce loyalties, patient hatreds, submissive loves—the history and romance of a proud and virile nation gave the drama its themes.

Now in all the extraordinary land of Japan there is no more extraordinary monument to the Japanese powers of assimilation, imitation, and modernization than the new Imperial Theater in Tokyo. A handsome, white stone building of semi-Grecian design, which would not look out of place beside the theaters of Paris, London, or New York, it violates in its architecture and in its performances nearly every tradition of the Japanese stage. And it plays "to capacity."

Oh, the old-fashioned theaters are not gone, and the old-fashioned plays are not dead. But with the electric car and the army aeroplane, high on the wave of Europeanism there has come a new theater and a new

drama, strangely blended of the old and the modern. The English-speaking peoples are in the forefront of civilization to-day. Shakespeare is the darling of the English. So Shakespeare was turned into Japanese, a company of Japanese actors donned Roman dress, the Japanese scenic painters created a Roman setting—and *Julius Caesar* coveted a crown and died the death at the Imperial Theater.

It was a dramatic moment in the literary history of Japan and in the history of literature. The "incredible swiftness" upon which Cæsar prided himself is fairly outdone by the headlong rush of Japanese advancement. When Shakespeare set about the task of writing "Julius Cæsar," Japan was hardly more than a line upon the charts of Elizabethan mariners. When Tokyo opened her port to foreign trade some fifty-seven years ago, Julius Cæsar and William Shakespeare were as vaguely known in the Flowery Kingdom as the Pilgrim Fathers or the daily newspaper. Even in the year of grace 1914 there stretches between the racial and national background of the Japanese and the racial and national background of the Caucasian a gulf wider than that between the Englishmen of Shakespeare's time and the Romans of Cæsar's. Yet Shakespeare was played, was well played, was intelligently played, in the Imperial Theater at Tokyo last summer. Moreover, he was to a very great extent appreciated.

Make-up accomplishes miracles. It is true that the slanting Oriental eyes of the guardsmen and of mem-

bers of the mob were not in character. It is true that the gestures of the minor personages were sometimes too dainty for sturdy Latins. But most of the principals actually found for themselves Roman countenances, and all the principals—easily making the transition from flowing kimono to flowing mantle—had the superb Roman manner.

It is not, however, the policy of the Imperial Theater management to give its patrons nothing but Shakespeare. In the long run, that would be bad business. And in a land which has a literature of its own, it would also be bad art. The old plays that stir the memory and the blood have their place on the list for the season, and side by side with these there is a strange new kind of drama.

One of the old plays was given at the Imperial Theater last spring. A company of finished actors—for these Japanese men and women can act!—portrayed the struggles of the "Forty-seven Ronins," those wanderers who were content to endure years of misery and degradation in order to avenge the death of their feudal lord. The story is overwhelming in its appeal to the emotions. It was presented with consummate skill. Even to the Europeans and Americans in the audience the advent of the "Forty-seven Ronins" at the Imperial Theater will always be memorable.

But in certain ways the every-day pieces at the Imperial Theater are more interesting to the foreign visitor than the introduction of Shakespeare or the revival of historical drama. The every-day pieces are the strange new ones, the mingling of Japanese and European, of oil and water. They are very true to life, the half-European, wholly Japanese life to which Nippon has awakened.

Visit the theater on a Sunday evening—a popular night. People are driving up to the door in carriages or automobiles or jinrickshas, or they are clacking thither afoot on their wooden clogs. They buy tickets at an ordinary ticket office, such as may be seen inside any American playhouse, and they pass up a flight of marble steps into a corridor which is like any theater corridor except that it is far handsomer than most. They are shown to their seats by girl ushers in gray uniforms and white aprons. The auditorium is precisely like that in an American theater except for the curtain. This is probably unique among all the stage curtains of the world. It represents two Japanese women picking blossoms in a flower garden, under a group of cherry trees—the whole picture done in embroidery so sumptuous, so delicately wrought, so lavish yet so tasteful in coloring that each detail stands out with the vivid, lifelike quality of a masterpiece in oils.

At six o'clock the curtain rises, gleams from the footlights shining on its soft pinks and yellows as it rolls slowly upward. Behind the footlights there stretches a road, and beyond it the sea. Down the road come a little group of men and women. The flimsy paper program, bright with reds and greens, explains nothing, except in Japanese. The young soldier in the next seat, who speaks a little English, can explain only that the piece is called "A Ragged Cloud." But ignorance of the actors' language is merely a slight handicap, since the actors speak so eloquently the universal language of tones and gestures. In the mind of the foreign spectator there may be confusion as to minor details of the plot. He may not know how the people got into the various situations, but he cannot fail

to know how they feel after getting into them. "A Ragged Cloud" is a tragedy. There is a young woman, very ill, on her way to a seaside sanitarium. She is dressed in the quiet gray-blue silk kimono affected by many women of the upper class. Some male relative—perhaps her father—and a maid accompany her. At the conclusion of the scene, when the doctor from the sanitarium comes to meet the invalid, the stage swings noiselessly round—the characters still talking—and another section of scenery with other characters swings into place.

That first scene is sufficient to show what the new drama is like. Some of the men wear kimonos. The doctor wears European clothes, a soft felt hat, a watch, and he carries a cane. Another man is dressed in the flowing drab skirt of the student. The women's roles are taken by women, instead of by boys.

In accordance with a convention of the Japanese stage the actresses speak in very high falsetto—a voice which requires long, hard practice. The actors pay but slight attention to the audience—one of the things that make their acting so lifelike. They act with directness, with simplicity, with repression, but with little facial expression. They are not afraid to permit many moments of absolute silence when action takes the place of dialogue.

Thus the old and the new are reconciled—ancient costumes, modern costumes; modern themes, ancient impassivity of countenance mingled with a rather modern freedom of gesture; modern women—so far as Japanese women are modern—ancient falsetto. This uniting of old and new does not seem to be an attempt to please the Japanese radicals and at the same time to placate the reactionaries. It is merely a remarkably truthful, perhaps an un-

consciously truthful, picture of Japan as it is to-day. It is holding the mirror up to nature.

When one of the later scenes in "A Ragged Cloud" has swung into place a young woman makes her way among the rocks and low fir trees along the beach, meets the doctor from the sanitarium, and flings herself upon him in an agony of love and broken pleading. He throws her from him. She drops to his feet, encircles his ankles with her arms, pours forth a torrent of entreaty. He extricates himself roughly, and leaves her. She weeps—just a choking sob or two. So poignant is her grief that sudden tears spring to the eyes of the audience—not excepting the eyes of Europeans and Americans. The young invalid from the sanitarium, she who appeared in the first scene, finds the heartbroken woman in time to prevent her leaping from a rock into the sea. The invalid listens to the girl's story, comforts her, offers protection—friendship. The male relative hurries to the beach, mad with anxiety over the invalid's absence. He refuses to let her befriend the young woman, but the invalid insists. As they argue, a splash is heard. The young woman has crept to the edge of the cliff and found a sure relief for her woes.

As the embroidered curtain descends there is a movement among the audience. People begin to leave the auditorium. Supper, it seems, is ready. Oh, admirable theater system, which starts its evening performance before the supper hour, affords a twenty-five minute intermission for supper, and, finally, supplies the supper—at a reasonable charge—in a handsome supper room within the theater building.

To the dining-room, therefore, the spectators retire. They discuss the play and a substantial supper of

soup, steak, vegetables, and ice cream—European food. There is time for the gentlemen to smoke their cigarettes and for the ladies to take a few whiffs from their tiny toy pipes before they leave the dining-room to watch the embroidered curtain rise again.

There is a sort of pulpit now, at the right of the stage, very near to the footlights. Upon a raised seat in front of the pulpit, their profiles toward the audience, squat two men clad in black silk robes that resemble those of Catholic priests. These men appear to be the Japanese "chorus." Like the ancient Greek chorus, they explain the plot. The stout man sings—or does he recite? Japanese recitation is not unlike Japanese singing—and the small man plays the Oriental equivalent of a guitar as accompaniment and occasionally adds a sustained vocal note or an exclamation to the other's song. The stout man takes himself seriously and is taken seriously by the audience. Twice his sense of the dramatic overcomes his composure, and he strikes the song-book with his fist as he brings out a resounding note.

"The Organ Grinder," to which the two musicians act as chorus, is chiefly pantomime. Once in a long while the characters utter a few sentences, but for the greater part of the time they are silent. The Organ Grinder's sister is a young geisha of whom a wealthy man has become enamored. She plans to elope with him at night, but as she walks softly through the dark house toward the door her brother wakes. His outcry summons the aged mother from an inner room. The lover is discovered waiting outside the gate. He enters the house.

Marriage has been no part of his plans, and the old mother, weeping softly in a corner, refrains from urging it upon him. Her unspoken

reproach together with the half sobbing attempts of the brother to carry off the whole affair as lightly as possible present a stronger argument to the heart of the lover than any words could have done.

As he sits moodily by himself, the girl, with averted face, begins to brew tea—tragedy or no tragedy, the laws of hospitality must be observed. The old mother still crouches in her corner. As a final desperate attempt to set everyone at ease, the Organ Grinder brings out his monkey and puts the animal through its little tricks. If the acting were less fine, this incident would be ludicrous. As it is, the incident adds the last touch of pathos. A sigh of real joy runs through the audience when the lover permits the mother to join his hand to the girl's as they drink tea, or whatever the rite is—it's a bit difficult for a foreigner to catch the details, though the import is clear—and to pronounce them formally betrothed, or maybe wedded. The moment is a dramatic one, full of emotion. Yet for ten minutes not a word has been spoken by the actors.

After sorrow comes laughter, in the form of a farce. It is called "The Secret" and has to do with a dog, an interfering friend, and a young married couple. The plot is not hard to guess, as the characters rush hither and yon. It is "Frenchy" in flavor, but it moves with a good deal of rapidity and wins much applause.

Down at the bottom of the program is a splash of green. This proves to be an announcement of a "European ballet." An orchestra with European musical instruments files into place. It begins to play.

Ta dum de *dum*-dum, de dum-dum—What IS that tune? "For I've got rings on (dum!) my fingers, (dum-dum)—bells on (dum!) my toes, (de dum-dum)—Elephants (dum!)

to ride upon (dum!)—Well, well, “O’Shay!” And is it yourself’s in Tokyo! However did—whi sht! Here’s the ballet.

A pretty good ballet it is, too. In the center of the stage there is a revolving platform upon which a group of men, clad in tights and with hands and faces whitened, pose as classic statues under a shower of vari-colored lights. The ballet dancing is pretty, though it lacks spontaneity. For some inexplicable reason the girls in their low-cut bodices and fluffy, short skirts do not look “smart,” but they do look attractive and they win unbounded favor.

Thus at somewhere near eleven p.m. ends the evening’s entertainment at the Imperial Theater.

Other people have spent their evening at the “movies” over in Asakusa Park. Have the “movies” reached Japan? They have. Moreover, they haven’t discovered America yet. In America they are “standies” or “sleepies.” In Japan the “movies” do move. Drugged, robbed, abducted, set adrift in a leaky boat, drugged again, outrivaled by geisha girls, spirited away in an automobile, involved in an auto accident, drugged once more—this time, by way of variety, in a ricksha going as fast as the coolies could pull it—locked in a burning house, rescued by a fireman, driven to attempt harakiri, and finally betrothed to the hero, who turns out to be the fireman—these are the things that make up a busy day for one heroine of an Asakusa “movie.”

If there was anything that did not threaten this particular heroine, it was because that particular disaster had not occurred to the Japanese mind. All “movie” heroines, the world over, lead adventurous lives. But the Japanese “movie” heroine

has a life that is just one thing after another.

To heighten the effect and make the blood of the audience run yet more cold, two or three men stood on the darkened stage and spoke the words that were supposed to fall from the lips of the “movies.” Boys, employing the high falsetto, spoke the women’s parts. The intervals between films were occupied by farces of the slapdash type—*A* introduced *B* into the house of dignified *C*, made absurd blunders in etiquette. Men and women spectators smoked while the heroine begged for mercy. After her rescue and betrothal they presented their door-checks, received their wooden shoes from the attendant—who does not have to be tipped!—and bowed an answer to the head usher who (American theater-managers please copy) said: “Thank you for coming.”

Is the Asakusa motion picture crude? Does it indicate a nation with a childish mind? Then what is indicated by the fact that last winter an amateur theatrical club, members of which were people from the best families, gave Tokyo a taste of “Magda” and “Hedda Gabler?” Surely this was more radical than “Julius Cæsar.” Japan is theatrically awake.

Wasn’t it in the year 1856 that Yokohama, not without misgiving, opened her harbor to foreign commerce? To-day Yokohama has a Shakespeare Hotel. At the capital of which Yokohama is the port, they are discussing *Calpurnia* and *Hedda*. Headlong Japan, where the swords of the daimyos have hardly ceased to clash and a woman with a baby strapped to her back drove piles last summer in the narrow streets of Tokyo!

WE OF THE WORLD

BY JOSEPHINE A. MEYER

THE rattle of rain on the roof drowned every other sound in the room, so that even the big clock ticked inaudibly. The woman near the window carefully tucked her scissors under the material she was sewing, out of reach of the lightning, and she glanced once or twice to the sofa where a red and black worsted afghan concealed a sleeping child. In one of these turns she was startled by a shadow at the window, and looked out in time to see a black-clad figure hurry past, across the strip of lawn, to take refuge under the shelter of the little porch at her doorway. The sound of footsteps on the wood dispelled the ridiculous impression that it had been a supernatural being, and she rose, half smiling at her own foolish fright, to open the door. A tall, handsome woman dressed in rich mourning stood outside, trying to protect herself from the muddy spattering of a broken leader.

"There ain't much shelter there," said the mistress of the house hospitably. "You'd better come in."

"Thank you." The victim of the weather smiled and hesitated, "I'm afraid I'm too dreadfully wet. I shall drip all over your carpet."

"It won't hurt it," said the seamstress. "Come in."

"Well, if *you* don't mind——" She stepped across the threshold and spread out her skirts. "But look!"

The seamstress reached out her hand, small-wristed though rough and needle-scarred, and touched the dress.

"The weather can't hurt that much," she pronounced after a slight

pause. "Just wait till it dries and then brush it out and press it. If you take it off now, I can dry it for you before the stove."

"Oh, you needn't go to all that bother," the visitor answered pleasantly. "Just let me sit in front of the stove myself. That will do as well."

The seamstress led the way through the little room in which she had been sewing to the kitchen beyond. The visitor stopped before the red and black bundle on the sofa.

"Your child?" she whispered, leaning over it.

"Yes, m'm."

"Boy?"

"Yes, m'm."

"How old is he?"

"Two years, m'm."

The child stirred, as though conscious of her gaze, and she drew away.

"I'm scared he ain't quite himself," said the mother, as she placed a chair before the stove. "He seems so heavy-like, an' last night he slep' so restless."

"Have you had the doctor?"

"No, m'm. It's such a long ways for him to come." The seamstress rubbed her rough hands together, then, suddenly stooping, threw open the grate. Silhouetted against the rich glow, her head acquired a sudden beauty that vanished when she rose. The rattle of thunder drew her startled eyes to the window.

"He sleeps through that?" asked the lady.

For answer, her hostess crossed to the doorway and looked in, returning, reassured, to find the visitor

removing her dripping hat. She took it and shook the hissing wet from it onto the stove. Its owner's slim, pink-tipped fingers were busy arranging her brown hair where a twitch discovered a thick strand of gray.

"I suppose that's a New York hat," said the seamstress, delicately pulling the sodden folds of silk and crêpe into place.

"Oh, it's so old! I got it at the beginning of the season, and only wear it for roughing about. You see—" the lady smiled charmingly—"I did not expect to pay any calls this afternoon, any more than you to receive."

"I—I never have no visitors." The seamstress flushed darkly and suddenly put the hat upon a near-by chair and crossed to the kitchen dresser. "I live too far away from folks. Do you drink tea, ma'am? It will be good for you after your wetting."

"Thank you, don't trouble——"

"I like to do it." The unringing clatter of the crockery confirmed the visitor's worst fears. "My china ain't much," the other voiced her thought, "but you'll excuse that. I hear New York ladies has their tea every afternoon."

"You've been to New York?"

"Me? No, never." The clattering ceased as the woman's eyes fell away from the present. She brought herself together with a sigh. "I guess it's a pretty wonderful place."

"Yes, wonderful, you might call it—and very terrible."

"Terrible? You mean wicked?"

The woman in black suddenly cast aside affectation and reserve.

"More than wicked," she said. "Hard, cold, deadening. If I had lived in the country all my life, I might have been alive to-day."

"Mercy on us!" gasped the other blankly.

The visitor narrowed her eyes, taking a childishly egotistical pleasure in puzzling the country woman by indulging in the intellectual sentimentality of her own kind.

"My dear, when your soul leaves your body you are dead, are you not?" she said, with pregnant simplicity.

A growing horror was in the other's eyes.

"You mean, when you've been bad?" she interpreted slowly.

The visitor smiled away her dismay.

"No—oh, dear, no! When you cease to use words like bad or good in reference to anything but plays or novels. Have you ever seen a play or read a novel?"

"Yes, ma'am." A flush had come to the seamstress's face. She filled the brown earthen teapot, half concealed behind the steam from the kettle.

"I'm not just trying to puzzle you," said the visitor, and believed she was speaking sincerely. "It is quite true. It is worse to be indifferent to sin than to be sinful."

"Don't talk that way!" exclaimed the seamstress, turning away quickly, with sudden passion.

"Ah, the Church means so much here, in the quiet, where people have time to think and pray," the city lady half mused. "My doctrines are of the town. I am a clever product of a cynical age. I am cursed with an analytical mind and a genius for introspection. I've dissected my soul till I've killed it, so here we are where I started from. I am dead, and you are living. Now let's have our tea—if you're not afraid to sup with a ghost."

The other drew up a rasping chair, and they sat a moment in uncomfortable silence. The visitor spoke first, stirring her tea:

"Shall I tell you what is going to

happen to-night at this very table? When you get through helping the little boy to all your own supper, you will lean over and say to your husband, 'The strangest woman was here to-day. I think she was insane.'"

The country woman clasped her hands tightly on the edge of the oil-cloth table-cover; her head drooping threw her eyes wider open and increased their tragedy as she spoke:

"I haven't got no husband."

It was the visitor's turn to color now, and she felt her lips tremble.

"Oh! Then, we're both widows."

The big eyes hid under the full white lids. The New Yorker's swift mind adjusted the bridge to the gap as she added musically, "But I am childless."

She had to reach across the table and take the other's hand before the hurt eyes again rose to hers.

"Now I can explain very clearly what I meant by having no soul. This crêpe I wear is the only mourning I have to show for my husband. Do you understand? I never cared for him, and never expected to. Moreover, while I am living here in the country, under the pretense of recovering from the shock of grief I suffered at his death, I am really retrenching, economizing, so that I may go back into the world well equipped to find another husband, a payer of my debts. That is what marriage means to us." She sipped her tea laboriously from the heavy cup, and looked up to see that the other woman had knotted her fingers in her lap and was staring into the rain, her lips drawn with anguish. "Oh, well," she added, with a little laugh. "Perhaps I exaggerate a little. Some marry for love—*més-alliances* mostly, they are. A year or two sees the end of their dream. Love wears badly in the city. My friend, if you would guard your soul, stay here where you are."

The woman turned upon her with a fierce laugh and held out her ringless hands.

"My soul!" she cried. "I give that up long ago! I knew he was married. He didn't try to fool me—ever. He told me he loved me, an' if I loved him it would be right. I did. I did. But that ain't goin' to make no difference to God. It didn't make none with common sinners. You talk a lot, but you're shocked at me, an' you ought to be. I'm no good. I guess I couldn't have been from the start. I knew what I was doin'. He never tried to fool me!" She broke down, her face hidden in her folded arms.

The city woman regarded her calmly, and there was a little, hard circle of humorous lines about her eyes.

"Rather a bad break I made, eh?" She smiled openly. Then, leaning over, she touched the heaving shoulder gently. The other woman straightened up, wiped her eyes, and wordlessly attended to the dishes. Her visitor did not attempt to help her other than by pushing her cup in easier reach.

"So that's why you have no visitors," she said. "How do you get on with your work, then—or does he provide for that?"

"I'm savin' that for Davy. He'll need it."

"Quite true. We're so apt to forget Davy. He pays up."

"An' they don't mind bein' fitted here. Hotel people don't know."

"Well, well. Perhaps you could make me a waist or something."

The woman did not answer, and her visitor shrugged her shoulders, smiling.

"What was he like?" she asked after a slight pause, curiously. "A city man, probably. A drummer?"

"He was wealthy, ma'am. A gentleman."

"Of course. They always are. Young, handsome, with a wife who would not have cared, had she known. Possibly one of those cooling love-matches—they are the most dangerous. People who miss it from the start are more considerate."

"He wasn't young."

"Oh, execrable!"—the visitor shuddered.

"He talked like you. His wife hated him—he said they hated each other."

"Real hate? There was a chance for them. But he loved you?"

The woman nodded.

"And left you—as Emerson prescribes?"

The woman hung up the towel and tip-toed to the door.

"Where is he now?" went on the visitor, after a short silence.

"I don't know."

"Ah, like that? Since when?"

"Seven months. He said he'd be back, but he sent a letter instead. In the letter he said he'd never be back."

"The scoundrel!"

"He put in money for Davy an' me. He didn't think it such a lot, but it was."

"Money!" The visitor smiled. "Of course. I forgot he was from town."

"What could he care for me?" demanded the other, suddenly harsh. "I wasn't fit for him. I knew it. I knew it wouldn't last. I never expected it to be dif'rent, an' if I prayed, what right had I? I went in it with my eyes open. I knew from the start—an' he never tried to fool me, never!"

"I believe you love him yet," the city woman murmured. "I'm not sure I wouldn't change with you," she added slowly. "Would you like to know how I lost my husband?"

"He *was* your husband, any ways."

"Quite true—and left me his name. He stole a lot of money—swindled—was found out, came home and accused me of driving him to it, and then went off and shot himself." She arranged her skirt to catch the glow of the fire more evenly, and spoke in a careless manner. "I was the center of a pretty scandal till an earthquake or something got the attention of the reporters away from my private affairs. Oh, yes, I have the honor of his name, and all of his debts. You came off a bit better, I think."

"No, I ain't got debts." Suddenly the seamstress stiffened into the attitude of listening. "That's Davy now," she declared, and went quickly into the other room. The visitor followed her and found her kneeling beside the child, who was crying querulously and coughing heavily. His skin was red and blotched, and his eyes singularly bright. "Davy's sick," declared the mother. "It looks like measles. You'd better go, m'm, now that it's clear. You might catch sick."

"Don't worry about me. Where's your doctor?"

"I ain't got none. Davy was never sick before." She smoothed back his soft hair, the light almost of reproach in her eyes. "He's terribly hot."

"It may be nothing. Where is the nearest doctor? Wait—there's one I know at the hotel. I'll send him." She strode into the kitchen and pinned on her still damp hat, without further delay. The mother remained on her knees near the sofa when she passed through the room on her way out. "Good-by"—she held out her hand—"and don't fret about Davy." The woman touched her hand abstractedly, and again bent over her child.

The doctor sat at the next table to the widow in the hotel, and, going

out of the dining-room that night, she stopped to inquire for little Davy.

"I only hope my diagnosis is incorrect," was the unsatisfactory answer.

He did not appear at lunch the next day, and in the afternoon she saw one of the bell-boys leaving the hotel with his suit-case.

"Is the doctor going away?" she demanded.

"I ain't heard," said the boy. "The doctor he just says to take these things over to Rand's cottage an' leave 'em on the porch."

She did not see him at dinner, nor again at lunch next day, whereupon, surprised at her own interest in the matter, she set out to visit Davy's mother and find out for herself how matters were progressing. The doctor was standing on the tiny porch, and as she approached waved her back.

"What's the matter?" she called, stopping.

He went as far as the fence, still keeping some distance between them.

"Don't come any nearer. I thought you were the nurse I sent for. Was there any message for me at the hotel?"

"How should I know?" She shrugged. "Why do you need a nurse?" Unconsciously, she had advanced toward him in speaking, and as she did so he retreated, his hand out warningly.

"Keep back, I tell you," he repeated impatiently. "It's scarlet-fever, and bad at that."

"That poor woman, alone——"

"That poor woman has taken it, herself," answered the man.

She stared. "Who nurses them? You?" she demanded.

"Till some one comes. I can't understand this—delay." He swallowed the oath respectfully, but his drawn, white face would have excused it. "You could help me if you

would," he added, quick to note the pity on her face.

"How?"

"Telephone all over till you get some one to take this case. Nobody 'round here seems to want anything to do with her. They have a grudge, so they salve their consciences and save their hide by calling it a judgment. Bah! So much for religionists."

"And if I can get no one?"

"I can stick it out another night; but I must have some one here in the morning." She was gone before he had the chance to explain further.

Two hours later she stood in the carbolic-sheeted doorway of the sick room, clad in crisp white linen.

"I got tired of telephoning, so I brought the only nurse I knew. I've had scarlet fever. What is there to do?"

Her most difficult task was persuading the doctor to sup and rest. Next to that was the agonizing battle to keep the fever-frenzied mother from raving about the room in search of Davy.

Toward morning the patient grew quieter, and in the dimness of the dawn the doctor appeared at the shadow-hung doorway.

"Now it's your turn," he said.

"A cup of coffee for you, first," responded his self-appointed nurse with professional decision.

She had to search about the kitchen for utensils and in a small tin canister marked "Coffee," her hand came upon a letter. At first the familiarity of the writing struck no chord of emotion in her tired brain. She accepted it as one accepts impossibilities in a dream, and thrust the letter back into its hiding place, disturbed only by the fact that, except for its presence, the canister was empty. But later, when she had found and brewed the coffee and had sipped a mouthful or two, her mind

cleared and the knife of curiosity went home to the hilt.

She rose and procured the crumpled envelope. Half hesitating, she drew forth the folded sheet within. As if to confirm her beyond all doubt, a little faded photograph of her husband dropped out—a snapshot she remembered having taken, herself . . . The note was dated the day of his death and signed by a name not his.

My heart's true wife:

You will never see me again. I cannot tell you why this must be so, but you must believe it. I am sending you my last good-bye here because I have not the courage to see you face to face. I have a great debt to pay to the world and today I shall pay it—all. I enclose a small amount for Davy. I had it changed into a single bill. Deposit it for him in some bank and draw against it. If you are careful it will last a long while—at least till he goes to school. *Do not let anyone invest it in stocks for you!*

Life and death might have been different had God been kind to me in time. As it is, I am acting for the best. Good-bye, again, dear love, and do not think I write this because you have grown less dear to me. Your love has been a star in the storm and my only happiness in many years. Good-bye.

She opened the back door to the rising sun and sat on the doorstep, the letter in her lap, her hands cold and her eyes on vacancy.

"Your love has been a star in the storm and my only happiness for many years. . . ."

Had love meant this to him? She gazed dizzily at the handwriting, at the picture. Were they indeed *his*? And she had never really known him—never suspected what lay behind the outer man he showed to her. She shuddered, wondering. A doubt came to her aid. She read the letter through again, and again stared at the date. But under the very wing of death, surely he had written sincerely. . . .

"Life and death might have been so different had God been kind to me in time."

She recalled his last living words to her, the passionate reproach and blame he had hurled at her, and they suddenly became illumined and took form and color. For the first time her horror of the memory had something in it of self-accusation. . . .

But the woman lying in the room beyond? Was it love, after all?

Her lacerated heart attacked bitterly, with fierce derision. We of the world—we are not blind! Bah! We see such love by a truer, uglier name! Love! . . . And then, the "small amount for Davy." . . . Ruthlessly her fingers delved into the envelope for the tissue-paper-wrapped packet she had missed. It was a large bill, a fortune to one of whom poverty had been so familiar a friend. So we are all bad at heart—rotten with greed and lust and pride and the rest of the tragic Seven. She shuddered and covered her eyes, and thus sat till the sun had grown high enough to warm her body through the crushed linen dress. She basked for a while in the good comfort of it. . . .

The morning splendor had descended upon the rude little garden when she looked up—upon the sweet-pea vines braced tenderly against the wind, the frail, flaming poppies, the staid, wet-eyed pansies that crouched at the feet of spice-breathing pinks or flamboyant sweet-william. On the dull earthen pathway, so narrow none but a child might walk it unblundering, a crimson tin pail caught the rays of the sun. It was half full of rain-water, evidence of its idleness since that first day when it had stormed. There had been an element of kindness then in the affair, the kindness and delicacy that had fostered these useless, beautiful things, something fine enough to perceive their potency. Were these placed here for Davy—his son? . . .

A robin called his mate and sent a sick thrill quivering through her. She drew her hands across her throbbing eyes, and it was as though another sun had risen and shown her all, relentlessly, naked in the glare. She saw herself, tiny and self-centered, her heart cramped with bitter intolerance. She had asked all and given nothing. It was not even worldly, for in the world we must make a feint at giving. He had stolen primarily to minister to her pride, and it was her pride that turned to pitiless scorn and hate—the scorn and hate that drove him further into the dark. And that other?

"I give my soul up long ago . . . I went in it with my eyes open. . . . I knew it wouldn't last. . . . I never expected it to be dif'rent, an' if I prayed, what right had I? . . ."

"God!" she whispered, white-lipped, to the sun, and the word was strange in her mouth. "Is this sin, God?—God?"

The answer was in her suddenly outstretched arms, the violent trembling that crushed her into that attitude of despair, longing, and self-abasement the masters have painted at the foot of the Cross. Even with the coming of understanding was the promise of forgiveness and peace . . .

The doctor's hand fell upon her bowed shoulder.

"This is not fair of you," he said gently.

She hastily thrust the letter into her blouse. He appeared not to notice the havoc passion had wrought on her face.

"I—I thought you might have needed me," she lied brokenly. "I can rest when the nurse comes."

"I have something difficult to beg of you. She is raving. The cad that wronged her was married, and

she knew it. She is haunted with the sin against his wife."

She raised herself with his aid; her ears roared and her mouth was dry so that it was agony to speak.

"You—you—want—me—to p l a y —I—was—his—wife?"

"It is a case of life and death. Do I ask too much? He would forgive you, did he know—surely."

A horrible ehoking of laughter seized her, and she smothered it by actually gripping her twitching throat with her hands.

"He would—— Go in. I'm coming."

The doctor marveled a little at her hysteria, and doubted the wisdom of his demand, but it was not a case for tact. He supported her to the sick-room, where, heedless of his protest, she threw herself to her knees at the bedside.

"I was his wife," she said steadily, holding the fever-burnt hands. "I was his wife by law. I have known bitterer sin than yours. I forgive you as I cry God's pardon for myself."

The sick woman regarded her tensely.

"You?" she whispered hoarsely. "He's dead? Ah, I knew. . . ."

"I found his letter to you. The hurt we do each other by our sinning! God asks no more of us. Let us be merciful when we can!"

"You—and you forgive me?"

"Yes—yes—yes!"

"And—and Davy?"

"Oh!" her passionately flowing tears choked her—"can you think—a little child?"

"If I die, could you——"

"Live! You must live! Together we must build up in Davy all we have thrown away—make him worthy to be our expiation. You have not sinned so deeply as I."

"How can you?" whispered the sick woman softly. "How good you

are! An angel! I don't deserve it
—I don't deserve it."

She began to cry steadily, as the happy do. The doctor left the room to answer a knock on the outer door. Against every law of health and caution, the woman of the world kissed her sister on the forehead.

The doctor returned with a quiet woman who carried a suit-case.

"This is the nurse," he said. "You had better go now. You have been under a terrific strain, and you're all unstrung."

"If you don't mind," she answered, "I'd rather stay and help."

I SAT APART

BY LYDIA GODFREY

THE children danced a merry ring.
I watched them whirl, I heard them sing,
"Derry down, oh, derry down!
The bride shall wear a myrtle crown."
Benumbed I sat apart.

Three mothers chatted 'neath a tree
With matronly complacency:
"My child is tall, and yours are fair.
Your son stands with his father's air."
But envy gloomed my heart.

The ring gives way. See each child hie,
An airy, darting dragonfly.
"Derry down, oh, derry down!
The wife shall wear a velvet gown."
I moaned my empty fate.

Their heads 'gainst mothers' breasts they fling,
Those ample breasts that poets sing,
"The pliant bosom veined with blue
How tenderly doth comfort you."
My clenched teeth were agrate.

Was *his* child like these, lithe and fair,
His lassie whom I might see ne'er?
"Derry down, oh, derry down!
She hath no babe to drive to town."
I clutched my unfilled breast.

But once again the quickening thrill
Of his words pierced my heart's gray chill:
"Above all earthly passion flows
Our ideal love, which no one knows."
My spent soul smiled, at rest.

“TOOTIE” ON INCREASED EFFICIENCY

BY CAROLYN WELLS

Author of “Anybody But Anne,” etc.

GOOD morning, Miss Bodkin. Come right on in. Excuse my having my head in a bowl of water, but I’ve been shampooing my hair, and now I’m rinsing it in clear rain water. Oh, excuse me! *Did* I spatter you? Such a tume as I had getting the rain water! You know it’s been so dry for weeks, and then yesterday it poured cats and dogs. So I said, “Now is my chance,” but I couldn’t collect much water, after all. The leaders leak, and we don’t have a regular cistern. I think they ought to pipe rain water into people’s houses. Or I’d like to build a watershed. I think that would be more useful than our artesian well.

No, I *don’t* often shampoo my own hair, but I’ve been reading so much about Lost Motion and Increased Efficiency, that I made up my mind I’d try to accomplish more things at once. So, as you were coming today, I decided to have you fit my frocks, and I’d do my hair at the same time, and meanwhile make notes for my paper to read at the club. Usually, one wastes so much time when a dressmaker is in the house, and now that I’m studying the Ethics of Standardization, I want to do my part in the World’s Uplift, I’m sure. Do you know, I used to be awful wobbly-minded, but I’ve learned to discard vain dreams and achieve results. Oh, yes, it’s all in a book. I read it as fast as I could tear through it, and it helped me like everything.

Yes, you go ahead. Of course I can’t see anything with my head in this bowl, but I have to rinse it thoroughly or my hair stays all stiff. Can’t you be selecting designs or planning out trimmings or cutting a lining or something till I can get my head out? My gracious! there goes the soap-dish on the floor! It’s awfully awkward doing one’s own hair! Yes, Miss Bodkin, *do* help me a minute. I thought you’d offer sooner. Suppose you wrap this towel round my head, while I get the soap out of my eyes. Oh, stop, Miss Bodkin! You’ve let all my wet hair fall down the back of my neck! Oo-oh! It feels like a wet alligator! Take another towel! My kimona is dripping wet all down the back!

Now you go back to your cutting out, and I’ll twist this Turkish towel round like a turban. There! Now I’ll see about the sewing, and I’ll dry my hair afterward. Sometimes I stick my head out of the skylight to dry, but there’s no sunshine to-day. It’s fun when Tottie May shampoos the same day and sticks her head out of her skylight. We can shout across quite easily. The last time she said—Oh, yes, I *am* going to give you your work. Now, let me see—this peach-colored chiffon—yes, I think we’ll do this first. It was a remnant—I bought it at such a bargain.

My hair has all tumbled down! And it’s still dripping wet! Oogh! It feels like a dozen raw oysters had slipped down my back! Well, I’ll

bundle it into a bathing-cap, for I *must* see about this dress. There, if you lay the pattern on that way, you can get it out. Why, if here isn't my blessed little Fido dogsy-wogsy! Well, *who* was a cunnin'? Yes, indeed, indeedy! So he wuzzy! Look at him sit up, Miss Bodkin. Isn't he the ducky-dear? Oh, yes, about the dress. Well, if there really isn't enough goods, let's use it as far as it goes, and piece out with a hem of satin. Lots of people do that. Wow! My cap leaks, and the water is just streaming down my shoulders! I simply *must* dry my hair now, so you must cut out that goods whatever way you think best. Of course I expect you to have *some* ideas of your own. Jumpy downy, Fido-dido. Yes, um wuz um cunnin'. Oh, I forgot, I want you to fix over a gown the very first thing of all, so I can wear it this afternoon to a bridge party. It doesn't need much done to it.

Yes, a bridge at Mrs. Smart's. She always gives afternoon affairs because she hasn't a very becoming husband. He's—well, he's sort of hand-painted—if you know what I mean. Now, Mrs. Lovell, she always gives evening parties, because her husband is a very tasty-looking person. He dresses up the atmosphere tremendously.

When I marry, I shall look out first for a man who is an artistic decoration in the home. We're learning that in our domestic science class. I mean, about harmonious house-furnishing, and if a husband isn't the principal thing to be made to harmonize with the other furnishings, I don't know what is. Perhaps one of those long, slap-dash bows—they *do* add an air—or, I have a lace bolero. No? Well, when I bought that thing, I felt sure I'd never use it! I've tried it with three dress-makers in the house. I guess there's

nothing so hopeless as a lace bolero!

But this gown isn't so very old, and I want you to fix it up some way. I'll try it on, and then you can tell better. Don't you adore these little dingly-dangly rosebuds just dripping off the berthé? Yes, I suppose they *are* last year's style, but Mrs. Smart won't know that. She's the kind of a woman who would wear a black grenadine—if you know what I mean.

Oh, wait, you're not hooking it right! The inner lining hooks first over across onto that under belt thing. Then bring that left side panel over across back again the other way, and then hook that—but the trimming hooks under it first, and then the bow laps over, don't you see? No, not *that* way. Oh, it twists my neck off to look in the mirror behind me—but we *must* get it right. I wish I had a neck like a hen, don't you know how they spin around? Well, you'll have to unhook it all and begin again. If you don't start right, you'll never get it—and I expect you omitted those little snap things. They have to be done first of all. Yes, I know it's too tight, that's what I want you to fix about it, but I won't pant another mouthful, if I have to have my hips *planed* off. Do you know, when I first heard about all this fuss over Waste Motion, I thought they meant some kind of physical culture exercises or Swedish movements or something to reduce!

Now I'll take a long breath and squeeze myself in. There! Didn't you hook it that time? No? Well, I don't believe we *can*, then! I don't see how people keep so thin—there's Mrs. Smart, she's simply nothing but a spine. Oh, there's the telephone!

Yes. Hay-o! Yes. Oh, Miss Featherton. Hats? Now? Yes, indeed; send them right up.

Oh, rapture! Miss Bodkin, some new hats are coming! I'll try them on, and you can help me choose. Oh, isn't it gay? Don't you just adore hats?

Excuse my flying around like a flea with St. Vitus's dance, but I'm simply crazy over hats! They're a lottery, though. You get one— Good gracious! I forgot my hair was all wet. *Do* help me dry it! Fan it, won't you? Wait! I'll stick my head out of the window! Oh, it's begun to rain! I wish I had an electric drier, but they're not much good. Do you suppose the vacuum-cleaner would help any? What *shall* I do? If I spoil the hats—

Oh, here are the hats! Bring them all in, Jane—all the boxes. Oh, Miss Bodkin, *do* look at this one! Isn't it a fright, with that stiff, ugly feather? Looks as if it were meant for a suffragette.

Oh, no, *I'm* not going to be a suffragette! I'd rather get married. Now look at this one. It's just covered with aigrettes. I won't wear those! Think of the poor dumb animals they have to shoot to get them! Oh, I'm *very* particular about such things—I won't even wear shot silk on my hats. I'm awfully fond of animals. Our society is going to see about providing muzzles for wolves, so they won't eat things that disagree with them—at least, I think that's it. Now, this red hat is a cracker-jack! Corking class to it, isn't there? I got that phrase from my friend, Mr. Dow, but I'm afraid it's slang. I can't wear red, though; you see, my fatal gift is so blonde.

Now I'll try on this black hat. It seems to have all the feathers in the world on it! But it requires a pretty face to wear this. Oh, Miss Bodkin, *do* you think so? Well, in a half light I'm not so bad. Oh, yes, the *men* say so; but you know what men *are!* Why, there's a perfect horde

of them sitting out on the curbstone now, each with a pistol at his temple, waiting for my answer. Well, some day I'll be—For a Good Boy. Oh, how about this draped hat? It *is* a dream, but it requires a certain setting, doesn't it? I'll have to concentrate on this—go into the silence, you know. Mrs. Maudley told me how; she's such an uplifter, you know—she never thinks anything that isn't new. My gracious! If Fidums hasn't played medicine ball with that taupe malines hat! He's torn it to bits! Oh, *can't* you fix it up? Never mind my dresses—*do* fix that hat! There's the telephone again!

Oh, hay-o, Totty! No, darling, I can't possibly see you now. I'm—I'm taking massage, and I need quiet. So sorry. Yes, dear. Good-by.

You see, if she saw these hats, she'd want the very one I want, so I simply *couldn't* let her come over here. Yes, I *do* want you to fix that for Bridge—you can do it without trying it on me again. Just let out the seams and things and renovate the sleeves a little; and if the skirt could be made a little scanter—Yes, it does look narrow now, but—oh, well, you know what skirts are. Yes, that's so, I do have to sit down at Bridge. Well, leave it as it is, then. But how about cutting out the collar? That would give it an air. Oh, fix it any way you like. I've so much to do, I can't decide these things for you. Really, Miss Bodkin, you ought to try to rely on your own judgment more.

You see, I have to study my question for the domestic science class to-morrow. It's the most fun; we learn how to do all those ridiculous things they tell you about in the woman's papers, and we learn to save motion, and purify politics, and

all sorts of things about the house.

Then we can have a question, you know, and this is mine. We're studying Economic Conditions as they affect women. All the economy I've learned so far is to cut the strings near the knots when the bundles come in. Clever, isn't it? I always used to cut them right in the middle. Well, as I was telling you, this is my question—Oh, there's that telephone again!

Hay-o! Yes, Miss Featherton, the hats came. No, I don't care for any of them much. And that taupe malines one seems to be mussy. Is it a last season's hat? Just fresh from Paris? My! It must have been badly boxed—or—well, you can see when it comes back, how mussy it looks. Yes, you may send for them at once. No, I don't want any of them. Good-by.

I *do* like this black one, but if I send it back perhaps she'll reduce—

Oh, hay-o! Is this you, Mr. Dow? Oh, well, Roddy, then. Go motor-ing? Now? And lunch at the

country club? Yes, with pleasure. No, I haven't a thing on for the afternoon! May I take Fidums? He's pining for a whizz. Oh, yes, you *do* love him, too—such a booflum dog-gums! Yes, I'll be ready in an hour. Oh, yes. Thank you. Good-by.

Now, Miss Bodkin, *do* help me out, won't you? Get me into my frock, and I'll wear one of these new hats. And won't you please telephone Mrs. Smart that I can't come to her Bridge? Oh, tell her I was suddenly called away to an important meeting—and, indeed, my meeting with Mr. Dow *is* important—and then you fix over that gown, won't you, and cut out the new one? And *do* mend up that malines hat! Yes, my hair is almost dry—if you'll just fan it a little while you sew.

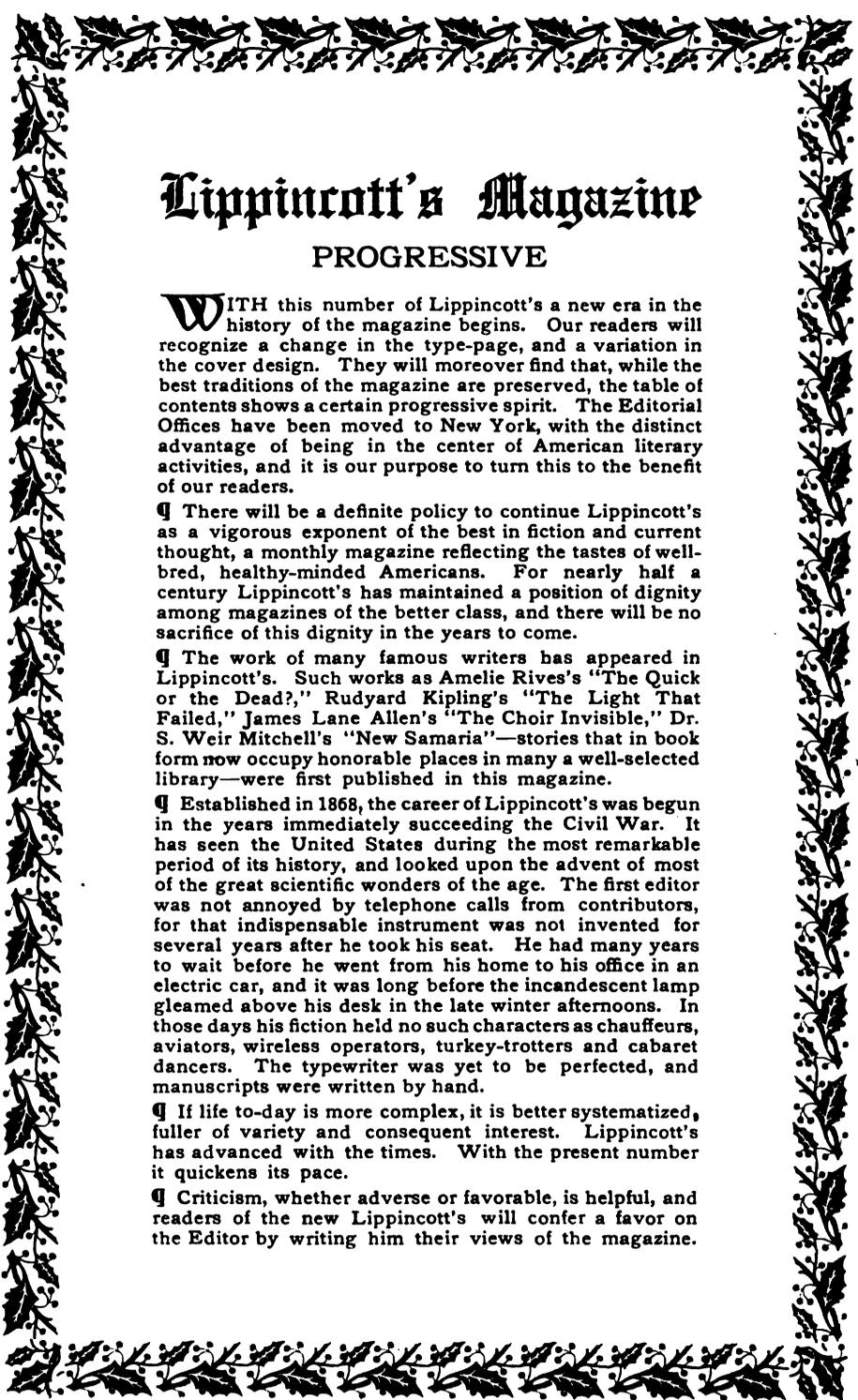
Now I must *fly*! I'm *so* glad I could help you as much as have. I really deserve a little outing now. *Do* make over that gown to look real smart, won't you? And don't let it have a home-made look, *whatever* you do!



MAGIC

BY JOHN P. SJOLANDER

ALL day the sky has hung a leaden cup
 Turned upside down. But now at eve behold!
 The Great Magician tilts the far edge up:
 Its sides are silver and its brim is gold.

A decorative border of grapevines with leaves and clusters of grapes surrounds the text.

Lippincott's Magazine

PROGRESSIVE

WITH this number of Lippincott's a new era in the history of the magazine begins. Our readers will recognize a change in the type-page, and a variation in the cover design. They will moreover find that, while the best traditions of the magazine are preserved, the table of contents shows a certain progressive spirit. The Editorial Offices have been moved to New York, with the distinct advantage of being in the center of American literary activities, and it is our purpose to turn this to the benefit of our readers.

¶ There will be a definite policy to continue Lippincott's as a vigorous exponent of the best in fiction and current thought, a monthly magazine reflecting the tastes of well-bred, healthy-minded Americans. For nearly half a century Lippincott's has maintained a position of dignity among magazines of the better class, and there will be no sacrifice of this dignity in the years to come.

¶ The work of many famous writers has appeared in Lippincott's. Such works as Amelie Rives's "The Quick or the Dead?," Rudyard Kipling's "The Light That Failed," James Lane Allen's "The Choir Invisible," Dr. S. Weir Mitchell's "New Samaria"—stories that in book form now occupy honorable places in many a well-selected library—were first published in this magazine.

¶ Established in 1868, the career of Lippincott's was begun in the years immediately succeeding the Civil War. It has seen the United States during the most remarkable period of its history, and looked upon the advent of most of the great scientific wonders of the age. The first editor was not annoyed by telephone calls from contributors, for that indispensable instrument was not invented for several years after he took his seat. He had many years to wait before he went from his home to his office in an electric car, and it was long before the incandescent lamp gleamed above his desk in the late winter afternoons. In those days his fiction held no such characters as chauffeurs, aviators, wireless operators, turkey-trotters and cabaret dancers. The typewriter was yet to be perfected, and manuscripts were written by hand.

¶ If life to-day is more complex, it is better systematized, fuller of variety and consequent interest. Lippincott's has advanced with the times. With the present number it quickens its pace.

¶ Criticism, whether adverse or favorable, is helpful, and readers of the new Lippincott's will confer a favor on the Editor by writing him their views of the magazine.

