

The Militants eBook

The Militants

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Contents

The Militants eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	7
Page 1.....	8
Page 2.....	10
Page 3.....	12
Page 4.....	14
Page 5.....	16
Page 6.....	18
Page 7.....	20
Page 8.....	21
Page 9.....	23
Page 10.....	24
Page 11.....	26
Page 12.....	27
Page 13.....	29
Page 14.....	31
Page 15.....	32
Page 16.....	33
Page 17.....	35
Page 18.....	37
Page 19.....	38
Page 20.....	39
Page 21.....	41
Page 22.....	42

Page 23.....	43
Page 24.....	44
Page 25.....	45
Page 26.....	47
Page 27.....	49
Page 28.....	50
Page 29.....	52
Page 30.....	53
Page 31.....	55
Page 32.....	56
Page 33.....	57
Page 34.....	59
Page 35.....	60
Page 36.....	62
Page 37.....	64
Page 38.....	66
Page 39.....	67
Page 40.....	69
Page 41.....	70
Page 42.....	71
Page 43.....	72
Page 44.....	73
Page 45.....	74
Page 46.....	75
Page 47.....	76
Page 48.....	78

Page 49.....	80
Page 50.....	81
Page 51.....	83
Page 52.....	85
Page 53.....	87
Page 54.....	89
Page 55.....	91
Page 56.....	92
Page 57.....	94
Page 58.....	96
Page 59.....	97
Page 60.....	99
Page 61.....	101
Page 62.....	103
Page 63.....	104
Page 64.....	106
Page 65.....	108
Page 66.....	110
Page 67.....	111
Page 68.....	112
Page 69.....	114
Page 70.....	115
Page 71.....	116
Page 72.....	118
Page 73.....	120
Page 74.....	121

Page 75.....	123
Page 76.....	125
Page 77.....	126
Page 78.....	127
Page 79.....	129
Page 80.....	130
Page 81.....	132
Page 82.....	133
Page 83.....	134
Page 84.....	135
Page 85.....	137
Page 86.....	138
Page 87.....	139
Page 88.....	141
Page 89.....	142
Page 90.....	143
Page 91.....	144
Page 92.....	145
Page 93.....	147
Page 94.....	149
Page 95.....	151
Page 96.....	152
Page 97.....	153
Page 98.....	155
Page 99.....	156
Page 100.....	158

Page 101.....	160
Page 102.....	161
Page 103.....	163
Page 104.....	165
Page 105.....	167
Page 106.....	169
Page 107.....	171
Page 108.....	173
Page 109.....	174
Page 110.....	176
Page 111.....	178
Page 112.....	180
Page 113.....	182
Page 114.....	184
Page 115.....	186
Page 116.....	188
Page 117.....	190
Page 118.....	191
Page 119.....	193
Page 120.....	195
Page 121.....	196
Page 122.....	197
Page 123.....	199
Page 124.....	201
Page 125.....	203

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
ILLUSTRATIONS	1
THE BISHOP'S SILENCE	1
THE WITNESSES	17
THE DIAMOND BROOCHES	26
CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOR	41
A MESSENGER	48
THE AIDE-DE-CAMP	60
THROUGH THE IVORY GATE	76
THE WIFE OF THE GOVERNOR	92
THE LITTLE REVENGE	105
ADVERTISEMENTS	124
MARY RAYMOND SHIPMAN ANDREWS	124
VIVE L'EMPEREUR	125
THE PERFECT TRIBUTE	125
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, NEW YORK	125

Page 1

ILLUSTRATIONS

"I took her in my arms and held her"

"Many waters shall not wash out love", said Eleanor

He stared into the smoldering fire

"Look!" he said, and Miles swung about toward the ridge behind

"I got behind a turn and fired as a man came on alone"

"I reckon I shall have to ask you to not pick any more of those roses," a voice said

"You see, the boat is very new and clean, Miss," he was saying

I felt myself pulled by two pairs of hands

THE BISHOP'S SILENCE

The Bishop was walking across the fields to afternoon service. It was a hot July day, and he walked slowly—for there was plenty of time—with his eyes fixed on the far-off, shimmering sea. That minstrel of heat, the locust, hidden somewhere in the shade of burning herbage, pulled a long, clear, vibrating bow across his violin, and the sound fell lazily on the still air—the only sound on earth except a soft crackle under the Bishop's feet. Suddenly the erect, iron-gray head plunged madly forward, and then, with a frantic effort and a parabola or two, recovered itself, while from the tall grass by the side of the path gurgled up a high, soft, ecstatic squeal. The Bishop, his face flushed with the stumble and the heat and a touch of indignation besides, straightened himself with dignity and felt for his hat, while his eyes followed a wriggling cord that lay on the ground, up to a small brown fist. A burnished head, gleaming in the sunshine like the gilded ball on a church steeple, rose suddenly out of the waves of dry grass, and a pink-ginghamed figure, radiant with joy and good-will, confronted him. The Bishop's temper, roughly waked up by the unwilling and unepiscopal war-dance just executed, fell back into its chains.

"Did you tie that string across the path?"

"Yes," The shining head nodded. "Too bad you didn't fell 'way down. I'm sorry. But you kicked awf'ly."

"Oh! I did, did I?" asked the Bishop. "You're an unrepentant young sinner. Suppose I'd broken my leg?"

The head nodded again. "Oh, we'd have patzed you up," she said cheerfully. "Don't worry. Trust in God."

The Bishop jumped. "My child," he said, "who says that to you?"

"Aunt Basha." The innocent eyes faced him without a sign of embarrassment. "Aunt Basha's my old black mammy. Do you know her? All her name's longer'n that. I can say it." Then with careful, slow enunciation, "Bathsheba Salina Mosina Angelica Preston."

"Is that your little bit of name too?" the Bishop asked, "Are you a Preston?"

"Why, of course." The child opened her gray eyes wide. "Don't you know my name? I'm Eleanor. Eleanor Gray Preston."

For a moment again the locust had it all to himself. High and insistent, his steady note sounded across the hot, still world. The Bishop looked down at the gray eyes gazing upward wonderingly, and through a mist of years other eyes smiled at him. Eleanor Gray—the world is small, the life of it persistent; generations repeat themselves, and each is young but once. He put his hand under the child's chin and turned up the baby face.

Page 2

“Ah!” said he—if that may stand for the sound that stood for the Bishop’s reverie. “Ah! Whom were you named for, Eleanor Gray?”

“For my own muvver.” Eleanor wriggled her chin from the big hand and looked at him with dignity. She did not like to be touched by strangers. Again the voices stopped and the locust sang two notes and stopped also, as if suddenly awed.

“Your mother,” repeated the Bishop, “your mother! I hope you are worthy of the name.”

“Yes, I am,” said Eleanor heartily. “Bug’s on your shoulder, Bishop! For de Lawd’s sake!” she squealed excitedly, in delicious high notes that a prima donna might envy; then caught the fat grasshopper from the black clerical coat, and stood holding it, lips compressed and the joy of adventure dancing in her eyes. The Bishop took out his watch and looked at it, as Eleanor, her soul on the grasshopper, opened her fist and flung its squirming contents, with delicious horror, yards away. Half an hour yet to service and only five minutes’ walk to the little church of Saint Peter’s-by-the-Sea.

“Will you sit down and talk to me, Eleanor Gray?” he asked, gravely.

“Oh, yes, if there’s time,” assented Eleanor, “but you mustn’t be late to church, Bishop. That’s naughty.”

“I think there’s time. How do you know who I am, Eleanor?”

“Dick told me.”

The Bishop had walked away from the throbbing sunshine into the green-black shadows of a tree, and seated himself with a boyish lightness in piquant contrast with his gray-haired dignity—a lightness that meant athletic years. Eleanor bent down the branch of a great bush that faced him and sat on it as if a bird had poised there. She smiled as their eyes met, and began to hum an air softly. The startled Bishop slowly made out a likeness to the words of the old hymn that begins

Am I a soldier of the Cross,
A follower of the Lamb?

Sweetly and reverently she sang it, over and over, with a difference.

Am I shoulder of a hoss,
A quarter of a lamb?

sang Eleanor.

The Bishop exploded into a great laugh that drowned the music.

“Aunt Basha taught you that, too, didn’t she?” he asked, and off he went into another deep-toned peal.

“I thought you’d like that, ’cause it’s a hymn and you’re a Bishop,” said Eleanor, approvingly. Her effort was evidently meeting with appreciation. “You can talk to me now, I’m here.” She settled herself like a Brownie, elbows on knees, her chin in the hollows of small, lean hands, and gazed at him unflinchingly.

“Thank you,” said the Bishop, sobering at once, but laughter still in his eyes. “Will you be kind enough to tell me then, Eleanor, who is Dick?”

Eleanor looked astonished, “You don’t know anybody much, do you?” and there was gentle pity in her voice. “Why, Dick, he’s—why, he’s—why, you see, he’s my friend. I don’t know his uvver names, but Mr. Fielding, he’s Dick’s favver.”

Page 3

"Oh!" said the Bishop with comprehension. "Dick Fielding. Then Dick is my friend, too. And people that are friends to the same people should be friends to each other—that's geometry, Eleanor, though it's possibly not life."

"Huh?" Eleanor stared, puzzled.

"Will you be friends with me, Eleanor Gray? I knew your mother a long time ago, when she was Eleanor Gray." Eleanor yawned frankly. That might be true, but it did not appear to her remarkable or interesting. The deep voice went on, with a moment's interval. "Where is your mother? Is she here?"

Eleanor laughed. "Oh, no," she said. "Don't you know? What a funny man you are—you know such a few things. My muvver's up in heaven. She went when I was a baby, long, *long* ago. I reckon she must have flewed," she added, reflectively, raising clear eyes to the pale, heat-worn sky that gleamed through the branches.

The Bishop's big hands went up to his face suddenly, and the strong fingers clasped tensely above his forehead. Between his wrists one could see that his mouth was set in a hard line. "Dead!" he said. "And I never knew it."

Eleanor dug a small russet heel unconcernedly into the ground. "Naughty, naughty, naughty little grasshopper," she began to chant, addressing an unconscious insect near the heel. "Don't you go and crawl up on the Bishop. No, just don't you. 'Cause if you do, oh, naughty grasshopper, I'll scrunch you!" with a vicious snap on the "scrunch."

The Bishop lowered his hands and looked at her. "I'm not being very interesting, Eleanor, am I?"

"Not very," Eleanor admitted. "Couldn't you be some more int'rstin'?"

"I'll try," said the Bishop. "But be careful not to hurt the poor grasshopper. Because, you know, some people say that if he is a good grasshopper for a long time, then when he dies his little soul will go into a better body—perhaps a butterfly's body next time."

Eleanor caught the thought instantly. "And if he's a good butterfly, then what'll he be? A hummin'-bird? Let's kill him quick, and see him turn into a butterfly."

"Oh, no, Eleanor, you can't force the situation. He has to live out his little grasshopper life the best that he can, before he's good enough to be a butterfly. If you kill him now you might send him backward. He might turn into what he was before—a poor little blind worm perhaps."

"Oh, my Lawd!" said Eleanor.

The Bishop was still a moment, and then repeated, quietly:

Slay not the meanest creature, lest thou slay
Some humble soul upon its upward way.

“Oughtn’t to talk to yourself,” Eleanor shook her head disapprovingly. “’Tisn’t so very polite. Is that true about the grasshopper, Bishop, or is it a whopper?”

The Bishop thought for a moment. “I don’t know, Eleanor,” he answered, gently.

“You don’t know so very much, do you?” inquired Eleanor, not as despising but as wondering, sympathizing with ignorance.

Page 4

"Very little," the Bishop agreed. "And I've tried to learn, all my life"—his gaze wandered off reflectively.

"Too bad," said Eleanor. "Maybe you'll learn some time."

"Maybe," said the Bishop and smiled, and suddenly she sprang to her feet, and shook her finger at him.

"I'm afraid," she said, "I'm very much afraid you're a naughty boy."

The Bishop looked up at the small, motherly face, bewildered. "Wh—why?" he stammered.

"Do you know what you're bein'? You're bein' late to church!"

The Bishop sprang up too, at that, and looked at his watch quickly. "Not late yet, but I'll walk along. Where are you going, waif? Aren't you in charge of anybody?"

"Huh?" inquired Eleanor, her head cocked sideways.

"Whom did you come out with?"

"Madge and Dick, but they're off there," nodding toward the wood behind them. "Madge is cryin'. She wouldn't let me pound Dick for makin' her, so I went away."

"Who is Madge?"

Eleanor, drifting beside him through the sunshine like a rose-leaf on the wind, stopped short. "Why, Bishop, don't you know even Madge? Funny Bishop! Madge is my sister—she's grown up. Dick made her cry, but I think he wasn't much naughty, 'cause she would *not* let me pound him. She put her arms right around him."

"Oh!" said the Bishop, and there was silence for a moment. "You mustn't tell me any more about Madge and Dick, I think, Eleanor."

"All right, my lamb!" Eleanor assented, cheerfully, and conversation flagged.

"How old are you, Eleanor Gray?"

"Six, praise de Lawd!"

The Bishop considered deeply for a moment, then his face cleared.

"Their angels do always behold the face of my Father," and he smiled. "I say it too, praise the Lord that she is six."

“Madge is lots more’n that,” the soft little voice, with its gay, courageous inflection, went on. “She’s twenty. Isn’t that old? You aren’t much different of that, are you?” and the heavy, cropped, straight gold mass of her hair swung sideways as she turned her face up to scrutinize the tall Bishop.

He smiled down at her. “Only thirty years different. I’m fifty, Eleanor.”

“Oh!” said Eleanor, trying to grasp the problem. Then with a sigh she gave it up, and threw herself on the strength of maturity. “Is fifty older’n twenty?” she asked.

More than once as they went side by side on the narrow foot-path across the field the Bishop put out his hand to hold the little brown one near it, but each time the child floated from his touch, and he smiled at the unconscious dignity, the womanly reserve of the frank and friendly little lady. “Thus far and no farther,” he thought, with the quick perception of character that was part of his power. But the Bishop was as unconscious as the child of his own charm, of the magnetism in him that drew hearts

Page 5

his way. Only once had it ever failed, and that was the only time he had cared. But this time it was working fast as they walked and talked together quietly, and when they reached the open door that led from the fields into the little robing-room of Saint Peter's, Eleanor had met her Waterloo. Being six, it was easy to say so, and she did it with directness, yet without at all losing the dignity that was breeding, that had come to her from generations, and that she knew of as little as she knew the names of her bones. Three steps led to the robing-room, and Eleanor flew to the top and turned, the childish figure in its worn pink cotton dress facing the tall powerful one in sober black broadcloth.

"I love you," she said. "I'll kiss you," and the long, strong little arms were around his neck, and it seemed to the Bishop as if a kiss that had never been given came to him now from the lips of the child of the woman he had loved. As he put her down gently, from the belfry above tolled suddenly a sweet, rolling note for service.

When the Bishop came out from church the "peace that passeth understanding" was over him. The beautiful old words that to churchmen are dear as their mothers' faces, haunting as the voices that make home, held him yet in the last echo of their music. Peace seemed, too, to lie across the world, worn with the day's heat, where the shadows were stretching in lengthening, cooling lines. And there at the vestry step, where Eleanor had stood an hour before, was Dick Fielding, waiting for him, with as unhappy a face as an eldest scion, the heir to millions, well loved, and well brought up, and wonderfully unspoiled, ever carried about a country-side. The Bishop was staying at the Fieldings'. He nodded and swung past Dick, with a look from the tail of his eye that said: "Come along." Dick came, and silently the two turned into the path of the fields. The scowl on Dick's dark face deepened as they walked, and that was all there was by way of conversation for some time. Finally:

"You don't know about it, do you, Bishop?" he asked.

"A very little, my boy," the Bishop answered.

Dick was on the defensive in a moment. "My father told you—you agree with him?"

"Your father has told me nothing. I only came last night, remember. I know that you made Madge cry, and that Eleanor wasn't allowed to punish you."

The boyish face cleared a little, and he laughed. "That little rat! Has she been talking? It's all right if it's only to you, but Madge will have to cork her up." Then anxiety and unhappiness seized Dick's buoyant soul again. "Bishop, let me talk to you, will you please? I'm knocked up about this, for there's never been trouble between my father and me before, and I can't give in. I know I'm right—I'd be a cad to give in, and I

wouldn't if I could. If you would only see your way to talking to the governor, Bishop! He'll listen to you when he'd throw any other chap out of the house."

Page 6

"Tell me the whole story if you can, Dick, I don't understand, you see."

"I suppose it will sound rather commonplace to you," said Dick, humbly, "but it means everything to me. I—I'm engaged to Madge Preston. I've known her for a year, and been engaged half of it, and I ought to know my own mind by now. But father has simply set his forefeet and won't hear of it. Won't even let me talk to him about it."

Dick's hands went into his pockets and his head drooped, and his big figure lagged pathetically. The Bishop put his hand on the young man's shoulder, and left it there as they walked slowly on, but he said nothing.

"It's her father, you know," Dick went on. "Such rot, to hold a girl responsible for her ancestors! Isn't it rot, now? Father says they're a bad stock, dissipated and arrogant and spendthrift and shiftless and weak—oh, and a lot more! He's not stingy with his adjectives, bless you! Picture to yourself Madge being dissipated and arrogant and—have you seen Madge?" he interrupted himself.

The Bishop shook his head. "Eleanor made an attempt on my life with a string across the path, to-day. We were friends over that."

"She's a winning little rat," said Dick, smiling absent-mindedly, "but nothing to Madge. You'll understand when you see Madge how I couldn't give her up. And it isn't so much that—my feeling for her—though that's enough in all conscience, but picture to yourself, if you please, a man going to a girl and saying: 'I'm obliged to give you up, because my father threatens to disinherit me and kick me out of the business. He objects because your father's a poor lot.' That's a nice line of conduct to map out for your only son. Yet that's practically what my father wishes me to do. But he's brought me up a gentleman, by George," said Dick straightening himself, "and it's too late to ask me to be a beastly cad. Besides that," and voice and figure drooped to despondency again, "I just can't give her up."

The Bishop's keen eyes were on the troubled face, and in their depths lurked a kindly shade of amusement. He could see stubborn old Dick Fielding in stubborn young Dick Fielding so plainly. Dick the elder had been his friend for forty years. But he said nothing. It was better to let the boy talk himself out a bit. In a moment Dick began again.

"Can't see why the governor's so keen against Colonel Preston, anyway. He's lost his money and made a mess of his life, and I rather fancy he drinks too much. But he's the sort of man you can't help being proud of—bad clothes and vices and all—handsome and charming and thorough-bred—and father must know it. His children love him—he can't be such a brute as the governor says. Anyway, I don't want to marry the Colonel—what's the use of rowing about the Colonel?" inquired Dick, desperately.

The Bishop asked a question now: “How many children are there?”

Page 7

"Only Madge and Eleanor. They're here with their cousins, the Vails, summers. Two or three died between those two, I believe. Lucky, perhaps, for the family has been awfully hard up. Lived on in their big old place, in Maryland, with no money at all. I've an idea Madge's mother wasn't so sorry to die—had a hard life of it with the fascinating Colonel." The Bishop's hand dropped from the boy's shoulder, and shut tightly. "But that has nothing to do with my marrying Madge," Dick went on.

"No," said the Bishop, shortly.

"And you see," said Dick, slipping to another tangent, "it's not the money I'm keenest about, though of course I want that too, but it's father. You believe I think more of my father than of his money, don't you? We've been good friends all my life, and he's such a crackerjack old fellow. I'd hate to get along without him." Dick sighed, from his boots up—almost six feet. "Couldn't you give him a dressing down, Bishop? Make him see reason?" He looked anxiously up the three inches that the Bishop towered above him.

At ten o'clock the next morning Richard Fielding, owner of the great Fielding Foundries, strolled out on his wide piazza, which, luxurious in deep wicker chairs and Japanese rugs and light, cool furniture, looked under scarlet and white awnings, across long boxes of geraniums and vines, out to the sparkling Atlantic. The Bishop, a friendly light coming into his thoughtful eyes, took his cigar from his lips and glanced up at his friend. Mr. Fielding kicked a hassock aside, moved a table between them, and settled himself in another chair, and with the scratch of a match, but without a word spoken, they entered into the companionship which had been a life-long joy to both.

"Father and the Bishop are having a song and dance without words," Dick was pleased sometimes to say, and felt that he hit it off. The breeze carried the scent of the tobacco in intermittent waves of fragrance, and on the air floated delicately that subtle message of peace, prosperity, and leisure which is part of the mission of a good cigar. The pleasantness of the wide, cool piazza, with its flowers and vines and gay awnings; the charm of the summer morning, not yet dulled by wear and tear of the day; the steady, deliberate dash of the waves on the beach below; the play and shimmer of the big, quiet water, stretching out to the edge of the world; all this filled their minds, rested their souls. There was no need for words. The Bishop sighed comfortably as he pushed his great shoulders back against the cool wicker of the chair and swung one long leg across the other. Fielding, chin up and lips rounded to let out a cloud of smoke, rested his hand, cigar between the fingers, on the table, and gazed at him satisfied. This was the man, after Dick, dearest to him in the world. Into which peaceful Eden stole at this point the serpent, and, as is usual, in the shape of woman. Little Eleanor, long-legged, slim, fresh as a flower in her

Page 8

crisp, faded pink dress, came around the corner. In one hot hand she carried, by their heads, a bunch of lilac and pink and white sweet peas. It cost her no trouble at all, and about half a minute of time, to charge the atmosphere, so full of sweet peace and rest, with a saturated solution of bitterness and disquiet. Her presence alone was a bombshell, and with a sentence or two in her clear, innocent voice, the fell deed was done. Fielding stopped smoking, his cigar in mid-air, and stared with a scowl at the child; but Eleanor, delighted to have found the Bishop, saw only him. A shower of crushed blossoms fell over his knees.

"I ran away from Aunt Basha. I brought you a posy for 'Good-mornin'," she said. The Bishop, collecting the plunder, expressed gratitude. "Dick picked a whole lot for Madge, and then they went walkin' and forgot 'em. Isn't Dick funny?" she went on.

Mr. Fielding looked as if Dick's drollness did not appeal to him, but the Bishop laughed, and put his arm around her.

"Will you give me a kiss, too, for 'Good-morning,'" he said; and then, "That's better than the flowers. You had better run back to Aunt Basha now, Eleanor—she'll be frightened."

Eleanor looked disappointed, "I wanted to ask you 'bout what dead chickens gets to be, if they're good. Pups? Do you reckon it's pups?"

The theory of transmigration of souls had taken strong hold. Mr. Fielding lost his scowl in a look of bewilderment, and the Bishop frankly shouted out a big laugh.

"Listen, Eleanor. This afternoon I'll come for you to walk, and we'll talk that all over. Go home now, my lamb." And Eleanor, like a pale-pink over-sized butterfly, went.

"Do you know that child, Jim?" Mr. Fielding asked, grimly.

"Yes," answered the Bishop, with a serene pull at his cigar.

"Do you know she's the child of that good-for-nothing Fairfax Preston, who married Eleanor Gray against her people's will and took her South to—to—starve, practically?"

The Bishop drew a long breath, and then he turned and looked at his old friend with a clear, wide gaze. "She's Eleanor Gray's child, too, Dick," he said.

Mr. Fielding was silent a moment. "Has the boy talked to you?" he asked. The Bishop nodded. "It's the worst trouble I've ever had. It would kill me to see him marry that man's daughter. I can't and won't resign myself to it. Why should I? Why should Dick choose, out of all the world, the one girl in it who would be insufferable to me. I can't

give in about this. Much as Dick is to me I'll let him go sooner. I hope you'll see I'm right, Jim, but right or wrong, I've made up my mind."

The Bishop stretched a large, bony hand across the little table that stood between them. Fielding's fell on it. Both men smoked silently for a minute.

"Have you anything against the girl, Dick?" asked the Bishop, presently.

Page 9

"That she's her father's daughter—it's enough. The bad blood of generations is in her. I don't like the South—I don't like Southerners. And I detest beyond words Fairfax Preston. But the girl is certainly beautiful, and they say she is a good girl, too," he acknowledged, gloomily.

"Then I think you're wrong," said the Bishop.

"You don't understand, Jim," Fielding took it up passionately. "That man has been the *bete noir* of my life. He has gotten in my way half-a-dozen times deliberately, in business affairs, little as he amounts to himself. Only two years ago—but that isn't the point after all." He stopped gloomily. "You'll wonder at me, but it's an older feud than that. I've never told anyone, but I want you to understand, Jim, how impossible this affair is." He bit off the end of a fresh cigar, lighted it and then threw it across the geraniums into the grass. "I wanted to marry her mother," he said, brusquely. "That man got her. Of course, I could have forgiven that, but it was the way he did it. He lied to her—he threw it in my teeth that I had failed. Can't you see how I shall never forgive him—never, while I live!" The intensity of a life-long, silent hatred trembled in his voice.

"It's the very thing it's your business to do, Dick," said the Bishop, quietly. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you'—what do you think that means? It's your very case. It may be the hardest thing in the world, but it's the simplest, most obvious." He drew a long puff at his cigar, and looked over the flowers to the ocean.

"Simple! Obvious!" Fielding's voice was full of bitterness. "That's the way with you churchmen! You live outside passions and temptations, and then preach against them, with no faintest notion of their force. It sounds easy, doesn't it? Simple and obvious, as you say. You never loved Eleanor Gray, Jim; you never had to give her up to a man you knew beneath her; you never had to shut murder out of your heart when you heard that he'd given her a hard life and a glad death. Eleanor Gray! Do you remember how lovely she was, how high-spirited and full of the joy of life?" The Bishop's great figure was still as if the breath in it had stopped, but Fielding, carried on the flood of his own rushing feeling, did not notice. "Do you remember, Jim?" he repeated.

"I remember," the Bishop said, and his voice sounded very quiet.

"Jove! How calm you are!" exploded the other.

"You're a churchman; you live behind a wall, you hear voices through it, but you can't be in the fight—it's easy for you."

"Life isn't easy for anyone, Dick," said the Bishop, slowly. "You know that. I'm fighting the current as well as you. You are a churchman as well as I. If it's my *metier* to preach against human passion, it's yours to resist it. You're letting this man you hate mould your character; you're letting him burn the kindness out of your soul. He's

Page 10

making you bitter and hard and unjust—and you’re letting him. I thought you had more will—more poise. It isn’t your affair what he is, even what he does, Dick—it’s your affair to keep your own judgment unwarped, your own heart gentle, your own soul untainted by the poison of hatred. We are both churchmen, as you put it—loyalty is for us both. You live your sermon—I say mine. I have said it. Now live yours. Put this wormwood away from you. Forgive Preston, as you need forgiveness at higher hands. Don’t break the girl’s heart, and spoil your boy’s life—it may spoil it—the leaven of bitterness works long. You’re at a parting of the ways—take the right turn. Do good and not evil with your strength; all the rest is nothing. After all the years there is just one thing that counts, and that our mothers told us when we were little chaps together—be good, Dick.”

The magnetic voice, that had swayed thousands, the indescribable trick of inflection that caught the heart-strings, the pure, high personality that shone through look and tone, had never, in all his brilliant career, been more full of power than for this audience of one. Fielding got up, trembling, and stood before him.

“Jim,” he said, “whatever else is so, you are that—you are a good man. The trouble is you want me to be as good as you are; and I can’t. If you had had temptations like mine, trials like mine, I might try to follow you—I would try. But you haven’t—you’re an impossible model for me. You want me to be an angel of light, and I’m only—a man.” He turned and went into the house.

The oldest inhabitant had not seen a devotion like the Bishop’s and Eleanor’s. There was in it no condescension on one side, no strain on the other. The soul that through fulness of life and sorrow and happiness and effort had reached at last a child’s peace met as its like the little child’s soul, that had known neither life nor sorrow nor conscious happiness, and was without effort as a lily of the field. It may be that the wisdom of babyhood and the wisdom of age will look very alike to us when we have the wisdom of eternity. And as all the colors of the spectrum make sunlight, so all his splendid powers that patient years had made perfect shone through the Bishop’s character in the white light of simplicity. No one knew what they talked about, the child and the man, on the long walks that they took together almost every day, except from Eleanor’s conversation after. Transmigration, done into the vernacular, and applied with startling directness, was evidently a fascinating subject from the first. She brought back as well a vivid and epigrammatic version of the nebular hypothesis.

“Did you hear ’bout what the world did?” she demanded, casually, at the lunch-table. “We were all hot, nasty steam, just like a tea-kettle, and we cooled off into water, sailin’ around so much, and then we got crusts on us, bless de Lawd, and then, sir, we kept on gettin’ solid, and circus animals grewed all over us, and then they died, and thank God

for that, and Adam and Evenin' camed, and Madge *can't* I have some more gingerbread? I'd just as soon be a little sick if you'll let me have it."

Page 11

The “fairylane of science and the long results of time,” passing from the Bishop’s hands into the child’s, were turned into such graphic tales, for Eleanor, with all her airy charm, struck straight from the shoulder. Never was there a sense of superiority on the Bishop’s side, or of being lectured on Eleanor’s.

“Why do you like to walk with the Bishop?” Mrs. Vail asked, curiously.

“Because he hasn’t any morals,” said the little girl, fresh from a Sunday-school lesson.

Saturday night Mr. Fielding stayed late in the city, and Dick was with his lady-love at the Vails; so the Bishop, after dining alone, went down on the wide beach below the house and walked, as he smoked his cigar. Through the week he had been restless under the constant prick of a duty undone, which he could not make up his mind to do. Over and over he heard his friend’s agitated voice. “If you had had temptations like mine, trials like mine, I would try to follow you,” it said. He knew that the man would be good as his word. He could perhaps win Dick’s happiness for him if he would pick up the gauntlet of that speech. If he could bring himself to tell Fielding the whole story that he had shut so long ago into silence—that he, too, had cared for Eleanor Gray, and had given her up in a harder way than the other, for the Bishop had made it possible that the Southerner should marry her. But it was like tearing his soul to do it. No one but his mother, who was dead, had known this one secret of a life like crystal. The Bishop’s reticence was the intense sort, that often goes with a frank exterior, and he had never cared for another woman. Some men’s hearts are open pleasure-grounds, where all the world may come and go, and the earth is dusty with many feet; and some are like theatres, shut perhaps to the world in general, but which a passport of beauty or charm may always open; and with many, of finer clay, there are but two or three ways into a guarded temple, and only the touchstone of quality may let pass the lightest foot upon the carefully tended sod. But now and then a heart is Holy of Holies. Long ago the Bishop, lifting a young face from the books that absorbed him, had seen a girl’s figure filling the narrow doorway, and dazzled by the radiance of it, had placed that image on the lonely altar, where the flame waited, before unconsecrated. Then the girl had gone, and he had quietly shut the door and lived his life outside. But the sealed place was there, and the fire burned before the old picture. Why should he, for Dick Fielding, for any one, let the light of day upon that stillness? The one thing in life that was his own, and all these years he had kept it sacred—why should he? Fiercely, with the old animal jealousy of ownership, he guarded for himself that memory—what was there on earth that could make him share it? And in answer there rose before him the vision of Madge Preston, with a haunting air of her mother about her; of young Dick Fielding, almost his own child from babyhood, his honest soul torn between two duties; of old Dick Fielding, loyal and kind and obstinate, his stubborn feet, the feet that had walked near his for forty years, needing only a touch to turn them into the right path.

Page 12

Back and forth the thoughts buffeted each other, and the Bishop sighed, and threw away his cigar, and then stopped and stared out at the darkening, great ocean. The steady rush and pause and low wash of retreat did not calm him to-night.

"I'd like to turn it off for five minutes. It's so eternally right," he said aloud and began to walk restlessly again.

Behind him came light steps, but he did not hear them on the soft sand, in the noise of a breaking wave. A small, firm hand slipped into his was the first that he knew of another presence, and he did not need to look down at the bright head to know it was Eleanor, and the touch thrilled him in his loneliness. Neither spoke, but swung on across the sand, side by side, the child springing easily to keep pace with his great step. Beside the gift of English, Eleanor had its comrade gift of excellent silence. Those who are born to know rightly the charm and the power and the value of words, know as well the value of the rests in the music. Little Eleanor, her nervous fingers clutched around the Bishop's big thumb, was pouring strength and comfort into him, and such an instinct kept her quiet.

So they walked for a long half-hour, the Bishop fighting out his battle, sometimes stopping, sometimes talking aloud to himself, but Eleanor, through it all, not speaking. Once or twice he felt her face laid against his hand, and her hair that brushed his wrist, and the savage selfishness of reserve slowly dissolved in the warmth of that light touch and the steady current of gentleness it diffused through him. Clearly and more clearly he saw his way and, as always happens, as he came near to the mountain, the mountain grew lower. "Over the Alps lies Italy." Why should he count the height when the Italy of Dick's happiness and Fielding's duty done lay beyond? The clean-handed, light-hearted disregard of self that had been his habit of mind always came flooding back like sunshine as he felt his decision made. After all, doing a duty lies almost entirely in deciding to do it. He stooped and picked Eleanor up in his arms.

"Isn't the baby sleepy? We've settled it together—it's all right now, Eleanor. I'll carry you back to Aunt Basha."

"Is it all right now?" asked Eleanor, drowsily. "No, I'll walk," kicking herself downward. "But you come wiv me." And the Bishop escorted his lady-love to her castle, where the warden, Aunt Basha, was for this half hour making night vocal with lamentations for the runaway.

"Po' lil lamb!" said Aunt Basha, with an undisguised scowl at the Bishop. "Seems like some folks dunno nuff to know a baby's bedtime. Seems like de Lawd's anointed wuz in po' business, ti'in' out chillens!"

"I'm sorry, Aunt Basha," said the Bishop, humbly. "I'll bring her back earlier again. I forgot all about the time."

“Huh!” was all the response that Aunt Basha vouchsafed, and the Bishop, feeling himself hopelessly in the wrong, withdrew in discreet silence.

Page 13

Luncheon was over the next day and the two men were quietly smoking together in the hot, drowsy quiet of the July mid-afternoon before the Bishop found a chance to speak to Fielding alone. There was an hour and a half before service, and this was the time to say his say, and he gathered himself for it, when suddenly the tongue of the ready speaker, the *savoir faire* of the finished man of the world, the mastery of situations which had always come as easily as his breath, all failed him at once.

"Dick," he stammered, "there is something I want to tell you," and he turned on his friend a face which astounded him.

"What on earth is it? You look as if you'd been caught stealing a hat," he responded, encouragingly.

The Bishop felt his heart thumping as that healthy organ had not thumped for years. "I feel a bit that way," he gasped. "You remember what we were talking of the other day?"

"The other day—talking—" Fielding looked bewildered. Then his face darkened. "You mean Dick—the affair with that girl." His voice was at once hard and unresponsive. "What about it?"

"Not at all," said the Bishop, complainingly. "Don't misunderstand like that, Dick—it's so much harder."

"Oh!" and Fielding's look cleared. "Well, what is it then, old man? Out with it—want a check for a mission? Surely you don't hesitate to tell me that! Whatever I have is yours, too—you know it."

The Bishop looked deeply disgusted. "Muddlehead!" was his unexpected answer, and Fielding, serene in the consciousness of generosity and good feeling, looked as if a hose had been turned on him.

"What the devil!" he said. "Excuse me, Jim, but just tell me what you're after. I can't make you out."

"It's most difficult." The Bishop seemed to articulate with trouble. "It was so long ago, and I've never spoken of it." Fielding, mouth and eyes wide, watched him as he stumbled on. "There were three of us, you see—though, of course, you didn't know. Nobody knew. She told my mother, that was all.—Oh, I'd no idea how difficult this would be," and the Bishop pushed back his damp hair and gasped again. Suddenly a wave of color rushed over his face.

"No one could help it, Dick," he said. "She was so lovely, so exquisite, so—"

Fielding rose quickly and put his hand on his friend's forehead, "Jim, my dear boy," he said gravely, "this heat has been too much for you. Sit there quietly, while I get some ice. Here, let me loosen your collar," and he put his fingers on the white clerical tie.

Then the Bishop rose up in his wrath and shook him off, and his deep blue eyes flashed fire.

"Let me alone," he said. "It is inexplicable to me how a man can be so dense. Haven't I explained to you in the plainest way what I have never told another soul? Is this the reward I am to have for making the greatest effort I have made for years?" And after a moment's steady, indignant glare at the speechless Fielding he turned and strode in angry majesty through the wide hall doorway.

Page 14

When he walked out of the same doorway an hour later, on his way to service, Fielding sat back in a shadowy corner and let him pass without a word. He watched critically the broad shoulders and athletic figure as his friend moved down the narrow walk—a body carefully trained to hold well and easily the trained mind within. But the careless energy that was used to radiate from the great elastic muscles seemed lacking to-day, and the erect head drooped. Fielding shook his own head as the Bishop turned the corner and went out of his view.

“*Mens sana in corpore sano*,” he said aloud, and sighed. “He has worked too hard this summer. I never saw him like that. If he should—” and he stopped; then he rose, and looked at his watch and slowly followed the Bishop’s steps.

The little church of Saint Peter’s-by-the-Sea was filled even on this hot July afternoon, to hear the famous Bishop, and in the half-light that fell through painted windows and lay like a dim violet veil against the gray walls, the congregation with summer gowns and flowery hats, had a billowy effect as of a wave tipped everywhere with foam. Fielding, sitting far back, saw only the white-robed Bishop, and hardly heard the words he said, through listening for the modulations of his voice. He was anxious for the man who was dear to him, and the service and its minister were secondary to-day. But gradually the calm, reverent, well-known tones reassured him, and he yielded to the pleasure of letting his thoughts be led, by the voice that stood to him for goodness, into the spirit of the words that are filled with the beauty of holiness. At last it was time for the sermon, and the Bishop towered in the low stone pulpit and turned half away from them all as he raised one arm high with a quick, sweeping gesture.

“In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen!” he said, and was still.

A shaft of yellow light fell through a memorial window and struck a golden bar against the white lawn of his surplice, and Fielding, staring at him with eyes of almost passionate devotion, thought suddenly of Sir Galahad, and of that “long beam” down which had “slid the Holy Grail.” Surely the flame of that old vigorous Christianity had never burned higher or steadier. A marvellous life for this day, kept, like the flower of Knighthood, strong and beautiful and “unspotted from the world.” Fielding sighed as he thought of his own life, full of good impulses, but crowded with mistakes, with worldliness, with lowered ideals, with yieldings to temptation. Then, with a pang, he thought about Dick, about the crisis for him that the next week must bring, and he heard again the Bishop’s steady, uncompromising words as they talked on the piazza. And on a wave of selfish feeling rushed back the old excuses. “It is different. It is easy for him to be good. Dick is not his son. He has never been tempted like other men. He never hated Fairfax Preston—he never loved Eleanor Gray.” And back somewhere in the dark places of his consciousness began to work a dim thought of his friend’s puzzling words of that day: “No one could help loving her—she was so lovely—so exquisite!”

Page 15

The congregation rustled softly everywhere as the people settled themselves to listen—they listened always to him. And across the hush that followed came the Bishop's voice again, tranquilly breaking, not jarring, the silence. "Not disobedient to the heavenly vision," were the words he was saying, and Fielding dropped at once the thread of his own thought to listen.

He spoke quickly, clearly, in short Anglo-Saxon words—the words that carry their message straightest to hearts red with Saxon blood—of the complex nature of every man—how the angel and the demon live in each and vary through all the shades of good and bad. How yet in each there is always the possibility of a highest and best that can be true for that personality only—a dream to be realized of the lovely life, blooming into its own flower of beauty, that God means each life to be. In his own rushing words he clothed the simple thought of the charge that each one has to keep his angel strong, the white wings free for higher flights that come with growth.

"The vision," he said, "is born with each of us, and though we lose it again and again, yet again and again it comes back and beckons, calls, and the voice thrills us always. And we must follow, or lose the way. Through ice and flame we must follow. And no one may look across where another soul moves on a quick, straight path and think that the way is easier for the other. No one can see if the rocks are not cutting his friend's feet; no one can know what burning lands he has crossed to follow, to be so close to his angel, his messenger. Believe always that every other life has been more tempted, more tried than your own; believe that the lives higher and better than your own are so not through more ease, but more effort; that the lives lower than yours are so through less opportunity, more trial. Believe that your friend with peace in his heart has won it, not happened on it—that he has fought your very fight. So the mist will melt from your eyes and you will see clearer the vision of your life and the way it leads you; selfishness will fall from your shoulders and you will follow lightly. And at the end, and along the way you will have the glory of effort, the joy of fighting and winning, the beauty of the heights where only an ideal can take you."

What more he said Fielding did not hear—for him one sentence had been the final word. The unlaidd ghost of the Bishop's puzzling talk an hour before rose up and from its lips came, as if in full explanation, "He has fought your very fight." He sat in his shadowy, dark corner of the cool, little stone church, and while the congregation rose and knelt and sang and prayed, he was still. Piece by piece he fitted the mosaic of past and present, and each bit slipped faultlessly into place. There was no question in his mind now as to the fact, and his manliness and honor rushed to meet the situation. He had said that where his friend had gone he would

Page 16

go. If it was down the road of renunciation of a life-long enmity, he would not break his word. Complex problems resolve themselves at the point of action into such simple axioms. Dick should have a blessing and his sweetheart; he would do his best for Fairfax Preston; with his might he would keep his word. A great sigh and a wrench at his heart as if a physical growth of years were tearing away, and the decision was made. Then, in a mist of pain and effort, and a surprised new freedom from the accustomed pang of hatred, he heard the rustle and movement of a kneeling congregation, and, as he looked, the Bishop raised his arms. Fielding bent his gray head quickly in his hands, and over it, laden with “peace” and “the blessing of God Almighty,” as if a general commended his soldier on the field of battle, swept the solemn words of the benediction.

Peace touched the earth on the blue and white September day when Madge and Dick were married. Pearly piled-up clouds, white “herded elephants,” lay still against a sparkling sky, and the air was alive like cool wine, and breathing warm breaths of sunlight. No wedding was ever gayer or prettier, from the moment when the smiling holiday crowd in little Saint Peter’s caught their breath at the first notes of “Lohengrin” and turned to see Eleanor, white-clad and solemn, and impressed with responsibility, lead the procession slowly up the aisle, her eyes raised to the Bishop’s calm face in the chancel, to the moment when, in showers of rice and laughter and slippers, the Fielding carriage dashed down the driveway, and Dick, leaning out, caught for a last picture of his wedding-day, standing apart from the bright colors grouped on the lawn, the black and white of the Bishop and Eleanor, gazing after them, hand in hand.

Bit by bit the brilliant kaleidoscopic effect fell apart and resolved itself into light groups against the dark foliage or flashing masses of carriages and people and horses, and then even the blurs on the distance were gone, and the place was still and the wedding was over. The long afternoon was before them, with its restless emptiness, as if the bride and groom had taken all the reason for life with them.

There were bridesmaids and ushers staying at the Fieldings’. The graceful girl who poured out the Bishop’s tea on the piazza, some hours later, and brought it to him with her own hands, stared a little at his face for a moment.

“You look tired, Bishop. Is it hard work marrying people? But you must be used to it after all these years,” and her blue eyes fell gently on his gray hair. “So many love-stories you have finished—so many, many!” she went on, and then quite softly, “and yet never to have a love-story of your own!”

At this instant Eleanor, lolling on the arm of his chair, slipped over on his knee and burrowed against his coat a big pink bow that tied her hair. The Bishop’s arm tightened

around the warm, alive lump of white muslin, and he lifted his face, where lines showed plainly to-day, with a smile like sunshine.

Page 17

"You are wrong, my daughter. They never finish—they only begin here. And my love-story"—he hesitated and his big fingers spread over the child's head, "It is all written in Eleanor's eyes."

"I hope when mine comes I shall have the luck to hear anything half as pretty as that. I envy Eleanor," said the graceful bridesmaid as she took the tea-cup again, but the Bishop did not hear her.

[Illustration: "Many waters shall not wash out this love," said Eleanor]

He had turned toward the sea and his eyes wandered out across the geraniums where the shadow of a sun-filled cloud lay over uncounted acres of unhurried waves. His face was against the little girl's bright head, and he said something softly to himself, and the child turned her face quickly and smiled at him and repeated the words:

"Many waters shall not wash out love," said Eleanor.

THE WITNESSES

The old clergyman sighed and closed the volume of "Browne on The Thirty-nine Articles," and pushed it from him on the table. He could not tell what the words meant; he could not keep his mind tense enough to follow an argument of three sentences. It must be that he was very tired. He looked into the fire, which was burning badly, and about the bare, little, dusty study, and realized suddenly that he was tired all the way through, body and soul. And swiftly, by way of the leak which that admission made in the sea-wall of his courage, rushed in an ocean of depression. It had been a hard, bad day. Two people had given up their pews in the little church which needed so urgently every ounce of support that held it. And the junior warden, the one rich man of the parish, had come in before service in the afternoon to complain of the music. If that knife-edged soprano did not go, he said, he was afraid he should have to go himself; it was impossible to have his nerves scraped to the raw every Sunday.

The old clergyman knew very little about music, but he remembered that his ear had been uncomfortably jarred by sounds from the choir, and that he had turned once and looked at them, and wondered if some one had made a mistake, and who it was. It must be, then, that dear Miss Barlow, who had sung so faithfully in St. John's for twenty-five years, was perhaps growing old. But how could he tell her so; how could he deal such a blow to her kind heart, her simple pride and interest in her work? He was growing old, too.

His sensitive mouth carved downward as he stared into the smoldering fire, and let himself, for this one time out of many times he had resisted, face the facts. It was not Miss Barlow and the poor music; it was not that the church was badly heated, as one of

the ex-pewholders had said, nor that it was badly situated, as another had claimed; it was something of deeper, wider significance, a broken foundation, that made the ugly, widening crack all through the height of

Page 18

the tower. It was his own inefficiency. The church was going steadily down, and he was powerless to lift it. His old enthusiasm, devotion, confidence—what had become of them? They seemed to have slipped by slow degrees, through the unsuccessful years, out of his soul, and in their place was a dull distrust of himself; almost—God forgive him—distrust in God's kindness. He had worked with his might all the years of his life, and what he had to show for it was a poor, lukewarm parish, a diminished congregation, debt—to put it in one dreadful word, failure!

[Illustration: He stared into the smoldering fire.]

By the pitiless searchlight of hopelessness, he saw himself for the first time as he was—surely devoted and sincere, but narrow, limited, a man lacking outward expression of inward and spiritual grace. He had never had the gift to win hearts. That had not troubled him much, earlier, but lately he had longed for a little appreciation, a little human love, some sign that he had not worked always in vain. He remembered the few times that people had stopped after service to praise his sermons, and to-night he remembered not so much the glow at his heart that the kind words had brought, as the fact that those times had been very few. He did not preach good sermons; he faced that now, unflinchingly. He was not broad minded; new thoughts were unattractive, hard for him to assimilate; he had championed always theories that were going out of fashion, and the half-consciousness of it put him ever on the defensive; when most he wished to be gentle, there was something in his manner which antagonized. As he looked back over his colorless, conscientious past, it seemed to him that his life was a failure. The souls he had reached, the work he had done with such infinite effort—it might all have been done better and easily by another man. He would not begrudge his strength and his years burned freely in the sacred fire, if he might know that the flame had shone even faintly in dark places, that the heat had warmed but a little the hearts of men. But—he smiled grimly at the logs in front of him, in the small, cheap, black marble fireplace—his influence was much like that, he thought, cold, dull, ugly with uncertain smoke. He, who was not worthy, had dared to consecrate himself to a high service, and it was his reasonable punishment that his life had been useless.

Like a stab came back the thought of the junior warden, of the two more empty pews, and then the thought, in irresistible self-pity, of how hard he had tried, how well he had meant, how much he had given up, and he felt his eyes filling with a man's painful, bitter tears. There had been so little beauty, reward, in his whole past. Once, thirty years before, he had gone abroad for six weeks, and he remembered the trip with a thrill of wonder that anything so lovely could have come into his sombre life—the voyage, the bit of travel, the new countries, the old

Page 19

cities, the expansion, broadening of mind he had felt for a time as its result. More than all, the delight of the people whom he had met, the unused experience of being understood at once, of light touch and easy flexibility, possible, as he had not known before, with good and serious qualities. One man, above all, he had never forgotten. It had been a pleasant memory always to have known him, to have been friends with him even, for he had felt to his own surprise and joy that something in him attracted this man of men. He had followed the other's career, a career full of success unabused, of power grandly used, of responsibility lifted with a will. He stood over thousands and ruled rightly—a true prince among men. Somewhat too broad, too free in his thinking—the old clergyman deplored that fault—yet a man might not be perfect. It was pleasant to know that this strong and good soul was in the world and was happy; he had seen him once with his son, and the boy's fine, sensitive face, his honest eyes, and pretty deference of manner, his pride, too, in his distinguished father, were surely a guaranty of happiness. The old man felt a sudden generous gladness that if some lives must be wasted, yet some might be, like this man's whom he had once known, full of beauty and service. It would be good if he might add a drop to the cup of happiness which meant happiness to so many—and then he smiled at his foolish thought. That he should think of helping that other—a man of so little importance to help a man of so much! And suddenly again he felt tears that welled up hotly.

He put his gray head, with its scanty, carefully brushed hair, back against the support of the worn armchair, and shut his eyes to keep them back. He would try not to be cowardly. Then, with the closing of the soul-windows, mental and physical fatigue brought their own gentle healing, and in the cold, little study, bare, even, of many books, with the fire smoldering cheerlessly before him, he fell asleep.

* * * * *

A few miles away, in a suburb of the same great city, in a large library peopled with books, luxurious with pictures and soft-toned rugs and carved dark furniture, a man sat staring into the fire. The six-foot logs crackled and roared up the chimney, and the blaze lighted the wide, dignified room. From the high chimney-piece, that had been the feature of a great hall in Florence two centuries before, grotesque heads of black oak looked down with a gaze which seemed weighted with age-old wisdom and cynicism, at the man's sad face. The glow of the lamp, shining like a huge gray-green jewel, lighted unobtrusively the generous sweep of table at his right hand, and on it were books whose presence meant the thought of a scholar and the broad interests of a man of affairs. Each detail of the great room, if there had been an observer of its quiet perfection, had an importance of its own, yet each exquisite belonging fell swiftly

Page 20

into the dimness of the background of a picture when one saw the man who was the master. Among a thousand picked men, his face and figure would have been distinguished. People did not call him old, for the alertness and force of youth radiated from him, and his gray eyes were clear and his color fresh, yet the face was lined heavily, and the thick thatch of hair shone in the firelight silvery white. Face and figure were full of character and breeding, of life lived to its utmost, of will, responsibility, success. Yet to-night the spring of the mechanism seemed broken, and the noble head lay back against the brown leather of his deep chair as listlessly as a tired girl's. He watched the dry wood of the fire as it blazed and fell apart and blazed up brightly again, yet his eyes did not seem to see it—their absorbed gaze was inward.

The distant door of the room swung open, but the man did not hear, and, his head and face clear cut like a cameo against the dark leather, hands stretched nervelessly along the arms of the chair, eyes gazing gloomily into the heart of the flame, he was still. A young man, brilliant with strength, yet with a worn air about him, and deep circles under his eyes, stood inside the room and looked at him a long minute—those two in the silence. The fire crackled cheerfully and the old man sighed.

"Father!" said the young man by the door.

In a second the whole pose changed, and he sat intense, staring, while the son came toward him and stood across the rug, against the dark wood of the Florentine fireplace, a picture of young manhood which any father would be proud to own.

"Of course, I don't know if you want me, father," he said, "but I've come to tell you that I'll be a good boy, if you do."

The gentle, half-joking manner was very winning, and the play of his words was trembling with earnest. The older man's face shone as if lamps were lighted behind his eyes.

"If I want you, Ted!" he said, and held out his hand.

With a quick step forward the lad caught it, and then, with quick impulsiveness, as if his childhood came back to him on the flood of feeling unashamed, bent down and kissed him. As he stood erect again he laughed a little, but the muscles of his face were working, and there were tears in his eyes. With a swift movement he had drawn a chair, and the two sat quiet a moment, looking at each other in deep and silent content to be there so, together.

"Yesterday I thought I'd never see you again this way," said the boy; and his father only smiled at him, satisfied as yet without words. The son went on, his eager, stirred

feelings crowding to his lips. “There isn’t any question great enough, there isn’t any quarrel big enough, to keep us apart, I think, father. I found that out this afternoon. When a chap has a father like you, who has given him a childhood and a youth like mine—” The young voice stopped, trembling. In a moment he had mastered himself.

Page 21

"I'll probably never be able to talk to you like this again, so I want to say it all now. I want to say that I know, beyond doubt, that you would never decide anything, as I would, on impulse, or prejudice, or from any motives but the highest. I know how well-balanced you are, and how firmly your reason holds your feelings. So it's a question between your judgment and mine—and I'm going to trust yours. You may know me better than I know myself, and anyway you're more to me than any career, though I did think—but we won't discuss it again. It would have been a tremendous risk, of course, and it shall be as you say. I found out this afternoon how much of my life you were," he repeated.

The older man kept his eyes fixed on the dark, sensitive, glowing young face, as if they were thirsty for the sight. "What do you mean by finding it out this afternoon, Ted? Did anything happen to you?"

The young fellow turned his eyes, that were still a bit wet with the tears, to his father's face, and they shone like brown stars. "It was a queer thing," he said, earnestly, "It was the sort of thing you read in stories—almost like," he hesitated, "like Providence, you know. I'll tell you about it; see if you don't think so. Two days ago, when I—when I left you, father—I caught a train to the city and went straight to the club, from habit, I suppose, and because I was too dazed and wretched to think. Of course, I found a grist of men there, and they wouldn't let me go. I told them I was ill, but they laughed at me. I don't remember just what I did, for I was in a bad dream, but I was about with them, and more men I knew kept turning up—I couldn't seem to escape my friends. Even if I stayed in my room, they hunted me up. So this morning I shifted to the Oriental, and shut myself up in my room there, and tried to think and plan. But I felt pretty rotten, and I couldn't see daylight, so I went down to lunch, and who should be at the next table but the Dangerfields, the whole outfit, just back from England and bursting with cheerfulness! They made me lunch with them, and it was ghastly to rattle along feeling as I did, but I got away as soon as I decently could—rather sooner, I think—and went for a walk, hoping the air would clear my head. I tramped miles—oh, a long time, but it seemed not to do any good; I felt deadlier and more hopeless than ever—I haven't been very comfortable fighting you," he stopped a minute, and his tired face turned to his father's with a smile of very winning gentleness.

The father tried to speak, but, his voice caught harshly. Then, "We'll make it up, Ted," he said, and laid his hand on the boy's shoulder.

The young fellow, as if that touch had silenced him, gazed into the fire thoughtfully, and the big room was very still for a long minute. Then he looked up brightly.

Page 22

"I want to tell you the rest. I came back from my tramp by the river drive, and suddenly I saw Griswold on his horse trotting up the bridle-path toward me. I drew the line at seeing any more men, and Griswold is the worst of the lot for wanting to do things, so I turned into a side-street and ran. I had an idea he had seen me, so when I came to a little church with the doors open, in the first half-block, I shot in. Being Lent, you know, there was service going on, and I dropped quietly into a seat at the back, and it came to me in a minute, that I was in fit shape to say my prayers, so—I said 'em. It quieted me a bit, the old words of the service. They're fine English, of course, and I think words get a hold on you when they're associated with every turn of your life. So I felt a little less like a wild beast, by the time the clergyman began his sermon. He was a pathetic old fellow, thin and ascetic and sad, with a narrow forehead and a little white hair, and an underfed look about him. The whole place seemed poor and badly kept. As he walked across the chancel, he stumbled on a hole in the carpet. I stared at him, and suddenly it struck me that he must be about your age, and it was like a knife in me, father, to see him trip. No two men were ever more of a contrast, but through that very fact he seemed to be standing there as a living message from you. So when he opened his mouth to give out his text I fell back as if he had struck me, for the words he said were, 'I will arise and go to my father.'"

The boy's tones, in the press and rush of his little story, were dramatic, swift, and when he brought out its climax, the older man, though his tense muscles were still, drew a sudden breath, as if he, too, had felt a blow. But he said nothing, and the eager young voice went on.

"The skies might have opened and the Lord's finger pointed at me, and I couldn't have felt more shocked. The sermon was mostly tommy-rot, you know—platitudes. You could see that the man wasn't clever—had no grasp—old-fashioned ideas—didn't seem to have read at all. There was really nothing in it, and after a few sentences I didn't listen particularly. But there were two things about it I shall never forget, never, if I live to a hundred. First, all through, at every tone of his voice, there was the thought that the brokenhearted look in the eyes of this man, such a contrast to you in every way possible, might be the very look in your eyes after a while, if I left you. I think I'm not vain to know I make a lot of difference to you, father—considering we two are all alone." There was a questioning inflection, but he smiled, as if he knew.

"You make all the difference. You are the foundation of my life. All the rest counts for nothing beside you." The father's voice was slow and very quiet.

Page 23

"That thought haunted me," went on the young man, a bit unsteadily, "and the contrast of the old clergyman and you made it seem as if you were there beside me. It sounds unreasonable, but it was so. I looked at him, old, poor, unsuccessful, narrow-minded, with hardly even the dignity of age, and I couldn't help seeing a vision of you, every year of your life a glory to you, with your splendid mind, and splendid body, and all the power and honor and luxury that seem a natural background to you. Proud as I am of you, it seemed cruel, and then it came to my mind like a stab that perhaps without me, your only son, all of that would—well, what you said just now. Would count for nothing—that you would be practically, some day, just a lonely and pathetic old man like that other."

The hand on the boy's shoulder stirred a little. "You thought right, Ted."

"That was one impression the clergyman's sermon made, and the other was simply his beautiful goodness. It shone from him at every syllable, uninspired and uninteresting as they were. You couldn't help knowing that his soul was white as an angel's. Such sincerity, devotion, purity as his couldn't be mistaken. As I realized it, it transfigured the whole place. It made me feel that if that quality—just goodness—could so glorify all the defects of his look and mind and manner, it must be worth while, and I would like to have it. So I knew what was right in my heart—I think you can always know what's right if you want to know—and I just chucked my pride and my stubbornness into the street, and—and I caught the 7:35 train."

The light of renunciation, the exhaustion of wrenching effort, the trembling triumph of hard-won victory, were in the boy's face, and the thought, as he looked at it, dear and familiar in every shadow, that he had never seen spirit shine through clay more transparently. Never in their lives had the two been as close, never had the son so unveiled his soul before. And, as he had said, in all probability never would it be again. To the depth where they stood words could not reach, and again for minutes, only the friendly undertone of the crackling fire stirred the silence of the great room. The sound brought steadiness to the two who sat there, the old hand on the young shoulder yet. After a time, the older man's low and strong tones, a little uneven, a little hard with the effort to be commonplace, which is the first readjustment from deep feeling, seemed to catch the music of the homely accompaniment of the fire.

"It is a queer thing, Ted," he said, "but once, when I was not much older than you, just such an unexpected chance influence made a crisis in my life. I was crossing to England with the deliberate intention of doing something which I knew was wrong. I thought it meant happiness, but I know now it would have meant misery. On the boat was a young clergyman of about my own age making his first, very likely his

Page 24

only, trip abroad. I was thrown with him—we sat next each other at table, and our cabins faced—and something in the man attracted me, a quality such as you speak of in this other, of pure and uncommon goodness. He was much the same sort as your old man, I fancy, not particularly winning, rather narrow, rather limited in brains and in advantages, with a natural distrust of progress and breadth. We talked together often, and one day, I saw, by accident, into the depths of his soul, and knew what he had sacrificed to become a clergyman—it was what meant to him happiness and advancement in life. It had been a desperate effort, that was plain, but it was plain, too, that from the moment he saw what he thought was the right, there had been no hesitation in his mind. And I, with all my wider mental training, my greater breadth—as I looked at it—was going, with my eyes open, to do a wrong because I wished to do it. You and I must be built something alike, Ted, for a touch in the right spot seems to penetrate to the core of us—the one and the other. This man's simple and intense flame of right living, right doing, all unconsciously to himself, burned into me, and all that I had planned to do seemed scorched in that fire—turned to ashes and bitterness. Of course it was not so simple as it sounds. I went through a great deal. But the steady influence for good was beside me through that long passage—we were two weeks—the stronger because it was unconscious, the stronger, I think, too, that it rested on no intellectual basis, but was wholly and purely spiritual—as the confidence of a child might hold a man to his duty where the arguments of a sophist would have no effect. As I say, I went through a great deal. My mind was a battle-field for the powers of good and evil during those two weeks, but the man who was leading the forces of the right never knew it. The outcome was that as soon as I landed I took my passage back on the next boat, which sailed at once. Within a year, within a month almost, I knew that the decision I made then was a turning-point, that to have done otherwise would have meant ruin in more than one way. I tremble now to think how close I was to shipwreck. All that I am, all that I have, I owe more or less directly to that man's unknown influence. The measure of a life is its service. Much opportunity for that, much power has been in my hands, and I have tried to hold it humbly and reverently, remembering that time. I have thought of myself many times as merely the instrument, fitted to its special use, of that consecrated soul."

The voice stopped, and the boy, his wide, shining eyes fixed on his father's face, drew a long breath. In a moment he spoke, and the father knew, as well as if he had said it, how little of his feeling he could put into words.

"It makes you shiver, doesn't it," he said, "to think what effect you may be having on people, and never know it? Both you and I, father—our lives changed, saved—by the influence of two strangers, who hadn't the least idea what they were doing. It frightens you."

Page 25

"I think it makes you know," said the older man, slowly, "that not your least thought is unimportant; that the radiance of your character shines for good or evil where you go. Our thoughts, our influences, are like birds that fly from us as we walk along the road; one by one, we open our hands and loose them, and they are gone and forgotten, but surely there will be a day when they will come back on white wings or dark like a cloud of witnesses—"

The man stopped, his voice died away softly, and he stared into the blaze with solemn eyes, as if he saw a vision. The boy, suddenly aware again of the strong hand on his shoulder, leaned against it lovingly, and the fire, talking unconcernedly on, was for a long time the only sound in the warmth and stillness and luxury of the great room which held two souls at peace.

* * * * *

At that hour, with the volume of Browne under his outstretched hand, his thin gray hair resting against the worn cloth of the chair, in the bare little study, the old clergyman slept. And as he slept, a wonderful dream came to him. He thought that he had gone from this familiar, hard world, and stood, in his old clothes, with his old discouraged soul, in the light of the infinitely glorious Presence, where he must surely stand at last. And the question was asked him, wordlessly, solemnly:

"Child of mine, what have you made of the life given you?" And he looked down humbly at his shabby self, and answered:

"Lord, nothing. My life is a failure. I worked all day in God's garden, and my plants were twisted and my roses never bloomed. For all my fighting, the weeds grew thicker. I could not learn to make the good things grow, I tried to work rightly, Lord, my Master, but I must have done it all wrong."

And as he stood sorrowful, with no harvest sheaves to offer as witnesses for his toiling, suddenly back of him he heard a marvellous, many-toned, soft whirring, as of innumerable light wings, and over his head flew a countless crowd of silver-white birds, and floated in the air beyond. And as he gazed, surprised, at their loveliness, without speech again it was said to him:

"My child, these are your witnesses. These are the thoughts and the influences which have gone from your mind to other minds through the years of your life." And they were all pure white.

And it was borne in upon him, as if a bandage had been lifted from his eyes, that character was what mattered in the great end; that success, riches, environment, intellect, even, were but the tools the master gave into his servants' hands, and that the honesty of the work was all they must answer for. And again he lifted his eyes to the



hovering white birds, and with a great thrill of joy it came to him that he had his offering, too, he had this lovely multitude for a gift to the Master; and, as if the thought had clothed him with glory, he saw his poor black clothes suddenly transfigured to shining garments, and, with a shock, he felt the rush of a long-forgotten feeling, the feeling of youth and strength, beating in a warm glow through his veins. With a sigh of deep happiness, the old man awoke.

Page 26

A log had fallen, and turning as it fell, the new surface had caught life from the half-dead ashes, and had blazed up brightly, and the warmth was penetrating gratefully through him. The old clergyman smiled, and held his thin hands to the flame as he gazed into the fire, but the wonder and awe of his dream were in his eyes.

“My beautiful white birds!” he said, aloud, but softly. “Mine! They were out of sight, but they were there all the time. Surely the dream was sent from Heaven—surely the Lord means me to believe that my life has been of service after all.” And as he still gazed, with rapt face, into his study fire, he whispered: “Angels came and ministered unto him.”

THE DIAMOND BROOCHES

The room was filled with signs of breeding and cultivation; it was bare of the things which mean money. Books were everywhere; family portraits, gone brown with time, hung on the walls; a tall silver candlestick gleamed from a corner; there was the tarnished gold of carved Florentine frames, such as people bring still from Italy. But the furniture-covering was faded, the carpet had been turned, the place itself was the small parlor of a cheap apartment, and the wall-paper was atrocious. The least thoughtful, listening for a moment to that language which a room speaks of those who live in it, would have known this at once as the home of well-bred people who were very poor.

So quiet it was that it seemed empty. If an observer had stood in the doorway, it might have been a minute before he saw that a man sat in front of the fireless hearth with his arms stretched before him on the table and his head fallen into them. For many minutes there was no sound, no stir of the man’s nerveless pose; it might have been that he was asleep. Suddenly the characterless silence of the place was flooded with tragedy, for the man groaned, and a child would have known that the sound came from a torn soul. He lifted his face—a handsome, high-bred face, clever, a bit weak,—and tears were wet on his cheeks. He glanced about as if fearing to be seen as he wiped them away, and at the moment there was a light bustle, low voices down the hall. The young man sprang to his feet and stood alert as a step came toward him. He caught a sharp breath as another man, iron-gray, professional, stood in the doorway.

“Doctor! You have made the examination—you think—” he flung at the newcomer, and the other answered with the cool incisive manner of one whose words weigh.

“Mr. Newbold,” he said, “when you came to my office this morning I told you my conjectures and my fear. I need not, therefore, go into details again. I am very sorry to have to say to you—” he stopped, and looked at the younger man kindly. “I wish I might make it easier, but it is better that I should tell you that your mother’s condition is as I expected.”

Newbold gave way a step as if under a blow, and his color went gray. The doctor had seen souls laid bare before, yet he turned his eyes to the floor as the muscles pulled and strained in this young face. It seemed minutes that the two faced each other in the loaded silence, the doctor gazing gravely at the worn carpet, the other struggling for self-control. At last Newbold spoke, in the harsh tone which often comes first after great emotion.

Page 27

"You mean that there is—no hope?"

And the doctor, relieved at the loosening of the tension, answered readily, glad to merge his humanity in his professional capacity: "No, Mr. Newbold; I do not mean just that. It is this bleak climate, the raw winds from the lake, which make it impossible for your mother to take the first step which might lead to recovery. There is, in fact—" he hesitated. "I may say that there is no hope for her cure while here. But if she is taken to a warm climate at once—at once—within two weeks—and kept there until summer, then, although I have not the gift of prophecy, yet I believe she would be in time a well woman. No medicine, can do it, but out-of-doors and warmth would do it—probably."

He put out his hand with a smile. "I am indeed glad that I may temper judgment with mercy," he said. "Try the south, Mr. Newbold,—try Bermuda, for instance. The sea air and the warmth there might set your mother up marvellously." And as the young man stared at him unresponsively he gave a grasp to the hand he held, and turning, found his way out alone. He stumbled down the dark steps of the third-rate apartment-house and into his brougham, and as the rubber tires bowled him over the asphalt he communed with himself:

"Queer about those Newbolds. Badly off, of course, to live in that place, yet they know what it means to call me in. There must be some money. I wonder if they have enough for a trip, poor souls. Bah! they must have—everybody has when it comes to life and death. They'll get it somehow—rich relations and all that. Burr Claflin is their cousin, I know. David Newbold himself was rich enough five years ago, when he made that unlucky gamble in stocks—which killed him, they say. Well—life is certainly hard." And the doctor turned his mind to a new pair of horses he had been looking at in the afternoon, with a comfortable sense of a wind-guard or so, at the least, between himself and the gales of adversity.

In the little drawing-room, with its cheap paper and its old portraits, Randolph Newbold faced his sister with the news. He knew her courage, yet, even in the stress of his feeling, he wondered at it now; he felt almost a pang of jealousy when he saw her take the blow as he had not been able to take it.

"It is a death-sentence," he said, brokenly. "We have not the money to send her south, and we cannot get it."

Katherine Newbold's hands clenched. "We will get it," she said. "I don't know how just now, but we'll get it, Randolph. Mother's life shall not go for lack of a few hundred dollars. Oh, think—just think—six years ago it would have meant nothing. We went south every winter, and we were all well. It is too cruel! But we'll get the money—you'll see."

Page 28

“How?” the young man asked, bitterly. “The last jewel went so that we could have Dr. Renfrew. There’s nothing here to sell—nobody would buy our ancestors,” and he looked up mournfully at the painted figures on the wall. The very thought seemed an indignity to those stately personalities—the English judge in his wig, the colonial general in his buff-faced uniform, harbored for a century proudly among their own, now speculated upon as possible revenue. The girl put up a hand toward them as if deprecating her brother’s words, and his voice went on: “You know the doctor practically told me this morning. I have had no hope all day, and all day I have lived in hell. I don’t know how I did my work. To-night, coming home, I walked past Litterny’s. The windows were lighted and filled with a gorgeous lot of stones—there were a dozen big diamond brooches. I stopped and looked at them, and thought how she used to wear such things, and how now her life was going for the value of one of them, and—you may be horrified, Katherine, but this is true: If I could have broken into that window and snatched some of that stuff, I’d have done it. Honesty and all I’ve been brought up to would have meant nothing—nothing. I’d do it now, in a second, if I could, to get the money to save my mother. God! The town is swimming in money, and I can’t get a little to keep her alive!”

The young man’s eyes were wild with a passion of helplessness, but his sister gazed at him calmly, as if considering a question. From a room beyond came a painful cough, and the girl was on her feet.

“She is awake; I must go to her. But I shall think—don’t be hopeless, boy—I shall think of a way.” And she was gone.

Worn out with emotion, Randolph Newbold was sleeping a deep sleep that night. With a start he awoke, staring at a white figure with long, fair braids.

“Randolph, it’s I—Katherine. Don’t be startled.”

“What’s the matter? Is she worse?” He lifted himself anxiously, blinking sleep from his eyes.

“No—oh no! She’s sleeping well. It’s just that I have to talk to you, Randolph. Now. I can’t wait till morning—you’ll understand when I tell you. I haven’t been asleep at all; I’ve been thinking. I know now how we can get the money.”

“Katherine, are you raving?” the brother demanded; but the girl was not to be turned aside.

“Listen to me,” she said, and in her tone was the authority of the stronger personality, and the young man listened. She sat on the edge of his bed and held his hand as she talked, and through their lives neither might ever forget that midnight council.



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Page 29

The room had an air of having come in perfect and luxurious condition, fur-lined and jewel-clasped, as it were, from the hands of a good decorator, and of having stopped at that. The great triple lamp glowed green as if set with gigantic emeralds; and its soft light shone on a scheme of color full of charm for the eye. The stuffs, the woodwork, were of a delightful harmony, but it seemed that the books and the pictures were chosen to match them. The man talking, in the great carved armchair by the fire, fitted the place. His vigorous, pleasant face looked prosperous, and so kindly was his air that one might not cavil at a lack of subtler qualities. He drew a long breath as he brought out the last words of the story he was telling.

“And that, Mr. North,” he concluded, “is the way the firm of Litterny Brothers, the leading jewellers of this city, were done yesterday by a person or persons unknown, to the tune of five thousand dollars.” His eyes turned from the blazing logs to his guest.

The young man in his clerical dress stood as he listened, with eyes wide like a child's, fixed on the speaker. He stooped and picked up a poker and pushed the logs together as he answered. The deliberateness of the action would not have prepared one for the intensity of his words. “I never wanted to be a detective before,” he said, “but I'd give a good deal to catch the man who did that. It was such planned rascality, such keen-witted scoundrelism, that it gives me a fierce desire to show him up. I'd like to teach the beggar that honesty can be as intelligent as knavery; that in spite of his strength of cunning, law and right are stronger. I wish I could catch him,” and the brass poker gleamed in a savage flourish. “I'd have no mercy. The hungry wretch who steals meat, the ignorant sinner taught to sin from babyhood—I have infinite patience for such. But this thief spoke like a gentleman, and the maid said he was ‘a pretty young man’—there's no excuse for him. He simply wanted money that wasn't his,—there's no excuse. It makes my blood boil to think of a clever rascal like that succeeding in his rascality.” With that the intense manner had dropped from him as a garment, and he was smiling the gentlest, most whimsical smile at the older man. “You'll think, Mr. Litterny, that it's the loss of my new parish-house that's making me so ferocious, but, honestly, I'd forgotten all about it.” And no one who heard him could doubt his sincerity. “I was thinking of the case from your point of view. As to the parish-house, it's a disappointment, but of course I know that a large loss like this must make a difference in a man's expenditures. You have been very good to St. John's already,—a great many times you have been good to us.”

“It's a disappointment to me as well,” Litterny said. “Old St. John's of Newburyport has been dear to me many years. I was confirmed and married there—but *you* know. Everything I could do for it has been a satisfaction. And I looked forward to giving this parish-house. In ordinary years a theft of five thousand dollars would not have prevented me, but there have been complications and large expenses of late, to which this loss is the last straw. I shall have to postpone the parish-house,—but it shall be only postponed, Mr. North, only postponed.”

Page 30

The young rector answered quietly: "As I said before, Mr. Litterny, you have been most generous. We are grateful more than I know how to say." His manner was very winning, and the older man's kind face brightened.

"The greatest luxury which money brings is to give it away. St. John's owes its thanks not to me, but to you, Mr. North. I have meant for some time to put into words my appreciation of your work there. In two years you have infused more life and earnestness into that sleepy parish than I thought possible. You've waked them up, put energy into them, and got it out of them. You've done wonders. It's right you should know that people think this of you, and that your work is valued."

"I am glad," Norman North said, and the restraint of the words carried more than a speech.

Mr. Litterny went on: "But there's such a thing as overdoing, young man, and you're shaving the edge of it. You're looking ill—poor color—thin as a rail. You need a rest."

"I think I'll go to Bermuda. My senior warden was there last year, and he says it's a wonderful little place—full of flowers and tennis and sailing, and blue sea and nice people." He stood up suddenly and broadened his broad shoulders. "I love the south," he said. "And I love out-of-doors and using my muscles. It's good to think of whole days with no responsibility, and with exercise till my arms and legs ache. I get little exercise, and I miss it. I was on the track team at Yale, you see, and rather strong at tennis."

Mr. Litterny smiled, and his smile was full of sympathy. "We try to make a stained-glass saint out of you," he said, "and all the time you're a human youngster with a human desire for a good time. A mere lad," he added, reflectively, and went on: "Go down to Bermuda with a light heart, my boy, and enjoy yourself,—it will do your church as much good as you. Play tennis and sail—fall in love if you find the right girl,—nothing makes a man over like that." North was putting out his hand. "And remember," Litterny added, "to keep an eye out for my thief. You're retained as assistant detective in the case."

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On a bright, windy morning a steamship wound its careful way through the twisted water-road of Hamilton Harbor, Bermuda. Up from cabins mid corners poured figures unknown to the decks during the passage, and haggard faces brightened under the balmy breeze, and tired eyes smiled at the dark hills and snowy sands of the sliding shore. In a sheltered corner of the deck a woman lay back in a chair and drew in breaths of soft air, and a tall girl watched her.

"You feel better already, don't you?" she demanded, and Mrs. Newbold put her hand into her daughter's.

“It is Paradise,” she said. “I am going to get well.”

In an hour the landing had been made, the custom-house passed; the gay, exhilarating little drive had been taken to the hotel, through white streets, past white-roofed houses buried in trees and flowers and vines; the sick woman lay quiet and happy on her bed, drawn to the open window, where the healing of the breeze touched her gently, and where her eyes dreamed over a fairy stretch of sea and islands. Katherine, moving about the room, unpacking, came to sit in a chair by her mother and talk to her for a moment.

Page 31

"To-morrow, if you're a good child, you shall go for a drive. Think—a drive in an enchanted island. It's Shakespeare's *Tempest* island,—did I tell you I heard that on the boat? We might run across Caliban any minute, and I think at least we'll find 'M' and 'F', for Miranda and Ferdinand, cut into the bark of a tree somewhere. We'll go for a drive every day, every single day, till we find it. You'll see."

Mrs. Newbold's eyes moved from the sea and rested, perplexed, on her daughter. "Katherine, how can we afford to drive every day? How can we be here at all? I don't understand it. I'm sure there was nothing left to sell except the land out west, and Mr. Seaton told us last spring that it was worthless. How did you and Randolph conjure up the money for this beautiful journey that is going to save my life?"

The girl bent impulsively and kissed her with tender roughness. "It is going to do that—it is!" she cried, and her voice broke. Then: "Never mind how the money came, dear,—invalids mustn't be curious. It strains their nerves. Wait till you're well and perhaps you'll hear a tale about that land out west."

Day after day slipped past in the lotus-eating land whose unreality makes it almost a change of planets from every-day America. Each day brought health with great rapidity, and soon each day brought new friends. Mrs. Newbold was full of charm, and the devotion between the ill mother and the blooming daughter was an attractive sight. Yet the girl was not light-hearted. Often the mother, waking in the night, heard a shivering sigh through the open door between their rooms; often she surprised a harassed look in the young eyes which, with all that the family had gone through, was new to them. But Katherine laughed at questions, and threw herself so gayly into the pleasures which came to her that Mrs. Newbold, too happy to be analytical, let the straws pass and the wind blow where it would.

There came a balmy morning when the two were to take, with half a dozen others, the long drive to St. George's. The three carriage-loads set off in a pleasant hubbub from the white-paved courtyard of the hotel, and as Katherine settled her mother with much care and many rugs, her camera dropped under the wheels. Everybody was busy, nobody was looking, and she stooped and reached for it in vain. Then out of a blue sky a voice said:

"I'll get it for you," She was pushed firmly aside and a figure in a blue coat was grovelling adventurously beneath the trap. It came out, straightened; she had her camera; she was staring up into a face which contemplated her, which startled her, so radiant, so everything desirable it seemed to her to be. The man's eyes considered her a moment as she thanked him, and then he had lifted his hat and was gone, running, like a boy in a hurry for a holiday, toward the white stone landing. An empty sail flopped big at the landing, and the girl stood and looked as he sprang in under it and took the rudder. Joe, the head porter, the familiar friend of every one, was stowing in a rug.

Page 32

"That gen'l'man's the Reverend Norman North,—he come by the *Trinidad* last Wednesday; he's sailin' to St. George's," Joe volunteered. "Don't look much like a reverend, do he?" And with that the carriage had started.

Seeing the sights at St. George's, they came to the small old church, on its western side a huge flight of steps, capped with a meek doorway; on its eastern end a stone tower guarding stately a flowery graveyard. The moment the girl stepped inside, the spell of the bright peace which filled the place caught her. The Sunday decorations were still there, and hundreds of lilies bloomed from the pillars; sunshine slanted through the simple stained glass and lay in colored patches on the floor; there were square pews of a bygone day; there was a pulpit with a winding stair; there were tablets on the walls to shipwrecked sailors, to governors and officers dead here in harness. The clumsy woodwork, the cheap carpets, the modest brasses, were in perfect order; there were marks everywhere of reverent care.

"Let me stay," the girl begged. "I don't want to drive about. I want to stay in this place. I'll meet you at the hotel for lunch, if you'll leave me." And they left her.

The verger had gone, and she was quite alone. Deep in the shadow of a gallery she slid to her knees and hid her face. "O God!" she whispered,—“O God, forgive me!” And again the words seemed torn from her—“O God, forgive me!”

There were voices in the vestibule, but the girl in the stress of her prayer did not hear.

"Deal not with us according to our sins, neither reward us according to our iniquities," she prayed, the accustomed words rushing to her want, and she was suddenly aware that two people stood in the church. One of them spoke.

"Don't bother to stay with me," he said, and in the voice, it seemed, were the qualities that a man's speech should have—strength, certainty, the unteachable tone of gentle blood, and beyond these the note of personality, always indescribable, in this case carrying an appeal and an authority oddly combined. "Don't stay with me. I like to be alone here. I'm a clergyman, and I enjoy an old church like this. I'd like to be alone in it," and a bit of silver flashed.

If the tip did it or the compelling voice, the verger murmured a word about luncheon, was gone, and the girl in her dim corner saw, as the other turned, that he was the rescuer of her camera, whose name was, Joe had said and she remembered, Norman North. She was about to move, to let herself be seen, when the young man knelt suddenly in the old-fashioned front pew, as a good child might kneel who had been taught the ways of his mother church, and bent his dark head. She waited quietly while this servant spoke to his Master. There was no sound in the silent, sun-lanced church, but outside one heard as from far away the noises of the village. Katherine's eyes rested on the bowed head, and she wondered uncertainly

Page 33

if she should let him know of her presence, or if it might not be better to slip out unnoticed, when in a moment he had risen and was swinging with a vigorous step up the little corkscrew stairway of the pulpit. There he stood, facing the silence, facing the flower-starred shadows, the empty spaces; facing her, but not seeing her. And the girl forgot herself and the question of her going as she saw the look in his face, the light which comes at times to those who give their lives to holiness, since the day when the people, gazing at Stephen, the martyr, “saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.” When his voice floated out on the dim, sunny atmosphere it rested as lightly on the silence as if the notes of an organ rolled through its own place. He spoke a prayer of a service which, to those whose babyhood has been consecrated by it, whose childhood and youth have listened to its simple and stately words, whose manhood and womanhood have been carried over many a hard place by the lift of its familiar sentences,—he spoke a prayer of that service which is less dear only, to those bred in it, than the voices of their dearest. As a priest begins to speak to his congregation he began, and the hearer in the shadow of the gallery listened, awed:

“The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.”

And in the little church was silence as if all the earth obeyed. The collect for the day came next, and a bit of jubilant Easter service, and then his mind seemed to drift back to the sentences with which the prayer-book opens.

“This is the day which the Lord hath made,” the ringing voice announced. “Let us rejoice and be glad in it.” And then, stabbing into the girl’s fevered conscience, “I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.” It was as if an inflexible judge spoke the words for her. “When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive,” the pure, stern tones went on.

She was not turning away from wickedness; she did not mean to turn away; she would not do that which was lawful. The girl shivered. She could not hear this dreadful accusal from the very pulpit. She must leave this place. And with that the man, as if in a sudden passion of feeling, had tossed his right hand high above him; his head was thrown back; his eyes shone up into the shadows of the roof as if they would pierce material things and see Him who reigned; he was pleading as if for his life, pleading for his brothers, for human beings who sin and suffer.

“O Lord,” he prayed, “spare all those who confess their sins unto Thee, that they whose consciences by sin are accused, by Thy merciful pardon may be absolved; through Christ our Lord.” And suddenly he was using the very words which had come to her of themselves a few minutes before. “Deal not with us according to our sins—deal not with us,” he repeated, as if wresting forgiveness for his fellows from the Almighty. “Deal

not with us according to our sins, neither reward us according to our iniquities.” And while the echo of the words yet held the girl motionless he was gone.

Page 34

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Down by the road which runs past the hotel, sunken ten feet below its level, are the tennis-courts, and soldiers in scarlet and khaki, and blue-jackets with floating ribbons, and negro bell-boys returning from errands, and white-gowned American women with flowery hats, and men in summer flannels stop as they pass, and sit on the low wall and watch the games. There is always a gallery for the tennis-players. But on a Tuesday morning about eleven o'clock the audience began to melt away in disgust. Without doubt they were having plenty of amusement among themselves, these tennis-players grouped at one side of the court and filling the air with explosions of laughter. But the amusement of the public was being neglected. Why in the world, being rubber-shod as to the foot and racquetted as to the hand, did they not play tennis? A girl in a short white dress, wearing white tennis-shoes and carrying a racquet, came tripping down the flight of stone steps, and stopped as she stood on the last landing and seemed to ask the same question. She came slowly across the empty court, looking with curiosity at the bunch of absorbed people, and presently she caught her breath. The man who was the centre of the group, who was making, apparently, the amusement, was the young clergyman, Norman North.

There was an outburst, a chorus of: "You can't have that one, Mr. North!" "That's been used!" "That's Mr. Dennison's!"

A tall English officer—a fine, manly mixture of big muscles and fresh color and khaki—looked up, saw the girl, and swung toward her. "Good morning, Miss Newbold. Come and join the fun. Devil of a fellow, that North,—they say he's a parson."

"What is it? What are they laughing at?" Katherine demanded.

"They're doing a Limerick tournament, which is what North calls the game. Mr. Gale is timekeeper. They're to see which recites most rhymes inside five minutes. The winner picks his court and plays with Miss Lee."

Captain Comerford imparted this in jerky whispers, listening with one ear all the time to a sound which stirred Katherine, the voice which she had heard yesterday in the church at St. George's. The Englishman's spasmodic growl stopped, and she drifted a step nearer, listening. As she caught the words, her brows drew together with displeasure, with shocked surprise. The inspired saint of yesterday was reciting with earnestness, with every delicate inflection of his beautiful voice, these words:

"There was a young curate of Kidderminster,
Who kindly, but firmly, chid a spinster,
Because on the ice
She said something not nice
When he quite inadvertently slid ag'inst her."

Page 35

As the roar which followed this subsided, Katherine's face cleared. What right had she to make a pattern of solemn righteousness for this stranger and be insulted if he did not fit? Certainly he was saintly—she had seen his soul bared to her vision; but certainly he was human also, as this moment was demonstrating. It flashed over her vaguely to wonder which was the dominant quality—which would rule in a stress of temptation—the saintly side or the human? But at least he was human with a winning humanity. His mirth and his enjoyment of it were as spontaneous as a mischievous, bright child's, and it was easy to see that the charm of his remarkable voice attracted others as it had attracted her.

“There was a young fellow from Clyde,
Who was often at funerals espied—”

he had begun, and with that, between her first shock and her swift recovery, with the contrast between the man of yesterday and the man of to-day, Katherine suddenly laughed aloud. North stopped short, and turned and looked at her, and for a second and their eyes met, and each read recognition and friendliness. The Limerick went on:

“When asked who was dead,
He nodded and said,
‘I don’t know—I just came for the ride.’”

“Eleven for Mr. North—one-half minute more,” called Mr. Gale, and instantly North was in the breach:

“A sore-hipped hippopotamus quite flustered
Objected to a poultice made of custard;
‘Can’t you doctor up my hip
With anything but flip?’
So they put upon the hip a pot o’ mustard.”

And the half-minute was done and North had won, and there was clapping of hands for the victor, and at once, before the little uproar was over, Katherine saw him speak a word to Mr. Gale, and saw the latter, turning, stare about as if searching for some one, and, meeting her glance, smile.

“I want to present Mr. North, Miss Newbold,” Gale said.

“Why did you laugh in the middle of my Limerick? Had you heard it?” North demanded, as if they had known each other a year instead of a minute.

“No, I had not heard it.” Katherine shook her head.

“Then why did you laugh?”

She looked at him reflectively. “I don’t know you well enough to tell you that.”

“How soon will you know me well enough—if I do my best?”

She considered. “About three weeks from yesterday.”

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Many things grow fast in southern climates—fruits, flowers, even friendship and love. Three weeks later, on a hot, bright morning of April, North and Katherine Newbold were walking down a road of Bermuda to the sea, and between them was what had ripened in the twenty-one days from a germ to a full-grown bud, ready to open at the lightest touch into flower. As they walked down such a road of a dream, the man talked to the girl as he had never talked to any one

Page 36

before. He spoke of his work and its hopes and disappointments, of the pathos, the tragedy, the comedy often of a way of life which leads by a deeper cut through men's hearts than any other, and he told her also, modestly indeed, and because he loved to tell her what meant much to him, of the joy of knowing himself successful in his parish. He went into details, absorbingly interesting to him, and this new luxury of speaking freely carried him away.

"I hope I'm not boring you." His frank gaze turned on her anxiously. "I don't know what right I have to assume that the increase in the Sunday-school, or even the new brass pulpit, is a fascinating subject to you. I never did this before," he said, and there was something in his voice which hindered the girl from answering his glance. But there was no air of being bored about her, and he went on. "However, life isn't all good luck. I had a serious blow just before I came down here—a queer thing happened. I told you just now that all the large gifts to St. John's had come from one man—a former parishioner. The man was James Litterny, of the great firm of—Why, what's the matter—what is it?" For Katherine had stopped short, in her fast, swinging walk, and without a sound had swayed and caught at the wall as if to keep herself from falling. Before he could reach her she had straightened herself and was smiling.

"I felt ill for a second—it's nothing,—let's go along."

North made eager suggestions for her comfort, but the girl was firm in her assertion, that she was now quite well, so that, having no sisters and being ignorant that a healthy young woman does not, any more than a healthy young man, go white and stagger without reason, he yielded, and they walked briskly on.

"You were telling me something that happened to you—something connected with Mr. —with the rich parishioner." Her tone was steady and casual, but looking at her, he saw that she was still pale.

"Do you really want to hear my yarns? You're sure it isn't that which made you feel faint —because I talked so much?"

"It's always an effort not to talk myself," she laughed up at him, yet with a strange look in her eyes. "All the same, talk a little more. Tell me what you began to tell about Mr. Litterny." The name came out full and strong.

"Oh, that! Well, it's a story extraordinary enough for a book. I think it will interest you."

"I think it will," Katherine agreed.

"You see," he went on, "Mr. Litterny promised us a new parish-house, the best and largest practicable. It was to cost, with the lot, ten thousand dollars. It was to be begun

this spring. Not long before I came to Bermuda, I had a note one morning from him, asking me to come to his house the next evening. I went, and he told me that the parish-house would have to be given up for the present, because the firm of Litterny Brothers had just met with a loss, through a most skilful and original robbery, of five thousand dollars.”

Page 37

"A robbery?" the girl repeated. "Burglars, you mean?"

"Something much more artistic than burglars. I told you this story was good enough for a book. It's been kept quiet because the detectives thought the chance better that way of hunting the thief to earth." (Why should she catch her breath?) "But I'm under no promise—I'm sure I may tell you. You're not likely to have any connection with the rascal."

Katherine's step hung a little as if she shrank from the words, but she caught at a part of the sentence and repeated it, "'Hunting the thief to earth'—you say that as if you'd like to see it done."

"I would like to see it done," said North, with slow emphasis. "Nothing has ever more roused my resentment. I suppose it's partly the loss of the parish-house, but, aside from that, it makes me rage to think of splendid old James Litterny, the biggest-hearted man I know, being done in that way. Why, he'd have helped the scoundrel in a minute if he'd gone to him instead of stealing from him. Usually my sympathies are with the sinner, but I believe if I caught this one I'd be merciless."

"Would you mind sitting down here?" Katherine asked, in a voice which sounded hard. "I'm not ill, but I feel—tired. I want to sit here and listen to the story of that unprincipled thief and his wicked robbery."

North was all solicitude in a moment, but the girl put him aside impatiently.

"I'm quite right. Don't bother. I just want to be still while you talk. See what a good seat this is."

Over the russet sand of the dunes the sea flashed a burning blue; storm-twisted cedars led a rutted road down to it; in the salt air the piny odor was sharp with sunlight. Katherine had dropped beneath one of the dwarfed trees, and leaning back, smiled dimly up at him with a stricken face which North did not understand.

"You are ill," he said, anxiously. "You look ill. Please let me take care of you. There is a house back there—let me—" but she interrupted:

"I'm not ill, and I won't be fussed over. I'm not exactly right, but I will be in a few minutes. The best thing for me is just to rest here and have you talk to me. Tell me that story you are so slow about."

He took her at her word. Lying at full length at her feet—his head propped on a hillock so that he might look into her face, one of his hands against the hem of her white dress,—the shadows of the cedars swept back and forth across him, the south sea glittered beyond the sand-dunes, and he told the story.

“Mr. Litterny was in his office in the early afternoon of February 18,” he began, “when a man called him up on the telephone. Mr. Litterny did not recognize the voice, but the man stated at once that he was Burr Claflin, whose name you may know. He is a rich broker, and a personal friend of both the Litternys. Voice is so uncertain a quantity over a telephone that it did not occur to Mr. Litterny to be suspicious on that point, and the conversation was absolutely in character otherwise. The talker used expressions and a manner of saying things which the jeweller knew to be characteristic of Claflin.

Page 38

"He told Mr. Litterny that he had just made a lucky hit in stocks, and 'turned over a bunch of money,' as he put it, and that he wanted to make his wife a present. 'Now—this afternoon—this minute,' he said, which was just like Burr Claflin, who is an impetuous old chap. 'I want to give her a diamond brooch, and I want her to wear it out to dinner to-night,' he said. 'Can't you send two or three corks up to the house for me?' That surprised Mr. Litterny and he hesitated, but finally said that he would do it. It was against the rules of the house, but as it was for Mr. Claflin he would do it. They had a little talk about the details, and Claflin arranged to call up his wife and tell her that the jewels would be there at four-thirty, so that she could look out for them personally. All that was the Litterny end of the affair. Simple enough, wasn't it?"

Katherine's eyes were so intent, so brilliant, that Norman North went on with a pleased sense that he told the tale well:

"Now begins the Claflin experience. At half past four a clerk from Litterny's left a package at the Claflin house in Cleveland Avenue, which was at once taken, as the man desired, to Mrs. Claflin. She opened it and found three very handsome diamond brooches, which astonished her extremely, as she knew nothing about them. However, it was not unusual for Claflin to give her jewelry, and he is, as I said, an impulsive man, so that unexpected presents had come once or twice before; and altogether, being much taken with the stones, she concluded simply that she would understand when her husband came home to dinner.

"However, her hopes were dashed, for twenty minutes later, barely long enough for the clerk to have got back to the shop, she was called to the telephone by a message, said to be from Litterny's, and a most polite and apologetic person explained over the line that a mistake had been made; that the diamonds had been addressed and sent to her by an error of the shipping-clerk; that they were not intended for Mrs. Burr Claflin, but for Mrs. Bird Catlin, and that the change in name had been discovered on the messenger's return. Would Mrs. Claflin pardon the trouble caused, and would she be good enough to see that the package was given to their man, who would call for it in fifteen minutes? Now the Catlins, as you must know, are richer people even than the Claflins, so that the thing was absolutely plausible. Mrs. Claflin tied up the jewels herself, and entrusted them to her own maid, who has been with her for years, and this woman answered the door and gave the parcel into the hands of a man who said that he was sent from Litterny's for it. All that the maid could say of him was that he was 'a pretty young man, with a speech like a gentleman.' And that was the last that has been seen of the diamond brooches. Wasn't it simple? Didn't I tell you that this affair was an artistic one?" North demanded.

Katherine Newbold drew a deep breath, and the story-teller, watching her face, saw that she was stirred with an emotion which he put down, with a slight surprise, to interest in his narrative.

Page 39

"Is there no clew to the—thief? Have they no idea at all? Haven't those wonderful detectives yet got on—his track?"

North shook his head. "I had a letter by yesterday's boat from Mr. Litterny about another matter, and he spoke of this. He said the police were baffled—that he believed now that it could never be traced."

"Thank God!" Katherine said, slowly and distinctly, and North stared in astonishment.

"What?" His tone was incredulous.

"Oh; don't take me so seriously," said the girl, impatiently. "It's only that I can't sympathize with your multimillionaire, who loses a little of his heaps of money, against some poor soul to whom that little may mean life or death—life or death, maybe, for his nearest and dearest. Mr. Litterny has had a small loss, which he won't feel in a year from now. The thief, the rascal, the scoundrel, as you call him so fluently, has escaped for now, perhaps, with his ill-gotten gains, but he is a hunted thing, living with a black terror of being found out—a terror which clutches him when he prays and when he dances. It's the thief I'm sorry for—I'm sorry for him—I'm sorry for him." Her voice was agitated and uneven beyond what seemed reasonable.

"The way of the transgressor is hard," Norman North said, slowly, and looked across the shifting sand-stretch to the inevitable sea, and spoke the words pitilessly, as if an inevitable law spoke through him.

They cut into the girl's soul. A quick gasp of pain broke from her, and the man turned and saw her face and sprang to his feet.

"Come," he said,—“come home,” and held out his hands.

She let him take hers, and he lifted her lightly, and did not let her hands go. For a second they stood, and into the silence a deep boom of the water against the beach thundered and died away. He drew the hands slowly toward him till he held them against him. There seemed not to be any need for words.

Half an hour later, as they walked back through the sweet loneliness of Springfield Avenue, North said: "You've forgotten something. You've forgotten that this is the day you were to tell me why you had the bad manners to laugh at me before you knew me. Now that we are engaged it's your duty to tell me if I'm ridiculous."

There was none of the responsive, soft laughter he expected. "We're not engaged—we can't be engaged," she threw back, impetuously, and as he looked at her there was suffering in her face.



“What do you mean? You told me you loved me.” His voice was full of its curious mixture of gentleness and sternness, and she shrank visibly from the sternness.

“Don’t be hard on me,” she begged, like a frightened child, and he caught her hand with a quick exclamation. “I’ll tell you—everything. Not only that little thing about my laughing, but—but more—everything. Why I cannot be engaged to you. I must tell you—I know it—but, oh! not to-day—not for a little while! Let me have this little time to be happy. You sail a week from to-day. I’ll write it all for you, and you can read it on the way to New York. That will do—won’t that do?” she pleaded.

Page 40

North took both her hands in a hard grasp and searched her face and her eyes—eyes clear and sweet, though filled with misery. “Yes, that will do,” he said. “It’s all nonsense that you can’t be engaged to me. You are engaged to me, and you are going to marry me. If you love me—and you say you do,—there’s nothing I’ll let interfere. Nothing—absolutely nothing.” There was little of the saint in his look now; it was filled with human love and masterful determination, and in his eyes smouldered a recklessness, a will to have his way, that was no angel, but all man.

A week later Norman North sailed to New York, and in his pocket was a letter which was not to be read till Bermuda was out of sight. When the coral reef was passed, when the fairy blue of the island waters had changed to the dark swell of the Atlantic, he slipped the bolt in the door of his cabin and took out the letter.

“I laughed because you were so wonderfully two men in one,” it began, “I was in the church at St. George’s the day when you sent the verger away and went into the pulpit and said parts of the service. I could not tell you this before because it came so close to the other thing which I must tell you now; because I sat trembling before you that day, hidden in the shadow of a gallery, knowing myself a criminal, while you stood above me like a pitiless judge and rolled out sentences that were bolts of fire emptied on my soul. The next morning I heard you reciting Limericks. Are you surprised that I laughed when the contrast struck me? Even then I wondered which was the real of you, the saint or the man,—which would win if it came to a desperate fight. The fight is coming, Norman.

“That’s all a preamble. Here is what you must know: I am the thief who stole Mr. Litterny’s diamonds.”

The letter fell, and the man caught at it as it fell. His hand shook, but he laughed aloud.

“It is a joke,” he said, in a queer, dry voice. “A wretched joke. How can she?” And he read on:

“You won’t believe this at first; you will think I am making a poor joke; but you will have to believe it in the end. I will try to put the case before you as an outside person would put it, without softening or condoning. My mother was very ill; the specialist, to pay whom we had sold her last jewel, said that she would die if she were not taken south; we had no money to take her south. That night my brother lost his self-control and raved about breaking into a shop and stealing diamonds, to get money to save her life. That put the thought into my mind, and I made a plan. Randolph, my brother, is a clever amateur actor, and the rich Burr Claflin is our distant cousin. We both know him fairly well, and it was easy enough for Randolph to copy his mannerisms. We knew also, of course, more or less, his way of living, and that it would not be out of drawing that he should send up diamonds to his wife unexpectedly. I planned it all, and

Page 41

I made Randolph do it. I have always been able to influence him to what I pleased. The sin is all mine, not his. We had been selling my mother's jewels little by little for several years, so we had no difficulty in getting rid of the stones, which Randolph took from their settings and sold to different dealers. My mother knows nothing of where the money came from. We are living in Bermuda now, in comfort and luxury, I as well as she, on the profits of my thievery. I am not sorry. It has wrecked life, perhaps eternity, for me, but I would do it again to save my mother.

"I put this confession into your hands to do with, as far as I am concerned, what you like. If the saint in you believes that I ought to be sent to jail, take this to Mr. Litterny and have him send me to jail. But you shan't touch Randolph—you are not free there. It was I who did it—he was my tool,—any one will tell you I have the stronger will. You shall not hurt Randolph—that is barred.

"You see now why I couldn't be engaged to you—you wouldn't want to marry a thief, would you, Norman? I can never make restitution, you know, for the money will be mostly gone before we get home, and there is no more to come. You could not, either, for you said that you had little beyond your salary. We could never make it good to Mr. Litterny, even if you wanted to marry me after this. Mr. Litterny is your best friend; you are bound to him by a thousand ties of gratitude and affection. You can't marry a thief who has robbed him of five thousand dollars, and never tell him, and go on taking his gifts. That is the way the saint will look at it—the saint who thundered awful warnings at me in the little church at St. George's. But even that day there was something gentler than the dreadful holiness of you. Do you remember how you pleaded, begged as if of your father, for your brothers and sisters? 'Deal not with us according to our sins, neither reward us according to our iniquities,' you said. Do you remember? As you said that to God, I say it to you, I love you. I leave my fate at your mercy. But don't forget that you yourself begged that, with your hands stretched out to heaven, as I stretch my hands to you, Norman, Norman—'Deal not with me according to my sins, neither reward me according to my iniquities.'"

The noises of a ship moving across a quiet ocean went on steadily. Many feet tramped back and forth on the deck, and cheerful voices and laughter floated through the skylight, and down below a man knelt in a narrow cabin with his head buried in his arms, motionless.

CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOR

Page 42

Mists blew about the mountains across the river, and over West Point hung a raw fog. Some of the officers who stood with bared heads by the heap of earth and the hole in the ground shivered a little. The young Chaplain read, solemnly, the solemn and grand words of the service, and the evenness of his voice was unnatural enough to show deep feeling. He remembered how, a year before, he had seen the hero of this scene playing football on just such a day, tumbling about and shouting, his hair wild and matted and his face filled with fresh color. Such a mere boy he was, concerned over the question as to where he could hide his contraband dress boots, excited by an invitation to dine out Saturday night. The dear young chap! There were tears in the Chaplain's eyes as he thought of little courtesies to himself, of little generousities to other cadets, of a manly and honest heart shown everywhere that character may show in the guarded life of the nation's schoolboys.

The sympathetic, ringing voice stopped, and he watched the quick, dreadful, necessary work of the men at the grave, and then his sad eyes wandered pitifully over the rows of boyish faces where the cadets stood. Just such a child as those, thought the Chaplain—himself but a few years older—no history; no life, as we know life; no love, and what was life without—you may see that the Chaplain was young; the poor boy was taken from these quiet ways and sent direct on the fire-lit stage of history, and in the turn, behold! he was a hero. The white-robed Chaplain thrilled and his dark eyes flashed. He seemed to see that day; he would give half his life to have seen it—this boy had given all of his. The boy was wounded early, and as the bullets poured death down the hill he crept up it, on hands and knees, leading his men. The strong life in him lasted till he reached the top, and then the last of it pulled him to his feet and he stood and waved and cheered—and fell. But he went up San Juan Hill. After all, he lived. He missed fifty years, perhaps, but he had Santiago. The flag wrapped him, he was the honored dead of the nation. God keep him! The Chaplain turned with a swing and raised his prayer-book to read the committal. The long black box—the boy was very tall—was being lowered gently, tenderly. Suddenly the heroic vision of Santiago vanished and he seemed to see again the rumpled head and the alert, eager, rosy face of the boy playing football—the head that lay there! An iron grip caught his throat, and if a sound had come it would have been a sob. Poor little boy! Poor little hero! To exchange all life's sweetness for that fiery glory! Not to have known the meaning of living—of loving—of being loved!

The beautiful, tender voice rang out again so that each one heard it to the farthest limit of the great crowd—"We therefore commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come."

Page 43

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An hour later the boy's mother sat in her room at the hotel and opened a tin box of letters, found with his traps, and given her with the rest. She had planned it for this time and had left the box unopened. To-morrow she must take up life and try to carry it, with the boy gone, but to-day she must and would be what is called morbid. She looked over the bend in the river to the white-dotted cemetery—she could tell where lay the new mound, flower-covered, above his yellow head. She looked away quickly and bent over the box in her lap and turned the key. Her own handwriting met her eyes first; all her letters for six months back were there, scattered loosely about the box. She gathered them up, slipping them through her fingers to be sure of the writing. Letter after letter, all hers.

"They were his love-letters," she said to herself. "He never had any others, dear little boy—my dear little boy!"

Underneath were more letters, a package first; quite a lot of them, thirty, fifty—it was hard to guess—held together by a rubber strap. The strap broke as she drew out the first envelope and they fell all about her, some on the floor, but she did not notice it, for the address was in a feminine writing that had a vague familiarity. She stopped a moment, with the envelope in one hand and the fingers of the other hand on the folded paper inside. It felt like a dishonorable thing to do—like prying into the boy's secrets, forcing his confidence; and she had never done that. Yet some one must know whether these papers of his should be burned or kept, and who was there but herself? She drew out the letter. It began "My dearest." The boy's mother stopped short and drew a trembling breath, with a sharp, jealous pain. She had not known. Then she lifted her head and saw the dots of white on the green earth across the bay and her heart grew soft for that other woman to whom he had been "dearest" too, who must suffer this sorrow of losing him too. But she could not read her letters, she must send them, take them to her, and tell her that his mother had held them sacred. She turned to the signature.

"And so you must believe, darling, that I am and always will be—always, always, with love and kisses, your own dear, little 'Good Queen Bess.'"

It was not the sort of an ending to a letter she would have expected from the girl he loved, for the boy, though most undemonstrative, had been intense and taken his affections seriously always. But one can never tell, and the girl was probably quite young. But who was she? The signature gave no clew; the date was two years before, and from New York—sufficiently vague! She would have to read until she found the thread, and as she read the wonder grew that so flimsy a personality could have held her boy. One letter, two, three, six, and yet no sign to identify the writer. She wrote first from New York on the

Page 44

point of starting for a long stay abroad, and the other letters were all from different places on the other side. Once in awhile a familiar name cropped up, but never to give any clew. There were plenty of people whom she called by their Christian names, but that helped nothing. And often she referred to their engagement—to their marriage to come. It was hard for the boy's mother, who believed she had had his confidence. But there was one letter from Vienna that made her lighter-hearted as to that.

"My dear sweet darling," it began, "I haven't written you very often from here, but then I don't believe you know the difference, for you never scold at all, even if I'm ever so long in writing. And as for you, you rascal, you write less and less, and shorter and shorter. If I didn't know for certain—but then, of course, you love me? Don't you, you dearest boy? Of course you do, and who wouldn't? Now don't think I'm really so conceited as that, for I only mean it in joke, but in earnest, I might think it if I let myself, for they make such a fuss over me here—you never saw anything like it! The Prince von H—— told Mamma yesterday I was the prettiest girl who had been here in ten years—what do you think of that, sir? The officers are as thick as bees wherever I go, and I ride with them and dance with them and am having just the loveliest time! You don't mind that, do you, darling, even if we are engaged? Oh, about telling your mother—no, sir, you just cannot! You've begged me all along to do that, but you might as well stop, for I won't. You write more about that than anything else, it seems to me, and I'll believe soon you are more in love with your mother than with me. So take care! Remember, you promised that night at the hop at West Point—what centuries ago it seems, and it was a year and a half!—that you would not tell a living soul, not even your mother, until I said so. You see, it might get out and—oh, what's the use of fussing? It might spoil all my good time, and though I'm just as devoted as ever, and as much in love, you big, handsome thing—yes, just exactly!—still, I want to have a good time. Why shouldn't I? As the Prince would say, I'm pretty enough—but that's nonsense, of course."

The letter was signed like all the others "Good Queen Bess," a foolish enough name for a girl to call herself, the boy's mother thought, a touch contemptuously. She sat several minutes with that letter in her hand.

"I'll believe soon that you are more in love with your mother than you are with me"—that soothed the sore spot in her heart wonderfully. Wasn't it so, perhaps. It seemed to her that the boy had fallen into this affair suddenly, impulsively, without realizing its meaning, and that his loyalty had held him fast, after the glamour was gone. And perhaps the girl, too. For the boy had much besides himself, and there were girls who might think of that.

The next letter went far to confirm this theory.

Page 45

"Of course I don't want to break our engagement," the girl wrote. "What makes you ask such a question? I fully expect to marry you some day, of course, when I have had my little 'fling,' and I should just go crazy if I thought you didn't love me as much as always. You would if you saw me, for they all say I'm prettier than ever. You don't want to break the engagement, do you? Please, please, don't say so, for I couldn't bear it."

And in the next few lines she mentioned herself by name. It was a well-known name to the boy's mother, that of the daughter of a cousin with whom she had never been over-intimate. She had had notes from the girl a few times, once or twice from abroad, which accounted for the familiarity of the writing. So she gathered the letters together, the last one dated only a month before, and put them one side to send back.

"She will soon get over it," she said, and sighed as she turned to the papers still left in the bottom of the box. There were only a few, a thin packet of six or eight, and one lying separate. She slipped the rubber band from the packet and looked hard at the irregular, strong writing, woman's or man's, it was hard to say which. Then she spread out the envelopes and took them in order by the postmarks. The first was a little note, thanking him for a book, a few lines of clever nothing signed by a woman's name which she had never heard.

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"My dear Mr. —," it ran. "Indeed you did get ahead of 'all the others' in sending me 'The Gentleman from Indiana,' So far ahead that the next man in the procession is not even in sight yet. I hate to tell you that, but honesty demands it. I have taken just one sidewise peep at 'The Gentleman'—and like his looks immensely—but to-morrow night I am going to pretend I have a headache and stay home from the concert where the family are going, and turn cannibal and devour him. I hope nothing will interrupt me. Unless—I wonder if you are conceited enough to imagine what is one of the very few things I would like to have interrupt me? After that bit of boldness I think I must stop writing to you. I mean it just the same. And thanking you a thousand times again, I am,

"Sincerely yours."

There were four or five more of this sort, sometimes only a day or two, sometimes a month apart; always with some definite reason for the writing, flowers or books to thank him for, a walk to arrange, an invitation to dinner. Charming, bright, friendly notes, with the happy atmosphere of a perfect understanding between them, of mutual interests and common enthusiasms.

"She was very different from the other," the boy's mother sighed, as she took up an unread letter—there were but two more. There was no harm in reading such letters as these, she thought with relief, and noticed as she drew the paper from the envelope that the postmark was two months later.

Page 46

"You want me to write once that I love you"—that is the way it began.

The woman who read dropped it suddenly as if it had burned her. Was it possible? Her light-hearted boy, whose short life she had been so sure had held nothing but a boy's, almost a child's, joys and sorrows! The other affair was surprise enough, and a sad surprise, yet after all it had not touched him deeply, she felt certain of that; but this was another question. She knew instinctively that if love had grown from such a solid foundation as this sweet and happy and reasonable friendship with this girl, whose warm heart and deep soul shone through her clear and simple words, it would be a different love from anything that other poor, flimsy child could inspire. "L'amitie, c'est l'amour sans ailes." But sometimes when men and women have let the quiet, safe god Friendship fold his arms gently around them, he spreads suddenly a pair of sinning wings and carries them off—to heaven—wherever he wills it, and only then they see that he is not Friendship, but Love.

She picked up the letter again and read on:

"You want me to write once that I love you, so that you may read it with your eyes, if you may not hear it with your ears. Is that it—is that what you want, dear? Which question is a foolish sort of way for me to waste several drops of ink, considering that your letter is open before me. And your picture just back of it, your brown eyes looking over the edge so eagerly, so actually alive that it seems very foolish to be making signs to you on paper at all. How much simpler just to say half a word and then—then! Only we two can fill up that dash, but we can fill it full, can't we? However, I'm not doing what you want, and—will you not tell yourself, if I tell you something? To do what you want is just the one thing on earth I like most to do. I think you have magnetized me into a jelly-fish, for at times I seem to have no will at all. I believe if you asked me to do the Chinese kotow, and bend to the earth before you, I'd secretly be dying to do it. But I wouldn't, you know, I promise you that. I give you credit for liking a live woman, with a will of her own, better than a jelly-fish. And anyway I wouldn't—if you liked me for it or not—so you see it's no use urging me. And still I haven't done what you want—what was it now? Oh, to tell you that—but the words frighten me, they are so big. That I—I—I—love you. Is it that? I haven't said it yet, remember. I'm only asking a question. Do you know I have an objection to sitting here in cold blood and writing that down in cold ink? If it were only a little dark now, and your shoulder—and I could hide my head—you can't get off for a minute? Ah, I am scribbling along light-heartedly, when all the time the sword of Damocles is hanging over us both, when my next letter may have to be good-bye for always. If that fate comes you will find me steady to stand by you, to help you. I will say

Page 47

those three little words, so little and so big, to you once again, and then I will live them by giving up what is dearest to me—that's you, dear—that your 'conduct' may not be 'unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.' You must keep your word. If the worst comes, will you always remember that as an American woman's patriotism. There could be none truer. I could send you marching off to Cuba—and how about that, is it war surely?—with a light heart, knowing that you were giving yourself for a holy cause and going to honor and fame, though perhaps, dear, to a soldier's death. And I would pray for you and remember your splendid strength, and think always of seeing you march home again, and then only your mother could be more proud than I. That would be easy, in comparison. Write me about the war—but, of course, you would not be sent.

"Now here is the very end of my letter, and I haven't yet said it—what you wanted. But here it is, bend your head, from away up there, and listen. Now—do you hear—I love you. Good-by, good-by, I love you."

The papers rustled softly in the silent room, and the boy's mother, as she put the letter back, kissed it, and it was as if ghostly lips touched hers, for the boy had kissed those words, she knew.

The next was only a note, written just before his sailing to Cuba.

"A fair voyage and a short one, a good fight and a quick one," the note said. "It is my country as well as yours you are going to fight for, and I give you with all my heart. All of it will be with you and all my thoughts, too, every minute of every day, so you need never wonder if I'm thinking of you. And soon the Spaniards will be beaten and you'll be coming home again 'crowned with glory and honor,' and the bands will play fighting music, and the flag will be flying over you, for you, and in all proud America there will be no prouder soul than I—unless it is your mother. Good-by, good-by—God be with you, my very dearest."

He had come home "crowned with glory and honor." And the bands had played martial music for him. But his horse stood riderless by his grave, and the empty cavalry boots hung, top down, from the saddle.

Loose in the bottom of the box lay a folded sheet of paper, and, hidden under it, an envelope, the face side down. When the boy's mother opened the paper, it was his own crabbed, uneven writing that met her eye.

"They say there will be a fight to-morrow," he wrote, "and we're likely to be in it. If I come out right, you will not see this, and I hope I shall, for the world is sweet with you in it. But if I'm hit, then this will go to you. I'm leaving a line for my mother and will enclose this and ask her to send it to you. You must find her and be good to her, if that

happens. I want you to know that if I die, my last thought will have been of you, and if I have the chance to do anything worth while, it will be for your sake. I could die happy if I might do even a small thing that would make you proud of me.”

Page 48

The sorrowful woman drew a long, shivering breath as she thought of the magnificent courage of that painful passing up San Juan Hill, wounded, crawling on, with a pluck that the shades of death could not dim. Would she be proud of him?

The line for herself he had never written. There was only the empty envelope lying alone in the box. She turned it in her hand and saw it was addressed to the girl to whom he had been engaged. Slowly it dawned on her that to every appearance this envelope belonged to the letter she had just read, his letter of the night before the battle. She recoiled at the thought—those last sacred words of his, to go to that empty-souled girl! All that she would find in them would be a little fuel for her vanity, while the other—she put her fingers on the irregular, back writing, and felt as if a strong young hand held hers again. She would understand, that other; she had thought of his mother in the stress of her own strongest feeling; she had loved him for himself, not for vanity. This letter was hers, the mother knew it. And yet the envelope, with the other address, had lain just under it, and she had been his promised wife. She could not face her boy in heaven if this last earthly wish of his should go wrong through her. How could she read the boy's mind now? What was right to do?

The twilight fell over Crow Nest, and over the river and the heaped-up mountains that lie about West Point, and in the quiet room the boy's mother sat perplexed, uncertain, his letter in her hands; yet with a vague sense of coming comfort in her heart as she thought of the girl who would surely "find her and be good to her," But across the water, on the hillside, the boy lay quiet.

A MESSENGER

How oft do they their silver bowers leave, To come to succour us that succour want!
How oft do they with golden pineons cleave The flitting skyes, like flying Pursuivant,
Against fowle feendes to ayd us militant! They for us fight, they watch and dewly ward,
And their bright Squadrons round about us plant; And all for love, and nothing for
reward. O! Why should heavenly God to men have such regard?

—Spenser's *"Faerie Queene."*

That the other world of our hope rests on no distant, shining star, but lies about us as an atmosphere, unseen yet near, is the belief of many. The veil of material life shades earthly eyes, they say, from the glories in which we ever are. But sometimes when the veil wears thin in mortal stress, or is caught away by a rushing, mighty wind of inspiration, the trembling human soul, so bared, so purified, may look down unimagined heavenly vistas, and messengers may steal across the shifting boundary, breathing hope and the air of a brighter world. And of him who speaks his vision, men say "He is mad," or "He has dreamed."



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Page 49

The group of officers in the tent was silent for a long half minute after Colonel Wilson's voice had stopped. Then the General spoke.

"There is but one thing to do," he said. "We must get word to Captain Thornton at once."

The Colonel thought deeply a moment, and glanced at the orderly outside the tent. "Flannigan!" The man, wheeling swiftly, saluted. "Present my compliments to Lieutenant Morgan and say that I should like to see him here at once," and the soldier went off, with the quick military precision in which there is no haste and no delay.

"You have some fine, powerful young officers, Colonel," said the General casually. "I suppose we shall see in Lieutenant Morgan one of the best. It will take strength and brains both, perhaps, for this message."

A shadow of a smile touched the Colonel's lips. "I think I have chosen a capable man, General," was all he said.

Against the doorway of the tent the breeze blew the flap lazily back and forth. A light rain fell with muffled gentle insistence on the canvas over their heads, and out through the opening the landscape was blurred—the wide stretch of monotonous, billowy prairie, the sluggish, shining river, bending in the distance about the base of Black Wind Mountain—Black Wind Mountain, whose high top lifted, though it was almost June, a white point of snow above dark pine ridges of the hills below. The five officers talked a little as they waited, but spasmodically, absent-mindedly. A shadow blocked the light of the entrance, and in the doorway stood a young man, undersized, slight, blond. He looked inquiringly at the Colonel.

"You sent for me, sir?" and the General and his aide, and the grizzled old Captain, and the big, fresh-faced young one, all watched him.

In direct, quiet words—words whose bareness made them dramatic for the weight of possibility they carried—the Colonel explained. Black Wolf and his band were out on the war-path. A soldier coming in wounded, escaped from the massacre of the post at Devil's Hoof Gap, had reported it. With the large command known to be here camped on Sweetstream Fork, they would not come this way; they would swerve up the Gunpowder River twenty miles away, destroying the settlement and Little Fort Slade, and would sweep on, probably for a general massacre, up the Great Horn as far as Fort Doncaster. He himself, with the regiment, would try to save Fort Slade, but in the meantime, Captain Thornton's troop, coming to join him, ignorant that Black Wolf had taken the war-path, would be directly in their track. Some one must be sent to warn them, and of course the fewer the quicker. Lieutenant Morgan would take a sergeant, the Colonel ordered quietly, and start at once.

Page 50

In the misty light inside the tent, the young officer looked hardly more than seventeen years old as he stood listening. His small figure was light, fragile; his hair was blond to an extreme, a thick thatch of pale gold; and there was about him, among these tanned, stalwart men in uniform, a presence, an effect of something unusual, a simplicity out of place yet harmonious, which might have come with a little child into a scene like this. His large blue eyes were fixed on the Colonel as he talked, and in them was just such a look of innocent, pleased wonder, as might be in a child's eyes, who had been told to leave studying and go pick violets. But as the Colonel ended he spoke, and the few words he said, the few questions he asked, were full of poise, of crisp directness. As the General volunteered a word or two, he turned to him and answered with a very charming deference, a respect that was yet full of gracious ease, the unconscious air of a man to whom generals are first as men, and then as generals. The slight figure in its dark uniform was already beyond the tent doorway when the Colonel spoke again, with a shade of hesitation in his manner.

"Mr. Morgan!" and the young officer turned quickly. "I think it may be right to warn you that there is likely to be more than usual danger in your ride."

"Yes, sir." The fresh, young voice had a note of inquiry.

"You will—you will"—what was it the Colonel wanted to say? He finished abruptly. "Choose the man carefully who goes with you."

"Thank you, Colonel," Morgan responded heartily, but with a hint of bewilderment. "I shall take Sergeant O'Hara," and he was gone.

There was a touch of color in the Colonel's face, and he sighed as if glad to have it over. The General watched him, and slowly, after a pause, he demanded:

"May I ask, Colonel, why you chose that blond baby to send on a mission of uncommon danger and importance?"

The Colonel answered quietly: "There were several reasons, General—good ones. The blond baby"—that ghost of a smile touched the Colonel's lips again—"the blond baby has some remarkable qualities. He never loses his head; he has uncommon invention and facility of getting out of bad holes; he rides light and so can make a horse last longer than most, and"—the Colonel considered a moment—"I may say he has no fear of death. Even among my officers he is known for the quality of his courage. There is one more reason: he is the most popular man I have, both with officers and men; if anything happened to Morgan the whole command would race into hell after the devils that did it, before they would miss their revenge."

The General reflected, pulling at his mustache. "It seems a bit like taking advantage of his popularity," he said.

“It is,” the Colonel threw back quickly. “It’s just that. But that’s what one must do—a commanding officer— isn’t it so, General? In this war music we play on human instruments, and if a big chord comes out stronger for the silence of a note, the note must be silenced—that’s all. It’s cruel, but it’s fighting; it’s the game.”

Page 51

The General, as if impressed with the tense words, did not respond, and the other officers stared at the Colonel's face, as carved, as stern as if done in marble—a face from which the warm, strong heart seldom shone, held back always by the stronger will.

The big, fresh-colored young Captain broke the silence. “Has the General ever heard of the trick Morgan played on Sun Boy, sir?” he asked.

“Tell the General, Captain Booth,” the Colonel said briefly, and the Captain turned toward the higher officer.

“It was apropos of what the Colonel said of his inventive faculties, General,” he began. “A year ago the youngster with a squad of ten men walked into Sun Boy's camp of seventy-five warriors. Morgan had made quite a pet of a young Sioux, who was our prisoner for five months, and the boy had taught him a lot of the language, and assured him that he would have the friendship of the band in return for his kindness to Blue Arrow—that was the chap's name. So he thought he was safe; but it turned out that Blue Arrow's father, a chief, had got into a row with Sun Boy, and the latter would not think of ratifying the boy's promise. So there was Morgan with his dozen men, in a nasty enough fix. He knew plenty of Indian talk to understand that they were discussing what they would do with him, and it wasn't pleasant.

“All of a sudden he had an inspiration. He tells the story himself, sir, and I assure you he'd make you laugh—Morgan is a wonderful mimic. Well, he remembered suddenly, as I said, that he was a mighty good ventriloquist, and he saw his chance. He gave a great jump like a startled fawn, and threw up his arms and stared like one demented into the tree over their heads. There was a mangy-looking crow sitting up there on a branch, and Morgan pointed at him as if at something marvellous, supernatural, and all those fool Indians stopped pow-wow-ing and stared up after him, as curious as monkeys. Then to all appearances, the crow began to talk. Morgan said they must have thought that spirits didn't speak very choice Sioux, but he did his best. The bird cawed out:

“‘Oh, Sun Boy, great chief, beware what you do!’

“And then the real bird flapped its wings and Morgan thought it was going to fly, and he was lost. But it settled back again on the branch, and Morgan proceeded to caw on:

“‘Hurt not the white man, or the curses of the gods will come upon Sun Boy and his people.’

“And he proceeded to give a list of what would happen if the Indians touched a hair of their heads. By this time the red devils were all down on their stomachs, moaning softly whenever Morgan stopped cawing. He said he quite got into the spirit of it and would have liked to go on some time, but he was beginning to get hoarse, and besides he was

in deadly terror for fear the crow would fly before he got to the point. So he had the spirit order them to give the white men their horses and turn them loose instanter; and just as he got all through, off went the thing with a big flap and a parting caw on its own account. I wish I could tell it as Morgan does—you'd think he was a bird and an Indian rolled together. He's a great actor spoiled, that lad."

Page 52

"You leave out a fine point, to my mind, Captain Booth," the Colonel said quickly. "About his going back."

"Oh! certainly that ought to be told," said the Captain, and the General's eyes turned to him again. "Morgan forgot to see young Blue Arrow, his friend, before he got away, and nothing would do but that he should go back and speak to him. He said the boy would be disappointed. The men were visibly uneasy at his going, but that didn't affect him. He ordered them to wait, and back he went, pell-mell, all alone into that horde of fiends. They hadn't got over their funk, luckily, and he saw Blue Arrow and made his party call and got out again all right. He didn't tell that himself, but Sergeant O'Hara made the camp ring with it. He adores Morgan, and claims that he doesn't know what fear is. I believe it's about so. I've seen him in a fight three times now. His cap always goes off—he loses a cap every blessed scrimmage—and with that yellow mop of hair, and a sort of rapt expression he gets, he looks like a child saying its prayers all the time he is slashing and shooting like a berserker." Captain Booth faced abruptly toward the Colonel. "I beg your pardon for talking so long, sir," he said. "You know we're all rather keen about little Miles Morgan."

The General lifted his head suddenly. "Miles Morgan?" he demanded. "Is his name Miles Morgan?"

The Colonel nodded. "Yes. The grandson of the old Bishop—named for him."

"Lord!" ejaculated the General. "Miles Morgan was my earliest friend, my friend until he died! This must be Jim's son—Miles's only child. And Jim is dead these ten years," he went on rapidly. "I've lost track of him since the Bishop died, but I knew Jim left children. Why, he married"—he searched rapidly in his memory—"he married a daughter of General Fitzbrian's. This boy's got the church and the army both in him. I knew his mother," he went on, talking to the Colonel, garrulous with interest. "Irish and fascinating she was—believed in fairies and ghosts and all that, as her father did before her. A clever woman, but with the superstitious, wild Irish blood strong in her. Good Lord! I wish I'd known that was Miles Morgan's grandson."

The Colonel's voice sounded quiet and rather cold after the General's impulsive enthusiasm. "You have summed him up by his antecedents, General," he said. "The church and the army—both strains are strong. He is deeply religious."

The General looked thoughtful. "Religious, eh? And popular? They don't always go together."

Captain Booth spoke quickly. "It's not that kind, General," he said. "There's no cant in the boy. He's more popular for it—that's often so with the genuine thing, isn't it? I sometimes think"—the young Captain hesitated and smiled a trifle deprecatingly—"that Morgan is much of the same stuff as Gordon—Chinese Gordon; the martyr stuff, you

know. But it seems a bit rash to compare an every-day American youngster to an inspired hero.”

Page 53

"There's nothing in Americanism to prevent either inspiration or heroism that I know of," the General affirmed stoutly, his fine old head up, his eyes gleaming with pride of his profession.

Out through the open doorway, beyond the slapping tent-flap, the keen, gray eyes of the Colonel were fixed musingly on two black points which crawled along the edge of the dulled silver of the distant river—Miles Morgan and Sergeant O'Hara had started.

* * * * *

"Sergeant!" They were eight miles out now, and the camp had disappeared behind the elbow of Black Wind Mountain. "There's something wrong with your horse. Listen! He's not loping evenly." The soft cadence of eight hoofs on earth had somewhere a lighter and then a heavier note; the ear of a good horseman tells in a minute, as a musician's ear at a false note, when an animal saves one foot ever so slightly, to come down harder on another.

"Yessirr. The Lieutenant'll remimber 'tis the horrsse that had a bit of a spavin, Sure I thot 'twas cured, and 'tis the kindest baste in the rigiment f'r a pleasure ride, sorr—that willin' 'tis. So I tuk it. I think 'tis only the stiffness at furrst aff. 'Twill wurruck aff later. Plaze God, I'll wallop him." And the Sergeant walloped with a will.

But the kindest beast in the regiment failed to respond except with a plunge and increased lameness. Soon there was no more question of his incapacity.

Lieutenant Morgan halted his mount, and, looking at the woe-begone O'Hara, laughed. "A nice trick this is, Sergeant," he said, "to start out on a trip to dodge Indians with a spavined horse. Why didn't you get a broomstick? Now go back to camp as fast as you can go; and that horse ought to be blistered when you get there. See if you can't really cure him. He's too good to be shot." He patted the gray's nervous head, and the beast rubbed it gently against his sleeve, quiet under his hand.

"Yessirr. The Lieutenant'll ride slow, sorr, f'r me to catch up on ye, sorr?"

Miles Morgan smiled and shook his head. "Sorry, Sergeant, but there'll be no slow riding in this. I'll have to press right on without you; I must be at Massacre Mountain to-night to catch Captain Thornton to-morrow."

Sergeant O'Hara's chin dropped. "Sure the Lieutenant'll niver be thinkin' to g'wan alone—widout *me*?" and with all the sergeant's respect of his superiors, it took the Lieutenant ten valuable minutes to get the man started back, shaking his head and muttering forebodings, to the camp.

It was quiet riding on alone. There were a few miles to go before there was any chance of Indians, and no particular lookout to be kept, so he put the horse ahead rapidly while

he might, and suddenly he found himself singing softly as he galloped. How the words had come to him he did not know, for no conscious train of thought had brought them; but they surely fitted to the situation, and a pleasant sense of companionship, of safety, warmed him as the swing of an old hymn carried his voice along with it.

Page 54

God shall charge His angel legions
Watch and ward o'er thee to keep;
Though thou walk through hostile regions,
Though in desert wilds thou sleep.

Surely a man riding toward—perhaps through—skulking Indian hordes, as he must, could have no better message reach him than that. The bent of his mind was toward mysticism, and while he did not think the train of reasoning out, could not have said that he believed it so, yet the familiar lines flashing suddenly, clearly, on the curtain of his mind, seemed to him, very simply, to be sent from a larger thought than his own. As a child might take a strong hand held out as it walked over rough country, so he accepted this quite readily and happily, as from that Power who was never far from him, and in whose service, beyond most people, he lived and moved. Low but clear and deep his voice went on, following one stanza with its mate:

Since with pure and firm affection
Thou on God hast set thy love,
With the wings of His protection
He will shield thee from above.

The simplicity of his being sheltered itself in the broad promise of the words.

Light-heartedly he rode on and on, though now more carefully; lying flat and peering over the crests of hills a long time before he crossed their tops; going miles perhaps through ravines; taking advantage of every bit of cover where a man and a horse might be hidden; travelling as he had learned to travel in three years of experience in this dangerous Indian country, where a shrub taken for granted might mean a warrior, and that warrior a hundred others within signal. It was his plan to ride until about twelve—to reach Massacre Mountain, and there rest his horse and himself till gray daylight. There was grass there and a spring—two good and innocent things that had been the cause of the bad, dark thing which had given the place its name. A troop under Captain James camping at this point, because of the water and grass, had been surprised and wiped out by five hundred Indian braves of the wicked and famous Red Crow. There were ghastly signs about the place yet; Morgan had seen them, but soldiers may not have nerves, and it was good camping ground.

On through the valleys and half-way up the slopes, which rolled here far away into a still wilder world, the young man rode. Behind the distant hills in the east a glow like fire flushed the horizon. A rim of pale gold lifted sharply over the ridge; a huge round ball of light pushed faster, higher, and lay, a bright world on the edge of the world, great against the sky—the moon had risen. The twilight trembled as the yellow rays struck into its depths, and deepened, dying into purple shadows. Across the plain zigzagged pools of a level stream, as if a giant had spilled handfuls of quicksilver here and there.



Miles Morgan, riding, drank in all the mysterious, wild beauty, as a man at ease; as open to each fair impression as if he were not riding each moment into deeper danger, as if his every sense were not on guard. On through the shining moonlight and in the shadow of the hills he rode, and, where he might, through the trees, and stopped to listen often, to stare at the hill-tops, to question a heap of stones or a bush.

Page 55

At last, when his leg-weary horse was beginning to stumble a bit, he saw, as he came around a turn, Massacre Mountain's dark head rising in front of him, only half a mile away. The spring trickled its low song, as musical, as limpidly pure as if it had never run scarlet. The picketed horse fell to browsing and Miles sighed restfully as he laid his head on his saddle and fell instantly to sleep with the light of the moon on his damp, fair hair. But he did not sleep long. Suddenly with a start he awoke, and sat up sharply, and listened. He heard the horse still munching grass near him, and made out the shadow of its bulk against the sky; he heard the stream, softly falling and calling to the waters where it was going. That was all. Strain his hearing as he might he could hear nothing else in the still night. Yet there was something. It might not be sound or sight, but there was a presence, a something—he could not explain. He was alert in every nerve. Suddenly the words of the hymn he had been singing in the afternoon flashed again into his mind, and, with his cocked revolver in his hand, alone, on guard, in the midnight of the savage wilderness, the words came that were not even a whisper:

God shall charge His angel legions
Watch and ward o'er thee to keep;
Though thou walk through hostile regions,
Though in desert wilds thou sleep.

He gave a contented sigh and lay down. What was there to worry about? It was just his case for which the hymn was written. "Desert wilds"—that surely meant Massacre Mountain, and why should he not sleep here quietly, and let the angels keep their watch and ward? He closed his eyes with a smile. But sleep did not come, and soon his eyes were open again, staring into blackness, thinking, thinking.

It was Sunday when he started out on this mission, and he fell to remembering the Sunday nights at home—long, long ago they seemed now. The family sang hymns after supper always; his mother played, and the children stood around her—five of them, Miles and his brothers and sisters. There was a little sister with brown hair about her shoulders, who always stood by Miles, leaned against him, held his hand, looked up at him with adoring eyes—he could see those uplifted eyes now, shining through the darkness of this lonely place. He remembered the big, home-like room; the crackling fire; the peaceful atmosphere of books and pictures; the dumb things about its walls that were yet eloquent to him of home and family; the sword that his great-grandfather had worn under Washington; the old ivories that another great-grandfather, the Admiral, had brought from China; the portraits of Morgans of half a dozen generations which hung there; the magazine table, the books and books and books. A pang of desperate homesickness suddenly shook him. He wanted them—his own. Why should he, their best-beloved, throw away his life—a life filled to the brim with hope

Page 56

and energy and high ideals—on this futile quest? He knew quite as well as the General or the Colonel that his ride was but a forlorn hope. As he lay there, longing so, in the dangerous dark, he went about the library at home in his thought and placed each familiar belonging where he had known it all his life. And as he finished, his mother's head shone darkly golden by the piano; her fingers swept over the keys; he heard all their voices, the dear never-forgotten voices. Hark! They were singing his hymn—little Alice's reedy note lifted above the others—"God shall charge His angel legions—"

Now! He was on his feet with a spring, and his revolver pointed steadily. This time there was no mistaking—something had rustled in the bushes. There was but one thing for it to be—Indians. Without realizing what he did, he spoke sharply.

"Who goes there?" he demanded, and out of the darkness a voice answered quietly:

"A friend."

"A friend?" With a shock of relief the pistol dropped by his side, and he stood tense, waiting. How might a friend be here, at midnight in this desert? As the thought framed itself swiftly the leaves parted, and his straining eyes saw the figure of a young man standing before him.

"How came you here?" demanded Miles sternly. "Who are you?"

Even in the dimness he could see the radiant smile that answered him. The calm voice spoke again: "You will understand that later. I am here to help you."

As if a door had suddenly opened into that lighted room of which he dreamed, Miles felt a sense of tranquillity, of happiness stirring through him. Never in his life had he known such a sudden utter confidence in anyone, such a glow of eager friendliness as this half-seen, mysterious stranger inspired. "It is because I was lonelier than I knew," he said mentally. "It is because human companionship gives courage to the most self-reliant of us"; and somewhere in the words he was aware of a false note, but he did not stop to place it.

The low, even voice of the stranger spoke again. "There are Indians on your trail," he said. "A small band of Black Wolf's scouts. But don't be troubled. They will not hurt you."

"You escaped from them?" demanded Miles eagerly, and again the light of a swift smile shone into the night. "You came to save me—how was it? Tell me, so that we can plan. It is very dark yet, but hadn't we better ride? Where is your horse?"

He threw the earnest questions rapidly across the black night, and the unhurried voice answered him. "No," it said, and the verdict was not to be disputed. "You must stay here."

Who this man might be or how he came Miles could not tell, but this much he knew, without reason for knowing it; it was someone stronger than he, in whom he could trust. As the newcomer had said, it would be time enough later to understand the rest. Wondering a little at his own swift acceptance of an unknown authority, wondering more at the peace which wrapped him as an atmosphere at the sound of the stranger's voice, Miles made a place for him by his side, and the two talked softly to the plashing undertone of the stream.

Page 57

Easily, naturally, Miles found himself telling how he had been homesick, longing for his people. He told him of the big familiar room, and of the old things that were in it, that he loved; of his mother; of little Alice, and her baby adoration for the big brother; of how they had always sung hymns together Sunday night; he never for a moment doubted the stranger's interest and sympathy—he knew that he cared to hear.

"There is a hymn," Miles said, "that we used to sing a lot—it was my favorite; 'Miles's hymn,' the family called it. Before you came to-night, while I lay there getting lonelier every minute, I almost thought I heard them singing it. You may not have heard it, but it has a grand swing. I always think"—he hesitated—"it always seems to me as if the God of battles and the beauty of holiness must both have filled the man's mind who wrote it." He stopped, surprised at his own lack of reserve, at the freedom with which, to this friend of an hour, he spoke his inmost heart.

"I know," the stranger said gently. There was silence for a moment, and then the wonderful low tones, beautiful, clear, beyond any voice Miles had ever heard, began again, and it was as if the great sweet notes of an organ whispered the words:

God shall charge His angel legions
Watch and ward o'er thee to keep;
Though thou walk through hostile regions,
Though in desert wilds thou sleep.

"Great Heavens!" gasped Miles. "How could you know I meant that? Why, this is marvellous—why, this"—he stared, speechless, at the dim outlines of the face which he had never seen before to-night, but which seemed to him already familiar and dear beyond all reason. As he gazed the tall figure rose, lightly towering above him. "Look!" he said, and Miles was on his feet. In the east, beyond the long sweep of the prairie, was a faint blush against the blackness; already threads of broken light, of pale darkness, stirred through the pall of the air; the dawn was at hand.

"We must saddle," Miles said, "and be off. Where is your horse picketed?" he demanded again.

But the strange young man stood still; and now his arm was stretched pointing. "Look," he said again, and Miles followed the direction with his eyes.

From the way he had come, in that fast-growing glow at the edge of the sky, sharp against the mist of the little river, crept slowly half a dozen pin points, and Miles, watching their tiny movement, knew that they were ponies bearing Indian braves. He turned hotly to his companion.



"It's your fault," he said. "If I'd had my way we'd have ridden from here an hour ago. Now here we are caught like rats in a trap; and who's to do my work and save Thornton's troop—who's to save them—God!" The name was a prayer, not an oath.

"Yes," said the quiet voice at his side, "God,"—and for a second there was a silence that was like an Amen.

Page 58

Quickly, without a word, Miles turned and began to saddle. Then suddenly as he pulled at the girth, he stopped. "It's no use," he said. "We can't get away except over the rise, and they'll see us there"; he nodded at the hill which rose beyond the camping ground three hundred yards away, and stretched in a long, level sweep into other hills and the west. "Our chance is that they're not on my trail after all—it's quite possible." There was a tranquil unconcern about the figure near him; his own bright courage caught the meaning of its relaxed lines with a hound of pleasure. "As you say, it's best to stay here," he said, and as if thinking aloud—"I believe you must always be right." Then he added, as if his very soul would speak itself to this wonderful new friend: "We can't be killed, unless the Lord wills it, and if he does it's right. Death is only the step into life; I suppose when we know that life, we will wonder how we could have cared for this one."

Through the gray light the stranger turned his face swiftly, bent toward Miles, and smiled once again, and the boy thought suddenly of the martyrdom of St. Stephen, and how those who were looking "saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

Across the plain, out of the mist-wreaths, came rushing, scurrying, the handful of Indian braves. Pale light streamed now from the east, filtering over a hushed world. Miles faced across the plain, stood close to the tall stranger whose shape, as the dawn touched it, seemed to rise beyond the boy's slight figure wonderfully large and high. There was a sense of unending power, of alertness, of great, easy movement about him; one might have looked at him, and looking away again, have said that wings were folded about him. But Miles did not see him. His eyes were on the fast-nearing, galloping ponies, each with its load of filthy, cruel savagery. This was his death coming; there was disgust, but not dread in the thought for the boy. In a few minutes he should be fighting hopelessly, fiercely against this froth of a lower world; in a few minutes after that he should be lying here still—for he meant to be killed; he had that planned. They should not take him—a wave of sick repulsion at that thought shook him. Nearer, nearer, right on his track came the riders pell-mell. He could hear their weird, horrible cries; now he could see gleaming through the dimness the huge headdress of the foremost, the white coronet of feathers, almost the stripes of paint on the fierce face.

Suddenly a feeling that he knew well caught him, and he laughed. It was the possession that had held in him in every action which he had so far been in. It lifted his high-strung spirit into an atmosphere where there was no dread and no disgust, only a keen rapture in throwing every atom of soul and body into physical intensity; it was as if he himself were a bright blade, dashing, cutting, killing, a living sword rejoicing to destroy. With the coolness that

Page 59

may go with such a frenzy he felt that his pistols were loose; saw with satisfaction that he and his new ally were placed on the slope to the best advantage, then turned swiftly, eager now for the fight to come, toward the Indian band. As he looked, suddenly in mid-career, pulling in their plunging ponies with a jerk that threw them, snorting, on their haunches, the warriors halted. Miles watched in amazement. The bunch of Indians, not more than a hundred yards away, were staring, arrested, startled, back of him to his right, where the lower ridge of Massacre Mountain stretched far and level over the valley that wound westward beneath it on the road to Fort Rain-and-Thunder. As he gazed, the ponies had swept about and were galloping back as they had come, across the plain.

Before he knew if it might be true, if he were not dreaming this curious thing, the clear voice of his companion spoke in one word again, like the single note of a deep bell. "Look!" he said, and Miles swung about toward the ridge behind, following the pointing finger.

In the gray dawn the hill-top was clad with the still strength of an army. Regiment after regiment, silent, motionless, it stretched back into silver mist, and the mist rolled beyond, above, about it; and through it he saw, as through rifts in broken gauze, lines interminable of soldiers, glitter of steel. Miles, looking, knew.

He never remembered how long he stood gazing, earth and time and self forgotten, at a sight not meant for mortal eyes; but suddenly, with a stab it came to him, that if the hosts of heaven fought his battle it was that he might do his duty, might save Captain Thornton and his men; he turned to speak to the young man who had been with him. There was no one there. Over the bushes the mountain breeze blew damp and cold; they rustled softly under its touch; his horse stared at him mildly; away off at the foot-hills he could see the diminishing dots of the fleeing Indian ponies; as he wheeled again and looked, the hills that had been covered with the glory of heavenly armies, lay hushed and empty. And his friend was gone.

[Illustration: "Look!" he said, and Miles swung about toward the ridge behind.]

Clatter of steel, jingle of harness, an order ringing out far but clear—Miles threw up his head sharply and listened. In a second he was pulling at his horse's girth, slipping the bit swiftly into its mouth—in a moment more he was off and away to meet them, as a body of cavalry swung out of the valley where the ridge had hidden them.

"Captain Thornton's troop?" the officer repeated carelessly. "Why, yes; they are here with us. We picked them up yesterday, headed straight for Black Wolf's war-path. Mighty lucky we found them. How about you—seen any Indians, have you?"

Miles answered slowly: "A party of eight were on my trail; they were riding for Massacre Mountain, where I camped, about an hour—about half an hour—awhile ago." He spoke vaguely, rather oddly, the officer thought, "Something—stopped them about a hundred yards from the mountain. They turned, and rode away."

Page 60

"Ah," said the officer. "They saw us down the valley."

"I couldn't see you," said Miles.

The officer smiled. "You're not an Indian, Lieutenant. Besides, they were out on the plain and had a farther view behind the ridge." And Miles answered not a word.

General Miles Morgan, full of years and of honors, has never but twice told the story of that night of forty years ago. But he believes that when his time comes, and he goes to join the majority, he will know again the presence which guarded him through the blackness of it, and among the angel legions he looks to find an angel, a messenger, who was his friend.

THE AIDE-DE-CAMP

Age has a point or two in common with greatness; few willingly achieve it, indeed, but most have it thrust upon them, and some are born old. But there are people who, beginning young, are young forever. One might fancy that the careless fates who shape souls—from cotton-batting, from stone, from wood and dynamite and cheese—once in an aeon catch, by chance, a drop of the fountain of youth, and use it in their business, and the soul so made goes on bubbling and sparkling eternally, and gray dust of years cannot dim it. It might be imagined, in another flight of fancy, that a spark of divine fire from the brazier of the immortals snaps loose once in a century and lodges in somebody, and is a heart—with such a clean and happy flame burns sometimes a heart one knows.

On a January evening, in a room where were books and a blazing hearth, a man with a famous name and a long record told me a story, and through his blunt speech flashed in and out all the time the sparkle of the fire and the ripple of the fountain. Unsuspecting, he betrayed every minute the queer thing that had happened to him—how he had never grown up and his blood had never grown cold. So that the story, as it fell in easy sequence, had a charm which was his and is hard to trap, yet it is too good a story to leave unwritten. A picture goes with it, what I looked at as I listened: a massive head on tremendous shoulders; bright white hair and a black bar of eyebrows, striking and dramatic; underneath, eyes dark and alive, a face deep red-and-brown with out of doors. His voice had a rough command in it, because, I suppose, he had given many orders to men. I tell the tale with this memory for a setting; the firelight, the soldierly presence, the gayety of youth echoing through it.

The fire had been forgotten as we talked, and I turned to see it dull and lifeless. "It hasn't gone out, however," I said, and coughed as I swallowed smoke. "There's no smoke without some fire," I poked the logs together. "That's an old saw; but it's true all the same."



“Old saws always are true,” said the General. “If there isn’t something in them that people know is so they don’t get old—they die young. I believe in the ridden-to-death proverbs—little pitchers with big ears—cats with nine lives—still waters running deep—love at first sight, and the rest. They’re true, too.” His straight look challenged me to dispute him.

Page 61

The pine knots caught and blazed up, and I went back comfortably into my chair and laughed at him.

“O General! Come! You don’t believe in love at first sight.”

I liked to make him talk sentiment. He was no more afraid of it than of anything else, and the warmest sort came out of his handling natural and unashamed.

“I don’t? Yes, I do, too,” he fired at me. “I know it happens, sometimes.”

With that the lines of his face broke into the sunshiniest smile. He threw back his head with sudden boyishness, and chuckled, “I ought to know; I’ve had experience,” he said. His look settled again thoughtfully. “Did I ever tell you that story—the story about the day I rode seventy-five miles? Well, I did that several times—I rode it once to see my wife. But this was the first time, and a good deal happened. It was a history-making day for me all right. That was when I was aide-de-camp to General Stoneman. Have I told you that?”

“No,” I said; and “oh, do tell me.” I knew already that a fire and a deep chair and one of the General’s stories made a good combination.

His manner had a quality uncommon to storytellers; he spoke as if what he told had occurred not in times gone by, but perhaps last week; it was more gossip than history. Probably the sharp, full years had been so short to him that the interval between twenty and seventy was no great matter; things looked as clear and his interest was as lively as a half-century ago. This trick of mind made a narrative of his vivid. With eyes on the fire, with his dominant voice absorbing the crisp sound of the crackling wood, he began to talk.

“It was down in Virginia in—let me see—why, certainly, it was in ’63—right away after the battle of Chancellorsville, you know.” I kept still and hoped the General thought I knew the date of the battle of Chancellorsville. “I was part of a cavalry command that was sent from the Army of the Potomac under General Stoneman—I was his aide. Well, we did a lot of things—knocked out bridges and railroads, and all that; our object was, you see, to destroy communication between Lee’s army and Richmond. We even got into Richmond—we thought every Confederate soldier was with Lee at the front, and we had a scheme to free the prisoners in Libby, and perhaps capture Jefferson Davis—but we counted wrong. The defence was too strong, and our force too small; we had to skedaddle, or we’d have seen Libby in a way we didn’t like. We found a negro who could pilot us, and we slipped out through fields and swamps beyond the reach of the enemy. Then the return march began. Let me put that log on.”

“No. Talk,” I protested; but the General had the wood in his vigorous left hand—where a big scar cut across the back.

“You needn’t be so independent,” he threw at me. “Now you’ve got a splinter in your finger—serves you right.” I laughed at the savage tone, and his eyes flashed fiercely—and he laughed back.

Page 62

"What was I talking about—you interrupted. Oh, that march. Well, we'd had a pretty rough time when the march back began. For nine days we hadn't had a real meal—just eaten standing up, whatever we could get cooked—or uncooked. We hadn't changed our clothes, and we'd slept on the ground every night."

"Goodness!" I interjected with amateur vagueness. "What about the horses?"

"Oh, they got it, too," the General said carelessly. "We seldom unsaddled them at all, and when we did it was just to give them a rub-down and saddle again. We'd made one march toward home and halted, late at night, when General Stoneman called for his aide-de-camp. I went to him, rather sleepy, and he told me he'd decided to communicate with his chief and report his success, and that I was to start at daylight and find the Army of the Potomac. I had my pick of ten of the best men and horses from the brigade, and I got off at gray dawn with them, and with the written report in my boot to the commanding general, and verbal orders to find him wherever he might be. Nothing else, except the tools—swords and pistols, and that sort of thing. Oh, yes, there was one thing more. General Ladd, who was a Virginian, had given my chief a letter for his people, thinking we'd get into their country. His family were all on the Confederate side of the fence, while he was a Union officer. That was not uncommon in our civil war. But we didn't get near the Ladd estate, and so Stoneman commissioned me to return the letter to the general with the explanation. Does this bore you?" he stopped suddenly to ask, and his alert eye shot the glance at me like a bullet.

"Stop once more and I'll be likely to cry," I predicted.

"For Heaven's sake don't do that." He reached across and took the poker. "Here's the Rapidan River," he sketched down the rug. "Runs east and west. And this blue diagonal north of it is the Rappahannock. I started south of the Rapidan, to cross it and go north, hoping to find our army victorious and south of the Rappahannock. Which I didn't—but that's farther along. Well, we were off at daylight, ten men and the officer—me. It was a fine spring morning, and the bunch of horsemen made a pretty sight as the sun came up, moving through the greenness—the foliage is well out down there in May. The bits jingled and the saddles creaked under our legs—I remember how it sounded as we started off. We'd had a strenuous week, but we were a strong lot and ready for anything. We were going to get it, too." The General chuckled suddenly, as if something had hit his funny-bone. "I skirted along the south bank of the Rapidan, keeping off the roads most of the time, and out of sight, which was better for our health—we were in Confederate country—and we got to Germania Ford without seeing anybody, or being seen. Said I, 'Here's the place we'll cross.' We'd had breakfast before starting, but we'd been in the saddle

Page 63

three hours since that, and I was thirsty. I could see a house back in the trees as we came to the ford—a beautiful old house—the kind you see a lot of in the South—high white pillars—dignified and aristocratic. It seemed to be quiet and safe, so we trotted up the drive, the eleven of us. The front door was open, and I jumped off my horse and ran up the steps and stood in the doorway. There were four or five people in the hall, and they'd seen us coming and were scared. A nice old lady was lying back in a chair, as pale as ashes, with her hand to her heart, gasping ninety to the second, and two or three negroes stood around her with their eyes rolling. And right in the middle of the place a red-headed girl in a white dress was bending over a grizzled old negro man who was locking a large travelling-bag. As cool as a cucumber that girl was."

The General stopped and considered.

"I wish I could describe the scene the way I saw it—I remember exactly. It was a big, square hall running through from front to back, and the back door was open, and you saw a garden with box hedges, and woods behind it. Stairs went up each side the hall and a balcony ran around the second story, with bedrooms opening off it. There was a high, oval window at the back over the balcony, and the sun poured through.

"The girl finished locking her bag as if she hadn't noticed scum of the earth like us, and then she deliberately picked up a bunch of long white flowers that lay by the bag—lilies, I think you call them—and stood up, and looked right past me, as if she was struck with the landscape, and didn't see me. She was a tall girl, and when she stood straight the light from the back window just hit her hair and shone through the loose part of it—there was a lot, and it was curly. I give you my word that, as she stood there and looked calmly beyond me, in her white dress, with the stalk of flowers over her shoulder, and the sun turning that wonderful red-gold hair into a halo—I give you my word she was a perfect picture of a saint out of a stained-glass window in a church. But she didn't act like one."

The General was seized with sudden, irresistible laughter. He sobered quickly.

"I took one look at the vision, and I knew it was all up with me. Talk about love at first sight—before she ever spoke a word I—well." He pulled up the sentence as if it were a horse. "I snatched off my cap and I said, said I, 'I'm very sorry to disturb you,' just as politely as I knew how, but all the answer she gave me was to glance across at the old lady. Then she went find put her arm around her as she lay back gasping in a great curved chair.

"'Don't be afraid, Aunt Virginia,' she said. 'Nothing shall hurt you. I can manage this man.'"

“The way she said ‘this man’ was about as contemptuous as they make ’em. I guess she was right, too—I guess she could. She turned her head toward me, but did not look at me.

Page 64

“Do you want anything here?” she asked.

“Her voice was the prettiest, softest sound you ever heard—she was mad as a hornet, too.” The General’s swift chuckle caught him. “‘Hyer,’ she said it,” he repeated. “‘Hyer.’” He liked to say it, evidently. “I stood holding my cap in my hand, so tame by this time you could have put me on a perch in a cage, for the pluck of the girl was as fascinating as her looks. I spoke up like a man all the same.

“‘I wanted to ask,’ said I, ‘if I might send my men around to your well for a drink of water. They’re thirsty.’

“The way she answered, looking all around me and never once at me, made me uncomfortable. ‘I suppose you can if you wish,’ she said. ‘You’re stronger than we are. You can take what you choose. But I won’t give you anything—not if you were dying—not a glass of water.’

“Well, in spite of her having played football with my heart, that made me angry.

“‘I didn’t know before that to be Southern made a woman unwomanly,’ I said. ‘Where I came from I don’t believe there’s a girl would say a cruel thing like that or refuse a drink of cold water to soldiers doing their duty, friends or enemies. We’ve slept on the ground nine nights and ridden nine days, and had very little to eat—my men are tired and thirsty. I shan’t make them go without any refreshment they can get, even if it is grudged.’

“I gave an order over my shoulder, and my party went off to the back of the house. Then I made a low bow to the old lady and to Miss High-and-Mighty, and I swung about and walked down the steps and mounted my horse. I was parched for water, but I wouldn’t have had it if I’d choked, after that. Between taking an almighty shine to the girl and getting stirred up that way, and then being all frozen over with icicles by her cool insultingness, I was pretty savage, and I stared away from the place and thought the men would never come. All of a sudden I felt something touch my arm, and I looked around quick, and there was the girl. She stood by the horse, her red hair close to my elbow as I sat in the saddle, and she held up a glass of water. I never was so astonished in my life.

“‘You’re thirsty and tired, too,’ she said, speaking as low as if she was afraid the horse might hear. ‘For my self-respect—for Southern women’—she brought it out in that soft, sliding way, but the words were all mixed up with embarrassment—and red—my, but she blushed! Then she went on. ‘You were right,’ said she. ‘I was cruel; you’re my enemy and I hate you, but I ought not to grudge you water. Take it.’

“I put my hand right on top of hers as she held the glass, and bent down and drank so, making her hold it to my lips, and my hand over hers—bless her heart!”

The General came to a full stop. He was smiling into the fire, and his face was as if a flame burned back of it. I waited very quietly, fearing to change the current by a word, and in a moment the strong voice, with its vibrating note, not to be described, began again.

Page 65

"I drained every drop," he said, "I'd have drunk a hog's head. When I finished I raised my head and looked down at her without a word said—but I didn't let go of the glass with her hand holding it inside mine—and she lifted her eyes very slowly, and for the first time looked at me. Well—" he shut his lips a moment—"these things don't tell well, but something happened. I held her eyes into mine, as if I gripped them with my muscles, and there came over her face an extraordinary expression—first as if she was surprised that it was me, then as if she was glad, and then—well, you may believe it or not, but I knew that second that the girl—loved me. She hated me all right five minutes before—I was her people's enemy—the chances were she'd never see me again—all that's true, but it simply didn't count. She cared for me, and I for her, and we both knew it—that's all there was about it. People live faster in war-time, I think—anyhow, that's the way it was.

"The men and horses came pouring around the house, and I let her hand loose—it was hard to do it, too—and then she was gone, and we rode on to the ford. We stopped when we got to the stream to let the horses have their turn at drinking, and as I sat loafing in the saddle, with my mind pretty full of what had just passed, my eyes were all over. Every cavalry officer, and especially an aide-de-camp, gets to be a sort of hawk in active service—nothing can move within range that he doesn't see. So as I looked about me I took in among other things the house we'd just left, and suddenly I spied a handkerchief waving from behind one of the big white pillars. Of course you've got to be wary in an enemy's country, and these people were rabid Confederates, as I'd occasion to know. All the same it would have been bad judgment to neglect such a signal, and what's more, I'd have staked my life on that girl's honesty. If the handkerchief had been a cannon I'd have gone back. So back I went, taking a couple of men with me. As I jumped off my horse I saw her standing inside the front door, back in the shadow, and I ran up the steps to her.

"'Well?' said I.

"She looked up at me and laughed, showing a row of white teeth. That was the first time I ever saw her laugh. 'I knew you'd come back,' said she, as mischievous as a child, and her eyes danced.

"I didn't mean to be made a fool of, for I had my duty to think about, so I spoke rather shortly. 'Well, and now I'm here—what?'

"With that she drew an excited little gasp. 'I couldn't let you be killed,' she brought out in a sort of breathless whisper, so low I had to bend over close to hear her. 'You mustn't go on—in that direction—you'll be taken. The Union army's been defeated—at Chancellorsville. They're driven north of the Rappahannock—to Falmouth. Our troops are in their old camps. There's an outpost across the ford—just over the hill.'

“It was the first I’d heard of the defeat at Chancellorsville, and it stunned me for a second. ‘Are you telling me the truth?’ I asked her pretty sharply.

Page 66

“‘You know I am,’ she said, as haughty as you please all of a sudden, and drew herself up with her head in the air.

“And I did know it. Something else struck me just about then. The old lady and the servants were gone from the hall. There wasn’t anybody in it but herself and me; my men were out of sight on the driveway. I forgot our army and the war and everything else, and I caught her hands in between mine, and said I, ‘Why couldn’t you let me be killed?’”

At his words I drew a quick breath, too. For a moment I was the Southern girl with the red-gold hair. I could feel the clasp of the young officer’s hands; I could hear his voice asking the rough, tender question, “Why couldn’t you let me be killed?”

“It was mighty still for a minute. Then she lifted up her eyes as I held her fingers in a vise, and gave me a steady look. That was all—but it was plenty.

“I don’t know how I got on my horse or what order I gave, but my head was clear enough for business purposes, and I had to use it—quickly, too. There were thick woods near by, and I hurried my party into them and gave men and horses a short rest till I could decide what to do. The Confederates were east of us, around Chancellorsville and in the triangle between the Rapidan and the Rappahannock, so that it was unsafe travelling in that direction. It’s the business of an aide-de-camp carrying despatches to steal as quietly as possible through an enemy’s country, and the one fatal thing is to be captured. So I concluded I wouldn’t get into the thick of it till I had to, but would turn west and make a *detour*, crossing by Morton’s Ford, farther up the Rapidan. Germania Ford lies in a deep loop of the river, and that made our ride longer, but we found a road and crossed all right as I planned it, and then we doubled back, as we had to, eastward.

“It was a pretty ride in the May weather, through that beautiful Virginia country. We kept in the woods and the lonely roads as much as we could and hardly saw a soul for hours, and though I knew we were getting into dangerous parts again, I hoped we might work through all right. Of course I thought first about my errand, and my mind was on every turn of the road and every speck in the landscape, but all the same there was one corner of it—or of something—that didn’t forget that red-headed girl—not an instant. I kept wondering if I’d ever see her again, and I was mighty clear that I would, if there was enough left of me by the time I could get off duty to go and look her up. The touch of her hands stayed with me all day.

Page 67

“About two o’clock or so we passed a house, just a cabin, but a neat sort of place, and I looked at it as I did at everything, and saw an old negro with grizzled hair standing some distance in front of it. Now everything reminded me of that girl because she was on my mind, and instantly I was struck with the idea, that the old fellow looked like the servant who had been locking the bag in the house by Germania Ford. I wasn’t sure it was the same darky, but I thought I’d see. There was a patch of woods back of the house, and I ordered the party to wait there till I joined them, and I threw my bridle to a soldier and turned in at the gate. The man loped out for the house, but I halted him. Then I went along past the negro to the cabin, and opened the door, which had been shut tight.

“There was a table littered with papers in the middle of the room, and behind it, in a gray riding-habit, with a gray soldier-cap on her red hair, writing for dear life, sat the girl. She lifted her head quick, as the door swung open, and then made a jump to get between me and the table. I took off my cap, and said I:

“‘I’m very glad to see you. I was just wondering if we’d ever meet again.’ She only stared at me. Then I said: ‘I’m sorry, but I’ll have to ask you for those papers.’ I knew by the look of them that they were some sort of despatches.

“At that she laughed in a kind of a friendly, cocksure way. She wasn’t afraid of anything, that girl. ‘No,’ she threw at me—just like that—‘No.’” The General tossed back his big head and did a poor imitation of a girl’s light tone—a poor imitation, but the way he did it was winning. “‘No,’ said she, shaking her head sidewise. ‘You can’t have those papers—not ever,’ and with that she swept them together and popped them into a drawer of the table and then hopped up on the table and sat there laughing at me, with her little riding-hoots swinging. ‘At least, unless you knock me down, and I don’t believe you’ll do that,’ said she.

“Well, I had to have those papers. I didn’t know how important they might be, but if this girl was sending information to the Southern commanders I was inclined to think it would be accurate and worth while. It wouldn’t do not to capture it. At the same time I wouldn’t have laid a finger on her, to compel her, for a million dollars. I stood and stared like a blockhead for a minute, at my wit’s end, and she sat there and smiled. All of a sudden I had an idea. I caught the end of the table and tipped it up, and off slid the young lady, and I snatched at the knob of the drawer, and had the papers in a second.

“It was simple, but it worked. Then it was her turn to look foolish. Of course she had a temper, with that colored hair, and she was raging. She looked at me as if she’d like to tear me to pieces. There wasn’t anything she could say, however, and not lose her dignity, and I guess she pretty nearly exploded for a minute, and then, in a flash, the joke of it struck her. Her eyes began to dance, and she laughed because she couldn’t help it, and I with her. For a whole minute we forgot what a big business we were both after, and acted like two children.

Page 68

“That’s right,’ said I finally. ‘I had to get them, but I did it in the kindest spirit. I see you understand that.’

“Oh, I don’t care,’ she answered with her chin up—a little way she had. ‘They’re not much, anyway. I hadn’t got to the important part.’

“Won’t you finish?’ said I politely, and pretended to offer her the papers—and then I got serious. ‘What are you doing here?’ I asked her. ‘Where are you going?’

“She looked up at me, and—I knew she liked me. She caught her breath before she answered. ‘What right have you got to ask me questions?’ said she, making a bluff at righteous indignation.

“But I just gripped her fingers into mine—it was getting to be a habit, holding her hand.

“And what are *you* doing here?’ she went on saucily, but her voice was a whisper, and she let her hand lie.

“‘I’ll tell you what I’m doing,’ said I. ‘I’m obeying the Bible. My Bible tells me to love my enemies, and I’m going to. I do,’ said I. ‘What does your Bible tell you?’

“‘My Bible tells me to resist the devil and he will flee from me,’ she answered back like a flash, standing up straight and looking at me squarely, as solemn as a church.

“‘Well, I guess I’m not that kind of a devil,’ said I. ‘I don’t want to flee worth a cent.’

“And at that she broke into a laugh and showed all her little teeth at me. That was one of the prettiest things about her, the row of small white teeth she showed every time she laughed.

“‘Just at that second the old negro stuck his head in at the door. ‘We’re busy, uncle,’ said I. ‘I’ll give you five dollars for five minutes.’

“But the girl put her hand on my arm to stop me, ‘What is it, Uncle Ebenezer?’ she asked him anxiously.

“‘It’s young Marse, Miss Lindy,’ the man said, ‘Him’n Marse Philip Breck’nridge ‘n’ Marse Tom’s ridin’ down de branch right now. Close to hyer—dey’ll be hyer in fo’-five minutes.’

“She nodded at him coolly. ‘All right. Shut the door, Uncle Ebenezer,’ said she, and he went out and shut it.

“And before I could say Jack Robinson she was dragging me into the next room, and pushing me out of a door at the back.



“Go—hurry up—oh, go!” she begged. ‘I won’t let them take you.’

“Well, I didn’t like to leave her suddenly like that, so I said, said I: ‘What’s the hurry? I want to tell you something.’

“No,’ she shot at me. ‘You can’t. Go—won’t you, please go?’ Then I picked up a little hand and hold it against my coat. I knew by now just how she would catch her breath when I did it.”

At about this point the General forgot me. Such good comrades we were that my presence did not trouble him, but as for telling the story to me, that was past—he was living it over, to himself alone, with every nerve in action.

“Look here,’ said I, ‘I don’t believe a thing like this ever happened on the globe before, but this has. It’s so—I love you, and I believe you love me, and I’m not going till you tell me so.’

Page 69

“By that time she was in a fit. ‘They’ll be here in two minutes; they’re Confederate officers. Oh, and you mustn’t cross at Kelly’s Ford—take the ford above it’—and she thumped me excitedly with the hand I held. I laughed, and she burst out again: ‘They’ll take you—oh, please go!’

“‘Tell me, then,’ said I, and she stopped half a second, and gasped again, and looked up in my eyes and said it. ‘I love you,’ said she. And she meant it.

“‘Give me a kiss,’ said I, and I leaned close to her, but she pulled away.

“‘Oh, no—oh, please go now,’ she begged.

“‘All right,’ said I, ‘but you don’t know what you’re missing,’ and I slid out of the back door at the second the Southerners came in at the front.

“There were bushes back there, and I crawled behind them and looked through into the window, and what do you suppose I saw? I saw the biggest and best-looking man of the three walk up to the girl who’d just told me she loved me, and I saw her put up her face and give him the kiss she wouldn’t give me. Well, I went smashing down to the woods, making such a rumpus that if those officers had been half awake they’d have been after me twice over. I was so maddened at the sight of that kiss that I didn’t realize what I was doing or that I was endangering the lives of my men. ‘Of course,’ said I to myself, ‘it’s her brother or her cousin,’ but I knew it was a hundred to one that it wasn’t, and I was in a mighty bad temper.

“I got my men away from the neighborhood quietly, and we rode pretty cautiously all that afternoon, I knew the road leading to Kelly’s Ford, and I bore to the north, away from there, for I trusted the girl and believed I’d be safe if I followed her orders. She’d saved my life twice that day, so I had reason to trust her. But all the time as I jogged along I was wondering about that man, and wondering what the dickens she was up to, anyway, and why she was travelling in the same direction that I was, and where she was going—and over and over I wondered if I’d ever see her again. I felt sure I would, though—I couldn’t imagine not seeing her, after what she’d said. I didn’t even know her name, except that the old negro had called her ‘Miss Lindy.’ I said that a lot of times to myself as I rode, with the men’s bits jingling at my buck and their horses’ hoofs thud-thudding. ‘Lindy—Miss Lindy—Linda—my Linda—I said it half aloud. It kept first-rate time to the hoof-beats—’Lindy—Miss Lindy.’

“I wondered, too, why she wouldn’t let me cross the Rappahannock by Kelly’s Ford, for I had reason to think there’d be a Union post on the east side of the river there, but there was a sense of brains and capability about the girl, as well as charm—in fact, that’s likely to be a large part of any real charm—and so I trusted to her.

[Illustration: “I got behind a turn and fired as a man came on alone.”]

Page 70

“Well, late in the afternoon we were trotting along, feeling pretty secure. I’d left the Kelly’s Ford road at the last turn, and was beginning to think that we ought to be within a few miles of the river, when all of a sudden, coming out of some woods into a small clearing with a farmhouse about the centre of it, we rode on a strong outpost of the enemy, infantry and cavalry both. We were in the open before I saw them, so there was nothing to do but make a dash for it and rush past the cabin before they could reach their arms, and we drew our revolvers and put the spurs in deep and flew past with a fire that settled some of them. But a surprise of this sort doesn’t last long, and it was only a few minutes before they were after us—and with fresh mounts. Then it was a horse-race for the river, and I wasn’t certain of the roads. However, I knew a trick or two about this business, and I was sure some of the pursuers would forge ahead; so three times I got behind a turn and fired as a man came on alone. I dismounted several that way. This relieved the strain enough so that I got within sight of the river with all my men. It was a quarter of a mile away when I saw it, and at that point the road split, and which branch led to the ford for the life of me I didn’t know. There wasn’t time for meditation, however, so I shot down the turn to the left, on the gamble, and sure enough there was the ford—only it wasn’t any ford. The Rappahannock was full to the banks and perhaps two hundred yards across. The Confederates were within rifle-shot, so there were exactly two things to do—surrender or swim. I gave my men the choice—to follow me or be captured—and I plunged in, without any of them.”

“What!” I demanded here, puzzled. “Didn’t the men know how to swim?”

“Oh, yes, they knew how,” the General answered, and looked embarrassed.

“Well, then, why didn’t they?” It began to dawn on me, “Were they afraid—was it dangerous—was the river swift?”

“Yes,” he acknowledged. “The river was swift—it was a foaming torrent.”

“They were afraid—all ten of them—and you weren’t—you alone?” The General looked annoyed. “I didn’t want to be captured,” he explained crossly. “I had the despatches besides.” He went on: “I slipped off my horse, keeping hold of the bridle to guide him, and swam low beside him, because they were firing from the bank. But all at once the shots stopped, and I heard shouting, and shortly after I got a glimpse, over my horse’s back, of a rider in the water near me, and there was a flash of a gray cap. One of the Southerners was swimming after me, and I was due for a tussle when we landed. I made it first. I scrambled to shore and snatched out my sword—the pistols were wet—and rushed for the other man as he jumped to the bank, and just as I got to him—just in time—I saw him. It wasn’t him—it was her—the girl. Heavens!” gasped the General; “she gave me a start that time. I dropped my sword on the ground, I was so surprised, and stared at her with my mouth open.

Page 71

“‘Oo-ee!’ said that girl, shaking her skirt, as calm as a May morning. ‘Oo-ee!’ like a baby crowing. ‘My, but that’s a cold river!’ And her teeth chattered.

“Well, that time I didn’t ask permission. I took her in my arms and held her—I had to, to keep her warm. Couldn’t let her stand there and click her teeth—could I? And she didn’t fight me. ‘What did you do such a crazy thing for?’ asked I.

“‘Well, you’re mighty par-particular,’ said she as saucy as you please, but still shivering so she couldn’t talk straight. ‘They were popping g-guns at you—that’s what for. Roger’s a right bad shot, but he might have hit you.’

“‘And he might, have hit you,’ said I. ‘Did you happen to think of that?’

“She just laughed. ‘Oh, no—they wouldn’t risk hitting me. I’m too valuable—that’s why I jumped in—to protect you.’

“‘Oh!’ said I. ‘I’m a delicate flower, it seems. You’ve been protecting me all day. Who’s Roger?’

“‘My brother,’ said she, smiling up at me.

“‘Was that the man you kissed in the cabin back yonder?’

“‘Shame!’ said she. ‘You peeped.’

“‘Was it?’ I insisted, for I wanted to know. And she told me.

“‘Yes,’ she told me, in that low voice of hers that was hard to hear, only it paid to listen.

“‘Did you ever kiss any other man?’ said I.

“‘It’s none of your business,’ said the girl. ‘But I didn’t—the way you mean.’

“‘Well, it wouldn’t make any difference, anyway—nothing would,’ I said. ‘Except this—are you ever going to?’

“All this time that bright-colored head of hers was on my shoulder, Confederate cap and all, and I was afraid of my life to stir, for fear she’d take it away. But when I said that I put my face down against hers and repeated the question, ‘Are you ever going to?’

“It seemed like ages before she answered and I was scared—yet she didn’t pull away, —and finally the words came—low, but I heard. ‘One,’ said she. ‘If he wants it.’

“Then—” the General stopped suddenly, and the splendid claret and honey color of his cheeks went a dark shade more to claret. He had come to from his trance, and

remembered me. “I don’t know why I’m telling you all these details,” he declared abruptly. “I suppose you’re tired to death listening.” His alert eyes questioned me.

“General,” I begged, “don’t stop like that again. Don’t leave out a syllable. ‘Then—’”

But he threw back his head boyishly and laughed with a touch of self-consciousness. “No, madam, I won’t tell you about ‘then.’ I’ll leave so much to your imagination. I guess you’re equal to it. It wasn’t a second anyway before she gave a jump that took her six feet from me, and there she was tugging at the girth of her saddle.

“‘Quick—change the saddles!’ she ordered me. ‘I must be out of my mind to throw away time when your life’s in danger. They’re coming around by the bridge,’ she explained, ‘two miles down. And you have to have a fresh mount. They’d catch you on that.’ She threw a contemptuous glance at my tired brute, and began unbuckling the wet straps with her little wet fingers.

Page 72

“Don’t do that,” said I. “Let me.” But she pushed me away. “Mustn’t waste time.” She gave her orders as business-like as an officer. “Do your own saddle while I attend to this. Zero can run right away from anything they’re riding—from anything at all. Can’t you, Zero?” and she gave the horse a quick pat in between unbuckling. He was a powerful, rangy bay, and not winded by his run and his swim. “He’s my father’s,” she went on. “He’ll carry you through to General Hooker’s camp at Falmouth—he knows that camp. It’s twenty-five miles yet, and you’ve ridden fifty to-day, poor boy.”

“I wish I could tell you how pretty her voice was when she said things like that, as if she cared that I’d had a strenuous day and was a little tired.

“How do you know I’m going to Falmouth? How do you know how far I’ve ridden?” I asked her, astonished again.

“‘I’m a witch,’ she said. ‘I find out everything about you-all by magic, and then I tell our officers. They know it’s so if I tell them. Ask Stonewall Jackson how he discovered the road to take his cavalry around for the attack on Howard. I reckon I helped a lot at Chancellorsville.’

“Do you reckon you’re helping now?” I asked, throwing my saddle over Zero’s back. “Strikes me you’re giving aid and comfort to the enemy hand over fist.”

“That girl surprised me whatever she did, and the reason was—I figured it out afterward—that she let herself be what few people let themselves be—absolutely straightforward. She had the gentlest ways, but she always hit straight from the shoulder, and that’s likely to surprise people. This time she took three steps to where I stood by Zero and caught my finger in the middle of pulling up the cinch and held to it.

“‘I’m not a traitor,’ she threw at me. ‘I’m loyal to my people, and you’re my enemy—and I’m saving you from them. But it’s you—it’s you,’ she whispered, looking up at me. It was getting dark by now, but I could see her eyes. ‘When you put your hand over mine this morning it was like somebody’d telegraphed that the one man was coming; and then I looked at you, and I knew he’d got there. I’ve never bothered about men—mostly they’re not worth while, when there are horses—but ever since I’ve been grown I’ve known that you’d come some time, and that I’d know you when you came. Do you think I’m going to let you be taken—shot, maybe? Not much—I’ll guard your life with every breath of mine—and I’ll keep it safe, too.’

“Now, wasn’t that a strange way for a girl to talk? Did you ever hear of another woman who could talk that way, and live up to it?” he demanded of me unexpectedly.

I was afraid to say the wrong thing and I spoke timidly. “What did you do then?”

He gave me a glance smouldering with mischief. “I didn’t do it. I tried to, but she wouldn’t let me.

“‘Hurry, hurry,’ said she, in a panic all of a sudden. ‘They’ll be coming. Zero’s fast, but you ought to get a good start.’

Page 73

“And she hustled me on the horse. And just as I was off, as I bent from the saddle to catch her hand for the last time, she gave me two more shocks together.” Silent reminiscent laughter shook him.

“‘When am I going to see you again?’ asked I hopelessly, for I felt as if everything was mighty uncertain, and I couldn’t bear to leave her.

“‘To-morrow,’ said she, prompt as taxes. ‘To-morrow. Good-by, Captain Carruthers.’

“And she gave the horse a slap that scared him into a leap, and off I went galloping into darkness, with my brain in a whirl as to where I could see her to-morrow, and how under creation she knew my name. The cold bath had refreshed me—I hadn’t had the like of it for nine days—and I galloped on for a while feeling fine, and thinking mighty hard about the girl I’d left behind me. Twenty-four hours before I’d never seen her, yet I felt, as if I had known her all my life. I was sure of this, that in all my days I’d never seen anybody like her, and never would. And that’s true to this minute. I’d had sweethearts a-plenty—in a way—but the affair of that day was the only time I was ever in love in my life.”

To tell the truth I had been a little scandalized all through this story, for I knew well enough that there was a Mrs. Carruthers. I had not met her—she had been South through the months which her husband had spent in New York—but the General’s strong language concerning the red-haired girl made me sympathize with his wife, and this last sentiment was staggering. Poor Mrs. Carruthers! thought I—poor, staid lady, with this gay lad of a husband declaring his heart forever buried with the adventure of a day of long ago. Yet, a soldier boy of twenty-three—the romance of war-time—the glamour of lost love—there were certainly alleviating circumstances. At all events, it was not my affair—I could enjoy the story as it came with a clear conscience. So I smiled at the wicked General—who looked as innocent as a baby—and he went on.

“I knew every road on that side the river, and I knew the Confederates wouldn’t dare chase me but a few miles, as it wasn’t their country any longer, so pretty soon I began to take things easy. I thought over everything that had happened through the day, everything she’d said and done, every look—I could remember it all. I can now. I wondered who under heaven she was, and I kicked myself that I hadn’t asked her name. ‘Lindy’—that’s all I knew, and I guess I said that over a hundred times. I wondered why she’d told me not to go to Kelly’s Ford, but I worked that out the right way—as I found later—that her party expected to cross there, and she didn’t want me to encounter them; and then the river was too full and they tried a higher ford. And I’d run into them. Yet I couldn’t understand why she planned to cross at Kelly’s, anyway, because there was pretty sure to be a Union outpost on the east bank there, and she’d have landed right among them. That puzzled me. Who was the girl, and why on earth was she travelling in that direction, and where could she be going? I went over that problem again and again, and couldn’t find an answer.

Page 74

“Meanwhile it was getting late, and the bracing effect of the cold water of the Rappahannock was wearing off, and I began to feel the fatigue of an exciting day and a seventy-five-mile ride—on top of nine other days with little to eat and not much rest. My wet clothes chilled me, and the last few miles I have never been able to remember distinctly—I think I was misty in my mind. At any rate, when I got to headquarters camp I was just about clear enough to guide Zero through the maze of tents, and not any more, and when the horse stopped with his nose against the front pole of the general’s fly I was unconscious.”

I exclaimed, horrified: “It was too much for human nature! You must have been nearly dead. Did you fall off? Were you hurt?”

“Oh, no—I was all right,” he said cheerfully. “I just sat there. But an equestrian statue in front of the general’s tent at 11 P.M. wasn’t usual, and there was a small sensation. It brought out the adjutant-general and he recognized me, and they carried me into a tent, and got a surgeon, and he had me stripped and rubbed and rolled in blankets. They found the despatches in my boots, and those gave all the information necessary. They found the letter, too, which Stoneman had given me to hand back to General Ladd, and they didn’t understand that, as it was addressed simply to ‘Miss Ladd, Ford Hall,’ so they left it till I waked up. That wasn’t till noon the next day.”

The General began chuckling contagiously, and I was alive with curiosity to know the coming joke.

“I believe every officer in the camp, from the commanding general down, had sent me clothes. When I unclosed my eyes that tent was alive with them. It was a spring opening, I can tell you—all sorts. Well, when I got the meaning of the array, I lay there and laughed out loud, and an orderly appeared at that, and then the adjutant-general, and I reported to him. Then I got into an assortment of the clothes, and did my duty by a pile of food and drink, and I was ready to start back to join my chief. Except for the letter of General Ladd—I had to deliver that in person to give the explanation. General Ladd had been wounded, I found, at Chancellorsville, but would see me. So off I went to his tent, and the orderly showed me in at once. He was in bed with his arm and shoulder bandaged, and by his side, looking as fresh as a rose and as mischievous as a monkey, sat a girl with red hair—Linda Ladd—Miss Ladd, of Ford Hall—the old house where I first saw her. Her father presented me in due form and told me to give her the letter and—that’s all.”

The General stopped short and regarded me quietly.

“Oh, but—” I stammered. “But that isn’t all—why, I don’t understand—it’s criminal not to tell the rest—there’s a lot.”

“What do you want to hear?” he demanded, “I don’t know any more—that’s all that happened.”

“Don’t be brutal,” I pleaded. “I want to know, for one thing, how she knew your name.”

Page 75

“Oh—that.” He laughed like an amused child. “That was rather odd. You remember I told you that when they were chasing us I took shelter and shot the horses from under some of the Southerners.”

“I remember.”

“Well, the first man dismounted was Tom Ladd, the girl’s cousin, who’d been my classmate at the Point, and he recognized me. He ran back and told them to make every effort to capture the party, as its leader was Captain Carruthers, of Stoneman’s staff, and undoubtedly carried despatches.”

“Oh!” I said. “I see. And where was Miss Ladd going, travelling your way all day?”

“To see her wounded father at Falmouth, don’t you understand? She’d had word from him the day before. She was escorted by a strong party of Confederates, including her brother and cousin. She started out with just the old negro, and it was arranged that she should meet the party at the cabin where I found her writing. They were to go with her to Kelly’s Ford, where she was to pass over to the Union post on the other bank—she had a safe-conduct.”

“Oh!” I assimilated this. “And she and her brother were Confederates, and the father was a Northern general—how extraordinary!”

“Not in the least,” the General corrected me. “It happened so in a number of cases. She was a power in that campaign. She did more work than either father or brother. A Southern officer told me afterward that the men half believed what she said—that she was a witch, and got news of our movements by magic. Nothing escaped her—she had a wonderful mind, and did not know what fear was. A wonderful woman!”

He was smiling to himself again as he sat, with his great shoulders bent forward and his scarred hand on his knee, looking into the fire.

“General,” I said tentatively, “aren’t you going to tell me what she said when she saw you come into her father’s tent?”

“Said?” asked the General, looking up and frowning. “What could she say? Good-morning, I guess.”

I wasn’t afraid of his frown or of his hammer-and-tongs manner. I’d got behind both before now. I persisted.

“But I mean—what did you say to each other, like the day before—how did it all come out?”

“Oh, we couldn’t do any love-making, if that’s what you mean,” he explained in a business-like way, “because the old man was on deck. And I had to leave in about ten minutes to ride back to join my command. That was all there was to it.”

I sighed with disappointment. Of course I knew it was just an idyll of youth, a day long, and that the book was closed forty years before. But I could not bear to have it closed with a bang. Somewhere in the narrative had come to me the impression that the heroine of it had died young in those exciting war-times of long ago. I had a picture in my mind of the dancing eyes closed meekly in a last sleep; of the young officer’s hand laid sorrowing on the bright halo of hair.

Page 76

"Did you ever see the girl again?" I asked softly.

The General turned on me a quick, queer look. Fun was in it, and memory gave it gentleness; yet there was impatience, too, at my slowness, in the boyish brown eyes.

"Mrs. Carruthers has red hair," he said briefly.

THROUGH THE IVORY GATE

Breeze-filtered through shifting leafage, the June morning sunlight came in at the open window by the boy's bed, under the green shades, across the shadowy, white room, and danced a noiseless dance of youth and freshness and springtime against the wall opposite. The boy's head stirred on his pillow. He spoke a quick word from out of his dream. "The key?" he said inquiringly, and the sound of his own voice awoke him. Dark, drowsy eyes opened, and he stared half seeing, at the picture that hung facing him. Was it the play of mischievous sunlight, was it the dream that still held his brain? He knew the picture line by line, and there was no such figure in it. It was a large photograph of Fairfield, the Southern home of his mother's people, and the boy remembered it always hanging there, opposite his bed, the first sight to meet his eyes every morning since his babyhood. So he was certain there was no figure in it, more than all one so remarkable as this strapping little chap in his queer clothes; his dress of conspicuous plaid with large black velvet squares sewed on it, who stood now in front of the old manor-house. Could it be only a dream? Could it be that a little ghost, wandering childlike in dim, heavenly fields, had joined the gay troop of his boyish visions and shipped in with them through the ivory gate of pleasant dreams? The boy put his fists to his eyes and rubbed them and looked again. The little fellow was still there, standing with sturdy legs wide apart as if owning the scene; he laughed as he held toward the boy a key—a small key tied with a scarlet ribbon. There was no doubt in the boy's mind that the key was for him, and out of the dim world of sleep he stretched his young arm for it; to reach it he sat up in bed. Then he was awake and knew himself alone in the peace of his own little room, and laughed shamefacedly at the reality of the vision which had followed him from dreamland into the very boundaries of consciousness, which held him even now with gentle tenacity, which drew him back through the day, from his studies, from his play, into the strong current of its fascination.

The first time Philip Beckwith had this dream he was only twelve years old, and, withheld by the deep reserve of childhood, he told not even his mother about it, though he lived in its atmosphere all day and remembered it vividly days longer. A year after it came again; and again it was a June morning, and as his eyes opened the little boy came once more out of the picture toward him, laughing and holding out the key on its scarlet string. The dream was a pleasant one, and Philip

Page 77

welcomed it eagerly from his sleep as a friend. There seemed something sweet and familiar in the child's presence beyond the one memory of him, as again the boy, with eyes half open to every-day life, saw him standing, small but masterful, in the garden of that old house where the Fairfields had lived for more than a century. Half consciously he tried to prolong the vision, tried not to wake entirely for fear of losing it; but the picture faded surely from the curtain of his mind as the tangible world painted there its heavier outlines. It was as if a happy little spirit had tried to follow him, for love of him, from a country lying close, yet separated; it was as if the common childhood of the two made it almost possible for them to meet; as if a message that might not be spoken, were yet almost delivered.

The third time the dream came it was a December morning of the year when Philip was fifteen, and falling snow made wavering light and shadow on the wall where hung the picture. This time, with eyes wide open, yet with the possession of the dream strongly on him, he lay sub-consciously alert and gazed, as in the odd, unmistakable dress that Philip knew now in detail, the bright-faced child swung toward him, always from the garden of that old place, always trying with loving, merry efforts to reach Philip from out of it—always holding to him the red-ribboned key. Like a wary hunter the big boy lay—knowing it unreal, yet living it keenly—and watched his chance. As the little figure glided close to him he put out his hand suddenly, swiftly for the key—he was awake. As always, the dream was gone; the little ghost was baffled again; the two worlds might not meet.

That day Mrs. Beckwith, putting in order an old mahogany secretary, showed him a drawer full of photographs, daguerrotypes. The boy and his gay young mother were the best of friends, for, only nineteen when he was born, she had never let the distance widen between them; had held the freshness of her youth sacred against the time when he should share it. Year by year, living in his enthusiasms, drawing him to hers, she had grown young in his childhood, which year by year came closer to her maturity. Until now there was between the tall, athletic lad and the still young and attractive woman, an equal friendship, a common youth, which gave charm and elasticity to the natural tie between them. Yet even to this comrade-mother the boy had not told his dream, for the difficulty of putting into words the atmosphere, the compelling power of it. So that when she opened one of the old-fashioned black cases which held the early sun-pictures, and showed him the portrait within, he startled her by a sudden exclamation. From the frame of red velvet and tarnished gilt there laughed up at him the little boy of his dream. There was no mistaking him, and if there were doubt about the face, there was the peculiar dress—the black and white plaid with large squares of black velvet sewed here and there as decoration. Philip stared in astonishment at the sturdy figure, the childish face with its wide forehead and level, strong brows; its dark eyes straight-gazing and smiling.

Page 78

“Mother—who is he? Who is he?” he demanded.

“Why, my lamb, don’t you know? It’s your little uncle Philip—my brother, for whom you were named—Philip Fairfield the sixth. There was always a Philip Fairfield at Fairfield since 1790. This one was the last, poor baby! and he died when he was five. Unless you go back there some day—that’s my hope, but it’s not likely to come true. You are a Yankee, except for the big half of you that’s me. That’s Southern, every inch.” She laughed and kissed his fresh cheek impulsively. “But what made you so excited over this picture, Phil?”

Philip gazed down, serious, a little embarrassed, at the open case in his hand. “Mother,” he said after a moment, “you’ll laugh at me, but I’ve seen this chap in a dream three times now.”

“Oh!” She did laugh at him. “Oh, Philip! What have you been eating for dinner, I’d like to know? I can’t have you seeing visions of your ancestors at fifteen—it’s unhealthy.”

The boy, reddening, insisted. “But, mother, really, don’t you think it was queer? I saw him as plainly as I do now—and I’ve never seen this picture before.”

“Oh, yes, you have—you must have seen it,” his mother threw back lightly. “You’ve forgotten, but the image of it was tucked away in some dark corner of your mind, and when you were asleep it stole out and played tricks on you. That’s the way forgotten ideas do: they get even with you in dreams for having forgotten them.”

“Mother, only listen—” But Mrs. Beckwith, her eyes lighting with a swift turn of thought, interrupted him—laid her finger on his lips.

“No—you listen, boy dear—quick, before I forget it! I’ve never told you about this, and it’s very interesting.”

And the youngster, used to these wilful ways of his sister-mother, laughed and put his fair head against her shoulder and listened.

“It’s quite a romance,” she began, “only there isn’t any end to it; it’s all unfinished and disappointing. It’s about this little Philip here, whose name you have—my brother. He died when he was five, as I said, but even then he had a bit of dramatic history in his life. He was born just before war-time in 1859, and he was a beautiful and wonderful baby; I can remember all about it, for I was six years older. He was incarnate sunshine, the happiest child that ever lived, but far too quick and clever for his years. The servants used to ask him, ‘Who is you, Marse Philip, sah?’ to hear him answer, before he could speak it plainly, ‘I’m Philip Fairfield of Fairfield’; he seemed to realize that, and his responsibility to them and to the place, as soon as he could breathe. He wouldn’t have a darky scolded in his presence, and every morning my father put him in front of

him in the saddle, and they rode together about the plantation. My father adored him, and little Philip's sunshiny way of taking possession of the slaves and the property pleased him more deeply, I think, than anything in

Page 79

his life. But the war came before this time, when the child was about a year old, and my father went off, of course, as every Southern man went who could walk, and for a year we did not see him. Then he was badly wounded at the battle of Malvern Hill; and came home to get well. However, it was more serious than he knew, and he did not get well. Twice he went off again to join our army, and each time he was sent back within a month, too ill to be of any use. He chafed constantly, of course, because he must stay at home and farm, when his whole soul ached to be fighting for his flag; but finally in December, 1863, he thought he was well enough at last for service. He was to join General John Morgan, who had just made his wonderful escape from prison at Columbus, and it was planned that my mother should take little Philip and me to England to live there till the war was over and we could all be together at Fairfield again. With that in view my father drew all of his ready money—it was ten thousand dollars in gold—from the banks in Lexington, for my mother's use in the years they might be separated. When suddenly, the day before he was to have gone, the old wound broke out again, and he was helplessly ill in bed at the hour when he should have been on his horse riding toward Tennessee. We were fifteen miles out from Lexington, yet it might be rumored that father had drawn a large sum of money, and, of course, he was well known as a Southern officer. Because of the Northern soldiers, who held the city, he feared very much to have the money in the house, yet he hoped still to join Morgan a little later, and then it would be needed as he had planned. Christmas morning my father was so much better that my mother went to church, taking me, and leaving little Philip, then four years old, to amuse him. What happened that morning was the point of all this rambling; so now listen hard, my precious thing."

The boy, sitting erect now, caught his mother's hand silently, and his eyes stared into hers as he drunk in every word:

"Mammy, who was, of course, little Philip's nurse, told my mother afterward that she was sent away before my father and the boy went into the garden, but she saw them go and saw that my father had a tin box—a box about twelve inches long, which seemed very heavy—in his arms, and on his finger swung a long red ribbon with a little key strung on it. Mother knew it as the key of the box, and she had tied the ribbon on it herself.

"It was a bright, crisp Christmas day, pleasant in the garden—the box hedges were green and fragrant, aromatic in the sunshine. You don't even know the smell of box in sunshine, you poor child! But I remember that day, for I was ten years old, a right big girl, and it was a beautiful morning for an invalid to take the air. Mammy said she was proud to see how her 'handsome boy' kept step with his father, and she watched the two until they got away down by the rose-garden, and then she

Page 80

couldn't see little Philip behind the three-foot hedge, so she turned away. But somewhere in that big garden, or under the trees beside it, my father buried the box that held the money—ten thousand dollars. It shows how he trusted that baby, that he took him with him, and you'll see how his trust was only too well justified. For that evening, Christmas night, very suddenly my father died—before he had time to tell my mother where he had hidden the box. He tried; when consciousness came a few minutes before the end he gasped out, 'I buried the money'—and then he choked. Once again he whispered just two words: 'Philip knows.' And my mother said, 'Yes, dearest—Philip and I will find it—don't worry, dearest,' and that quieted him. She told me about it so many times.

"After the funeral she took little Philip and explained to him as well as she could that he must tell mother where he and father had put the box, and—this is the point of it all, Philip—he wouldn't tell. She went over and over it all, again and again, but it was no use. He had given his word to my father never to tell, and he was too much of a baby to understand how death had dissolved that promise. My mother tried every way, of course, explanations and reasoning first, then pleading, and finally severity; she even punished the poor little martyr, for it was awfully important to us all. But the four-year-old baby was absolutely incorruptible, he cried bitterly and sobbed out:

"'Farver said I mustn't never tell anybody—never! Farver said Philip Fairfield of Fairfield mustn't *never* bweak his words,' and that was all.

"Nothing could induce him to give the least hint. Of course there was great search for it, but it was well hidden and it was never found. Finally, mother took her obdurate son and me and came to New York with us, and we lived on the little income which she had of her own. Her hope was that as soon as Philip was old enough she could make him understand, and go back with him and get that large sum lying underground—lying there yet, perhaps. But in less than a year the little boy was dead and the secret was gone with him."

Philip Beckwith's eyes were intense and wide. The Fairfield eyes, brown and brilliant, their young fire was concentrated on his mother's face.

"Do you mean that money is buried down there, yet, mother?" he asked solemnly.

Mrs. Beckwith caught at the big fellow's sleeve with slim fingers. "Don't go to-day, Phil—wait till after lunch, anyway!"

"Please don't make fun, mother—I want to know about it. Think of it lying there in the ground!"

“Greedy boy! We don’t need money now, Phil. And the old place will be yours when I am dead—” The lad’s arm went about his mother’s shoulders. “Oh, but I’m not going to die for ages! Not till I’m a toothless old person with side curls, hobbling along on a stick. Like this!”—she sprang to her feet and the boy laughed a great peal at the hag-like effect as his young mother threw herself into the part. She dropped on the divan again at his side.

Page 81

“What I meant to tell you was that your father thinks it very unlikely that the money is there yet, and almost impossible that we could find it in any case. But some day when the place is yours you can have it put through a sieve if you choose. I wish I could think you would ever live there, Phil; but I can’t imagine any chance by which you should. I should hate to have you sell it—it has belonged to a Philip Fairfield so many years.”

A week later the boy left his childhood by the side of his mother’s grave. His history for the next seven years may go in a few lines. School days, vacations, the four years at college, outwardly the commonplace of an even and prosperous development, inwardly the infinite variety of experience by which each soul is a person; the result of the two so wholesome a product of young manhood that no one realized under the frank and open manner a deep reticence, an intensity, a sensitiveness to impressions, a tendency toward mysticism which made the fibre of his being as delicate as it was strong.

Suddenly, in a turn of the wheel, all the externals of his life changed. His rich father died penniless and he found himself on his own hands, and within a month the boy who had owned five polo ponies was a hard-working reporter on a great daily. The same quick-wittedness and energy which had made him a good polo player made him a good reporter. Promotion came fast and, as those who are busiest have most time to spare, he fell to writing stories. When the editor of a large magazine took one, Philip first lost respect for that dignified person, then felt ashamed to have imposed on him, then rejoiced utterly over the check. After that editors fell into the habit; the people he ran against knew about his books; the checks grew better reading all the time; a point came where it was more profitable to stay at home and imagine events than to go out and report them. He had been too busy as the days marched, to generalize, but suddenly he knew that he was a successful writer; that if he kept his head and worked, a future was before him. So he soberly put his own English by the side of that of a master or two from his book-shelves, to keep his perspective clear, and then he worked harder. And it came to be five years after his father’s death.

At the end of those years three things happened at once. The young man suddenly was very tired and knew that he needed the vacation he had gone without; a check came in large enough to make a vacation easy—and he had his old dream. His fagged brain had found it but another worry to decide where he should go to rest, but the dream settled the vexed question off-hand—he would go to Kentucky. The very thought of it brought rest to him, for like a memory of childhood, like a bit of his own soul, he knew the country—the “God’s Country” of its people—which he had never seen. He caught his breath as he thought of warm, sweet air that held no hurry or nerve strain;

Page 82

of lingering sunny days whose hours are longer than in other places; of the soft speech, the serene and kindly ways of the people; of the royal welcome waiting for him as for every one, heartfelt and heart-warming; he knew it all from a daughter of Kentucky—his mother. It was May now, and he remembered she had told him that the land was filled with roses at the end of May—he would go then. He owned the old place, Fairfield, and he had never seen it. Perhaps it had fallen to pieces; perhaps his mother had painted it in colors too bright; but it was his, the bit of the earth that belonged to him. The Anglo-Saxon joy of land-owning stirred for the first time within him—he would go to his own place. Buoyant with the new thought he sat down and wrote a letter. A cousin of the family, of a younger branch, a certain John Fairfield, lived yet upon the land. Not in the great house, for that had been closed many years, but in a small house almost as old, called Westerly. Philip had corresponded with him once or twice about affairs of the estate, and each letter of the older man's had brought a simple and urgent invitation to come South and visit him. So, pleased as a child with the plan, he wrote that he was coming on a certain Thursday, late in May. The letter sent, he went about in a dream of the South, and when its answer, delighted and hospitable, came simultaneously with one of those bleak and windy turns of weather which make New York, even in May, a marvellously fitting place to leave, he could not wait. Almost a week ahead of his time he packed his bag and took the Southwestern Limited, and on a bright Sunday morning he awoke in the old Phoenix Hotel in Lexington. He had arrived too late the night before to make the fifteen miles to Fairfield, but he had looked over the horses in the livery-stable and chosen the one he wanted, for he meant to go on horseback, as a Southern gentleman should, to his domain. That he meant to go alone, that no one, not even John Fairfield, knew of his coming, was not the least of his satisfactions, for the sight of the place of his forefathers, so long neglected, was becoming suddenly a sacred thing to him. The old house and its young owner should meet each other like sweethearts, with no eyes to watch their greeting, their slow and sweet acquainting; with no living voices to drown the sound of the ghostly voices that must greet his home-coming from those walls—voices of his people who had lived there, voices gone long since into eternal silence.

A little crowd of loungers stared with frank admiration at the young fellow who came out smiling from the door of the Phoenix Hotel, big and handsome in his riding clothes, his eyes taking in the details of girths and bits and straps with the keenness of a horseman.

Philip laughed as he swung into the saddle and looked down at the friendly faces, most of them black faces, below, "Good-by," he said. "Wish me good luck, won't you?" and a willing chorus of "Good luck, boss," came flying after him as the horse's hoofs clattered down the street.

Page 83

Through the bright drowsiness of the little city he rode in the early Sunday morning, and his heart sang for joy to feel himself again across a horse, and for the love of the place that warmed him already. The sun shone hotly, but he liked it; he felt his whole being slipping into place, fitting to its environment; surely, in spite of birth and breeding, he was Southern born and bred, for this felt like home more than any home he had known!

As he drew away from the city, every little while, through stately woodlands, a dignified sturdy mansion peeped down its long vista of trees at the passing cavalier, and, enchanted with its beautiful setting, with its air of proud unconsciousness, he hoped each time that Fairfield would look like that. If he might live here—and go to New York, to be sure, two or three times a year to keep the edge of his brain sharpened—but if he might live his life as these people lived, in this unhurried atmosphere, in this perfect climate, with the best things in his reach for every-day use; with horses and dogs, with out-of-doors and a great, lovely country to breathe in; with—he smiled vaguely—with sometime perhaps a wife who loved it as he did—he would ask from earth no better life than that. He could write, he felt certain, better and larger things in such surroundings.

But he pulled himself up sharply as he thought how idle a day-dream it was. As a fact, he was a struggling young author, he had come South for two weeks' vacation, and on the first morning he was planning to live here—he must be light-headed. With a touch of his heel and a word and a quick pull on the curb, his good horse broke into a canter, and then, under the loosened rein, into a rousing gallop, and Philip went dashing down the country road, past the soft, rolling landscape, and under cool caves of foliage, vivid with emerald greens of May, thoughts and dreams all dissolved in exhilaration of the glorious movement, the nearest thing to flying that the wingless animal, man, may achieve.

He opened his coat as the blood rushed faster through him, and a paper fluttered from his pocket. He caught it, and as he pulled the horse to a trot, he saw that it was his cousin's letter. So, walking now along the brown shadows and golden sunlight of the long white pike, he fell to wondering about the family he was going to visit. He opened the folded letter and read:

"My dear Cousin," it said—the kinship was the first thought in John Fairfield's mind—"I received your welcome letter on the 14th. I am delighted that you are coming at last to Kentucky, and I consider that it is high time you paid Fairfield, which has been the cradle of your stock for many generations, the compliment of looking at it. We closed our house in Lexington three weeks ago, and are settled out here now for the summer, and find it lovelier than ever. My family consists only of myself and Shelby, my one child, who is now twenty-two years of age. We are both ready to give you an old-time Kentucky welcome, and Westerly is ready to receive you at any moment you wish to come."

Page 84

The rest was merely arrangement for meeting the traveller, all of which was done away with by his earlier arrival.

"A prim old party, with an exalted idea of the family," commented Philip mentally. "Well-to-do, apparently, or he wouldn't be having a winter house in the city. I wonder what the boy Shelby is like. At twenty-two he should be doing something more profitable than spending an entire summer out here, I should say."

The questions faded into the general content of his mind at the glimpse of another stately old pillared homestead, white and deep down its avenue of locusts. At length he stopped his horse to wait for a ragged negro trudging cheerfully down the road.

"Do you know a place around here called Fairfield?" he asked.

"Yessah. I does that, sah. It's that ar' place right hyeh, sah, by yo' hoss. That ar's Fahfiel'. Shall I open the gate fo' you, boss?" and Philip turned to see a hingeless ruin of boards held together by the persuasion of rusty wire.

"The home of my fathers looks down in the mouth," he reflected aloud.

The old negro's eyes, gleaming from under shaggy sheds of eyebrows, watched him, and he caught the words.

"Is you a Fahfiel', boss?" he asked eagerly. "Is you my young Marse?" He jumped at the conclusion promptly. "You favors de fam'ly mightily, sah. I heard you was comin'"; the rag of a hat went off and he bowed low. "Hit's cert'nly good news fo' Fahfiel', Marse Philip, hit's mighty good news fo' us niggers, sah. I'se b'longed to the Fahfiel' fam'ly a hund'ed years, Marse—me and my folks, and I wishes yo' a welcome home, sah—welcome home, Marse Philip."

Philip bent with a quick movement from his horse, and gripped the twisted old black hand, speechless. This humble welcome on the highway caught at his heart deep down, and the appeal of the colored people to Southerners, who know them, the thrilling appeal of a gentle, loyal race, doomed to live forever behind a veil and hopeless without bitterness, stirred for the first time his manhood. It touched him to be taken for granted as the child of his people; it pleased him that he should be "Marse Philip" as a matter of course, because there had always been a Marse Philip at the place. It was bred deeper in the bone of him than he knew, to understand the soul of the black man; the stuff he was made of had been Southern two hundred years.

The old man went off down the white limestone road singing to himself, and Philip rode slowly under the locusts and beeches up the long drive, grass-grown and lost in places, that wound through the woodland three-quarters of a mile to his house. And as he moved through the park, through sunlight and shadow of these great trees that were



his, he felt like a knight of King Arthur, like some young knight long exiled, at last coming to his own. He longed with an unreasonable seizure of desire to come here to live, to take care of it, beautify it, fill it with life and prosperity as it had once been filled, surround it with cheerful faces of colored people whom he might make happy and comfortable. If only he had money to pay off the mortgage, to put the place once in order, it would be the ideal setting for the life that seemed marked out for him—the life of a writer.

Page 85

The horse turned a corner and broke into a canter up the slope, and as the shoulder of the hill fell away there stood before him the picture of his childhood come to life, smiling drowsily in the morning sunlight with shuttered windows that were its sleeping eyes—the great white house of Fairfield. Its high pillars reached to the roof; its big wings stretched away at either side; the flicker of the shadow of the leaves played over it tenderly and hid broken bits of woodwork, patches of paint cracked away, window-panes gone here and there. It stood as if too proud to apologize or to look sad for such small matters, as serene, as stately as in its prime. And its master, looking at it for the first time, loved it.

He rode around to the side and tied his mount to an old horse-rack, and then walked up the wide front steps as if each lift were an event. He turned the handle of the big door without much hope that it would yield, but it opened willingly, and he stood inside. A broom lay in a corner, windows were open—his cousin had been making ready for him. There was the huge mahogany sofa, horse-hair-covered, in the window under the stairs, where his mother had read “Ivanhoe” and “The Talisman.” Philip stepped softly across the wide hall and laid his head where must have rested the brown hair of the little girl who had come to be, first all of his life, and then its dearest memory. Half an hour he spent in the old house, and its walls echoed to his footsteps as if in ready homage, and each empty room whose door he opened met him with a sweet half familiarity. The whole place was filled with the presence of the child who had loved it and left it, and for whom this tall man, her child, longed now as if for a little sister who should be here, and whom he missed. With her memory came the thought of the five-year-old uncle who had made history for the family so disastrously. He must see the garden where that other Philip had gone with his father to hide the money on the fated Christmas morning. He closed the house door behind him carefully, as if he would not disturb a little girl reading in the window, a little boy sleeping perhaps in the nursery above. Then he walked down the broad sweep of the driveway, the gravel crunching under the grass, and across what had been a bit of velvet lawn, and stood for a moment with his hand on a broken vase, weed-filled, which capped the stone post of a gateway.

All the garden was misty with memories. Where a tall golden flower nodded alone, from out of the tangled thicket of an old flower-bed, a bright-haired child might have laughed with just that air of startled, gay naughtiness, from the forbidden centre of the blossoms. In the moulded tan-bark of the path was a vague print, like the ghost of a footprint that had passed down the way a lifetime ago. The box, half dead, half sprouted into high unkept growth, still stood stiffly against the riotous overflow of weeds as if it yet

Page 86

held loyally to its business of guarding the borders, Philip shifted his gaze slowly, lingering over the dim contours, the shadowy shape of what the garden had been. Suddenly his eyes opened wide. How was this? There was a hedge as neat, as clipped, as any of Southampton in mid-season, and over it a glory of roses, red and white and pink and yellow, waved gay banners to him in trim luxuriance. He swung toward them, and the breeze brought him for the first time in his life the fragrance of box in sunshine.

Four feet tall, shaven and thick and shining, the old hedge stood, and the garnered sweetness of a hundred years' slow growth breathed delicately from it toward the great-great-grandson of the man who planted it. A box hedge takes as long in the making as a gentleman, and when they are done the two are much of a sort. No plant in all the garden has so subtle an air of breeding, so gentle a reserve, yet so gracious a message of sweetness for all of the world who will stop to learn it. It keeps a firm dignity under the stress of tempest when lighter growths are tossed and torn; it shines bright through the snow; it has a well-bred willingness to be background, with the well-bred gift of presence, whether as background or foreground. The soul of the box-tree is an aristocrat, and the sap that runs through it is the blue blood of vegetation.

Saluting him bravely in the hot sunshine with its myriad shining sword-points, the old hedge sent out to Philip on the May breeze its ancient welcome of aromatic fragrance, and the tall roses crowded gayly to look over its edge at the new master. Slowly, a little dazed at this oasis of shining order in the neglected garden, he walked to the opening and stepped inside the hedge. The rose garden! The famous rose garden of Fairfield, and as his mother had described it, in full splendor of cared-for, orderly bloom. Across the paths he stepped swiftly till he stood amid the roses, giant bushes of Jacqueminot and Marechal Niel; of pink and white and red and yellow blooms in thick array. The glory of them intoxicated him. That he should own all of this beauty seemed too good to be true, and instantly he wanted to taste his ownership. The thought came to him that he would enter into his heritage with strong hands here in the rose garden; he caught a deep-red Jacqueminot almost roughly by its gorgeous head and broke off the stem. He would gather a bunch, a huge, unreasonable bunch of his own flowers. Hungrily he broke one after another; his shoulders bent over them, he was deep in the bushes.

"I reckon I shall have to ask you not to pick any more of those roses," a voice said.

Philip threw up his head as if he had been shot; he turned sharply with a great thrill, for he thought his mother spoke to him. Perhaps it was only the Southern inflection so long unheard, perhaps the sunlight that shone in his eyes dazzled him, but, as he stared, the white figure before him seemed to him to look exactly as his mother had looked long ago. Stumbling over his words, he caught at the first that came.

Page 87

"I—I think it's all right," he said.

The girl smiled frankly, yet with a dignity in her puzzled air. "I'm afraid I shall have to be right decided," she said. "These roses are private property and I mustn't let you have them."

"Oh!" Philip dropped the great bunch of gorgeous color guiltily by his side, but still held tightly the prickly mass of stems, knowing his right, yet half wondering if he could have made a mistake. He stammered:

"I thought—to whom do they belong?"

"They belong to my cousin, Mr. Philip Fairfield Beckwith"—the sound of his own name was pleasant as the falling voice strayed through it. "He is coming home in a few days, so I want them to look their prettiest for him—for his first sight of them. I take care of this rose garden," she said, and laid a motherly hand on the nearest flower. Then she smiled. "It doesn't seem right hospitable to stop you, but if you will come over to Westerly, to our house, father will be glad to see you, and I will certainly give you all the flowers you want." The sweet and masterful apparition looked with a gracious certainty of obedience straight into Philip's bewildered eyes.

[Illustration: "I reckon I shall have to ask you not pick any more of those roses," a voice said.]

"The boy Shelby!" Many a time in the months after Philip Beckwith smiled to himself reminiscently, tenderly, as he thought of "the boy Shelby" whom he had read into John Fairfield's letter; "the boy Shelby" who was twenty-two years old and the only child; "the boy Shelby" whom he had blamed with such easy severity for idling at Fairfield; "the boy Shelby" who was no boy at all, but this white flower of girlhood, called—after the quaint and reasonable Southern way—as a boy is called, by the surname of her mother's people.

Toward Westerly, out of the garden of the old time, out of the dimness of a forgotten past, the two took their radiant youth and the brightness of to-day. But a breeze blew across the tangle of weeds and flowers as they wandered away, and whispered a hope, perhaps a promise; for as it touched them each tall stalk nodded gayly and the box hedges rustled delicately an answering undertone. And just at the edge of the woodland, before they were out of sight, the girl turned and threw a kiss back to the roses and the box.

"I always do that," she said. "I love them so!"

Two weeks later a great train rolled into the Grand Central Station of New York at half-past six at night, and from it stepped a monstrosity—a young man without a heart. He

had left all of it, more than he had thought he owned, in Kentucky. But he had brought back with him memories which gave him more joy than ever the heart had done, to his best knowledge, in all the years. They were memories of long and sunshiny days; of afternoons spent in the saddle, rushing through grassy lanes where trumpet-flowers flamed over gray farm fences, or trotting slowly down white roads; of whole mornings only an hour long, passed in the enchanted stillness of an old garden; of gay, desultory searches through its length and breadth, and in the park that held it, for buried treasure: of moonlit nights; of roses and June and Kentucky—and always, through all the memories, the presence that made them what they were, that of a girl he loved.

Page 88

No word of love had been spoken, but the two weeks had made over his life; and he went back to his work with a definite object, a hope stronger than ambition, and, set to it as music to words, came insistently another hope, a dream that he did not let himself dwell on—a longing to make enough money to pay off the mortgage and put Fairfield in order, and live and work there all his life—with Shelby. That was where the thrill of the thought came in, but the place was very dear to him in itself.

The months went, and the point of living now were the mails from the South, and the feast days were the days that brought letters from Fairfield. He had promised to go back for a week at Christmas, and he worked and hoarded all the months between with a thought which he did not formulate, but which ruled his down-sitting and his up-rising, the thought that if he did well and his bank account grew enough to justify it he might, when he saw her at Christmas, tell her what he hoped; ask her—he finished the thought with a jump of his heart. He never worked harder or better, and each check that came in meant a step toward the promised land; and each seemed for the joy that was in it to quicken his pace, to lengthen his stride, to strengthen his touch. Early in November he found one night when he came to his rooms two letters waiting for him with the welcome Kentucky postmark. They were in John Fairfield's handwriting and in his daughter's, and "*place aux dames*" ruled rather than respect to age, for he opened Shelby's first. His eyes smiling, he read it.

"I am knitting you a diamond necklace for Christmas," she wrote. "Will you like that? Or be sure to write me if you'd rather have me hunt in the garden and dig you up a box of money. I'll tell you—there ought to be luck in the day, for it was hidden on Christmas and it should be found on Christmas; so on Christmas morning we'll have another look, and if you find it I'll catch you 'Christmas gif' as the darkies do, and you'll have to give it to me, and if I find it I'll give it to you; so that's fair, isn't it? Anyway—" and Philip's eyes jumped from line to line, devouring the clear, running writing. "So bring a little present with you, please—just a tiny something for me," she ended, "for I'm certainly going to catch you 'Christmas gif'."

Philip folded the letter back into its envelope and put it in his pocket, and his heart felt warmer for the scrap of paper over it. Then he cut John Fairfield's open dreamily, his mind still on the words he had read, on the threat—"I'm going to catch you 'Christmas gif'." What was there good enough to give her? Himself, he thought humbly, very far from it. With a sigh that was not sad he dismissed the question and began to read the other letter. He stood reading it by the fading light from the window, his hat thrown by him on a chair, his overcoat still on, and, as he read, the smile died from his face. With drawn

Page 89

brows he read on to the end, and then the letter dropped from his fingers to the floor and he did not notice; his eyes stared widely at the high building across the street, the endless rows of windows, the lights flashing into them here and there. But he saw none of it. He saw a stretch of quiet woodland, an old house with great white pillars, a silent, neglected garden, with box hedges sweet and ragged, all waiting for him to come and take care of them—the home of his fathers, the home he had meant, had expected—he knew it now—would be some day his own, the home he had lost! John Fairfield's letter was to tell him that the mortgage on the place, running now so many years, was suddenly to be foreclosed; that, property not being worth much in the neighborhood, no one would take it up; that on January 2nd, Fairfield, the house and land, were to be sold at auction. It was a hard blow to Philip Beckwith. With his hands in his overcoat pockets he began to walk up and down the room, trying to plan, to see if by any chance he might save this place he loved. It would mean eight thousand dollars to pay the mortgage. One or two thousand more would put the estate in order, but that might wait if he could only tide over this danger, save the house and land. An hour he walked so, forgetting dinner, forgetting the heavy coat which he still wore, and then he gave it up. With all he had saved—and it was a fair and promising beginning—he could not much more than half pay the mortgage, and there was no way, which he would consider, by which he could get the money. Fairfield would have to go, and he set his teeth and clinched his fists as he thought how he wanted to keep it. A year ago it had meant nothing to him, a year from now if things went his way he could have paid the mortgage. That it should happen just this year—just now! He could not go down at Christmas; it would break his heart to see the place again as his own when it was just slipping from his grasp. He would wait until it was all over, and go, perhaps, in the spring. The great hope of his life was still his own, but Fairfield had been the setting of that hope; he must readjust his world before he saw Shelby again. So he wrote them that he would not come at present, and then tried to dull the ache of his loss with hard work.

But three days before Christmas, out of the unknown forces beyond his reasoning swept a wave of desire to go South, which took him off his feet. Trained to trust his brain and deny his impulse as he was, yet there was a vein of sentiment, almost of superstition, in him which the thought of the old place pricked sharply to life. This longing was something beyond him—he must go—and he had thrown his decisions to the winds and was feverish until he could get away.

Page 90

As before, he rode out from the Phoenix Hotel, and at ten o'clock in the morning he turned into Fairfield. It was a still, bright Christmas morning, crisp and cool, and the air like wine. The house stood bravely in the sunlight, but the branches above it were bare and no softening leafage hid the marks of time; it looked old and sad and deserted to-day, and its master gazed at it with a pang in his heart. It was his, and he could not save it. He turned away and walked slowly to the garden, and stood a moment as he had stood last May, with his hand on the stone gateway. It was very silent and lonely here, in the hush of winter; nothing stirred; even the shadows of the interlaced branches above lay almost motionless across the walks.

Something moved to his left, down the pathway—he turned to look. Had his heart stopped, that he felt this strange, cold feeling in his breast? Were his eyes—could he be seeing? Was this insanity? Fifty feet down the path, half in the weaving shadows, half in clear sunlight, stood the little boy of his life-long vision, in the dress with the black velvet squares, his little uncle, dead forty years ago. As he gazed, his breath stopping, the child smiled and held up to him, as of old, a key on a scarlet string, and turned and flitted as if a flower had taken wing, away between the box hedges. Philip, his feet moving as if without his will, followed him. Again the baby face turned its smiling dark eyes toward him, and Philip knew that the child was calling him, though there was no sound; and again without volition of his own his feet took him where it led. He felt his breath coming difficultly, and suddenly a gasp shook him—there was no footprint on the unfrozen earth where the vision had passed. Yet there before him, moving through the deep sunlit silence of the garden, was the familiar, sturdy little form in its old-world dress. Philip's eyes were open; he was awake, walking; he saw it. Across the neglected tangle it glided, and into the trim order of Shelby's rose garden; in the opening between the box walls it wheeled again, and the sun shone clear on the bronze hair and fresh face, and the scarlet string flashed and the key glinted at the end of it. Philip's fascinated eyes saw all of that. Then the apparition slipped into the shadow of the beech trees and Philip quickened his step breathlessly, for it seemed that life and death hung on the sight. In and out through the trees it moved; once more the face turned toward him; he caught the quick brightness of a smile. The little chap had disappeared behind the broad tree-trunk, and Philip, catching his breath, hurried to see him appear again. He was gone. The little spirit that had strayed from over the border of a world—who can say how far, how near?—unafraid in this earth-corner once its home, had slipped away into eternity through the white gate of ghosts and dreams.

Page 91

Philip's heart was pumping painfully as he came, dazed and staring, to the place where the apparition had vanished. It was a giant beech tree, all of two hundred and fifty years old, and around its base ran a broken wooden bench, where pretty girls of Fairfield had listened to their sweethearts, where children destined to be generals and judges had played with their black mammies, where gray-haired judges and generals had come back to think over the fights that were fought out. There were letters carved into the strong bark, the branches swung down whisperingly, the green tent of the forest seemed filled with the memory of those who had camped there and gone on. Philip's feet stumbled over the roots as he circled the veteran; he peered this way and that, but the woodland was hushed and empty; the birds whistled above, the grasses rustled below, unconscious, casual, as if they knew nothing of a child-soul that had wandered back on Christmas day with a Christmas message, perhaps, of good-will to its own.

As he stood on the farther side of the tree where the little ghost had faded from him, at his feet lay, open and conspicuous, a fresh, deep hole. He looked down absent-mindedly. Some animal—a dog, a rabbit—had scratched far into the earth. A bar of sunlight struck a golden arm through the branches above, and as he gazed at the upturned, brown dirt the rays that were its fingers reached into the hollow and touched a square corner, a rusty edge of tin. In a second the young fellow was down on his knees digging as if for his life, and in less than five minutes he had loosened the earth which had guarded it so many years, and staggering with it to his feet had lifted to the bench a heavy tin box. In its lock was the key, and dangling from it a long bit of no-colored silk, that yet, as he untwisted it, showed a scarlet thread in the crease. He opened the box with the little key; it turned scrapingly, and the ribbon crumbled in his fingers, its long duty done. Then, as he tilted the heavy weight, the double eagles, packed closely, slipped against each other with a soft clink of sliding metal. The young man stared at the mass of gold pieces as if he could not trust his eyesight; he half thought even then that he dreamed it. With a quick memory of the mortgage he began to count. It was all there—ten thousand dollars in gold! He lifted his head and gazed at the quiet woodland, the open shadow-work of the bare branches, the fields beyond lying in the calm sunlit rest of a Southern winter. Then he put his hand deep into the gold pieces, and drew a long breath. It was impossible to believe, but it was true. The lost treasure was found. It meant to him Shelby and home; as he realized what it meant his heart felt as if it would break with the joy of it. He would give her this for his Christmas gift, this legacy of his people and hers, and then he would give her himself. It was all easy now—life seemed not to hold a difficulty. And the two would keep tenderly,

Page 92

always, the thought of a child who had loved his home and his people and who had tried so hard, so long, to bring them together. He knew the dream-child would not visit him again—the little ghost was laid that had followed him all his life. From over the border whence it had come with so many loving efforts it would never come again. Slowly, with the heavy weight in his arms, he walked back to the garden sleeping in the sunshine, and the box hedges met him with a wave of fragrance, the sweetness of a century ago; and as he passed through their shining door, looking beyond, he saw Shelby. The girl's figure stood by the stone column of the garden entrance, the light shone on her bare head, and she had stopped, surprised, as she saw him. Philip's pace quickened with his heart-throb as he looked at her and thought of the little ghostly hands that had brought theirs together; and as he looked the smile that meant his welcome and his happiness broke over her face, and with the sound of her voice all the shades of this world and the next dissolved in light.

“‘Christmas gif’,’ Marse Philip!’ called Shelby.

THE WIFE OF THE GOVERNOR

The Governor sat at the head of the big black-oak table in his big stately library. The large lamps on either end of the table stood in old cloisonne vases of dull rich reds and bronzes, and their shades were of thick yellow silk. The light they cast on the six anxious faces grouped about them was like the light in Rembrandt's picture of The Clinic.

It was a very important meeting indeed. A city official, who had for months been rather too playfully skating on the thin ice of bare respect for the law, had just now, in the opinion of many, broken through. He had followed a general order of the Governor's by a special order of his own, contradicting the first in words not at all, but in spirit from beginning to end. And the Governor wished to make an example of him—now, instantly, so promptly and so thoroughly that those who ran might read, in large type, that the attempt was not a success. He was young for a Governor—thirty-six years old—and it may be that care for the dignity of his office was not his only feeling on the subject.

“I won't be badgered, you know,” he said to the senior Senator of the State. “If the man wishes to see what I do when I'm ugly, I propose to show him. Show me reason, if you can, why this chap shouldn't be indicted.”

To which they answered various things; for while they sympathized, and agreed in the main, yet several were for temporizing, and most of them for going a bit slowly. But the Governor was impetuous and indignant. And here the case stood when there came a knock at the library door.

The Governor looked up in surprise, for it was against all orders that he should be disturbed at a meeting. But he spoke a "Come in," and Jackson, the stately colored butler, appeared, looking distressed and alarmed.

Page 93

"Oh, Lord! Gov'ner, suh!" was all he got out for a moment, fear at his own rashness seizing him in its grip at the sight of the six distinguished faces turned toward him.

"Jackson! What do you want?" asked the Governor, not so very gently.

Jackson advanced, with conspicuous lack of his usual style and sang-froid, a tray in his hand, and a quite second-class-looking envelope upon it. "Beg pardon, suh. Shouldn't 'a' interrupted, Gov'nor; please scuse me, suh; but they boys was so pussistent, and it comed fum the deepo, and I was mos' feared the railways was done gone on a strike, and I thought maybe you'd oughter know, suh—Gov'ner."

And in the meantime, while the scared Jackson rambled on thus in an undertone, the Governor had the cheap, bluish-white envelope in his hand, and with a muttered "Excuse me" to his guests, had cut it across and was reading, with a face of astonishment, the paper that was enclosed. He crumpled it in his hand and threw it on the table.

"Absurd!" he said, half aloud; and then, "No answer, Jackson," and the man retired.

"Now, then, gentlemen, as we were saying before this interruption"—and in clear, eager sentences he returned to the charge. But a change had come over him. The Attorney-General, elucidating a point of importance, caught his chief's eye wandering, and followed it, surprised, to that ball of paper on the table. The Secretary of State could not understand why the Governor agreed in so half-hearted a way when he urged with eloquence the victim's speedy sacrifice. Finally, the august master of the house growing more and more distrait, he suddenly rose, and picking up the crumpled paper

"Gentlemen, will you have the goodness to excuse me for five minutes?" he said. "It is most annoying, but I cannot give my mind to business until I attend to the matter on which Jackson interrupted us. I beg a thousand pardons—I shall only keep you a moment."

The dignitaries left cooling their heels looked at each other blankly, but the Lieutenant-Governor smiled cheerfully.

"One of the reasons he is Governor at thirty-six is that he always does attend to the matters that interrupt him."

Meanwhile the Governor, rushing out with his usual impulsive energy, had sent two or three servants flying over the house. "Where's Mrs. Mooney? Send Mrs. Mooney to me here instantly—and be quick;" and he waited, impatient, although it was for only three minutes, in a little room across the hall, where appeared to him in that time a

square-shaped, gray-haired woman with a fresh face and blue eyes full of intelligence and kindness.

“Mary, look here;” and the big Governor put his hand on the stout little woman’s arm and drew her to the light. Mary and his Excellency were friends of very old standing indeed, their intimacy having begun thirty-five years before, when the future great man was a rampant baby, and Mary his nurse and his adorer, which last she was still. “I want to read you this, and then I want you to telephone to Bristol at once.” He smoothed out the wrinkled single sheet of paper.

Page 94

"My dear Governor Rudd," he read,— "My friends the McNaughtons of Bristol are friends of yours too, I think, and that is my reason for troubling you with this note. I am on my way to visit them now, and expected to take the train for Bristol at twenty minutes after eight to-night, but when I reached here at eight o'clock I found the time-table had been changed, and the train had gone out twenty minutes before. And there is no other till to-morrow. I don't know what to do or where to go, and you are the only person in the city whose name I know. Would it trouble you to advise me where to go for the night—what hotel, if it is right for me to go to a hotel? With regret that I should have to ask this of you when you must be busy with great affairs all the time, I am,

"Very sincerely,
"LINDSAY LEE."

Mary listened, attentive but dazed, and was about to burst out at once with voluble exclamations and questions when the Governor stopped her.

"Now, Mary, don't do a lot of talking. Just listen to me. I thought at first this note was from a man, because it is signed by a man's name. But it looks and sounds like a woman, and I think it should be attended to. I want you to telephone to Mr. George McNaughton, at Bristol, and ask if Mr. or Miss Lindsay Lee is a friend of theirs, and say that, if so, he—or she—is all right, and is spending the night here. Then, in that case, send Harper to the station with the brougham, and say that I beg to have the honor of looking after Mrs. McNaughton's friend for the night. And you'll see that whoever it is is made very comfortable."

"Indeed I will, the poor young thing," said Mary, jumping at a picturesque view of the case. "But, Mr. Jack, do you want me to telephone to Mr. McNaughton's and ask if a friend of theirs—"

The Governor cut her short. "Exactly. You know just what I said, Mary Mooney; you only want to talk it over. I'm much too busy. Tell Jackson not to come to the library again unless the State freezes over. Good-night.—I don't think the McNaughtons can complain that I haven't done their friend brown," said the Governor to himself as he went back across the hall.

* * * * *

Down at the station, beneath the spirited illumination of one whistling gas-jet, the station-master and Lindsay Lee waited wearily for an answer from the Governor. It was long in coming, for the station-master's boys, the Messrs. O'Milligan, seizing the occasion for foreign travel offered by a sight of the Executive grounds, had made a detour by the Executive stables, and held deep converse with the grooms. Just as the thought of duty undone began to prick the leathery conscience of the older one, the order came for Harper and the brougham. Half an hour later, at the station, Harper

drew up with a sonorous clatter of hoofs. The station-master hurried forward to interview the coachman. In a moment he turned with a beaming face.

Page 95

"It's good news for ye, miss. The Governor's sent his own kerridge for ye, then. Blessed Mary, but it's him that's condescendin'. Get right in, miss."

Such a sudden safe harbor seemed almost too good to be true. Lindsay was nearly asleep as the rubber-tired wheels rolled softly along through the city. The carriage turned at length from the lights and swung up a long avenue between trees, and then stopped. The door flew open, and Lindsay looked up steps and into a wide, lighted doorway, where stood a stout woman, who hastened to seize her bag and umbrella and take voluble possession of her. The sleepy, dazed girl was vaguely conscious of large halls and a wide stair and a kind voice by her side that flowed ever on in a gentle river of words. Then she found herself in a big, pleasant bed-room, and beyond was the open door of a tiled bath-room.

"Oh—oh!" she said, and dropped down sideways on the whiteness of the brass bed, and put her arms around the pillow and her head, hat and all, on it.

"Poor child!" said pink-checked, motherly Mrs. Mooney. "You're more than tired, that I can see without trying, and no wonder, too! I shan't say another word to you, but just leave you to get to bed and to sleep, and I'm sure it's the best medicine ever made, is a good comfortable bed and a night's rest. So I shan't stop to speak another word. But is there anything at all you'd like, Miss Lee? And there, now, what am I thinking about? I haven't asked if you wouldn't have a bit of supper! I'll bring it up myself—just a bit of cold bird and a glass of wine? It will do you good. But it will," as Lindsay shook her head, smiling. "There's nothing so bad as going to sleep on an empty stomach when you're tired."

"But I had dinner on the train, and I'm not hungry; sure enough, I'm not; thank you a thousand times."

Mrs. Mooney reluctantly took two steps toward the door, the room shaking under her soft-footed, heavy tread.

"You're sure you wouldn't like—" She stopped, embarrassed, and the blue eyes shone like kindly sapphires above the always-blushing cheeks. "I'm mortified to ask you for fear you'd laugh at me, but you seem like such a child, and—would you let me bring you—just a slice of bread and butter with some brown sugar on it?"

Lindsay had a gracious way of knowing when people really wished to do something for her. She flapped her hands, like the child she looked. "Oh, how did you think of it? I used to have that for a treat at home. Yes, I'd love it!" And Mrs. Mooney beamed.

"There! I thought you would! You see, Miss Lee, that's what I used sometimes to give my boy—that's the Governor—when he was little and got hungry at bedtime."

Page 96

Lindsay, left alone, took off her hat, and with a pull and screw at her necktie and collar-button, dropped into a chair that seemed to hold its fat arms up for her. She smiled sleepily and comfortably. "I'm having a right good time," she said to herself, "but it's funny. I feel as if I lived here, and I love that old housekeeper-nurse of the Governor's. I wonder what the Governor is like? I wonder—" And at this point she became aware, with only slight surprise, of a little boy with a crown on his head who offered her a slice of bread and butter and sugar a yard square, and told her he had kept it for her twenty-five years. She was about to reason with him that it could not possibly be good to eat in that case, when something jarred the brain that was slipping so easily down into oblivion, and as her eyes opened again she saw Mrs. Mooney's solid shape bending over the tub in the bath-room, and a noise of running water sounded pleasant and refreshing.

"Oh, did I go to sleep?" she asked, sitting up straight and blinking wide-open eyes.

"There! I knew it would wake you, and I couldn't a-bear to do it, my dear, but it would never do for you to sleep like that in your clothes, and I drew your bath warm, thinking it would rest you better, but I can just change it hot or cold as it suits you. And here's the little lunch for you, and I feel as if it was my own little boy I was taking care of again; the year he was ten it was he ate so much at night. I saw him just now, and he's that tired from his meeting—it's a shame how hard he has to work for this State, time and time again. He said 'Good-night, Mary,' he said, just the way he did years ago—such a little gentleman he always was. The dearest and the handsomest thing he was; they used to call him 'the young prince,' he was that handsome and full of spirit. He told me to say he hoped for the pleasure of seeing Miss Lee at breakfast to-morrow at nine; but if you should be tired, Miss Lee, or prefer your breakfast up here, which you can have it just as well as not, you know. And here I'm talking you to death again, and you ought to stop me, for when I begin about the Governor I never know when to stop myself. Just put up your foot, please, and I'll take your shoes off," And while she unlaced Lindsay's small boots with capable fingers she apologized profusely for talking—talking as much again.

"There's nothing to excuse. It's mighty interesting to hear about him," said Lindsay. "I shall enjoy meeting him that much more. Is there a picture of him anywhere around?" looking about the room.

That was a lucky stroke. Mary Mooney parted the black ribbon that was tied beneath her neat white collar and turned her face up, all pleased smiles, to the girl, who leaned down to examine an ivory miniature set as a brooch. It was a sunny-faced little boy, with thick straight golden hair and fearless brown eyes—a sweet childish face very easy to admire, and Lindsay admired it enough to satisfy even Mrs. Mooney.

Page 97

"I had it for a Christmas gift the year he was nine," she said. Mary's calendar ran from The Year of the Governor, 1. "He had whooping-cough just after that, and was ill seven weeks. Dear me, what teeny little feet you have!" as she put on them the dressing-slippers from the bag, and struggled up to her own, heavily but cheerfully.

Lindsay looked at her thoughtfully. "You haven't mentioned the Governor's wife," she said. "Isn't she at home?" and she leaned over to pull up the furry heel of the little slipper. So that she missed seeing Mary Mooney's face. Expression chased expression over that smiling landscape—astonishment, perplexity, anxiety, the gleam of a new-born idea, hesitation, and at last a glow of unselfish kindness which often before had transfigured it.

"No, Miss Lee," said Mary. "She's away from home just now." And then, unblushingly, "But she's a lovely lady, and she'll be very disappointed not to see you."

Almost the next thing Lindsay knew she was watching dreamily spots of sunlight that danced on a pale pink wall. Then a bird began to sing at the edge of the window; there was a delicate rustle of skirts, and she turned her head and saw a maid—not Mary Mooney this time—moving softly about, opening part way the outside shutters, drawing lip the shades a bit, letting the light and shadow from tossing trees outside and the air and the morning in with gentle slowness. She dressed with deliberation, and, lo! it was a quarter after nine o'clock.

So that the Governor waited for his breakfast. For ten minutes, while the paper lasted, waiting was unimportant; and then, being impatient by nature, and not used to it, he suddenly was cross.

"Confound the girl!" soliloquized the Governor. "I'll have her indicted too! First she breaks up a meeting, then she gets the horses out at all hours, and now, to cap it, she makes me wait for breakfast. Why should I wait for my breakfast? Why the devil can't she—Now, Mary, what is it? I warn you I'm cross, and I shan't listen well till I've had breakfast. I'm waiting for that young lady you're coddling. Where's that young lady? Why doesn't she—What?"

For the flood-gates were open, and the soft verbal oceans of Mary were upon him. He listened two minutes, mute with astonishment, and then he rose up in his wrath and was verbal also.

"What! You told her I was *married*? What the dev—And you're actually asking *me* to tell her so *too*? Mary, are you insane? Embarrassed? What if she is embarrassed? And what do I care if—What? Sweet and pretty? Mary, don't be an idiot. Am I to improvise a wife, in my own house, because a stray girl may object to visiting a bachelor? Not if I know it. Not much." The Governor bristled with indignation. "Confound the girl, I'll—" At this point Mary, though portly, vanished like a vision of the

night, and there stood in the doorway a smiling embodiment of the morning, crisp in a clean shirt-waist, and free from consciousness of crime.

Page 98

"Is it Governor Rudd?" asked Lindsay; and the Governor was, somehow, shaking hands like a kind and cordial host, and the bitterness was gone from his soul. "I certainly don't know how to thank you," she said. "You-all have been very good to me, and I've been awfully comfortable. I was so lost and unhappy last night; I felt like a wandering Jewess. I hope I haven't kept you waiting for breakfast?"

"Not a moment," said the Governor, heartily, placing her chair, and it was five minutes before he suddenly remembered that he was cross. Then he made an effort to live up to his convictions. "This is a mistake," he said to himself. "I had no intention of being particularly friendly with this young person. Rudd, I can't allow you to be impulsive in this way. You're irritated by the delay and by last night: you're bored to be obliged to entertain a girl when you wish to read the paper; you're anxious to get down to the Capitol to see those men; all you feel is a perfunctory politeness for the McNaughtons' friend. Kindly remember these facts, Rudd, and don't make a fool of yourself gambolling on the green, instead of sustaining the high dignity of your office." So reasoned the Governor secretly, and made futile attempts at high dignity, while his heart became as wax, and he questioned of his soul at intervals to see if it knew what was going on.

So the Governor sat before Lindsay Lee at his own table, momentarily more surprised and helpless. And Lindsay, eating her grape-fruit with satisfaction, thought him delightful, and wondered what his wife was like, and how many children he had, and where they all were. It was at least safe to speak of the wife, for the old house-keeper-nurse had given her an unqualified recommendation. So she spoke.

"I'm sorry to hear that Mrs. Rudd is not at home," she began. "It must be rather lonely in this big house without her."

The Governor looked at her and laughed. "Not that I've noticed," he said, and was suddenly seized with a sickness of pity that was the inevitable effect of Lindsay Lee. She needed no pity, being healthy, happy, and well-to-do, but she had, for the punishment of men's sins, sad gray eyes and a mouth whose full lips curved sorrowfully down. Her complexion was the colorless, magnolia-leaf sort that is typically Southern; her dark hair lay in thick locks on her forehead as if always damp with emotion; her swaying, slender figure seemed to appeal to masculine strength; and the voice that drawled a syllable to twice its length here, to slide over mouthfuls of words there, had an upward inflection at the end of sentences that brought tears to one's eyes. There was no pose about her, but the whole effect of her was pathetic—illogically, for she caught the glint of humor from every side light of life, which means pleasure that other people miss. The old warning against vice says that we "first endure, then pity, then embrace"; but Lindsay differed from vice so far that people never had to

Page 99

endure her, but began with pity, finding it often a very short step to the wish, at least, to embrace her. The Governor after fifteen minutes' acquaintance had arrived at pitying her, intensely and with his whole soul, as he did most things. He held another interview with himself. "Lord! what an innocent face it is!" he said. "Mary said she would be embarrassed—the brute that would embarrass her! Hanged if I'll do it! If she would rather have me married, married I'll be." He raised candid eyes to Lindsay's face.

"I'm afraid I've shocked you. You mustn't think I shall not be glad when—Mrs. Rudd—is here. But, you see, I've been very busy lately. I've hardly had time to breathe—haven't had time to miss—her—at all, really. All the same—" Now what was the queer feeling in his throat and lungs—yes, it must be the lungs—as the Governor framed this sentence? He went on: "All the same, I shall be a happy man when—my wife—comes home."

Lindsay's face cleared. This was satisfactory and proper; there was no more to be said about it. She looked up with a smile to where the old butler beamed upon her for her youth and beauty and her accent and her name.

A handful of busy men left the Capitol in some annoyance that morning because the Governor had telephoned that he could not be there before half past eleven. They would have been more annoyed, perhaps, if they had seen him dashing about the station light-heartedly just before the eleven-o'clock train for Bristol left. They said to each other: "It must be a matter of importance that keeps him. Governor Rudd almost never throws over an appointment. He has been working like the devil over that street-railway franchise case; probably it's that."

And the Governor stood by a chair in a parlor-car, his world cleared of street railways and indictments and their class as if they had never been, and in his hand was a small white oblong box tied with a tinsel cord.

"Good-by," he said, "but remember I'm to be asked down for the garden party next week, and I'm coming."

"I certainly won't forget. And I reckon I'd better not try to thank you for—Oh, thank you! I thought that looked like candy. And bring Mrs. Rudd with you next week. I want to see her. And—Oh, get off, please; it's moving. Good-by, good-by."

And to the mighty music of a slow-clanging bell and the treble of escaping steam and the deep-rolling accompaniment of powerful wheels the Governor escaped to the platform, and the capital city of that sovereign State was empty—practically empty. He noticed it the moment he turned his eyes from the disappearing train and moved toward Harper and the brougham. He also noticed that he had never noticed it before.

A solid citizen, catching a glimpse of the well-known, thoughtful face through the window of the Executive carriage as it bowled across toward the Capitol, shook his head. "He works too hard," he said to himself. "A fine fellow, and young and strong, but the pace is telling. He looks anxious to-day. I wonder what scheme is revolving in his brain at this moment."

Page 100

And at that moment the Governor growled softly to himself. "I've overdone it," he said. "She's sure to be offended. No one likes to be taken in. I ought not to have showed her Mrs. Rudd's conservatory; that was a mistake. She won't let them ask me down; I shan't see her. Hanged if I won't telephone Mrs. McNaughton to keep the secret till I've been down." And he did, before Lindsay could get there, amid much laughter at both ends of the wire, and no small embarrassment at his own.

And he was asked down, and having enjoyed himself, was asked again. And again. So that during the three weeks of Lindsay's visit Bristol saw more of the Chief Executive officer of the State than Bristol had seen before, and everybody but Lindsay had an inkling of the reason. But the time never came to tell her of the shadowy personality of Mrs. Rudd, and between the McNaughton girls and the Governor, whom they forced into unexpected statements, to their great though secret glee, Lindsay was informed of many details in regard to the missing first lady of the commonwealth. Such a dialogue as the following would occur at the lunch table:

Alice McNaughton (speaking with ceremonious politeness from one end of the table to the Governor at the other end). "When is Mrs. Rudd coming, Governor?"

The Governor (with a certain restraint). "Before very long, I hope, Miss Alice. Mrs. McNaughton, may I have more lobster? I've never in my life had as much lobster as I wanted."

Alice (refusing to be side-tracked). "And when did you last hear from her, Governor?"

Chuck McNaughton (ornament of the Sophomore class at Harvard. In love with Lindsay, but more so with the joke. Gifted with a sledgehammer style of wit). "I've been hoping for a letter from her myself, Governor, but it doesn't come."

The Governor (with slight hauteur). "Ah, indeed!"

Lindsay (at whose first small peep the Governor's eyes turn to hers and rest there shamelessly). "Why haven't you any pictures of Mrs. Rudd in the house, Mrs. McNaughton? The Governor's is everywhere and you all tell me how fascinating she is, and yet don't have her about. It looks like you don't love her as much as the Governor." (At the mention of being loved, in that voice, cold shivers seize the Executive nerves.)

Mrs. McNaughton (entranced with the airy persiflage, but knowing her own to be no light hand at repartee). "Ask the others, my dear."

Alice (jumping at the chance). "Oh, the reason of that is very interesting! Mrs. Rudd has never given even the Governor her picture. She—she has principles against it. She belongs, you see, to an ancient Hebrew family—in fact, she is a Jewess" ("A wandering Jewess," the Governor interjected, *sotto voce*, his glance veering again to

Lindsay's face), "and you know that Jewish families have religious scruples about portraits of any sort" (pauses, exhausted).

Page 101

Chuck (with heavy artillery). “*Alice, taisez-vous.* You’re doing poorly. You can’t converse. Your best parlor trick is your red hair. Miss Lee, I’ll show you a picture of Mrs. Rudd some day, and I’ll tell you now what she looks like. She has exquisite melancholy gray eyes, a mouth like a ripe tomato” (shouts from the table *en masse*, but *Chuck* ploughs along cheerily), “hair like the braided midnight” (cries of “What’s that?” and “Hear! Hear!”), “a figure slim and willowy as a vaulting-pole” (a protest of “No track athletics at meals; that’s forbidden!”), “and a voice—well, if you ever tasted New Orleans molasses on maple sugar, with ‘that tired feeling’ thrown in, perhaps you’ll have a glimpse, a mile off, of what that voice is like.” (Eager exclamations of “That’s near enough,” “Don’t do it any more, *Chuck*,” and “For Heaven’s sake, *Charlie*, stop.” *Lindsay* looks hard with the gray eyes at the Governor.)

Lindsay, “Why don’t you pull your bowie-knife out of your boot, Governor? It looks like he’s making fun of your wife, to me. Isn’t anybody going to fight anybody?”

And then Mr. McNaughton would reprove her as a bloodthirsty Kentuckian, and the whole laughing tableful would empty out on the broad porch. At such a time the Governor, laughing too, amused, yet uncomfortable, and feeling himself in a false and undignified position, would vow solemnly that a stop must be put to all this. It would get about, into the papers even, by horrid possibility; even now a few intimates of the McNaughton family had been warned “not to kill the Governor’s wife.” He would surely tell the girl the next time he could find her alone, and then the absurdity would collapse. But the words would not come, or if he carefully framed them beforehand, this bold, aggressive leader of men, whose nickname was “Jack the Giant-killer,” made a giant of *Lindsay*’s displeasure, and was afraid of it. He had never been afraid of anything before. He would screw his courage up to the notch, and then, one look at the childlike face, and down it would go, and he would ask her to go rowing with him. They were such good friends; it was so dangerous to change at a blow existing relations, to tell her that he had been deceiving her all these weeks. These exquisite June weeks that had flown past to music such as no June had made before; days snowed under with roses, nights that seemed, as he remembered them, moonlit for a solid month. The Governor sighed a lingering sigh, and quoted,

“Oh what a tangled web we weave
When first we practise to deceive!”

Yes, he must really wait—say two days longer. Then he might be sure enough of her—regard—to tell her the truth. And then, a little later, if he could control himself so long, another truth. Beyond that he did not allow himself to think.

“Governor Rudd,” asked *Lindsay* suddenly as they walked their horses the last mile home from a ride on which they had gotten separated—the Governor knew how—from the rest of the party, “why do they bother you so about your wife, and why do you let them?”

Page 102

"Can't help it, Miss Lindsay. They have no respect for me. I'm that sort of man. Hard luck, isn't it?"

Lindsay turned her sad, infantile gray eyes on him searchingly. "I reckon you're not," she said. "I reckon you're the sort of man people don't say things to unless they're right sure you will stand it. They don't trifle with you." She nodded her head with conviction. "Oh, I've heard them talk about you! I like that; that's like our men down South. You're right Southern, anyhow, in some ways. You see, I can pay you compliments because you're a safe old married man," and her eyes smiled up at him: she rarely laughed or smiled except with those lovely eyes. "There's some joke about your wife," she went on, "that you-all won't tell me. There certainly is. I *know* it, sure enough I do, Governor Rudd."

There is a common belief that the Southern accent can be faithfully rendered in writing if only one spells badly enough. No amount of bad spelling could tell how softly Lindsay Lee said those last two words.

"I love to hear you say that—'Guv'na Rudd.' I do, 'sho 'nuff,'" mused the Governor out loud and irrelevantly. "Would you say it again?"

"I wouldn't," said Lindsay, with asperity. "Ridiculous! If you are a Governor! But I was talking about your wife. Isn't she coming home before I go? Sometimes I don't believe you have a wife."

That was his chance, and he saw it. He must tell her now or never, and he drew a long breath. "Suppose I told you that I had not," he said, "that she was a myth, what would you say?"

"Oh, I'd just never speak to you again," said Lindsay, carelessly. "I wouldn't like to be fooled like that. Look, there are the others!" and off she flew at a canter.

It is easy to see that the Governor was not hurried headlong into confession by that speech. But the crash came. It was the night before Lindsay was to go back home to far-off Kentucky, and with infinite expenditure of highly trained intellect, for which the State was paying a generous salary, the Governor had managed to find himself floating on a moonlit flood through the Forest of Arden with the Blessed Damozel. That, at least, is the rendering of a walk in the McNaughtons' wood with Lindsay Lee as it appeared that night to the intellect mentioned. But the language of such thoughts is idiomatic and incapable of exact translation. A flame of eagerness to speak, quenched every moment by a shower-bath of fear, burned in his soul, when suddenly Lindsay tripped on a root and fell, with an exclamation. Then fear dried beneath the flames. It is unnecessary to tell what the Governor did, or what he said. The language, as language, was unoriginal and of striking monotony, and as to what happened, most people have had experience which will obviate the necessity of going into brutal facts.

But when, trembling and shaken, he realized a material world again, Lindsay was fighting him, pushing him away, her eyes blazing fiercely.

Page 103

"What do you mean? What *do* you mean?" she was saying.

"Mean—mean? That I love you—that I want you to love me, to be my wife!" She stood up like a white ghost in the silver light and shadow of the wood.

"Governor Rudd, are you crazy?" she cried. "You have a wife already."

The tall Governor threw back his head and laughed a laugh like a child. The people away off on the porch heard him and smiled. "They are having a good time, those two," Mrs. McNaughton said.

"Lindsay—Lindsay," and he bent over and caught her hands and kissed them. "There isn't any wife—there never will be any but you. It was all a joke. It happened because—Oh, never mind! I can't tell you now; it's a long story. But you must forgive that; that's all in the past now. The question is, will you love me—will you love me, Lindsay? Tell me, Lindsay!" He could not say her name often enough. But there came no answering light in Lindsay's face. She looked at him as if he were a striped convict.

"I'll never forgive you," she said, slowly. "You've treated me like a child; you've made a fool of me, all of you. It was insulting. All a joke, you call it? And I was the joke; you've been laughing at me all these weeks. Why was it funny, I'd like to know?"

"Great heavens, Lindsay—you're not going to take it that way? I insult you—laugh at you! I'd give my life; I'd shoot down any one—Lindsay!" he broke out appealingly, and made a step toward her.

"Don't touch me!" she cried. "Don't touch me! I hate you!" And as he still came closer she turned and ran up the path, into the moonlight of the driveway, and so, a dim white blotch on the fragrant night, disappeared.

When the Governor, walking with dignity, came up the steps of the porch, three minutes later, he was greeted with questions.

"What have you done to Lindsay Lee, I'd like to know?" asked Alice McNaughton. "She said she had fallen and hurt her foot, but she wouldn't let me go up with her, and she was dignified, which is awfully trying. Why did you quarrel with her, this last night?"

"Governor," said Chuck, with more discernment than delicacy, "if you will accept the sympathies of one not unacquainted with grief—" But at this point his voice faded away as he looked at the Governor.

The Governor never remembered just how he got away from the friendly hatefulness of that porchful. An early train the next morning was inevitable, for there was a meeting of real importance this time, and at all events everything looked about the same shade of gray to him; it mattered very little what he did. Only he must be doing something every

moment. He devoured work as if it were bread and meat and he were famished. People said all that autumn and winter that anything like the Governor's energy had never been seen. He evidently wanted a second term, and really he ought to have it. He was working hard enough to get it. About New-Year's he went down to Bristol for the first time since June, for a dinner at the McNaughtons'. Alice McNaughton's friendly face, under its red-gold hair, beamed at him from far away down the table, but after dinner, when the men came in from the dining-room, she took possession of him boldly.

Page 104

"Governor, I want to tell you about Lindsay Lee. I know you'll be interested, though you did have some mysterious fight before she left. She's been awfully ill with pleurisy, a painful attack, and she's getting well very slowly. They have just taken her to Paul Smith's. I'm writing her to-morrow, and I want you to send a good message; it would please her."

It was hard to stand with eighteen people grouped about him, all more or less with an eye on his motions, and be the Governor, calm and dignified, while hot irons were being applied to his heart by this smiling girl.

"But, Miss Alice," he said, slowly, "I'm afraid you are wrong. I was unfortunate enough to make Miss Lee very angry. I am afraid she would think a message from me only an impertinence."

"Sir," said Alice, with decision, "I'm right sometimes, if I'm not Governor; and it's better to be right than to be Governor, I've heard—or something. You trust me. Just try the effect of a message, and see if it isn't a success. What shall I say?"

The Governor was impetuous, and in spite of all the work he had done so fiercely, the longing the work had been meant to quiet surged up as strong as ever. "Miss Alice," he said, eagerly, "if you are right, would it do—do you think I might deliver the message myself?"

"Do I think? Well, if I were a man! Faint heart, you know!"

And the Governor, at that choppy eloquence, openly seized the friendly young hand and wrung it till Alice begged, laughing but bruised, for mercy. When he came up, later, to bid her good-night, his face was bright, and,

"Good-night, Angel of Peace," he said.

* * * * *

Mary Mooney, who through the dark days had watched with anxious though uncomprehending eyes her boy's dejection and hard effort to live it down, and had applied partridges and sweetbreads and other forms of devotion steadily but unsuccessfully, saw at once and with, rapture the change when the Governor greeted her the next morning. Light-heartedly she packed his traps two days later—she had done it jealously for thirty-five years, though almost over the dead body of the Governor's man sometimes in these later days. And when he told her good-by she had her reward. The man's boyish heart went out in a burst of gratitude to the tireless love that had sought only his happiness all his life. He put his arm around the stout little woman's neck.

"Mary," he said, "I'm going to see Miss Lee."

Mary's pink cheeks were scarlet as she patted with a work-worn palm the strong hand on her shoulder. "Then I know what will happen," she said, "and I'm glad. And if you don't bring her back with you, Mr. Jack, I won't let you in."

So the stately Governor went off like a schoolboy with his nurse's blessing. And later like an arrow from a bow he swung around the corner of the snowy piazza at Paul Smith's, where Mrs. Lee had told him he would find her daughter. There was a bundle of fur in a big chair in the sunlight, dark against the white hills beyond, with their black lines of pine-trees. As the impetuous steps came nearer, it turned, and—the Governor's methods were again such that words do them no justice. But this time with happier result. Half an hour later, when some coherency was established, he said:

Page 105

"You waited for me! You've been *waiting* for me!" as if it were the most astonishing fact in history. "And since when have you been waiting for me, you—"

Lindsay laughed, not only with her eyes, but with her soft voice. "Ever since the morning after, your Excellency. Alice told me all about it before I left, and made me see reason. And I—and I was right sorry I'd been so cross. I thought you'd come some time—but you came right slow," she said, and her eyes travelled over his face as if she were making sure he was really there.

"And I never dared to think you would see me!" he said. "But now!"

And again there were circumstances that are best described by a hiatus.

The day after, when Mary Mooney, discreetly letting her soul's idol get into his library before greeting him, trotted into that stately chamber with soft, heavy footsteps, she was met with a kiss and a bear's hug that, as she told Mrs. Rudd later, "was like the year he was nine."

"I didn't bring her, Mary," the Governor said, "but you'd better let me stay, for she's coming."

THE LITTLE REVENGE

Suddenly a gust of fresh wind caught Sally's hat, and off it flew, a wide-winged pink bird, over the old, old sea-wall of Clovelly, down among the rocks of the rough beach, tumbling and jumping from one gray stone to another, and getting so far away that, in the soft violet twilight, it seemed as lost as any ship of the Spanish Armada wrecked long ago on this wild Devonshire coast.

"Oh!" cried Sally distractedly, and clapped her hands to her head with the human instinct to shut the stable door after the horse is gone. "Oh!" she cried again; "my pretty hat! And *oh!* it's in the water!"

But suddenly, out of somewhere in the twilight, there was a man chasing it. Sally leaned over the rugged, yellowish, grayish stone wall and excitedly called to him.

"Oh, thank you!" she cried, and "That's so good of you!"

The hat had tacked and was sailing inshore now, one stiff pink taffeta sail set to the breeze. And in a minute, with a reckless splash into the dashing waves, the man had it, and an easy, athletic figure swung up the causeway, holding it away from him, as if it might nip at him. He wore a dark blue jersey, and loose, flapping trousers of a seaman.

“He’s only a sailor,” Sally said under her breath; “I’d better tip him.” Her hand slipped into her pocket and I heard the click of her purse.

He looked from one to the other of us in the dim light inquiringly, as he came up, and then off went his cap, and his face broke into the gentlest, most charming smile as he delivered the hat into Sally’s outstretched hands.

“I’m afraid it’s a bit damp,” he said.

Page 106

All dark-eyed, stalwart young fellows are attractive to me for the sake of one like that who died forty years ago, but this sailor had a charm of manner that is a gift of the gods, let it fall to prince or peasant; the pretty deference of his few words, and the quick, radiant smile, were enough to win friendliness from me. More than that, something in the set of his head, in the straight gaze of his eyes, held a likeness that made my memory ache. I smiled back at him instantly. But Sally's heart was on her hat; hats from good shops did not grow on trees for Sally Meade.

"I hope it isn't hurt," she said, anxiously, and shook it carefully, and hardly glanced at the rescuer, who was watching with something that looked like amusement in his face. Then her good manners came back.

"Thank you a thousand times," she said, and turned to him brightly. "You were so quick—but, oh! I'm afraid you're wet." She looked at him, and I saw a little shock of surprise in her face. Beauty so striking will be admired, even in a common sailor.

"It's nothing," he said, looking down at his sopping, wide trousers; "I'm used to it," and as Sally's hand went forward I caught the flash of silver, and at the same moment another flash, from the man's eyes.

It was enough to startle me for the fraction of a second, but, as I looked again, his expression held only a serious respect, and I was sure I had been mistaken. He took the money and touched his cap and said, "Thank you, miss," with perfect dignity. Yet my imagination must have been lively, for as he slipped it in his pocket, his look turned toward me, and for another breath of time a gleam of mischief—certainly mischief—flashed from his dark eyes to mine.

Then Sally, quite unconscious of this, perhaps imaginary, by-play, had an idea. "Are you a sailor?" she asked.

The man looked at her. "Yes—miss," he answered, a little slowly.

"We want to engage a boat and a man to take us out. Do you know of one? Have you a boat?"

The young fellow glanced down across the wall where a hull and mast gleamed indistinctly through the falling night, swinging at the side of the quay. "That's mine, yonder," he said, nodding toward it. And then, with the graceful, engaging frankness that I already knew as his, "I shall be very glad to take you out"—including us both in his glance.

"Sally," I said, five minutes later, as we trudged up the one steep, rocky street of Clovelly,—the picturesque old street that once led English smugglers to their caves, and that is more of a staircase than a street, with rows of stone steps across its narrow width



—“Sally, you are a very unexpected girl. You took my breath away, engaging that man so suddenly to take us sailing to-morrow. How do you know he is reliable? It would have been safer to try one of the men they recommended from the Inn. And certainly it would have been more dignified to let me make the arrangements. You seem to forget that I am older than you.”

Page 107

"You aren't," said Sully, giving a squeeze to my arm that she held in the angle of hers, pushing me with her young strength up the hill. "You're not as old, cousin Mary. I'm twenty-two, and you're only eighteen, and I believe you will never be any older."

I think perhaps I like flattery. I am a foolish old woman, and I have noticed that it is not the young girls who treat me with great deference and rise as soon as I come who seem to me the most charming, but the ones who, with proper manners, of course, yet have a touch of comradeship, as if they recognized in me something more than a fossil exhibit. I like to have them go on talking about their beaux and their work and play, and let me talk about it, too. Sally Meade makes me feel always that there is in me an undying young girl who has outlived all of my years and is her friend and equal.

"I'm sorry if I was forward, cousin Mary, but the sailing is to be my party, you know, and then I thought you liked him. He had a pretty manner for a common sailor, didn't he? And his voice—these low-class English people have wonderfully well-bred, soft voices. I suppose it's particularly so here in the South. Cousin Mary, did you see the look he gave you with those delicious dark eyes? It's always the way—gentleman or hod-carrier—no one has a chance with men when you are about."

It is pleasant to me, old woman as I am, to be told that people like me—more pleasant, I think, every year. I never take it for truth, of course, but I believe it means good feeling, and it makes an atmosphere easy to breathe. I purred like a contented cat under Sally's talking, yet, to save my dignity, kept up a protest.

"Sally, my dear! Delicious dark eyes! I'm ashamed of you—a common sailor!"

"I didn't smile at him," said Sally, reflectively.

So, struggling up the steep street of Clovelly, we went home to the "New Inn," to cold broiled lobster, to strawberries and clotted Devonshire cream, and dreamless sleep in the white beds of the quiet rooms whose windows looked toward the woods and cliffs of Hobby Drive on one side, and on the other toward the dark, sparkling jewel of the moon-lighted ocean, and the shadowy line of Lundy Island far in the distance.

That I, an inland woman, an old maid of sixty, should tell a story of sailing and of love seems a little ridiculous. My nephews at college beguile me to talk about boats, and then laugh to hear me, for I think I get the names of things twisted. And as for what I know of the other—the only love-making to which I ever listened was ended forty years ago by one of the northern balls that fell in fiery rain on Pickett's charge at Gettysburg. Yet, if I but tell the tale as it came to me, others may feel as I did the thrill of the rushing of the keel through dashing salt water, the swing of the great white sail above, the flapping of the fresh wind in the slack of it, the exhilaration of moving with power like the angels, with the great forces of nature for muscles, the joy of it all expanding, pulsing through you, till it seems as if the sky might crack if once you let your delight go free.

And some may catch, too, that other thrill, of the hidden feeling that glorified those days. Few lives are so poor that the like of it has not brightened them, and no one quite forgets.

Page 108

It is partly Sally Meade's Southern accent that has made me love her above nearer cousins, from her babyhood. The modulations of her voice seem always to bring me close to the sound of the voice that went into silence when Geoffrey Meade, her father's young kinsman, was killed long ago.

The Meades, old-time planters in Virginia, have been very poor since the distant war of the sixties, and it has been one of my luxuries to give Sally a lift over hard places. Always with instant reward, for the smallest bit of sunlight, going into her prismatic spirit, comes out a magnificent rainbow of happiness. So when the idea came that they might let me have the girl to take abroad that summer, her friend, the girl spirit in me, jumped for joy. There was no difficulty made; it was one of the rare good things too good to be true, that yet are true. She did more for me than I for her, for I simply spent some superfluous idle money, while she filled every day with a new enjoyment, the reflection of her own fresh pleasure in every day as it came.

So here we were prowling about the south of England with "Westward Ho!" for a guide-book; coaching through deep, tawny Devonshire lanes from Bideford to Clovelly; searching for the old tombstone of Will Cary's grave in the churchyard on top of the hill; gathering tales of Salvation Yeo and of Amyas Leigh; listening to echoes of the three-hundred-year-old time when the great sea-battle was fought in the channel and many ships of the Armada wrecked along this Devonshire coast. And always coming back to sleep in the fascinating little "New Inn," as old as the hills, built on both sides of the one rocky ladder street of Clovelly, the street so steep that no horses can go in it, and at the bottom of whose breezy tunnel one sees the rolling floor of the sea. In so careless a way does the Inn ramble about the cliff that when I first went to my room, two flights up from the front, I caught my breath at a blaze of scarlet and yellow nasturtiums that faced me through a white-painted doorway opening on the hillside and on a tiny garden at the back.

The irresponsible pleasure of our first sail the next afternoon was never quite repeated. The boat shot from the landing like a high-strung horse given his head, out across the unbordered road of silver water, and in a moment, as we raced toward the low white clouds, we turned and saw the cliffs of the coast and the tiny village, a gay little pile of white, green-latticed houses steeped in foliage lying up a crack in the precipice. Above was the long stretch of the woods of Hobby Drive. Clovelly is so old that its name is in Domesday Book; so old, some say, that it was a Roman station, and its name was Clausa Vaillis. But it is a nearer ancientness that haunts it now. Every wave that dashes on the rocky shore carries a legend of the ships of the Invincible Armada. As we asked question after question of our sailor, handsomer than ever to-day with a red

Page 109

silk handkerchief knotted sailor-fashion about his strong neck, story after story flashed out, clear and dramatic, from his answers. The bunch of houses there on the shore? Yes, that had a history. The people living there were a dark-featured, reticent lot, different from other people hereabouts. It was said that one of the Spanish galleons went ashore there, and the men had been saved and had settled on the spot and married Devonshire women, but their descendants had never lost the tradition of their blood. Certainly their speech and their customs were peculiar, unlike those of the villages near. He had been there and had seen them, had heard them talk. Yes, they were distinct. He laughed a little to acknowledge it, with an Englishman's distrust of anything theatrical. A steep cliff started out into the waves, towering three hundred feet in almost perpendicular lines. Had that a name? Yes, that was called "Gallantry Bower." No; it was not a sentimental story—it was the old sea-fight again. It was said that an English sailor threw a rope from the height and saved life after life of the crew of a Spaniard wrecked under the point.

"You know the history of your place very well," said Sally. The young man kept his eyes on his steering apparatus and a slow half-smile troubled his face and was gone.

"I've had a bit of an education for a seaman—Miss," he said. And then, after apparently reflecting a moment, "My people live near the Leighs of Burrough Court, and I was playmate to the young gentlemen and was given a chance to learn with them, with their tutors, more than a common man is likely to get always."

At that Sally's enthusiasm broke through her reserve, and I was only a little less eager.

"The Leighs! The real, old Leighs of Burrough? Amyas Leigh's descendants? Was that story true? Oh!—" And here manners and curiosity met and the first had the second by the throat. She stopped. But our sailor looked up with a boyish laugh that illumined his dark face.

"Is it so picturesque? I have been brought up so close that it seems commonplace to me. Every one must be descended from somebody, you know."

"Yes, but Amyas Leigh!" went on Sally, flushed and excited, forgetting the man in his story. "Why, he's my hero of all fiction! Think of it, Cousin Mary—there are men near here who are his great—half-a-dozen greats—grandchildren! Cousin Mary," she stopped and looked at me impressively, oblivious of the man so near her, "if I could lay my hands on one of those young Leighs of Burrough I'd marry him in spite of his struggles, just to be called by that name. I believe I would."

"Sally!" I exclaimed, and glanced at the man; Sally's cheeks colored as she followed my look. His mouth was twitching, and his eyes smouldered with fun. But he behaved

well. On some excuse of steering he turned his back instantly and squarely toward us. But Sally's interest was irrepressible.

Page 110

"Would you mind telling me their names, Cary?" she asked. He had told us to call him Cary. "The names of the Mr. Leighs of Burrough."

"No, Cary," I said. "I think Miss Meade doesn't notice that she is asking you personal questions about your friends."

Cary turned on me a look full of gentleness and chivalry. "Miss Meade doesn't ask anything that I cannot answer perfectly well," he said. "There are two sons of the Leighs, Richard Grenville, the older, and Amyas Francis, the younger. They keep the old names you see. Richard—Sir Richard, I should say—is the head of the family, his father being dead."

"Sir Richard Grenville Leigh!" said Sally, quite carried away by that historic combination. "That's better than Amyas," she went on, reflectively. "Is he decent? But never mind. I'll marry *him*, Cousin Mary."

At that our sailor-man shook with laughter, and as I met his eyes appealing for permission, I laughed as hard as he. Only Sally was apparently quite serious.

"He would be very lucky—Miss," he said, restraining his mirth with a respect that I thought remarkable, and turned again to his rudder.

Sally, for the first time having felt the fascination of breathing historic air, was no longer to be held. The sweeping, free motion, the rush of water under the bow as we cut across the waves, the wide sky and the air that has made sailors and soldiers and heroes of Devonshire men for centuries on end, the exhilaration of it all had gone to the girl's head. She was as unconscious of Cary as if he had been part of his boat. I had seen her act so when she was six, and wild with the joy of an autumn morning, intoxicated with oxygen. We had been put for safety into the hollow part of the boat where the seats are—I forget what they call it—the scupper, I think. But I am apt to be wrong on the nomenclature. At all events, there we were, standing up half the time to look at the water, the shore, the distant sails, and because life was too intense to sit down. But when Sally, for all her gentle ways, took the bit in her teeth, it was too restricted for her there.

"Is there any law against my going up and holding on to the mast?" she asked Cary.

"Not if you won't fall overboard, Miss," he answered.

The girl, with a strong, self-reliant jump, a jump that had an echo of tennis and golf and horseback, scrambled up and forward, Cary taking his alert eyes a moment from his sailing, to watch her to safety, I thought her pretty as a picture as she stood swaying with one arm around the mast, in her white shirt-waist and dark dress, her head bare,

and brown, untidy hair blowing across the fresh color of her face, and into her clear hazel eyes.

“What is the name of this boat?” she demanded, and Cary’s deep, gentle voice lifted the two words of his answer across the twenty feet between them.

“The Revenge” he said.

Page 111

Then there was indeed joy. “The Revenge! The Revenge! I am sailing on the Revenge, with a man who knows Sir Richard Grenville and Amyas Leigh! Cousin Mary, listen to that—this is the Revenge we’re on—this!” She hugged the mast, “And there are Spanish galleons, great three-deckers, with yawning tiers of guns, all around us! You may not see them, but they are here! They are ghosts, but they are here! There is the great San Philip, hanging over us like a cloud, and we are—we are—Oh, I don’t know who we are, but we’re in the fight, the most beautiful fight in history!” She began to quote:

And half of their fleet to the right, and half to the left were seen,
And the little Revenge ran on through the long sea-lane between.

And then:

Thousands of their sailors looked down from the decks and laughed;
Thousands of their soldiers made mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on till delayed
By the mountain-like San Philip that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And towering high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stayed.

The soft, lingering voice threw the words at us with a thrill and a leap forward, just as the Revenge was carrying us with long bounds, over the shining sea. We were spinning easily now, under a steady light wind, and Cary, his hand on the rudder, was opposite me. He turned with a start as the girl began Tennyson’s lines, and his shining dark eyes stared up at her.

“Do you know that?” he said, forgetting the civil “Miss” in his earnestness.

“Do I know it? Indeed I do!” cried Sally from her swinging rostrum. “Do you know it, too? I love it—I love every word of it—listen,” And I, who knew her good memory, and the spell that the music of a noble poem cast over her, settled myself with resignation. I was quite sure that, short of throwing her overboard, she would recite that poem from beginning to end. And she did. Her skirts and her hair blowing, her eyes full of the glory of that old “forlorn hope,” gazing out past us to the seas that had borne the hero, she said it.

At Flores in the Azores, Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnacle, like a frightened bird, came flying from far away;
Spanish ships of war at sea, we have sighted fifty-three!
Then up spake Sir Thomas Howard
“Fore God, I am no coward”—

She went on and on with the brave, beautiful story. How Sir Thomas would not throw away his six ships of the line in a hopeless fight against fifty-three; how yet Sir Richard, in the Revenge, would not leave behind his “ninety men and more, who were lying sick ashore”; how at last Sir Thomas

sailed away
With five ships of war that day
Till they melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven,
But Sir Richard bore in hand
All his sick men from the

Page 112

land,
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon—
And he laid them on the ballast down below;
And they blessed him in their pain
That they were not left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

The boat sailed softly, steadily now, as if it would not jar the rhythm of the voice telling, with soft inflections, with long, rushing meter, the story of that other Revenge, of the men who had gone from these shores, under the great Sir Richard, to that glorious death.

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,
And not one moment ceased the fight of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with their battle thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead and her shame;
For some they sunk, and many they shattered so they could fight no more.
God of battles! Was ever a battle like this in the world before?

As I listened, though I knew the words almost, by heart too, my eyes filled with tears and my soul with the desire to have been there, to have fought as they did, on the little Revenge one after another of the great Spanish ships, till at last the Revenge was riddled and helpless, and Sir Richard called to the master-gunner to sink the ship for him, but the men rebelled, and the Spaniards took what was left of ship and fighters. And Sir Richard, mortally wounded, was carried on board the flagship of his enemies, and died there, in his glory, while the captains

—praised him to his face.
With their courtly Spanish grace.

So died, never man more greatly, Sir Richard Grenville, of Stow in Devon.

The crimson and gold of sunset were streaming across the water as she ended, and we sat silent. The sailor's face was grim, as men's faces are when they are deeply stirred, but in his dark eyes burned an intensity that reserve could not hold back, and as he still

stared at the girl a look shot from them that startled me like speech. She did not notice. She was shaken with the passion of the words she had repeated, and suddenly, through the sunlit, rippling silence, she spoke again.

“It’s a great thing to be a Devonshire sailor,” she said, solemnly. “A wonderful inheritance—it ought never to be forgotten. And as for that man—that Sir Richard Grenville Leigh—he ought to carry his name so high that nothing low or small could ever touch it. He ought never to think a thought that is not brave and fine and generous.”

There was a moment’s stillness and then I said, “Sally, my child, it seems to me you are laying down the law a little freely for Devonshire. You have only been here four days.” And in a second she was on her usual gay terms with the world again.

Page 113

"A great preacher was wasted in me," she said. "How I could have thundered at everybody else about their sins! Cousin Mary, I'm coming down—I'm all battered, knocking against the must, and the little trimmings hurt my hands."

Cary did not smile. His face was repressed and expressionless and in it was a look that I did not understand. He turned soberly to his rudder and across the broken gold and silver of the water the boat drew in to shadowy Clovelly.

It was a shock, after we had landed and I had walked down the quay a few yards to inspect the old Red Lion Inn, the house of Salvation Yeo, to come back and find Sally dickered with Cary. I had agreed that this sail should be her "party," because it pleased the girl's proud spirit to open her small purse sometimes for my amusement. But I did not mean to let her pay for all our sailing, and I was horrified to find her trying to get Cary cheaper by the quantity. When I arrived, Sally, a little flustered and very dignified and quite evidently at the end of a discussion as to terms, was concluding an engagement, and there was a gleam in the man's wonderful eyes, which did much of his talking for him.

"You see the boat is very new and clean, Miss," he was saying, "and I hope you were satisfied with me?"

I upset Sally's business affairs at once, engaged Cary, and told him he must take out no one else without knowing our plans. My handkerchief fell as I talked to him and he picked it up and presented it with as much ease and grace as if he had done such things all his life. It was a remarkable sailor we had happened on. A smile came like sunshine over his face—the smile that made him look as Geoffrey Meade looked, half a century ago.

"I'll promise not to take any one else, ma'am," he said. And then, with the pretty, engaging frankness that won my heart over again each time, "And I hope you'll want to go often—not so much for the money, but because it is a pleasure to me to take you—both."

There was mail for us waiting at the Inn. "Listen, Sally," I said, as I read mine in my room after dinner. "This is from Anne Ford. She wants to join us here the 6th of next month, to fill in a week between visits at country-houses."

[Illustration: "You see, the boat is very new and clean, Miss," he was saying.]

Sally, sitting on the floor before the fire, her dark hair loose and her letters lying about her, looked up attentively, and discreetly answered nothing. Anne Ford was my cousin, but not hers, and I knew without discussing it, that Sally cared for her no more than I. She was made of showy fibre, woven in a brilliant pattern, but the fibre was a little coarse, and the pattern had no shading. She was rich and a beauty and so used to

being the centre of things, and largely the circumference too, that I, who am a spoiled old woman, and like a little place and a little consideration, find it difficult to be comfortable as spoke upon her wheel.

Page 114

"It's too bad," I went on regretfully. "Anne will not appreciate Clovelly, and she will spoil it for us. She is not a girl I care for. I don't see why I should have made a convenience for Anne Ford," I argued in my selfish way. "I think I shall write her not to come."

Sally laughed cheerfully. "She won't bother us, Cousin Mary. It would be too bad to refuse her, wouldn't it? She can't spoil Clovelly—it's been here too long. Anne is rather overpowering," Sally went on, a bit wistfully. "She's such a beauty, and she has such stunning clothes."

The firelight played on the girl's flushed, always-changing face, full of warm light and shadow; it touched daintily the white muslin and pink ribbons of the pretty negligee she wore, Sally was one of the poor girls whose simple things are always fresh and right. I leaned over and patted her rough hair affectionately.

"Your clothes are just as pretty," I said, "and Anne doesn't compare with you in my eyes." I lifted the unfinished letter and glanced over it. "All about her visit to Lady Fisher," I said aloud, giving a resume as I read. "What gowns she wore to what functions; what men were devoted to her—their names—titles—incomes too." I smiled. "And—what is this?" I stopped talking, for a name had caught my eye. I glanced over the page. "Isn't this curious! Listen, my dear," I said. "This will interest you!" I read aloud from Anne's letter.

"But the man who can have me if he wants me is Sir Richard Leigh. He is the very best that ever happened, and moreover, quite the catch of the season. His title is old, and he has a yacht and an ancestral place or two, and is very rich, they say—but that isn't it. My heart is his without his decorations—well, perhaps not quite that, but it's certainly his with the decorations. He is such a beauty, Cousin Mary! Even you would admire him. It gives you quite a shock when he comes into a room, yet he is so unconscious and modest, and has the most graceful, fascinatingly quiet manners and wonderful brown eyes that seem to talk for him. He does everything well, and everything hard, is a dare-devil on horseback, a reckless sailor, and a lot besides. If you could see the way those eyes look at me, and the smile that breaks over his face as if the sun had come out suddenly! But alas! the sun has gone under now, for he went this morning, and it's not clear if he's coming back or not. They say his yacht is near Bideford, where his home is, and Clovelly is not far from that, is it?"

I stopped and looked at Sally, listening, on the floor. She was staring into the fire.

"What do you think of that?" I asked. Sally was slow at answering; she stared on at the burning logs that seemed whispering answers to the blaze.

"Some girls have everything," she said at length. "Look at Anne. She's beautiful and rich and everybody admires her, and she goes about to big country-houses and meets famous and interesting people. And now this Sir Richard Leigh comes like the prince

into the story, and I dare say he will fall in love with her and if she finds no one that suits her better she will marry him and have that grand old historic name."

Page 115

"Sally, dear," I said, "you're not envying Anne, are you?"

A quick blush rushed to her face. "Cousin Mary! What foolishness I've been talking! How could I! What must you think of me! I didn't mean it—please believe I didn't. I'm the luckiest girl on earth, and I'm having the most perfect time, and you are a fairy godmother to me, except that you're more like a younger sister. I was thinking aloud. Anne is such a brilliant being compared to me, that the thought of her discourages me sometimes. It was just Cinderella admiring the princess, you know."

"Cinderella got the prince," I said, smiling.

"I don't want the prince," said Sally, "even if I could get him. I wouldn't marry an Englishman. I don't care about a title. To be a Virginian is enough title for me. It was just his name, magnificent Sir Richard Grenville's name and the Revenge-Armada atmosphere that took my fancy. I don't know if Anne would care for that part," she added, doubtfully.

"I'm sure Anne would know nothing about it," I answered decidedly, and Sally went on cheerfully.

"She's very welcome to the modern Sir Richard, yacht and title and all. I don't believe he's as attractive as your sailor, Cousin Mary. Something the same style, I should say from the description. If you hadn't owned him from the start, I'd rather like that man to be my sailor, Cousin Mary—he's so everything that a gentleman is supposed to be. How did he learn that manner—why, it would flatter you if he let the boom whack you on the head. Too bad he's only a common sailor—such a prince gone wrong!"

I looked at her talking along softly, leaning back on one hand and gazing at the fire, a small white Turkish slipper—Southern girls always have little feet—stuck out to the blaze, and something in the leisurely attitude and low, unhurried voice, something, too, in the reminiscent crackle of the burning wood, invited me to confidence. I went to my dressing-table, and when I came back, dropped, as if I were another girl, on the rug beside her. "I want to show you this," I said, and opened a case that travels always with me. From the narrow gold rim of frame inside, my lover smiled gayly up at her brown hair and my gray, bending over it together.

None of the triumphs of modern photographers seem to my eyes so delicately charming as the daguerrotypes of the sixties. As we tipped the old picture this way and that, to catch the right light on the image under the glass, the very uncertainty of effect seemed to give it an elusive fascination. To my mind the birds in the bush have always brighter plumage than any in the hand, and one of these early photographs leaves ever, no matter from what angle you look upon it, much to the imagination. So Geoff in his gray Southern uniform, young and soldierly, laughed up at Sally and me from the shadowy

lines beneath the glass, more like a vision of youth than like actual flesh and blood that had once been close and real.

Page 116

His brown hair, parted far to one side, swept across his forehead in a smooth wave, as was the old-fashioned way; his collar was of a big, queer sort unknown to-day; the cut of his soldier's coat was antique; but the beauty of the boyish face, the straight glance of his eyes, and ease of the broad shoulders that military drill could not stiffen, these were untouched, were idealized even by the old-time atmosphere that floated up from the picture like fragrance of rose-leaves. As I gazed down at the boy, it came to me with a pang that he was very young and I growing very old, and I wondered would he care for me still. Then I remembered that where he lived it was the unworn soul and not the worn-out body that counted, and I knew that the spirit within me would meet his when the day came, with as fresh a joy as forty years ago. And as I still looked, happy in the thought, I felt all at once as if I had seen his face, heard his voice, felt the touch of his young hand that day—could almost feel it yet. Perhaps my eyes were a little dim, perhaps the uncertainty of the old daguerrotype helped the illusion, but the smile of the master of the Revenge seemed to shine up at me from my Geoff's likeness, and then Sally's slow voice broke the pause.

"It's Cousin Geoffrey, isn't it?" she asked. Her father was Geoffrey Meade's cousin—a little boy when Geoff died, "Was he as beautiful as that?" she said, gently, putting her hand over mine that held the velvet case. And then, after another pause, she went on, hesitatingly; "Cousin Mary, I wonder if you would mind if I told you whom he looks like to me?"

"No, my dear," I answered easily, and like an echo to my thought her words came.

"It is your sailor. Do you see it? He is only a common seaman, of course, but I think he must have a wonderful face, for with all his dare-devil ways I always think of 'Blessed are the pure in spirit' when I see him. And the eyes in the picture have the same expression—do you mind my saying it, Cousin Mary?"

"I saw it myself the first time I looked at him," I said. And then, as people do when they are on the verge of crying, I laughed. "Anne Ford would think me ridiculous, wouldn't she?" and I held Geoff's picture in both my hands. "He is much better suited to her or to you. A splendid young fellow of twenty-four to belong to an old woman like me—it is absurd, isn't it?"

"He is suited to no one but you, dear, and you are just his age and always will be," and as Sally's arms caught me tight I felt tears that were not my own on my cheek.

It was ten days yet before Anne was due to arrive, and almost every day of the ten we sailed. The picturesque coast of North Devon, its deep bays, its stretches of high, tree-topped cliffs, grew to be home-like to us. We said nothing of Cary and his boat at the Inn, for we soon saw that both were far-and-away better than common, and we were

selfish. Nor did the man himself seem to care for more patronage. He was always ready when we wished to go, and jumped from his spick-and-span deck to meet us with a smile that started us off in sunshine, no matter what the weather. And with my affection for the lovely, uneven coast and the seas that held it in their flashing fingers, grew my interest in the winning personality that seemed to combine something of the strength of the hills and the charm of the seas of Devonshire.

Page 117

One day after another he loosed the ropes with practised touch, and the wind taught the sail with a gay rattle and the little Revenge flung off the steep street and the old sea-wall and the green cliffs of Clovelly, and first yards and then miles of rippling ocean lay between us and land, and we sailed away, we did not need to know or care where, with our fate for the afternoon in his reliable hands. Little by little we forgot artificial distinctions in the out-of-doors, natural atmosphere, or that the man was anything but himself—a self always simple, always right. Looking back, I see how deeply I was to blame, to have been so blind, at my age, but the figure by the rudder, swinging to the boat's motion, grew to be so familiar and pleasant a sight, that I did not think of being on guard against him. Little as he talked, his moods were varied, grave or gay or with a gleam of daring in his eyes that made him, I think, a little more attractive than any other way. Yet when a wind of seriousness lifted the still or impetuous surface, I caught a glimpse, sometimes, of a character of self-reliance, of decision as solid as the depths under the shifting water of his ocean. There was never a false note in his gentle manner, and I grew to trust serenely to his tact and self-respect, and talked to him freely as I chose. Which of course I should not have done. But there was a temptation to which I yielded in watching for the likeness in his face, and in listening for a tone or two of his voice that caught my heart with the echo of a voice long silent.

One morning to our astonishment Cary sent up to break our engagement for the afternoon. Something had happened so that he could not possibly get away. But it was moonlight and warm—would we not go out in the evening? The idea seemed to me a little improper, yet very attractive, and Sally's eyes danced.

"Let's be bold and bad and go, Cousin Mary," she pleaded, and we went.

A shower of moonlight fell across the sea and on the dark masses of the shore; it lay in sharp patches against the black shadows of the sail; it turned Sally's bare, dark head golden, and tipped each splashing wave with a quick-vanishing electric light. It was not earth or ocean, but fairyland. We were sailing over the forgotten, sea-buried land of Lyonesse; forests where Tristram and Iseult had ridden, lay under our rushing keel; castles and towers and churches were there—hark! could I not hear the faint bells in the steeples ringing up through the waves? The old legend, half true, half fable, was all real to me as I sat in the shadow of the sail and stared, only half seeing them, at Sally standing with her hands on the rudder and Cary leaning over her, teaching her to sail the Revenge. Their voices came to me clear and musical, yet carrying no impression of what they were saying. Then I saw Sally's little fingers slip suddenly, and Cary's firm hand close over them, pushing the rudder strongly to one side. His face was toward me, and I saw the look that went over it as his hand held hers. It startled me to life again, and I sat up straight, but he spoke at once with quiet self-possession.

Page 118

"I beg your pardon, Miss Meade. She was heading off a bit dangerously."

And he went on with directions, laughing at her a little, scolding her a little, yet all with a manner that could not be criticised. I still wonder how he could have poised so delicately and so long on that slender line of possible behavior.

As the boat slipped over the shimmering ocean, back into the harbor again, most of the houses up the sharp ascent of Clovelly street were dark, but out on the water lay a mass of brilliant lights, rocking slowly on the tide. Sally was first to notice it.

"There is a ship lying out there. Is it a ship or is it an enchantment? She is lighted all over. What is it—do you know?"

Cary was working at the sail and he did not look at us or at it as he answered.

"Yes, Miss—I know her. She is Sir Richard Leigh's yacht the Rose. She was there as we went out, but she was dark and you did not notice her."

I exclaimed, full of interest, at this, but Sally, standing ghost-like in her white dress against the sinking sail, said nothing, but stared at the lights that outlined the yacht against the deep distance of the sky, and that seemed, as the shadowy hull swung dark on the water, to start out from nowhere in pin-pricks of diamonds set in opal moonlight.

Lundy Island lies away from Clovelly to the northwest seventeen miles off on the edge of the world. Each morning as I opened my window at the Inn, and looked out for the new day's version of the ocean, it lifted a vague line of invitation and of challenge. Since we had been in Devonshire the atmosphere of adventure that hung over Lundy had haunted me with the wish to go there. It was the "Shutter," the tall pinnacle of rock at its southern end, that Amyas Leigh saw for his last sight of earth, when the lightning blinded him, in the historic storm that strewn ships of the Armada along the shore. I am not a rash person, yet I was so saturated with the story of "Westward Ho!" that I could not go away satisfied unless I had set foot on Lundy. But it had the worst of reputations, and landing was said to be hazardous.

"It isn't that I can't get you there," said Cary when I talked to him, "but I might not be able to get you away."

Then he explained in a wise way that I did not entirely follow, how the passage through the rocks was intricate, and could only be done with a right wind, and how, if the wind changed suddenly, it was impossible to work out until the right wind came again. And that might not be for days, if one was unlucky. It had been known to happen so. Yet I lingered over the thought, and the more I realized that it was unreasonable, the more I wanted to go. The spirit of the Devonshire seas seemed, to my fancy, to live on the

guarded, dangerous rocks, and I must pay tribute before I left his kingdom. Cary laughed a little at my one bit of adventurous spirit so out of keeping

Page 119

with my gray hairs, but it was easy to see that he too wanted to go, and that only fear for our safety and comfort made him hesitate. The day before Anne Ford was due we went. It was the day, too, after our sail in the moonlight that I half believed, remembering its lovely unreality, had been a dream. But as we sailed out, there lay Sir Richard Leigh's yacht to prove it, smart and impressive, shining and solid in the sunlight as it had been ethereal the night before. I gazed at her with some curiosity.

"Have you been on board?" I asked our sailor. "Is Sir Richard there?"

Cary glanced at Sally, who had turned a cold shoulder to the yacht and was looking back at Clovelly village, crawling up its deep crack in the cliff. "Yes," he said; "I've been on her twice. Sir Richard is living on her."

"I suppose he's some queer little rat of a man," Sally brought out in her soft voice, to nobody in particular.

I was surprised at the girl's incivility, but Cary answered promptly, "Yes, Miss!" with such cheerful alacrity that I turned to look at him, more astonished. I met eyes gleaming with a hardly suppressed amusement which, if I had stopped to reason about it, was much out of place. But yet, as I looked at him with calm dignity and seriousness, I felt myself sorely tempted to laugh back. I am a bad old woman sometimes.

The Revenge careered along over the water as if mad to get to Lundy, under a strong west wind. In about two hours the pile of fantastic rocks lay stretched in plain view before us. We were a mile or more away—I am a very uncertain judge of distance—but we could see distinctly the clouds of birds, glittering white sea-gulls, blowing hither and thither above the wild little continent where were their nests. There are thousands and thousands of gulls on Lundy. We had sailed out from Clovelly at two in bright afternoon sunshine, but now, at nearly four, the blue was covering with gray, and I saw Cary look earnestly at the quick-moving sky.

"Is it going to rain?" I asked.

He stood at the rudder, feet apart and shoulders full of muscle and full of grace, the handkerchief around his neck a line of flame between blue clothes and olive face. A lock of bronze hair blew boyishly across his forehead.

"Worse than that," he said, and his eyes were keen as he stared at the uneven water in front of us. A basin of smoother water and the yellow tongue of a sand-beach lay beyond it at the foot of a line of high rocks. "The passage is there"—he nodded. "If I can make it before the squall catches us"—he glanced up again and then turned to Sally. "Could you sail her a moment while I see to the sheet? Keep her just so." His

hand placed Sally's with a sort of roughness on the rudder. "Are you afraid?" He paused a second to ask it.

"Not a bit," said the girl, smiling up at him cheerfully, and then he was working away, and the little Revenge was flying, ripping the waves, every breath nearer by yards to that tumbling patch of wolf-gray water.

Page 120

As I said, I know less about a boat than a boy of five. I can never remember what the parts of it are called and it is a wonder to me how they can make it go more than one way. So I cannot tell in any intelligent manner what happened. But, as it seemed, suddenly, while I watched Sally standing steadily with both her little hands holding the rudder, there was a crack as if the earth had split, then, with a confused rushing and tearing, a mass of something fell with a long-drawn crash, and as I stared, paralyzed, I saw the mast strike against the girl as she stood, her hands still firmly on the rudder, and saw her go down without a sound. There were two or three minutes of which I remember nothing but the roaring of water. I think I must have been caught under the sail, for the next I knew I was struggling from beneath its stiff whiteness, and as I looked about, dazed, behold! we had passed the reefs and lay rocking quietly. I saw that first, and then I saw Cary's head as it bent over something he held in his arms—and it was Sally! I tried to call, I tried to reach them, but the breath must have been battered out of me, for I could not, and Cary did not notice me. I think he forgot I was on earth. As I gazed at them speechless, breathless, Sally's eyes opened and smiled up at him, and she turned her face against his shoulder like a child. Cary's dark cheek went down against hers, and through the sudden quiet I heard him whisper.

"Sweetheart! sweetheart!" he said.

Both heads, close against each other, were still for a long moment, and then my gasping, rasping voice came back to me.

"Cary!" I cried, "for mercy's sake, come and take me out of this jib!"

I have the most confused recollection of the rest of that afternoon. Cary hammered and sawed and worked like a beaver with the help of two men who lived on Lundy, fishermen by the curious name of Heaven. Sally and I helped, too, whenever we could, but all in a heavy silence. Sally was wrapped in dignity as in a mantle, and her words were few and practical. Cary, quite as practical, had no thought apparently for anything but his boat. As for me, I was like a naughty old cat. I fussed and complained till I must have been unendurable, for the emotions within me were all at cross-purposes. I was frightened to death when I thought of General Meade; I was horrified at the picture stamped on my memory of his daughter, trusted to my care, smiling up with that unmistakable expression into the eyes of a common sailor. Horrified! My blood froze at the thought. Yet—it was unpardonable of me—yet I felt a thrill as I saw again those two young heads together, and heard the whispered words that were not meant for me to hear.

Somehow or other, after much difficulty, and under much mental strain, we got home. Sally hardly spoke as we toiled up the stony hill in the dark beneath a pouring rain, and I, too, felt my tongue tied in an embarrassed silence. At some time, soon, we must talk, but we both felt strongly that it was well to wait till we could change our clothes.

Page 121

At last we reached the friendly brightness of the New Inn windows; we trudged past them to the steps, we mounted them, and as the front door opened, the radiant vision burst upon us of Anne Ford, come a day before her time, fresh and charming and voluble—voluble! It seemed the last straw to our tired and over-taxed nerves, yet no one could have been more concerned and sympathetic, and that we were inclined not to be explicit as to details suited her exactly. All the sooner could she get to her own affairs. Sir Richard Leigh's yacht was the burden of her lay, and that it was here and we had seen it added lustre to our adventures. That we had not been on board and did not know him, was satisfactory too, and neither of us had the heart to speak of Cary. We listened wearily, feeling colorless and invertebrate beside this brilliant creature, while Anne planned to send her card to him to-morrow, and conjectured gayeties for all of us, beyond. Sir Richard Leigh and his yacht did not fill a very large arc on our horizon to-night. Sally came into my room to tell me good-night, when we went up-stairs, and she looked so wistful and tired that I gave her two kisses instead of one.

"Thank you," she said, smiling mistily. "We won't talk to-night, will we, Cousin Mary?" So without words, we separated.

Next morning as I opened my tired eyes on a world well started for the day, there came a tap at the door and in floated Anne Ford, a fine bird in fine feathers, wide-awake and brisk.

"Never saw such lazy people!" she exclaimed. "I've just been in to see Sally and she refuses to notice me. I suppose it's exhaustion from shipwreck. But I wasn't shipwrecked, and I've had my breakfast, and it's too glorious a morning to stay indoors, so I'm going to walk down to the water and look at Sir Richard's boat, and send off my card to him by a sailor or something. Then, if he's a good boy, he will turn up to-day, and then—!" The end of Anne's sentence was wordless ecstasy.

But the mention of the sailor had opened the flood-gates for me, and in rushed all my responsibilities. What should I do with this situation into which I had so easily slipped, and let Sally slip? Should I instantly drag her off to France like a proper chaperone? Then how could I explain to Anne—Anne would be heavy dragging with that lodestone of a yacht in the harbor. Or could we stay here as we had planned and not see Cary again? The unformed shapes of different questions and answers came dancing at me like a legion of imps as I lay with my head on the pillow and looked at Anne's confident, handsome face, and admired the freshness and cut of her pale blue linen gown.

"Well, Cousin Mary," she said at last, "you and Sally seem both to be struck dumb from your troubles. I'm going off to leave you till you can be a little nicer to me. I may come back with Sir Richard—who knows! Wish me good luck, please!" and she swept off on a wave of good-humor and good looks.

Page 122

I lay and thought. Then, with a pleasant leisure that soothed my nerves a little, I dressed, and went down to breakfast in the quaint dining-room hung from floor to ceiling with china brought years ago from the far East by a Clovelly sailor. As I sat over my egg and toast Sally came in, pale, but sweet and crisp in the white that Southern girls wear most. There was a constraint over us for the reckoning that we knew was coming. Each felt guilty toward the other and the result was a formal politeness. So it was a relief when, just at the last bit of toast, Anne burst in, all staccato notes of suppressed excitement.

“Cousin Mary! Sally! Sir Richard Leigh is here! He’s there!” nodding over her shoulder. “He walked up with me—he wants to see you both. But”—her voice dropped to an intense whisper—“he has asked to see Miss Walton first—wants to speak to her alone! What does he mean?” Anne was in a tremendous flutter, and it was plain that wild ideas were coursing through her. “You are my chaperone, of course, but what can he want to see you for alone—Cousin Mary?”

I could not imagine, either, yet it seemed quite possible that this beautiful creature had taken a susceptible man by storm, even so suddenly. I laid my napkin on the table and stood up.

“The chaperone is ready to meet the fairy prince,” I said, and we went across together to the little drawing-room.

It was a bit dark as Anne opened the door and I saw first only a man’s figure against the window opposite, but as he turned quickly and came toward us, I caught my breath, and stared, and gasped and stared again. Then the words came tumbling over each other before Anne could speak.

“Cary!” I cried. “What are you doing here—in those clothes?”

Poor Anne! She thought I had made some horrid mistake, and had disgraced her. But I forgot Anne entirely for the familiar brown eyes that were smiling, pleading into mine, and in a second he had taken my hand and bending over, with a pretty touch of stateliness, had kissed it, and the charm that no one could resist had me fast in its net.

“Miss Walton! You will forgive me? You were always good to me—you won’t lay it up against me that I’m Richard Leigh and not a picturesque Devonshire sailor! You won’t be angry because I deceived you! The devil tempted me suddenly and I yielded, and I’m glad. Dear devil! I never should have known either of you if I had not.”

There were more of the impetuous sentences that I cannot remember, and somewhere among them Anne gathered that she was not the point of them, and left the room like a slighted but still reigning princess. It was too bad that any one should feel slighted, but if it had to be, it was best that it should be Anne.

Then my sailor told me his side of the story; how Sally's tip for the rescue of her hat had showed him what we took him to be; how her question about a boat had suggested playing the part; how he had begun it half for the fun of it and half, even then, for the interest the girl had roused in him—and he put in a pretty speech for the chaperone just there, the clever young man! He told me how his yacht had come sooner than he had expected, and that he had to give up one afternoon with her was so severe a trial that he knew then how much Sally meant to him.

Page 123

"That moonlight sail was very close sailing indeed," he said, his face full of a feeling that he did not try to hide. "There was nearly a shipwreck, when—when she steered wrong." And I remembered.

Then, with no great confidence in her mood, I went in search of my girl. She is always unexpected, and a dead silence, when I had anxiously told my tale, was what I had not planned for. After a minute,

"Well?" I asked.

And "Well?" answered Sally, with scarlet cheeks, but calmly.

"He is waiting for you down-stairs," I said.

Then she acted in the foolish way that seemed natural. She dropped on her knees and put her face against my shoulder.

"Cousin Mary! I can't! It's a strange man—it isn't our sailor any more. I hate it. I don't like Englishmen."

"He's very much the same as yesterday," I said. "You needn't like him if you don't want to, but you must go and tell him so yourself." I think that was rather clever of me.

So, holding my hand and trembling, she went down. When I saw Richard Leigh's look as he stood waiting, I tried to loosen that clutching hand and leave them, but Sally, always different from any one else, held me tight.

"Cousin Mary, I won't stay unless you stay," she said, firmly.

I looked at the young man and he laughed.

"I don't care. I don't care if all the world hears me," he said, and he took a step forward and caught her hands.

Sally looked up at him. "You're a horrid lord or something," she said.

He laughed softly. "Do you mind? I can't help it. It's hard, but I want you to help me try to forget it. I'd gladly be a sailor again if you'd like me better."

"I did like you—before you deceived me. You pretended you were that."

"But I have grievances too—you said I was a queer little rat of a man."

Sally's laugh was gay but trembling. "I did say that, didn't I?"

"Yes, and you tried to underpay me, too."

“Oh, I didn’t! You charged a lot more than the others.”

Sir Richard shook his head firmly. “Not nearly as much as the Revenge was worth. I kept gangs of men scrubbing that boat till I nearly went into bankruptcy. And, what’s more, you ought to keep your word, you know. You said you were going to marry Richard Leigh—Richard Grenville Cary Leigh is his whole name, you know. Will you keep your word?”

“But I—but you—but I didn’t know,” stammered Sally, feebly.

He went on eagerly. “You told me how he should wear his name—high and—and all that.” He had no time for abstractions. “He can never do it alone—will you come and help him?”

Sally was palpably starching about for weapons to aid her losing fight. “Why do you like me? I’m not beautiful like Anne Ford.” He laughed. “I’m not rich, you know, like lots of American girls. We’re very poor”—she looked at him earnestly.

Page 124

[Illustration: I felt myself pulled by two pairs of hands.]

"I don't care if you're rich or poor," he said. "I don't know if you're beautiful—I only know you're you. It's all I want."

She shook a little at his vehemence, but she was a long fighter. "You don't know me very much," she went on, her soft voice breaking. "Maybe it's only a fancy—the moonlight and the sailing and all—maybe you only imagine you like me."

"Imagine I like you!"

And then, at the sight of his quick movement and of Sally's face I managed to get behind a curtain and put my fingers in my ears. No woman has a right to more than one woman's love-making. And as I stood there, a few minutes later, I felt myself pulled by two pairs of hands, and Sally and her lover were laughing at me.

"May I have her? I want her very much," he said, and I wondered if ever any one could say no to anything he asked. So, with a word about Sally's far-away mother and father, I told him, as an old woman might, that I had loved him from the first, and then I said a little of what Sally was to me.

"I like her very much," I said, in a shaky voice that tried to be casual. "Are you sure that you like her enough?" For all of his answer, he turned, not even touching her hands, and looked at her.

It was as if I caught again the fragrance of the box hedges in the southern sunshine of a garden where I had walked on a spring morning long ago. Love is as old-fashioned as the ocean, and us little changed in all the centuries. Its always yielding, never retreating arms lie about the lands that are built and carved and covered with men's progress; it keeps the air sweet and fresh above them, and from generation to generation its look and its depths are the same. That it is stronger than death does not say it all. I know that it is stronger than life. Death, with its crystal touch, may make a weak love strong; life, with its every-day wear and tear, must make any but a strong love weak.

I like to think that the look I saw in Richard Leigh's eyes as he turned toward my girl was the same look I shall see, not so very many years from now, when I close mine on this dear old world, and open them, by the shore of the ocean of eternity, on the face of Geoffrey Meade.

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Page 125

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