

it was quite different. Letitia was an interesting compound of father and mother. Her father's adventurous nature supplied the romantic element in her. Perhaps it was this spirit of romance that prevented Letitia from being satisfied with bread and butter in the shape of the honest youths of her intimate acquaintance, and sent her fancy roving, just as the spirit of adventure, years before, had urged her father abroad to seek his fortune. Homely instincts of duty, however, inherited from her mother, weighted Letitia's wings, and kept her from many a daring act. Their strength was evident in the happy way in which she adapted herself to the old-fashioned groove marked out for the only daughter in a family of boys. In spite of her dimples and her laughter, and the partly unconscious coquetry of her bright glances, the strongest influences long remained those which associated her with her brothers. Fancy-free herself, she officiated as bridesmaid with all the more grace to one friend after another; and she had even assumed the responsibilities of a godmother before she met Charles Neville.

II.

It was at a garden-party at Judge Whyte's that Letitia was introduced to Lieutenant Charles Neville of her Majesty's ship *Stronghold*. Mrs. Whyte was the recognized leader of Alberta society, and her weekly summer garden-parties were attended by all within its magic pale. The Roys were just on the borderland; for the retail department of Mr. Roy's store could not, with the best will in the world, be entirely overlooked by the little colony of select English people. But then it was whispered that he occasionally advanced money, at a high rate of interest, to traveling fellow-countrymen of distinction, chiefly officers of the royal navy, who found themselves inconveniently distant from the base of their supplies; and hence he might be looked upon as a private banker by those who were inclined to take a charitable view. These transactions were frequently arranged in informal conferences on the door-step of the store, or in a stroll along the sidewalk of the principal street, and were often followed by a convivial lunch or dinner on board one of the ships at the neighboring naval station. Such outward and visible signs of intimacy in high quarters could not be ignored. Besides, Mrs. Roy, if somewhat homely, was considered a lady by the other ladies of the town; and as for Letitia, she was not a girl to be passed over anywhere, and in a colonial town on the Pacific coast was actually a mine of wealth to an ambitious hostess who wished to make her house an attractive one. So Mr. and Mrs. Roy were invited to dinner

by the judge's lady at least once a year, and Letitia, or Letty, as Mrs. Whyte preferred to call her, was welcome on all occasions when young people were present.

It was the naval element that gave both tone and variety to Alberta society. It had the advantage of constantly changing, and therefore could never grow monotonous. In the easy intercourse of colonial life Letitia had danced with several admirals and with many gallant captains, while the young middies fraternized with her brothers at foot-ball and cricket, and were always made welcome at the cottage on the Harbor Road. Lieutenant Neville did not therefore flash like an unexpected meteor upon Letitia's horizon. He arrived in the spring with the *Stronghold*, and it was quite in the ordinary course of events that he appeared at Judge Whyte's first garden-party in May. Letitia was there, equally as a matter of course, and the magic words, "Mr. Neville, Miss Roy," were pronounced in Mrs. Whyte's ordinary even tones. Neville and Letitia found themselves opponents at croquet, a much more piquant relation than that of partners. They were well-matched players, but Letitia finally pegged her opponent. Then, surrendering their mallets to later arrivals, they went laughing and chatting across the lawn and up the steps of the veranda, where Mrs. Whyte was dispensing tea and claret-cup. Neville's sunburnt face had the same buoyant, gladsome expression that distinguished Letitia's. His laugh was as gay as hers, his teeth as white under his fair mustache, and he had the gracious manners of a happy nature in addition to the well-bred air of a young man of the world.

"What a charming pair!" murmured Mrs. Whyte as they came up the veranda steps, Neville just behind Letitia.

Some of the elder ladies were grouped round Mrs. Whyte's tea-table. A Chinaman in a spotless white tunic with wide, hanging sleeves, and with his queue neatly braided round his head, was deftly handing round the tea-cups and the cake. His calm, expressionless brown eyes took in everything, and he quickly brought refreshments to Letitia and her companion, who were standing near a group of young people.

"You likee tea, Miss Loy?"

"Oh, thank you, Hing," said Letitia; "heap likee. But this man, Hing," she added, turning to Neville, "I think he likee claret."

"No, no," interposed Neville; "I likee tea."

"Tea velly good," said Hing, solemnly.

"Yes," replied Letitia, in assent; "but sometimes white man not savvy what good for him."

Neville's eyes followed Hing with some curiosity.