

all in a moment it overturned, and the blue water took her and drew her down. There was no one within reach; no one within sight but Madeleine, and the water here was deep and swift. In a flash, however, Madeleine was at the spot where she knew instinctively that the girl must reappear; and as the golden head and white dress came up through the water she bent down and caught her firmly with both hands. "Don't be frightened," she cried; "you are safe. Catch hold of my boat—here at the end. Try to draw yourself up. Get your knee on the edge. Give me your hand. There!"

And using all her dexterity and strength, assisted by the half-conscious young creature herself, Madeleine got her into the boat and laid her down upon the bottom, where she fainted quite away and lay like a lily among the lilies, her pretty hair, loosened by the weight of the water, lying in a tangled mass upon her shoulders and making a wavy, yellow frame about a childlike face. Madeleine looked down at her with a curious resentment as she paddled swiftly back to Claribelle Island. The girl was crushing Mr. Horace's flowers.

Horace himself strolled out on the pier just as Madeleine reached it, and with an exclamation of amazement he hastened to the landing-place to meet her. Madeleine saw her rose still hanging upon his breast.

"What have you here?" he cried. "Who is she? Is she dead?"

"She's only swooned, I guess," Madeleine answered. "I got her out of the channel just below. She couldn't manage her boat. She shouldn't 'a' been let go out by herself. I'll bring her into the house." "No, no," said Horace, reaching down; "I'll carry her. Give her to me. Carefully, Madeleine, carefully! I will take her in to my mother."

Stooping, he gathered the slim young figure tenderly in his arms as Madeleine raised her towards him. The rose upon his breast fell out, as he did so, and lay upon the boards at his feet. He stepped upon it as he turned away. Madeleine stood watching till he had entered the house with his burden, then caught up the rose and tore it fiercely to pieces, petal by petal. Then she sat down again, and waited in brooding anger. The sun was quite gone, but the light across the water was more beautiful than ever. It had all softened down into a uniform, delicious pink. Everywhere she saw the color of the rose that she had given him, and that he had stepped on and forgotten. Then that, too, faded by degrees, until there was only the memory of it left, tingeing the silver grey of the early twilight as the glow of past happiness tempers after sorrows. Yet Madeleine still sat among her bruised lilies and waited. They had long since closed, and looked dull and grey.

She heard him calling her at last, and stood silently up in answer. He came hurriedly towards her, holding out a note.

"Are you there still, and with your boat? Will you take this note over to Pearl Island at once? It is to tell Miss Staunton's friends that she is safe and well. Only she is to stay with us to-night. My mother thinks it best."

He turned back while still speaking, and Madeleine dropped in her seat again without a word. The lilies must wait longer yet. As she sullenly took the oars, he unexpectedly retraced his steps and stood beside her.

"Madeleine," he said, "you have been a brave, good girl; give me your hand."

Madeleine looked up at him. Her lip quivered; her eyes moistened; her whole expression grew soft, and a rich color swept over her face from brow to chin. She had never shaken hands with him. He had never before spoken to her in such a gentle tone.

"Give me your hand," he repeated, bending

nearer; "you have saved her life. What a beautiful creature she is!"

At his last words the color left Madeleine's face and it grew hard again in a moment. She bent down her head, and the boat slipped along the pier so that the two outstretched hands failed to touch.

"I will take your letter," she called back, and pushed away.

At Pearl Island, after delivering the note, she lingered awhile, thinking there might be an answer to carry back; and presently a gentleman with two ladies hurried towards her from the house.

"This is certainly Madeleine herself," exclaimed one of the ladies as they came up. "Is it not? Are you not the girl referred to in this note? Was it not you who saved the young lady's life?"

"I am Madeleine Brabau," the girl answered. "If there's no answer, I'm to go back."

"But there is an answer, most certainly," returned the gentleman cordially, holding out a little roll of bank notes. "In the absence of Miss Staunton's parents you must let me give you this token of gratitude in their stead. Here, take it. You have put us all in your debt."

Madeleine flushed violently. "Money!" she cried with anger, springing to her feet and snatching her pole. "I'll not take money! I'll not be paid for it! If you've no answer but that, I'll go!"

"Oh, wait, please!" begged the second lady, gently. "I see you have a boatful of lovely flowers. Water-lilies, aren't they? How exquisite! Do at least let us buy some of them."

"They aren't for sale," Madeleine answered quickly, drawing up her head. "I didn't get them to sell them—not to no one." And pushing from the pier, she went back through the dusk to Claribelle Island. Her grandmother was standing on the tiny porch of the ranch as she passed, and called petulantly to know if she were never coming in for supper.

Madeleine shook her head. "I don't want none," she muttered, and went doggedly back to her old post by the landing-place. Perhaps Mr. Horace would come out again, and she could give him his lilies even yet. She sat as if made of stone and waited and waited. Through the open windows beyond came the sound of voices—his voice and his mother's, and a new sweet voice that sounded like music. Madeleine hated it as she listened.

It grew later and later. Night came on. There was a movement in the house now. There were steps upon the wooden floors and upon the stairs; old familiar lights shone out from the upper rooms, and one from a room hitherto unused. But there were lights in the drawing-room still, and the corner room upstairs was dark, and still Madeleine waited.

She did not know how long she sat there. At last the drawing-room was dark, and the upstairs room was bright. What chance was there now that he would come? Yet she waited still, till every light was out, and there was no sound but the mud-hen's mocking cry, or the occasional shrill whistle of meeting boats. Finally these, too, ceased, and the very waters seemed asleep. Then she rose and noiselessly paddled out into the middle of the channel, where the current ran swiftest and blackest, and with pitiless hands flung out all the lilies, one by one. When there was not so much as the smallest bud, or even a stray stem, left in the boat, she turned and went home, and creeping into the ranch, lay down, all dressed, beside her grandmother's sleeping figure. There she lay, perfectly motionless, with clenched hands and wide-open eyes, till dawn.

iv.

During the long, languid summer days and the cool twilights that followed, a young girl with wavy golden hair and charming hazel eyes was oftener and oftener seen in Horace Hayden's boat as he sailed to and fro in Little Venice. Fishing and duck-shooting grew day by day to have less charm for him, notwithstanding Louis's marvelous accounts of the canvas-backs and red-heads in some distant channel, and the rumor among the fisherfolk of a sturgeon now in Baltimore Bay quite the largest ever seen.

Madeleine stole into the boat-house early every morning and oiled the young man's gun and polished his fishing-reel anew, setting them in some conspicuous place where they could not fail to attract his notice when he entered. But their dumb appeal was of no avail. More and more often Madeleine, sitting motionless in her boat among the rushes, caught the sound of Evelyn's banjo across the water, and snatching up her oars, she rowed desperately away to be rid of the hateful sound.

This was Evelyn's first visit to Little Venice, some friends whom she was visiting in Detroit having brought her with them to their summer home; and having been thus unceremoniously introduced to the owners of Claribelle Island, the acquaintance between the two families ripened into intimacy, as is natural in all places where neighbors are so few. Her new friends yielded without resistance to the charm of this winning young creature. Mrs. Hayden took her to her motherly heart at once, and could not make enough of her. Even old Mrs. Brabau had a grudging smile for her, and lazy Louis bestirred himself more quickly at her call than at any other. There was not a fisherman at the Flats but soon knew her by sight, and smiled to see her pass. Only Madeleine held aloof. This new reign of pleasure-making and pleasure-seeking was irrational and strange to her. To shoot, or fish, or sail, seemed to her the only natural way of spending the summer days; but these continual visits back and forth between Claribelle and Pearl islands, these tea-parties, these water picnics, this music morning, noon and night, this incessant ministering to every possible caprice on the part of the petted, gay young beauty—Madeleine had never seen anything of the sort before. From the tiny sitting-room in the ranch she watched it all in lonely, envious wonder. This was only another girl like herself. What made the difference? Why should the one have everything and the other nothing? Why had fate brought Evelyn to Little Venice? Or why had Madeleine been there in her boat that night when first she came? Madeleine was haunted by the thought of what might have been but for that chance.

Evelyn was puzzled by Madeleine's churlishness, and wondered why it was that she could win nothing but dark looks from her in response to her attempts to make friends. Naturally she had but grateful and even loving impulses towards this girl who had saved her life, and it troubled her that she could recompense Madeleine in no way—not so much even as with the gift of her friendship.

One morning, during one of Horace Hayden's frequent absences in the city, Madeleine was returning from an errand to the summer grocery—a barge anchored in one of the side channels—when Evelyn beckoned to her from the pier of Pearl Island.

"Won't you take me for a row, please, Madeleine?" she asked coaxingly, as the girl paddled slowly up. "Can you take me? Have you time to go?"

"Time?" echoed Madeleine with a short laugh; "I have plenty of time. I haven't nothin' else."

(To be continued.)