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that person should belong to us all—to one as much as to another. Most of 'er little things we've bought we've clubbed together for. Bein' six of us—we takes 'er one day a week each, so as it shall be fair, and there shan't be no one saying that she's fonder of one than she is of the rest. Monday's my day, and Queenie looks after her on Tuesdays; Audrey Wednesday, Cicily takes charge on Thursday, Pauline Friday, and Daisy finishes up the week. Sunday she don't belong to nobody in particular; but she's our baby all the year round, and she's going to stop so."

The girl's dark head was bent down over the child, and a short sob broke her voice at the end of the little speech. "Fanny's put it quite right," said Queenie, speaking in a high piping voice. "It ain't likely you'd understand—men never do understand those things. If six of us can't look after her it's a bit 'ard lines, and she has a much better time than most children that come the way she da. We've made up our minds—I think I speak for one and all, girls?—that things remain as they are."

Captain Follett glanced at Shearman, who shrugged his shoulders; then he gave a comprehensive bow, all round, and said the final word that was necessary.

"I am sorry to hear your decision, ladies," he said, slowly "but I feel that I must regard it as final. There are quite a number of things I should like to say, if it were possible—things concerning admiration of your conduct, and

"So that's the end of the business," said the lawyer at last. "I should like to remind you, Captain, that I predicted what the end would be."

"Yes—yes—I know all about that," exclaimed the Captain testily. "You were right—and they are right—from their point of view. I feel a great respect for those young ladies—and I trust that I behaved in a perfectly straightforward manner with them."

"So now, I suppose, Captain Follett, you will regard the matter as closed, and will go back to London."

"I don't know," answered the Captain, standing still, and frowning at the pavement. "I haven't really made up my mind."

As a matter of fact, Captain Neville Follett did not return to London. He sat late in his room at the hotel that night, with his chin sunk upon his breast and his finger-tips joined before him, staring into the fire. Now he seemed to see that mutilated photograph of the dead girl; now he seemed to be on his knees, holding the head of the dying boy against his breast, and hearing the last faltering injunction to him to look after the child. And now again he seemed to be in that untidy dressing-room, with the baby seated on the table smiling at him, and the six girls in their dancing dresses defying him to take the child away.

Something else too; bawdy arms about his neck. The Captain had grown up in hard service in many lands, and his life had known but little softness; he could not forget that the child had so impulsively kissed him. He got up at



Falls on the English River, east of Winnipeg

of the fashion in which you have behaved to the little person that shall be nameless. In effect, ladies, I almost feel that I have not quite played the game in trying to force you to give her up. I—I apologize.

With which speech the Captain moved across the room to the girl farthest from him, and gravely shook hands; performing the like office with each one of them, and ending with the child upon the table. Something to his embarrassment, the child suddenly flung her arms about his neck and kissed him rapturously. So that the Captain, on regaining his dignity and his full height, was seen to be violently blushing. "Captain Follett," said Fanny, leaning a hand easily on her hip, and looking down somewhat nervously at her well-proportioned legs—"I think I should say, on behalf of me and the girls, that we didn't expect to be treated in quite so gentlemanly a manner. I hope we know a gentleman when we see him—one that knows how to treat a girl as a lady; we should like to say that things 'ave been done kindly and—generously. We have no quarrel with you, Captain Follett—and we are very sorry. None the less, we're quite sure you understand."

"Ladies, I understand perfectly," answered the Captain, with a little troubled glance at the child on the table. "I wish you a very good evening."

He found his way out of the place, and stood for a moment or two in the street, with the lawyer watching him. He seemed a little depressed, a little troubled; presently he walked away without saying anything; Shearman walked beside him.

last out of his chair and went to bed—to dream that he was riding hard through the night, with the sounds of battle away behind him in the distance, and with the child on his saddle before him, fast asleep, with her head against his breast.

The next night found Captain Follett still in Mexchester; it saw him also, as immaculately dressed as ever, seated alone in the box at the music-hall. The Jolliffe Troupe saw him also, and their performance suffered a little in consequence; there was a nervousness about it that drew upon them the wrath of their manager, who threatened dire pains and penalties if the thing wasn't "bucked up a bit" by the following night.

When, the next evening, that quiet figure was seen again in the box, the nervousness of the troupe had given way to defiance, and they had scarcely ever danced so well. Not that the Captain noticed them; he looked always past them at the tiny figure in the wings, going through her performance solemnly in time to the others. And when once, catching sight of him, the child stopped and waved a hand to him shyly, a curious pleased flush crept over the Captain's lean cheek as he waved a hand in response.

It was with no hope that anything might happen that the Captain followed the troupe to the next town on their list; it was rather as though the man were bewitched. The bitter loneliness of this baby, wandering about always from place to place, and living in obscure lodgings; the uncertainty of her after-fate—pretty and engaging and nameless as she would be; all these