

SIR WILLIAM'S WILL

But presently, with a sigh of resignation, he left the accounts and made up a fire, over which a kettle was hanging, that was smouldering outside, while Lord Stanton arranged the cups on a huge slab of stone. Then he went up to the girls.

"Douglas has got some tea for us," he said.

"Hurrah!" said Mollie, descending from her perch with alacrity; but Clytie looked before her thoughtfully, and remained seated.

"I don't think I'll come down," she said.

Lord Stanton was about to urge her, but Mollie caught him by the arm.

"Oh, leave her alone," she said.

"Haven't you discovered yet that when Clytie is in one of her dreaming-fits it is not safe to disturb her? She is like one of those pretty, sleek-looking cats at the Zoo, the kind you feel that you must go up to and stroke. Luckily for you, there is always a kind, good keeper to warn you off. See? I'm the keeper."

"I wish you were mine," murmured the lad.

"What did you say? Never mind. But you shouldn't get into the bad habit of muttering to yourself. That's one of the lessons I'm always trying to teach you. How do you do, Mr. Douglas? It's very kind of you to offer us tea; this is the second time we are indebted to your hospitality," she added suavely.

Jack reddened; he never thought of the scene with Hesketh Carton without growing warm, inside and out.

"I think Lord Stanton deserves all the credit on this occasion, Miss Mollie," he said.

"Oh! then be sure he'll take it!" she retorted.

Jack went into the shed, leaving his lordship to play host, and Mollie, as she poured out the tea, noticed that there were only three cups.

"I wonder if Clytie would have some if we sent it up," she said.

"Yes, I was going to take it," said Lord Stanton.

"Oh, no; I couldn't be left," said Mollie blandly. "Mr. Douglas!"

Jack came out with the paper in his hand and stood at the door.

"Will you please take this cup of tea to my sister?" asked Mollie, with the sweetness which she could at will infuse into voice and manner.

Jack took the cup without a word, and walked off.

"The Paragon does not appear to be in the best of tempers," remarked Mollie.

The lad laughed. "He's fearfully busy," he said exuberantly. "How jolly it is here!" He leaned back against the stone. "Such a fine view!" His eyes were fixed on Mollie's face, crowned by its crimson tam-o'-shanter.

"Didn't think I should be so happy down here at the Towers. I wish you weren't going back to the Hall."

"Well, we're not, for a little while," said Mollie.

"That's good! Though, of course, I shall see you after you go to the Hall. My aunt's coming down next week, you know; and—and, of course, you'll come to the Towers. She's a good sort, and you'll like her."

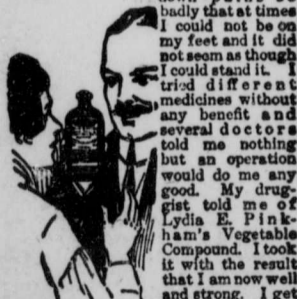
"You're not going back to Oxford, then?" said Mollie.

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"No," he said. "You see," with a touch of color, "things were altered when I came into Stanton. There's a good deal to be done."

"Oh, is there?" asked Mollie innocently.

"Why, of course there is," he retorted angrily. "No end of things to look after, all over the estate, you know."

"Really? It seemed to me that you spent most of your time between Pethwick and Withycombe."

He colored still more redly. "Well, you see, I've got this job on hand."

"Oh, don't apologize," she exhorted him indifferently. "It's no business of mine how you waste—employ your time. But if I were your aunt—which, thank goodness, I am not—I should pack you back to school—Oxford, I mean."

"Oh, if you want me to go—" He sighed, despairfully.

"I!" retorted Mollie, opening her eyes on him like saucers. "It's a matter of perfect indifference to me whether you go or stay."

"Then I shall stay," he retorted, in his turn.

"And while you are here you might get some more water," she said.

Jack, walking deliberately like a dog, carried the cup of tea to the quay wall, and Clytie looked up with a smile.

"Oh, thank you!" she said. "It is very good of you. I was just wondering whether I would go down or not; it was the sight of the cups and saucers."

"Then I'm glad I brought it," said Jack, and, setting the cup of tea beside her, he was turning away when she said:

"You are very much interested in the works—" She paused a moment as Mollie's remark about the "mister" occurred to her. "Mr. Douglas."

"Yes," said Jack, leaning against the wall and looking, not at the beautiful face, the gray eyes resting placidly upon his, but at the hill opposite.

"Yes, it is interesting work. It will be a great improvement."

"Have you ever been engaged in similar work?" she asked, with something more than merely gracious interest.

"Not quite," he replied, "but I've seen it done. And the thing is easy enough. You have seen the plan, I suppose?" As she replied in the negative, he took a roll from his pocket.

"It's only a small rough plan. I copied it from the large one," he said, as he spread it out on the wall beside her. She bent over it, and, having to hold it so that it should not curl up, his head, as he explained the plan, was very near hers. "That's the jetty proper," he said, "and that's the breakwater. We've got it rounded, so that the sea will break over it without doing any damage."

"I don't understand," she said, with genuine interest.

He bent lower, so that his head almost touched the soft, dark tangle of her hair, as he traced the lines with his finger. Her gaze unconsciously shifted from the drawing to his hands. It was not the first time she had noticed their shapeliness; but it was the first time she had seen them so closely; and she was struck by them. They were brown, and anything but effeminate, but they were quite unlike those of the fishermen and workmen.

"It's a great improvement on the Withycombe one," he said, ignorant of her gaze and the faint surprise. "I wonder that they didn't alter it on these lines when they were repairing it fifteen years ago; but it was done by the village mason, a good workman in his way, but, of course, not up to date."

"You were here then?" she asked.

Jack shifted his hand, the plan curled up at that corner, and he appeared to find some difficulty in setting it out straight again.

"Oh, I've heard all about it," he said, carelessly.

"I suppose the Withycombe jetty could be altered, built like this?" she asked.

"Oh, yes," he replied. "It would cost a great deal of money—were you thinking of doing it, Miss Bramley?"

Clytie shook her head and smiled.

"No," she said, gravely, a little wistfully; she could not tell him she was only a caretaker of the property; that the proper person to improve Withycombe jetty or any other part of the Bramley estate was Sir Wilfred Carton, who probably would have no desire to do so.

"Ah, well, if you should, it would be a good thing to run the jetty out a bit farther than it is; there is scarcely room for the boats in the wild weather. That is what I mean." He made a rough sketch on the back of the plan. "Like that. It would be a boon to the men."

"You draw very well," said Clytie; then she laughed. "My sister called you the Admirable Crichton."

"Oh!" said Jack. "Never heard of him." And he had not; for he had been too busily engaged at playing at Jack of all trades to have time for books.

Clytie colored slightly. It was not the first time she had forgotten that she was not talking to an equal.

"He was a man who did everything, and did it well," she said.

Jack laughed. "Miss Mollie was out



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—for once," he said, lightly.

He leaned against the wall, looking out to sea, but thinking of the girl by his side, so near to him and yet so far away! He had seen her, spoken to her, nearly every day for the last three weeks, and he was conscious with a consciousness against which he fought, that he liked seeing her, talking to her; better still, hearing her speak. When she came in sight something within his heart suddenly grew warm, his pulse quickened, the air grew brighter. He tried to avoid her, scarcely acknowledging the wish to do so; but he seemed drawn by some unconscious influence to her side; and when he would have resisted, chance came to the aid of that mysterious influence; it had come this afternoon; and while he was at her side he lingered as if he was loath to go. In his solitary hours he caught himself thinking of her face—it was wonderful and amazing, how well he knew its every expression; the slight, wistful curve of the lips, the trick of the straightening brows, the steady, direct gaze of the beautiful eyes, the smile which lit up the rather sad face as the sunlight shimmers on a summer sea. And her voice—surely it was the most musical, the sweetest ever owned by woman; the music, the sweetness echoed for him in the hours of his solitude, up in the woods, on the beach, at night, as he lay awake and thinking of her, as he was thinking of her now, in a deep reverie.

He woke suddenly.

"I'm keeping you from your book, Miss Bramley. Shall I bring you another cup of tea?"

"No, thanks," she answered.

He glanced at his watch.

"I have to take the boat to the Head," he said, nodding at the promontory. "Would you—do you care to come?"

She looked seaward.

"Yes, I think I should," she said. "I am tired of reading."

As they reached the shed, she called:

"I'm going into the boat. Will you come, Mollie?"

Mollie shook her head; she was sitting on a log with the big stone for a back, with her arms round her knees.

"No, indeed. Lord Stanton is telling me of all the wonderful things he did at Oxford, and I haven't the heart to stop him. You go, Clytie."

Clytie hesitated a moment or two, then followed Jack to the beach.

CHAPTER XIV.

There was a fair wind from them, and Jack put up the sail and was making a comfortable place in the bottom of the boat for Clytie, when she said:

"I will take the tiller, so that you can look after the sail."

She had never before offered to steer, but he plied the cushions on the stern and gave her the tiller, and she put her arm over it in good, nautical fashion, and kept her eye on the wind.

"You may smoke if you wish," she said, and Jack, with a respectful "Thank you," availed himself of the permission. He needed a pipe to steady his nerves, which of late had always thrilled in her presence, as the strings of a harp thrill at the touch of the musician's hand, though it sweep its chords all unconsciously. Her nearness—the boat was small, and he was almost touching her—filled him with a happiness which was not perfect because of its wistfulness, and every now and then he glanced at her as if she were a necessary part of the beauty of the multicolored coast the opaline sea.

"What are you going to do at the Head?" she asked, after a rather long silence, during which his mind was dwelling on the ever absorbing marvel of the change which had been wrought in her, the change from the gawky girlhood—and yet, no, he told himself; even as a girl she had been lithe, graceful, notwithstanding the length of the black-stockinged legs, and the long arms—to wonder of womanhood.

"I am going to see if we can manage to slide some of the timber down the slope there; it will save us hauling the trees we are cutting in the wood behind the Head. You know it?"

"Yes," she replied. "We used, my sister and I, to picnic there. You seem to have made acquaintance with the land very quickly."

"Oh, yes," he responded, easily. "I have been riding about a great deal lately, looking out for suitable timber and stone. It is a beautiful place, and I'm not surprised that Lord Stanton is so proud of it."

"And yet I think in some ways Bramley is more beautiful," she said, musingly.

"Oh, no doubt," he assented. "The land is better, the farms, too, but the Towers is the bigger house."

"You know Bramley?" she asked, with some surprise.

He turned to the sail and tightened the sheet.

"Give her just a point to starboard," he said. "Thank you. Oh, every one knows Bramley, by the guide-books and the photographs," he added, as easily as before, but with a mental resolve to keep a more cautious watch on his tongue, which was so ready to answer when she spoke. "I dare say you are as proud of it, Miss Bramley, as his lordship is of the Towers."

"Yes," she admitted, with a sigh. "I love it."

"You have been there so long—I mean your family."

"Since 1416," she said. "There are still some portions of the original building standing, the west wing. Sir William Carton had it very carefully restored."

Jack nodded. He did some good for the old place," he remarked, cheerfully.

"Yes, oh, yes. If it had remained in my father's possession—he was poor; the Bramleys have been poor for a long time." She hesitated again. "It was well that the place should pass into more capable hands."

"Well, it's back to the right owners now," he said, still more cheerfully; "and, if I may be so bold, one who will take care of it."

Clytie sighed again, but made no response to this suggestion. Presently, she said, as if she had been considering:

"If you would like to see the house, to go over it, Mr. Douglas, please go up there any day, and ask Mrs. Huton, the housekeeper, or Sholes, the butler, to show you over it."

"Thank you very much," he said, gratefully, and with a slightly heightened color. "It is very good of you. I will go up some day, the first opportunity—but I'm afraid it will not be yet a while. I don't seem able to leave the work at Pethwick for more than an hour or two."

"You must come when we are at home. I—or my sister—will be delighted to show it to you. She is fonder, prouder of the Hall even than I am. Here is the Head. Are you going to land?"

He looked up at the slope with his keen eyes.

"I should like to land for a minute or two if you don't mind waiting."

"Not at all," she responded. "It is delightful on the sea this afternoon."

He had not been thinking of the weather, but he glanced round him now, and he saw a bank of clouds which had mysteriously risen in the southwest, and as he let down the sail he felt the wind come in a sudden puff.

"I won't be more than a moment or two," he said, as he ran the boat on a slip of sand.

He went quickly to the base of the cliff, looked about him thoughtfully, and began climbing to a narrow ridge some little distance up the path. Clytie watched him as she leaned back lazily, and half-unconsciously noticed the ease with which he made the ascent, the casual way in which he balanced himself on the slight projection which, from where she sat, seemed scarcely a foothold; then suddenly she felt a little jar of fear.

"You are not going any higher?" she called. "That sandstone is very treacherous."

"No, no," he called back, and he descended quickly; he had cast an eye seaward, and saw, more plainly than he had seen while in the boat, that the bank of clouds was rising swiftly, and that one of these sudden changes of

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wind and weather, which make this coast so dangerous, was taking place.

"It will do," he said, as he put the boat off. "It will save us a long haul—and therefore save Lord Stanton a huge sum of money."

He ran up the sail and they started on the home track; but they had not got very far before the sky was darkened, the wind began to make itself heard, and the first dash of rain swished across them.

He glanced at Clytie, noticed that the pretty dress, which had filled him with admiration and delight an hour ago, afforded very insufficient protection against the storm that was coming, and he crawled forward and got out his oilskins from the locker.

(To Be Continued.)

NORTH SEA TRAWLERS.

Their Great Work in Peace and War.

The northeast coast of Scotland is pacific in climate, as compared with the Atlantic straits, which rules the sea-girt land, on the west," writes William Elliot Griffis in "Bonnie Scotland and What We Owe Her," and he goes on later in the same chapter to speak of the trawlers of the North Sea.

At Aberdeen "twenty-five millions of dollars' worth of food is extracted annually through the fisheries in the deeper waters, which have been improved, first by the method of beam trawling, begun in 1882, and then by the steam line fishing in 1889."

"How full the North Sea is of these trawlers those know who have seen them and kept pace with the efforts of philanthropists to minister to the needs of the men on board the ships. In recent years we have learned, moreover, how soon, in time of war, these toilers of the deep are called upon to show their courage as well as their industry, and have thus realized the danger ever surrounding these modest heroes. In the world war of 1914-18, the trawlers have not only caught fish, but in their new capacity as minesweepers, have kept the North Sea measurably free."

Squirrel's Pathetic Search.

In moving some quilts in the cottage of Fred Hayden of Northwest Abbot, Me., five little squirrels were spilled on the floor, one of them being killed. The mother squirrel was quickly on the scene, taking one at a time and hastening upstairs with it. The fourth one she dropped at the foot of the stairs and rushed back with frantic haste, thoroughly looking over the contents of the room for the fifth one. She even climbed to the waists of the men and smelled their hands in her search for her lost baby.

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