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PRETTY MISS NEVILLE

BY B. M. CROKER

CHAPTER XIV ON BOARD THE "HINDOSTAN"

To make amends for our calamity. we had splendid weather for the re-mainder of the voyage; neither storms nor fogs. The *Hindostan* was crowd-ed. We had nearly two hundred fellow passengers, most of whom were sociably inclined. Music, dancing, and theatricals enlivened our evenings; and altogether a gayer com-munity was seldom afloat. I think people were not a little disappointed at my civilized appearance. I imagine that they expected me to have presented myself in the blanket and dressing-gown, instead of a neat-fitting serge costume.

You don't look a bit as if you had been nearly drowned !" remarked a very pretty, piquant looking girl, sur-veying me discontentedly. "You got veying me discontentedly. "You got over it wonderfully, I must say! If I had been hours in the water, hanging on to an oar, I'm certain my hair would have turned perfectly gray with fright, like What's-her-name's all in one night." This young lady, Miss Gibbon, and

I sat together at meals, and became rather intimate, and, as far as she was concerned, confidential. She was going out to be married to a coffee-planter ; and was without ex-ception, the most candid, matter-offact young person I ever came across She coolly informed me that she did not care two straws about Mr. Hogg was it not an odious name ?--but there were so many of them at home -three girls younger than herselfthat it was a good thing for her mother (who was a widow, and by no means well off) to get one of them off her

Our good looks are all we have our faces are our fortunes; and I am nearly twenty-six, and it is quite time for me to be settled, is it not ? she asked with disconcerting frank-

I gazed at her in mute amazement. She was quite a new experience to countrified Nora O'Neill!

You do amuse me," she exclaimed; "you open your great big eyes so wide, and look as if I had seven heads! By the way, what color do you call your eyes—hazel, or light brown ?" she asked, in a parenthesis. I thought all Irish girls had blue or

gray eyes." My eyes had been called "yellow," by eyes had been called "yellow," "mud-color," and "cat's eyes," by Rody and Deb, when in a specially critical humor. Consequently I felt some diffidence in advancing my opinion, viz., that they were hazel, luncheon-bell. with black trimmings. "If you were one of a large, pauper

genteel family," pursued Miss Gib-bon loquaciously, "you would soon know what I mean. Mr. Hogg came home last year, and happened to stay with friends of ours. He is fabulous with friends of ours. He is fabulous ly rich; an enormous *parti*, both in purse and person. That's a pun," pausing for applause. "And all the girls in the place instantly set their caps at him, and he was good enough to throw the handkerchief to me, and I picked it up, and said 'Thank you kindly.' Me voila en route to marry him, wedding-dress, trousseau, cake, and all complete."

And do yon love him ?" I asked point-black. Love him !" she rejoined ; " no,]

do not love him, you dear little sen-timental goose ! I don't dislike him, although he is middle aged, unusually plain, and preposterously fat ! I am what is called a g

ious fancy to me the instant she saw me. She told me that "I amused her immensely, I was so refreshingly green "—her own expression—" I was, moreover, a heroine, who had saved a whole boat's crew from the waves of the Bay of Biscay !" waves of the Bay of Biscay !" This I indignantly denied ; but my

nxious disclaimers were of no avail. There is not a bit of good in your

dispense with.

all comers.

talking, my dear; no one will believe you. It is in all the newspapers that you saved Colonel Keith's life, and if accommodate her dresses upon my hooks ? "Miss Neville, say to Miss Roper I were in your place I would swear that I had saved the other twelve that those hooks are mine, not hers. Or, "Miss Neville, tell Miss Gibbon that I insist on the port being passenger into the bargain ! Always stand up for yourself, and put your "Tell Mrs. Roper I intend to keep best foot foremost.

Mrs. Roper occupied a top berth, and made that elevation an excuse for sending me all her errands, and it open ?" Then Mrs. Roper would spring out they were not a few. "Go into the saloon, and bring me

of her top berth, with surprising agility, and slam the port with a de-fiant bang. Ere she had scrambled back to her couch, Miss Gibbon would have boldly thrown it open; the yellow-backed novel from the top of the piano, there's a darling. Don't look into it, for it is a very naughty book, and not fit for an and as fast as Mrs. Roper shut it, Miss Gibbon would open it. At innocent little pet lamb like you ; length she wearied out her antagor, "Would you mind bringing me the eau de Cologne, dearest?" or onist, who hysterically desired me to 'tell Miss Gibbon she was a most un "Just run up on deck-you are young and nimble-and tell Colonel Durand that I am not coming out bearable, insolent young person, and that she (Mrs. Roper) would certainly complain to the captain of her abomtill the afternoon. I have such le conduct."

say :

"Miss

as to tell Miss Gibbon that I canno

Of course we all landed at Port She never got up till Miss Gibbon Said. In getting out of the boat Miss Gibbon hurt her hand very and I were both dressed. She liked to have the cabin to herself. "Air and space, and plenty of elbow-room," were necessities she could not cadly. As I used to poultice it and bandage it for her, and assist her to dress, and do her hair, we were brought very much together, and I was an early riser, and only too

she again resorted to me as a "safe-ty-valve," and honored me with her glad to escape from the stuffy cabin and take a turn on deck with Colonel confidence—one evening especially We were sitting together on deck, in Keith, who had fallen in with many Anglo Indians, and was a most sought-after and popular man. Breakfast would be almost forgotten the husk, and had not opened our ips to each other for more than a quarter of an hour, when Miss Gib when Mrs. Roper would make her bon suddenly exclaimed : appearance on deck, charmingly I declare, at times I've a good dressed in an elaborate walking

mind to jump overboard !" ostume, and altogether got up with I peered into her face in the dim considerable care. To see her languidly moving but I could not make out light whether she were in jest or earnest toward her long cane chair, feebly responding to the anxious inquiries or what to gather from her alarming declaration. of a host of attentive gentlemen, one

You know I am going out to be rried," she went on. "In me you would think she was a confirmed but most interesting invalid. I knew married," she went on. "In me you see-or rather you do not see, for hetter, having seen a well-laden tray dispatched to her berth during it's far too dark—the future bride of the rich Mr. Hogg. I suppose he is actually counting the very hours till I arrive in Madras!" "Probably," I answered; " and breakfast. Extended at full length in her steamer - chair, her head gracefully buried in cushions, and her beautifully shod feet modestly

you, are you reckoning up the days? displayed beneath the frills and Shall you be pleased to see him ?" furbelows of her morning-gown, she "Pleased to see him ! I hate the would remain perdue the entire foreshe thought of him; I detest him !"

noon, an enormous white covered umbrella concealing her and the favored cavalier, who read and talked answered vehemently. 'Then why-why-?" I stam to her, in a low voice, until their mered. Why marry him! you would say ête-à-tête was interrupted by the

Because we are so poor, as I have told you fifty times; I have no choice. He has actually paid for my passage and outfit—think of that!" spread-ing out both hands, a favorite ges-ture." When I accented him I did No one on board the Hindostar believed the heresy, "that luncheon is an insult to your breakfast, and an injury to your dinner !" No, no ! "When I accepted him, I did They all eagerly responded to the loudly clanging bell by hurrying ture. not absolutely dislike him. I care for no one else, and no one else cared headlong down to the saloon, where a substantial cold reflection awaited for me. Now it is different: the very idea of Mr. Hogg drives me nearly frantic."

Mrs. Roper formed an exception 'And what will you do?" I into the rule. She still remained prone in her chair, slowly fanning quired, with my usual bluntness. "That is exactly the question I am asking myself night and day. I cannerself with a prodigious black fan and making observations in a faint, not return to England, for I have no subdued tone. A recherché little money; I cannot abscond, when I reach Madras, for the same excellent uncheon accompanied by asbottle of champagne, was, nevertheless, disreason. I am only certain of one thing, and that is, come what may, I of under the shelter of the umbrella ; and during the afternoon will not marry Mr. Hogg," replied Mrs. Roper would be sufficiently rehis fianceé, in a tone of stern deter vived to stroll along the deck, arm mination. in-arm with her aid-de-camp, and

'I would not, if I were you, if I exchange a few words en passan did not like him," remarked sage with the other passengers. But enely. after dinner was the time to se I heard Mrs. Jones telling a story her at her best. Arrayed in an exquisite demi-toilet, and surof some girl, who had been engaged on a short acquaintance, to a gentlerounded by a select circle, she was man, for years and years, and went out to India to marry him : but when the gayest of the gay, the liveliest of the lively—a *leetle* fast, perhaps, and he saw him, she found that she rather too fond of the adjectives really could not: and she sold all her 'beastly," "revolting," and "disgustwedding presents and outfit in Boming," as applied to people and things. bay, to pay her passage home in the next steamer." Nevertheless, it certainly seemed that the men found great entertain "I am sure she did right," I con ment in her society, and she appeared to afford them as much amusement cluded with great emphasis, and in a tone of the deepest approval. in one way as I did to her in an-History does not mention the kind of reception she met with at home We had dancing on deck most when she arrived back to her loving evenings. Going down the Red Sea relatives, sans husband, sans trous-seau, sans presents!" remarked Miss Gibbon sarcastically. "She received the weather was glorious - not a ripple on the water, and splendid moonlight nights. Mrs. Roper had a tepid welcome, believe me. no taste for the sublime, she prided No. no; I might work my passage herself on being commonplace and matter of fact. I myself heard her home as stewardess-I should not mind that; but to face my mother describe the moonlight track on the water as looking so very oily that it forcibly reminded her of melted and sisters, and uncles and aunts and cousins, who have all been chanting triumphant pæans in praise of my She "loathed the moon," she butter. excellent sense and magnificent prossaid ; all the same she found it very useful, as, to its beams alone, she tripped the deck on light fantastic ects-no, I could not do that ome along; there's the bell for tea, she exclaimed, jumping up, and thus toe. The piano was the band, and bringing the conversation to an dancing went on every evening for at least a week. I could not dance brupt conclusion. Miss Gibbon could not endure Mrs. a step (except an Irish jig), and I Roper, as I have already hinted. "Horrid old frump!" she would say. "She ought to be ashamed of was obliged to decline many press-ing invitations to take the floor, as I (but not daring) to follow their exsay. "She ought to be ashamed or herself. The way she goes on is pre-"Age!" I echoed. "Why, she is ample. I have not touched upon the mis Age !" I echoed. cellaneous horde of other passengers, uite young.' Forty, if an hour, probably fortyar too numerous to particularize. ive," returned Miss Gibbon, with un There was a strong civil element usual animation. half a dozen forlorn grass widows en route to rejoin their husbands; a "Oh, how can you say so?" I ex postulated indignantly, "She does not look much older than you do." "Don't you know that she is 'made judge, a general, a lord, bent on tiger-shooting; an M. P., boiling to write a pamphlet on the late famine; and several large clutches of young up,' you dear, little, innocent Paddy? Are you not aware that that is the ladies, bound for the East, under the reason she performs her toilet solus? She does not want to let us into its wings of very indiscreet and experienced chaperons. As a stray and friendless "chicken" I was permysteries, in case we might divulge the secrets of the prison-house Have you not remarked how she mitted to join one of the broods, and spent most of my time working and keeps the curtain of her berth drawn reading under the ægis of a Mrs. and her face quite in the shade, and Turner-Jones, a very kind, motherly lady-a faint, fashionable, traveled if you go near her, she always puts up her fan. What an unsophistical copy of Mrs. West.

THE CATHOLIC RECORD

My two cabin companions had had "a few works" previous to my arrival on board, and⁸were not on speaking terms; a state of affairs that was little creature it is!" she added, sur veying me with compassionate curi I had not observed this before, but exceedingly unpleasant for me, as they used me as a channel of comit struck me now as a remarkable

fact. "I firmly believe," continued my munication whether I would or not For instance, Mrs. Roper, would companion forcibly, "that ever night she takes off her hair and eye brows, and removes her complexion and all her back teeth ! What is in Neville, will you be so good that mysterious little black bag that she always takes to bed with her?

Tell me that !" authoritatively. I shook my head hopelessly, in ssion of miserable ignoran Mr. Price told me," pursued Miss

Gibbon, with still greater animus, "that he remembers her fifteen

years ago, when he first came out looking much the same as she does now-as notorious a flirt, and as vain and empty-headed as ever she could pe. I wish I could lay hands on her bottles of hair dye, and other various little artificial aids, and pitch them out of the cabin window. Then we should see her in her true colors," concluded Miss Gibbon viciously with dark hair and a tallow skin.

"Miss Gibbon is a beast!"-this was Mrs. Roper's opinion-" a great goggle-eyed creature, like a barmaid. way in which she is carrying on with Harvey Price is simply scandal ous; considering, too, that she is en-gaged to be married. Whoever the lance may be, I pity him from my heart"—some people said that Mrs. Roper did not possess that organ. "If she thinks that she is going to catch Harvey Price she is greatly nistaken. I'll put him on his guard this very day. Some one told me that her father was an auctioneer. If he was a scavenger, it would never surprise me. She is the regular stamp of an adventuress."

So much Mrs. Roper confided to Mrs. Jones on a certain sunny after noon, in my hearing. She still patronized me, and made me useful, nd gave me plenty of advice gratis ; and one day, when I was holding some wool for her, she became quite maternal in her solicitude, as wound off skein after skein, with

ieweled, taper fingers. "Of course, you will marry," she said, nodding her head confidently. "But take my advice, and have noth-ing to say to the military: they are pleasant, but poor ; a Bengal or Bom bay civilian, well up—if not already a member of council—is your man. And once married, you can flirt away with the redcoats as much as eve

you please." "Mrs. Roper!" I cried, aghast how can you say such things, even in joke? But it is of no consequence, for I never intend to marry. Nonever!"

Then what are you coming out for, my good girl ?" she asked, raised brows, and a highly incredulous expression of countenance.

To live with my aunt and uncle. "Oh! Well, your aunt and uncle won't have the pleasure of your so-ciety for long! You can tell them so, with my compliments. Of course you know that you are a very pretty

girl?" "I know nothing of the sort," I answered, coloring, "and I don't think you ought to turn me into ridicule-you are making fun of me." 'Come now, there is no use in putting on such an affectation of mod-

esty," gazing at me with an air of lazy amusement. "It won't go down "But I really mean what I say,

Mrs. Roper, I really do. I have been told that I was ugly as long as I can remember anything; as a little girl I was simply hideous."

THE MAESTRO'S STORY hole life were at stake. Signorina admires the outlook

'What do you mean ?"

led with her lot here among us. He

has set her to dream impossibl

When Matteo had gone I sat think

even so, it is not too late." And then three or four months

ater-it was a beautiful sight, the

coming when the mutual stress would burst forth into the old miracle of

sweetness color and light. I thrilled

Matteo-sitting together at evening

promises.

gain.

sight of them-Concetta and

Oh, yes, I thought of many reasons

nexplicable sensings of disasters

the chair that was in front of

Lady's statue gleamed in the candle

ight. There, on her knees, with nead bowed, she remained till the

people gone. A touch on my shoul

turned around. It was Matteo.

he asked huskily : "Have you heard the news ?"

What news ?" I demanded

"Carl Volpini has returned."

and shiver.

"No !'

within."

talking

light.

Well, it is not to be despised. Look sternly yonder across the valley where San Marco piles up its pink and "He has told her nothing but lies -lies ! He has filled her mind with roofs against the purpling hills. Such lights ! What charm ! thoughts of riches, position, fine clothes. He has made her dissatis-

But a thousand pardons. Signor-ina had aside his work and I had meant only to— So? Then I shall rest awhile till the great heat be over things. But now that he is away --perhaps----'' And he gazed off over and gone. Signorina finds it difficult, I sup-

pose, to command his mood always The past : it intrudes. Well, we are none of us masters of the heart in that respect. Our wistful eyes are forever turned toward the rueful

gateway. Cure ! There is no cure. Only this orning I received a letter from sunlight. I was glad for both their sakes. I felt certain a dawn was morning I received a letter from a famous singer, an artist, whose voice thrills thousands; who has riches, health, a world at his feet—yet, who, in his unhappiness asks the same question. In spite of the gifts that fortune has pressed upon him, my Matteo is pursued, tortured by mem-ory

No; there is no cure. There are only now and then, blessed gaps of forgetfulness. One of us finds an our's respite in this task ; another in that. Signorino, for instance, is vriting a-romance. Then he is in deed favored. He can retreat at will to an ideal world.

He thinks such work futile, thank less. I have a wise little book that I keep always near at hand. It was written by one of your own country men. Somewhere therein is the sen tence—"The worst miser is the learned man that will not write." And it is so. A thought is gained here ; a light there-who knows but that from a written page a principle a standard is plucked. What a re sponsibility-this power to enter the lives of men and women so intimate

ly so secretly ! But Signorino will forgive a garro lous old music master that chatters away such blessed hours. The mood, perhaps, has returned ?-Eh, Matteo's story ! But I have no skill at that sort of thing-Why, certainly, if the

Signorino wish it. then, suddenly they are upon us as One autumn day, eight or nine fearsome realities. I have only to close my eyes and years ago, up in the public square, we were holding some festival; I that fateful October morning is beforgot just what. Signorino knows fore me. We were at Mass. Matteo's comforting the broad shadow is that lies at afternoon on the west the church with wonderful music side where the inns and shops are Heaven seemed very near. Just ahead of me knelt Concetta. Toward Yes, it is always cool and pleasant there, while across the piazza our little church fairly bakes in the sunthe end of the service she became restless, kept turning and glancing

behind her. I was puzzled, for I saw in his eyes the look of some hunted light. I walked among the merry-makers listening to the laughter, the music, the songs. And I said to myself They are children to day ; they are Then I stood still. I saw a happy." Then I stood still. I saw a face. Oh, the beauty of it! In the girl's dark eyes slept the dreams and ightnings of the south. They glorious. Under the dusk of her oval cheeks were the ebb and flow of rich, warm blood-the covert red of our race. Her lips, with their pout and scorn and pleading, were elo-quent beyond words. She had the oice of a singer, smooth and soft and full of rich depths, incomparable tones. Her dark hair was massed gloriously about the clearest of brows. he was magnificent.

I was flung back twenty five years to one spring day when a woman's eyes—how blind we are when we so uch need to see ! I inquired who the girl might be

'That ? Oh, that would be Concetta the wood-carver's daughter : Steph-ano Briganti's child." At the same table sat Carlo Vol-

know.' pini a handsome fellow just returned from America ; so bold, so aggressive

"Her peace, her happiness, her I was amazed. He was so ver erious, so solemn. And I said to-to

fine

Well. I never care to dwell on the days that followed. They were full of foreboding. Something dark and cruel seemed working its evil way through their peace and beauty. Early one morning while I was still at breakfast Matteo, his face very pale, stood in my doorway. My leaped with dread. I thought of the light that I had seen in his eyes the day he let go his hold on my arm. I guessed a dozen horrible things. And I cried out; "Whet here you done !" ing over his words. And I said to myself : "Perhaps he is right. But

What have you done !" "Have you not heard ?" "Nothing," I answered.

hidden bud straining toward air and

great burden that was lifted from my heart. I made Matteo sit down and take some black coffee. And I said to him :

"If I could, Maestro, but I cannot." And the way he said it, Signorino !

he seemed to be himself again—out-wardly at least. But—Yes, Signorino says true. The world had indeed suffered a change. Dawn and dusk eemed different. Everything was

It was on the following Sunday when Matteo sang at High Mass that I realized what the affair had done for him. It was his voice, Signorino. t was unutterably sad. But it was very effective. And our church was still as midnight when his clear tones full of pleading, sorrow, tenderness rose heavenward through the silence. We were rapt out of intensity of it ! And she would smile

up at him. And he would be himself Concetta's flight, some Americans from the Western part of your country heard Matteo sing at Vespers. It but never of the true one. Tell me, was the beginning of the end. Toward the close of that summer he Signorino, these premonitions, these these dark hints that flash upon the eft us to complete his studies in the

He came down here to my garden the day he was leaving. We spoke of many things that we had in common; but it was only when he took my hand for the parting that he re-ferred to the unfortunate affair that was so much a part of his thoughts and life. Just before he turned away voice rising higher and higher, filled

now sitting and said : " My heart is all there, Maestro, all there ; nothing else matters. I loved

her." And he was gone. A fortnight later startling news flashed through the village. Carlos Volpini was dead; killed in a gamblcreature. Suddenly I saw her grip ing brawl at Naples ! All the sordid details were laid bare in the journals When Father Michael had given the blessing she arose and moved swiftly forward to where our

that brought us the story. Concetta? But wait, you shall hear. That week we were scourged with deadly heats. Even on these heights we gasped for breath. I sat here in the garden one night thinking what lights had been snuffed and the such weather meant to the swelter. people gone. A touch on my der caused me to start violently. I der caused me to start violently. His ing thousands on city streets. And I thanked God for His gift of the hills. face was pale. He beckoned me to Signorino knows how deep the silence is after nightfall. That evenfollow him. Outside in the piazza ing it was ominous. The countryside was parched, dying. Where stars should be was a luminous mist. An expectancy was abroad. As I sat thinking, a puff of air passed down through the wilted trees. Sud-"It is true. Gino Carlucci saw him denly I leapt to my feet. A ragged aise the curtain at the door and look stream of fire tore apart the sky in the west. I knew what that meant, Another angry flash and down through the darkness came the split-He looked at me queerly for a mod ment, and then demanded : ting of ash and the long brawl of

"But, Concetta ? How did she now." The source of his words flashed tered in my face before I had reached A few minutes later, the

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you see ; don't you understand ; it is a spell. He has haunted her thoughts for months. He is hunting her soul

"They are gone !" Well. Signorino can imagine the

"Son, think no more of them : they are not worthy this anguish.

on this very bench looking off over the valley. I knew that there shore Fo look in his eyes ! Well, four, five months afterwards for them somewhere in these sunsets the fairy land we all of us glimpse

but once, to lose forever. All the romance that had ever been written was beguiling them with hopes and different.

It was the following spring when we were much together that I no ticed a change in Matteo. Sometimes in the height of his apparent happi ness he would shiver as if a draught of cold air had suddenly swept over him. On these occasions he would turn to Concetta with inexpressibly sad eyes. She would call him by name. It would be a mere whisper but oh, the depth, the strength, the

ourselves. Then nine or ten months after

musical centers of the North. soul in the high tide of contentment -what is the truth of them ? For years they absent themselves and

he pointed to the bench where we are

and I can open up a splendid sphere of pastures new to my three pretty, penniless sisters. I shall have them out, according to age, and marry them off ! Now are you wiser ?" she asked, suddenly changing her tone, and looking at me with her head on one side, and an expression of amused interrogation. Miss Gibbon would half apologize

her extraordinary frankness by telling me that, as we were going to different parts of India, it did not signify two straws what she said to

I must open my mind to some one," she would say. "It used to be my sister Bessie; now that she is not within earshot, I repose my confi-dences in you, an utter stranger—and so much the better; you will soon forget the queer, mad girl you met on board the *Hindostan*, and, meanwhile, you serve me as an admirable safetyvalve !'

After a time she ceased to be so expansive; her confidences were no longer mine. The new safety-valve was a very good-looking young man -a Bengal civilian, returning from furlough. Together they paced the deck together they danced, and played chess, and occupied secluded corners in our cabin and at mealtimes did I see anything of Miss Florence Gibbon.

She was certainly a young woman of action : for after a short time she complained of the draft at our table in the Red Sea !) and moved away to the one at which her Bengal civilian took his meals.

The other lady who shared my was a Mrs. Fortescue-Roper, a tall, slight individual, with a profusion of fair, almost orange-colored, hair ; her eyes were pale and her feature insignificant, but somehow her whole tout ensemble was most stylish and I was not surprised to hear striking. that Anglo-Indian ladies were con sidered lazy after I became acquainted with her. From the first she treated me with an affectionate familiarity that there was no resisting. She was an experienced woman of world, and I was a raw, unsophisticated, country girl, and as wax in her hands. She took a prodig"Very possibly," returned my com-panion coolly; "but now that you are a big girl, you are the very re-His dark eyes pierced one through and through. Opposite the girl sat verse! You are uncommonly pretty!" "I was always told that I was plain !" I murmured, still clinging to "I'm sure you must old traditions. e making fun of me."

"Who told you that you were plain?" she asked, sitting erect, and looking greatly entertained. ' I answered forcibly grandfather, Deb, and dozens of

"How long was this ago !" "Oh, four or five years ago!"

"And did no one ever say anything else ?" she asked, dubiously

Yes; the servants and beggars used to call me a 'lovely girl;' but that is a mere figure of speech in Ireland; and Rody told me last summer that I was not so bad as he expected and might pass in a crowd, if got a good shove.'

Your friend Rody evidently understands the art of paying grace ful compliments! I can scarcely be lieve that you entertain so low an opinion of your charms." Leaning forward, and looking into my face with calm, critical scrutiny, she said Your eyes alone are a fortune to

you, putting your dear little mouth and nose out of the question. You are a case of the ugly duckling, my I have no doubt that once you dear. were a detestable little duckling, but now you are a magnificent young

swan. Probably your worthy and uncle would say that 1 I was poisoning our mind, if they heard me; but I think that a girl who is pretty and does not know it (or pre tends she does not) is the eighth wonder of the world. Hold up your head-you will be the belle of Mulkapore.

TO BE CONTINUED

says a

espect time.

Matteo, my favorite pupil-timid, thoughtful. Carlo stared boldly at the girl. Matteo looked at her only at long intervals. Yet, once, when their glances met, I saw him blush. And I knew the truth. Yes, indeed, Signorino, she was worth his admiration. I could easily understand how she might stir even in his thoughtful soul a tremendous passion ; how she might sweep by storm

his simple heart. While I stood looking at the girl, 1 heard Matteo ask her to sing. But Carlo, quickly leaning across the She looked table, whispered to her. at him a moment, then at Matteo and tossing her head declared : "No-1 will sing."

Carlo laughed, shook his head and called to the musicians. Some mo-ments later in a circling cloud, with youth and loveliness shining about main road I felt his fingers grip my arm with great force. I heard his Concetta held us spell-bound with the grace and beauty of her etta and Carl Volpini.

dancing. I looked at Matteo. His eyes were troubled. Perhaps he had a present-ment. I was very much puzzled. And I fell to wondering what the outcome would be-Concetta with such beauty; Carlo bold, daring masterful; Matteo naturally timid yet with a great passion tugging at his heart. I saw clearly how these three lives were on the brink of some aunt entanglement.

One morning a week later I was standing over there under the plum trees, when Matteo came running down the path calling out : 'Have you heard the news ?'

I looked at him and shook my head. "Carlos has gone ; he is off again to America !"

"No !" I exclaimed. "It is true," he replied ; and after

a pause—"it is a great blessing." I, too, smiled, Signorino—it was so frank, so simple. And I said : "So you have the field to yourself The great rule of moral conduct wise man, is, next to God, to

He did not smile. He looked at There's romance enough at home without going half a mile for it; only people never think of it. answered :

upon me in an instant. 'Are you certain that it was Carlo?" winds and the floods of weeks burst I asked. upon us.

'Well," said I, "and what of that ?

And Matteo said that Gino had I sat for almost an hour listening to the trumpetings and onslaughts of the storm when I thought I heard a sworn it. Just then Concetta came down the steps of the church. She knock. It seemed incredible that one should be abroad in such stress. paused a second, came forward, and said wearily : "I am very tired, take

But at the sound of the second knock I jumped to my feet and, drawing the And together they went me home." down the road. I have never heard what pass bar, let the door swing back a few between them that morning; but from that day onward Matteo seemed inches. For a second the whole val-ley stood revealed to me and with it woman's face. I thought it a trick to rest under a strange spell of abstraction. Some burden was on his of the imagination ; but at the touch of wet fingers on mine and at the sound of a human voice in the darksoul. Once or twice I was tempted to speak to him of the things that were in my mind, but I could not. The next afternoon I met Matteo in the square. We sauntered along

Matteo turned to me with :

He was at me like a tiger.

what can I do ?'

oves him."

him !

ness, I flung open the door to drag her in out of the wild havoc of the night.—Yes, Signorino! it was Con-cetta. The light dazed her. She staggered toward a chair, clutched at of this thing and that-his studies, his music, his ambitions ; but its back, and, looking at me out of not one word of what I was sure was uppermost in both our minds. Just

her great dark eyes, demanded : "Matteo, where is Matteo?" where the path turns aside from the "Matteo?" I repeated.

She gave me one look : such a ook

suppressed cry. There coming up 'What do you mean ?" she asked the hill road, hand in hand were Conhoarsely. "Why," said I, "Matteo has left

I could feel the gathering strain of Matteo's muscles. It seemed an

us ; he is not here." It was thoughtless. I should have eternity till the two passed us. Carlo with his fine clothes and worldly air

known better. "Not here—," she stammered, "Matsmiled and bowed ; a mocking smile. Concetta like one in a dream did not teo gone !'

look at us. Suddenly Matteo let go his grip. A hard light flashed in his eyes. I laid hold of him forcibly. No, Signorino, neither do I blame She stared straight ahead of her, swayed and then drooped at my feet, She looked about her as she came to, She booked about her as she came to, shivered, and began to sob in a piti-ful manner. And I said to myself, "when grief has spent itself, I will get the whole truth. But even as him. My own cheeks were hot with anger3 and disgust. When the girl and Carlo had gone their way the thought shaped itself in my mind, she leaped to her feet, screamed, just 'Tell me, Maestro, what shall I do: once, a wild, hopeless cry that made But what could I say ! I could think my heart stand still. And before I had recovered, she had flung open the of only one thing and I blurted out door and rushed headlong into the "My son, think no more of her ; she dark.

I ran down the pathway calling her name. But there was no response. There was nothing to see except the "She hates him, I tell you, hates heavy masses of the hills, the gray I looked at him sharply, thinking blur of the valley, and overhead the that perhaps the strain had abused his reason. He divined my thoughts and said : "Not that, not that ! Don't misty gleam of a star or two among the storm sheds. The rain had ceased.

now.

me very steadily for a moment, and