

The Wings of the Morning

By LOUIS TRACY

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(Continued.)

But perhaps I am not destined to be loved by you. Therefore, in the event of my death before you leave the island, I wish to give you instructions how to find in the cave a gold mine of great value which I hidden in the rock containing the cave. You remember the sign on the piece of tin which I denoted the utmost depth of the excavation, and the 1 signifies that one foot below the surface, on reaching the face of the rock, there is a rich vein of gold. The hollow of the other side of the cliff became filled with anhydride gas, and I stopped the operations of the Chinese, who are known of the existence of the mine. This is all the information the experts employed by Sir Arthur Deane will need. The facts are, we will assume that I am alive, we will assume, as copartners in the mine. If I am dead, I wish one-third share to be given to my uncle, William Anstruther, Crosswhite Manor, Northallerton, Yorkshire, as recompense for his kindness in making me an heir to the mine. The remainder is to be yours absolutely.

ROBERT ANSTRUTHER.

He read this remarkable document twice through to make sure that it expressed his sentiments. He even smiled sarcastically at the endorsement of the uncle who disinherited him. Then, satisfied with the perusal, he tore out the two leaves covered by the letter and began to devise a means of protecting it securely while in Iris' possession.

At that moment he looked up and saw her coming toward him across the beach, brightly flushed after her bath, walking like a nymph clothed in tattered garments. Perceiving that he was watching her, she waved her hand and instinctively quickened her pace. Even now, when they were thrown together by the exigencies of each hour, she disliked to be long separated from him.

Instantly the scales fell from his mental vision. What Distrust Iris! Imagine for one second that riches of poverty, good fortune or ill, would affect that loyal heart when its virgin glow was filled with the love that once in her life comes to every true woman! Perish the thought!

Laughing at his fantastic folly, Jenks tore the letter into little pieces. It might have been wiser to throw the sheets into the embers of the fire close at hand, but for the moment he was overpowered by the great awakening that had come to him.

"Good gracious! Don't gaze at me in that fashion. I don't look like a ghost, do I?" cried Iris, when near enough to note his rapt expression.

"You would not object if I called you a vision?" he inquired quietly, averting his eyes lest they should speak more plainly than his tongue.

"Not if you meant it nicely. But I fear that 'specter' would be a more appropriate word. Just look at my best gown!"

Iris looked puzzled. "Is that your way of telling me that his feathers would make me a fine bird?" she asked.

"No. I intend my words to be understood in their ordinary sense. You are very, very rich, Miss Deane, an extremely wealthy young person."

"Of course you know you are talking nonsense. Why, only the other day my father said—"

"Excuse me. What is the average price of a walking dress from a leading Paris house?"

"Thirty pounds."

"And an evening dress?"

"Oh, anything from fifty upward."

He picked up a few pieces of quartz from the canvas sheet.

"Here is your walking dress," he said, handing her a lump weighing about a pound. "With the balance in the bag of gold, you can stagger the best dressed woman you meet at your first dinner in England."

"Do you mean by pelting her?" she inquired mischievously.

"Far worse. By wearing a more expensive costume."

His manner was so earnest that he compelled seriousness. Iris took the proffered specimen and looked at it.

"From the cave, I suppose?" she said, almost as if by chance.

"That is not antimony. It is gold. By chance I have hit upon an extremely rich lode of gold. At the most, only a computation of its worth amounts to thousands of pounds. You and I are quite wealthy people, Miss Deane."

Iris opened her blue eyes very wide at this intelligence. It took her breath away. But her first words betokened her innate sense of fair dealing.

"You and I? Wealthy?" she gasped. "I am not rich for your sake, but tell me, pray, Mr. Jenks, what have I got to do with it?"

"You!" he repeated. "Are we not partners in this island? By squatter's right if by no better title we own land, minerals, wood, game and even such things as ancient lights and fishing privileges."

"I don't see that at all. You find a gold mine and coolly tell me that I am a half owner of it because you dragged me out of the sea, fed me, housed me, saved my life from pirates and generally acted like a devoted nursemaid in charge of a baby. Really, Mr. Jenks, I am sorry for you."

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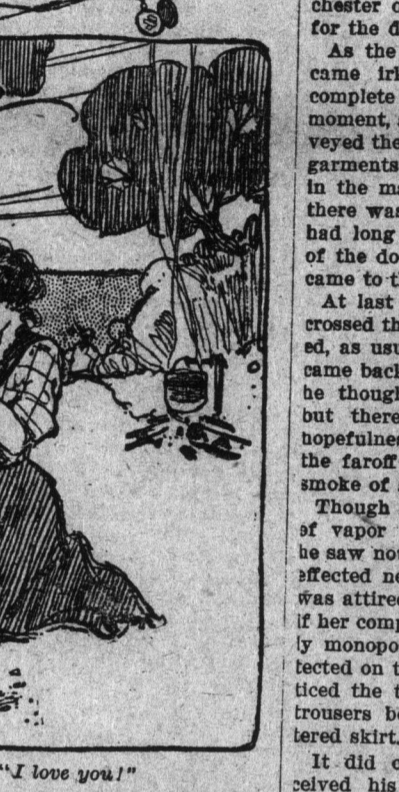
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"I love you."

plant. This sort of ore requires a crushing mill, a smelting furnace, perhaps big tanks filled with cyanide of potassium.

"And of course, although you can do wonders, you cannot provide all those things, can you?"

Jenks deemed this query to be unanswerable.

They were busy again until night fell. Sitting down for a little while before retiring to rest, they discussed for the hundredth time the probabilities of speedy success. This led them to the topic of available supplies, and the sailor told Iris the dispositions he had made.

CHAPTER X.

NIGHT after night the Pinedes swung higher in the firmament. Day after day the sailor perfected his defenses and anxiously scanned the ocean for sign of friendly smoke or hostile flag. The spirits were not even in the least depressed. The one who had been given to him were not for the lucky bullet which removed two fingers and part of a third from the right hand of Dyak chief. Not even a healthy savage can afford to treat such a wound lightly, and ten days elapsed before the maimed robber was able to move the injured limb without a curse.

Meanwhile each night Jenks slept less soundly. Each day his face became more careworn. He began to realize why the island had not been visited already by the vessel which would certainly be deputed to search for them. She was examining the great coast line of China and Siam.

It was his habit to mark the progress of time on the rudely made sundial, which sufficiently served their requirements as a clock. Iris happened to watch him thinning the forty-fourth notch on the edge of the horizontal block of wood.

"Have we really been forty-four days here?" she inquired after counting the marks with growing astonishment.

"I believe the reckoning is accurate," he said. "The Sirdar was lost on the 15th of March, and I make this the 1st of May."

"It seems to be a tremendous time; indeed, in some respects, it figures in my mind like many years. That is when I am thinking. Otherwise, when busy, the days fly like hours."

"It must be convenient to have such an elastic scale."

"Most useful. I strive to apply the quick rate when you are grumpy."

Iris placed her arms akimbo, planted her feet widely apart and surveyed Jenks with an expression that might almost be termed impudent. They were great friends, these two, now.

When the urgent necessity for continuous labor no longer spurred them to exertion during every moment of daylight, they tackled the box of books and read, not volumes which appealed to them in common, but quaint tomes in the use of which Jenks was tutor and Iris the scholar.

As a variant Jenks introduced a study of Hindustani. His method was to write a short sentence and explain in detail its component parts. She knitted her brows in the effort to master the ridiculous complexities of a language which, instead of simply saying "Take" or "Bring," compels one to say "Take-go" and "Take-come."

One problem defied solution—that of providing rations for Iris. The united skill of the sailor and herself would not induce unraveled cordage to supply the need of thread. It was either too weak or too knotty, and meanwhile the girl's clothes were falling to pieces. Jenks tried the fibers of trees, the sinews of birds—every possible expedient he could hit upon—and perhaps after experiments covering some weeks he might have succeeded. But modern dress stuffs, weakened by aniline dyes and stiffened with Chinese clay, permit of no such exhaustive research. It must be remembered that the lady passengers on board the Sirdar were dressed according to the hard usage given by Iris to her scanty stock, was never contemplated by the Manchester or Bradford looms responsible for the durability of the material.

As the days passed the position became irksome. It even threatened complete collapse. At a certain moment, and the two were sitting, they surveyed the large number of merely made garments in their possession. Of course in the matter of coats and waistcoats there was no difficulty whatever. Iris had long been wearing those portions of the wardrobe. But when it came to the rest...

At last one memorable morning she crossed the Rubicon. Jenks had climbed, as usual, to the Summit rock. He came back with the exciting news that he thought—he could not be certain, but he was confident—the island was not monopolized by the bluish haze detected on the horizon he must have noticed the turned up ends of a pair of trousers beneath the hem of her tattered skirt.

It did occur to him that Iris resented his momentous announcement with an odd air of haughtiness, and it was passing strange she did not offer to accompany him when, after bolting his breakfast, he returned to the observatory.

He came back in an hour, and the lines on his face were deeper than before.

"A false alarm," he said curtly in response to her questioning look. "I only wish to get away so that one might get some bright hours for herself and the man who had so devoted himself to her. She refused to believe that Robert Anstruther, strong of arm and clear of brain, a knight of the Round Table in all that was noble and chivalric, would permit his name to bear an unwarrantable stigma when—and she blushed like a June rose—he came to tell her that which he had written. The sailor returned hastily, with the manner of one hurrying to perform a neglected task. Without any explanation to Iris he climbed several times to the ledge, carrying armloads of grass roots, which he had carved and viewed. Then he entered the cave, although he was furnished only with the dim light that penetrated through

the recollection of the Lee-Metford is so slight that any woman can manipulate the weapon with effect, provided she is not called upon to fire from a standing position, in which case the weight is liable to cause bad aiming. Though it came rather late in the day, Jenks caught at the idea. He accustomed her in the first instance to the use of blank cartridges. Then when fairly proficient in holding and sighting—a child can learn how to reload the clip and eject each empty shell—the first rounds of service ammunition. The target was a white circle on a rock at eighty yards, and those of the ten shots that missed the absolute mark have made an enemy at the same distance extremely uncomfortable.

"Iris looked at him steadily.

"No, no! It was the truth. You are seeking now to busy me up with false hopes. It is 1,600 miles from Hongkong to Singapore, and half as much from Siam to Borneo. The Sirdar might have been driven anywhere in the typhoon. Didn't you say so, Mr. Jenks?"

She blazed out in sudden wrath, and he understood that she would not be denied the full extent of his secret fear. He bowed reverently before her, a mortal plying homage to an angry goddess.

Then Iris, for the first time in many days, wept bitterly, and Jenks, blind to the true cause of her emotion, picked up a rifle to which, in spare moments, he had affixed a curious device, and walked slowly across Prospect park toward the half obliterated road leading to the valley of death.

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better. My horse beat his for a goda Hurdle handicap. Poor tan, I wonder where he is now!

"Colonel Costobell fell ill, I—I—the command of the regiment devolved upon me, our only major being absent in the interior. The colonel's wife, unhappily, chose that moment to flirt as people say, with Lord Ventnor. Not having learned the advisability of minding my own business, I remonstrated with her, thus making her my deadly enemy. Lord Ventnor contrived an official mission to a neighboring town and detailed me for the military charge. I sent a junior officer, then Mrs. Costobell and he deliberately concocted a plot to ruin me, he for the sake of his old mistress—you remember that I had also crossed his path in Egypt—she because she feared I would speak to her husband. On pretense of seeking my advice she inveigled me at night into a deserted corner of the club grounds at Hongkong. Lord Ventnor appeared, and as the upshot of their vile statements, which created an immediate uproar, I—well, Miss Deane, I nearly killed him."

Iris vividly recalled the anguish he betrayed when this topic was inadvertently broached one day early in their acquaintance. Now he was reciting his painful history with the air of a man far more concerned to be scrupulously accurate than aroused in his deepest passions by the memory of past wrongs. What had happened in the interim to blunt these hygeone sufferings? Iris clasped her locket. She thought she knew.

"The remainder may be told in a sentence," she said. "Of what avail were my friend's statements against the definite proofs adduced by Lord Ventnor and his unfortunate ally? Even her husband believed her and became my bitter foe. Poor woman! I have it in my heart to pity her. Well, that is all. I am here!"

"Can a man be ruined so easily?" murmured the girl, her exquisite tact leading her to avoid any direct expression of sympathy.

"It seems so. But I have had my reward. If ever I meet Mrs. Costobell again I will thank her for a great service."

Iris suddenly became confused. Her brow and neck tingled with a quick access of color.

"Why do you say that?" she asked. And Jenks, who was rising, either did not hear or pretended not to hear the tremor in her tone.

ST. ANDREW'S PROPERTY.
ST. ANDREW'S N. B., July 26.—The Hatheway property on King street, sold at auction today subject to mortgage and interest for seven hundred and twenty dollars, was knocked down to Doctor Chandler of Moncton at \$90.

Monkey Brand Soap cleans Kitchen utensils, steel, iron and tinware, knives and forks, and all kinds of cutlery.

To prove to you that Dr. Chase's Ointment is a certain remedy for each and every form of Piles, we have prepared a pamphlet containing the full particulars of the ointment. It is available in the daily press and ask your neighbors what they think of it. You can use it and get your money back if not cured in a box at once.

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