

Before she can make any acknowledgment, or returns as he hopes, the confidence, the captain suddenly approaches, and reads the pasteboard over her shoulder.

"Well, my little lady," he says, in his jovial voice, "how goes the *mal de mer*? None yet? That's a good girl. Mr. Dexter, good afternoon to you, sir. I saw you on the dock a while ago, but hadn't time to speak. My little friend, Mademoiselle Reine, Mr. Dexter, going to New York in my care. If you can help to amuse her on the passage I shall take it as a personal favour. How is Mademoiselle Marie? Not sick, surely? Oh! I'm sorry to hear that. I'll call upon her presently when I get time."

The captain bustled away.

Mademoiselle's dark eyes regard her companion.

"You know the captain?" she inquires.

"Oh, very well. Crossed with him when I came over—an out and out good fellow, one's *beau idéal* of a jolly sailor. It is more than a year since we met, but he seems to have a good memory for faces. I didn't suppose he would remember me."

"You have been travelling a whole year?" she asks. "All Americans travel do they not? They all go to Paris once at least in their life, I am told."

"Or if not in their life, they go, if they are good, when they die," responded young Dexter, laughing. "I think I have gone over the beaten track of travel pretty well in my year, although a man could spend half a dozen years very comfortably knocking about Europe, and not exhaust the sights. But with the year my leave of absence expires, and I am obliged to return."

"Ah! monsieur is in the army?"

"Not at all. Leave from the powers at home I mean. My uncle—I am his property, made over to him absolutely—orders me about at will. 'Take a run over to Europe, my boy,' he says to me; 'only don't make it over a year.' So I packed my valise and came, and now the year is up, and I am returning."

He tells this with an off-hand cheeriness that is a part of his character; and, is by the way, what a good gift a frank, cheery voice is. He is prepared to give mademoiselle his whole biography

since he first went into roundabouts if she cares to listen, but she does not seem to care. She smiles, and is silent for awhile. Then she asks, suddenly—

"Monsieur, have you seen Rouen?"

"The Manchester of France, as they call it—place with the grand cathedral, and Louis de Breze's wonderful statue, and Diane de Poitiers kneeling on the tomb, and where Joan of Arc made a noise in the world, and Corneille and Fontenelle were born, and where there is Notre Dame de Bon Secours, beautiful as a vision," he says, with voluble disconnectedness. "Oh, yes, mademoiselle, I have seen Rouen."

Her face lights, her eyes shine, her lips part eagerly. She is about to speak. Then suddenly some thought checks the words upon her lips, the light fades out of her face, and she leans over and looks silently at the dark, flowing water.

"You know Rouen, mademoiselle?" Dexter asserts, his folded arms on the bulwarks, his eyes on her face.

"I know it well, monsieur, better than well. I was born in Rouen."

She stops abruptly, recollecting, perhaps, that this cheery, boyish, bright young fellow is a total stranger. Indeed most people are apt to forget that fact after ten minutes of Mr. Dexter's society. He sees a shadow fall on her face, he hears a faint sigh, or fancies he does; but the brown eyes do not lift from the white-capped, angry-looking little waves.

"Ah, awfully jolly place to be born in, I should say," is what Mr. Dexter remarks sympathetically; "so old and historical, and all that. Now, I was born in Boston, and anything more unromantic than Boston the mind of man has never conceived."

"But gentlemen yet unborn will proudly point it out as the birthplace of Frank Dexter. My dear boy, turn round and let me see if those dulcet tones really belong to you."

The voice that says this is a woman's, and Mr. Dexter and Mademoiselle Reine, turning round simultaneously, see the speaker. They see a lady whose best friend cannot call her young, whose worst enemy dare not stigmatize her as old. A lady who has rounded the rubicon—thirty-five—and gone a stop or two down hill towards forty,