

boats be able to rescue her before she again sank? This was the question that was asked on all hands, but none dared to hazard an answer.

The man was still far in advance of either of the skiffs, but he was still some distance from the drowning woman. It was evident that he was exerting himself to the utmost, but he gained but little upon the form in advance.

The steamer was now in the centre of the channel, and the excitement on board had reached the highest pitch. The vessel could easily have overtaken either of the bodies struggling for life in the water, but such action would, perhaps, lessen their chance of escape, the heavy swell being liable to engulf them. Therefore it was deemed advisable to allow the Quebec to float down with the current.

And now the man appeared to be gaining upon the woman. Little by little he is lessening the gap that divides them. Nearer and nearer—but a hundred feet divide them now. The herculean efforts he is making must surely prove successful.

All eyes are turned upon him. Perfect stillness reigns upon the steamer. Every emotion is centred upon the forms in the water below.

Nearer and nearer—but fifty feet or so now separate them—and a few more powerful strokes must accomplish the difficult task the brave man has undertaken.

Nearer and still nearer—he can almost grasp her. But two more strokes! He paddles with one hand, holds out the other to clutch her—but she sinks from view—and he is left on the surface of the water alone.

But for a moment he remains there—then, apparently gathering together all his remaining strength for a last grand effort, he dives rapidly after the sunken woman, and the waves close over both of them.

A thrill of horror passes through the multitude who throng the deck of the steamer, and all eyes are eagerly scanning the waters to catch the first glimpse of either of the sunken persons should they rise to the surface.

But another object also attracts attention at this moment.

The boat, which left the steamer almost immediately after the man had thrown himself overboard, now veers into view, just above the spot where the swimmer was last seen. The oarsmen rest on their oars for a moment, eagerly scanning the water.

A few moments thus, when there is a cry, issuing simultaneously from many throats:

"There he is! There he is!"

And glancing beyond the rowboat, some twenty yards in advance, the head of a man is seen to rise slowly to the surface of the water. He brings something with him, too. This is plainly seen, as he makes a frantic effort to raise above the water a burden that weighs heavily upon one arm.

Will he succeed? A few moments and the question is answered, as another head is seen to emerge from the water, held firmly up by the brave man who has risked his life in the attempt to save a fellow-creature from death.

And now the row boat is rapidly nearing the exhausted man, while cheer upon cheer is sent up by the spectators on board the Quebec.

The rescuer and the rescued are tenderly lifted into the row boat, which is then headed for the steamer, but a few feet away, while another cry is sent across the broad waters of the St. Lawrence:

"Saved!"

But as the lifeless forms are gently handled from the small to the larger vessel, it looks very much as though the vital spark had fled from the pallid faces of the two, who were laid side by side upon deck.

The exertion had been too great for the man, and he had no sooner been lifted into the boat than he fainted away.

Kind and willing hands were in readiness, however, to look after their comfort. But first of all a doctor, hustled through the throng of spectators, carefully examined, first one and then the other, then said:

"Let them both be taken to different state-rooms. The man has only fainted from exhaus-

tion; the woman's case is more serious. I will first attend to her, and, if it is possible, resuscitate her, and then look after the man."

II.

His orders were promptly obeyed, and soon both were placed on comfortable beds, and, while the doctor was engaged in endeavouring to restore life to the well-nigh drowned woman, other willing hands were trying to restore to consciousness the man who had risked his life in her behalf.

The latter had only swooned from sheer exhaustion, and soon he was fully restored, but it took some moments before memory returned in all its fullness. Then he immediately asked, abruptly:

"Did I save her?"

"Yes, you saved the woman from drowning, but I do not know whether the doctor has succeeded in restoring her to consciousness," answered one of the attendants.

"Who is she?" queried the rescuer.

"That is what we all want to find out. We thought you, perhaps, would be able to enlighten us on the subject."

"No," he answered, "I do not think I ever saw her before; but, of course, of that I cannot be certain, as I have not yet seen her face."

"But how came you to jump into the river after her?"

"I had just stepped on board the boat, when I saw the woman jump on the rail of the vessel and throw herself into the water. Without a moment's thought I rushed forward and threw myself after her. I swam as I never swam before, my only hope that I might be able to reach the drowning woman before she sank for the last time. When I saw her sink I was well-nigh exhausted, but, determined to make a last attempt, I exerted myself to the utmost and dived after her. After what seemed a very long time to me, I managed to grasp the lifeless burden, but it was so heavy that I almost despaired of bringing it to the surface. However, I at last succeeded, but my strength was almost gone, and I hailed with joy the sight of the advancing boat. With my last remaining strength I succeeded in helping my burden into the skiff, and then was assisted in myself, after which I knew no more till a few minutes ago."

As he finished speaking the doctor entered the room, and advancing to the noble man's bedside said:

"Well, my friend, your efforts have proved successful. The woman for whom you risked your life has recovered consciousness, but she maintains an almost sullen silence as to the cause of her rash act. She has been asking after you, and says she would like to see you as soon as you are able to visit her in her cabin—not to thank you, she says, for saving her life, but simply that she may see the man who would so imperil his existence for the sake of one he has never seen before."

The man jumped up from his reclining position, and announced that he would accompany the Doctor as soon as he could make himself presentable. In reply to queries from the doctor, he said:

"I may as well give you my name, but I do not want you to mention it till after I see this woman. Why, I cannot exactly explain. It may be a whim on my part, but a something—an irresistible feeling—impels me to make this request."

The Doctor having promised, the man continued:

"My name is Arthur Arbuckle. I have been travelling round the world for the past two years, partly for pleasure and partly for profit, and I took the Quebec boat this evening with the intention of proceeding to England by the Parisian, which leaves Quebec to-morrow morning. This, I think, is all that is necessary for me to say in explanation of my presence on board the Quebec this evening."

While saying this Mr. Arbuckle had been unpacking a valise and taking such articles therefrom as he needed to replace those that had been

The Doctor thanked him for his confidence, and after Mr. Arbuckle's toilet had been completed the Doctor led the way to the rescued woman's cabin.

Knocking at the door, and receiving an answer to come in, the Doctor advanced into the room, motioning Arbuckle to wait.

"Well, madame, and how do you feel now? None the worse of your rather cold bath, I hope," and the Doctor advanced to the bedside and took the hand of the woman as it lay hanging outside her berth.

"No, none the worse, certainly; but none the better, I assure you."

The tones were sharp—hard, even—but the man in waiting outside the door heard them—heard them and knew them—knew the voice that uttered them—a voice that he had not heard for over two years—a voice that he had not expected to hear again.

He shook all over as with a palsy, made a start forward as if to enter the room, then drew back and listened intently for the next words. He had not long to wait, for the same sharp voice queried:

"And have you brought him—my rescuer?" with a bitterness upon the last word that touched the listener to the heart. He could stand the emotion under which he laboured no longer, but entering the cabin, before the Doctor had time to answer, he said:

"Yes, I am here, Nellie!"

The girl—for she was little more than a girl in appearance—started up from her recumbent attitude, gazed for a moment at the figure standing by the open door, then cried, wildly:

"You, Arthur, you! You my rescuer!" Then fell back fainting upon the bed.

The Doctor rapidly procured restoratives, and after some little time had the satisfaction of seeing the girl return to consciousness.

While this was going on the Doctor, from time to time, gazed at Arbuckle, evidently expecting some explanation from him; but the latter had sunk down on a chair by the side of the berth, and gazed with a fixed stare on the face of the beautiful girl lying so white and deathlike before him. Then he took her hand and gazed with amazement at a ring upon the engagement finger—a ring he had seen before. Suddenly shifting his position, he bent over her, whispered a name in her ear, and pressed a kiss upon her forehead.

Returning consciousness on the part of the girl caused him to release her hand, step back a trifle, and stand in the shadow, where he could gaze upon her without being seen.

"Arthur," the voice murmured—not the same harsh voice that he had heard before, but a voice trembling with infinite tenderness. "Arthur! It was his voice—it was his face—but it has gone—it was only a dream," the words dying away with a wail.

"No, Nellie, it was not a dream!" said Arthur, stepping forward; "Arthur is here."

She glanced up at his face, shuddered, then murmured:

"Arthur, forgive!"

He remained motionless, gazing upon that earnest, supplicating face, while she continued:

"Arthur, forgive! See, I wear your ring still! See what I have suffered," holding up her finger, upon which the ring slipped up and down.

"And have I not suffered, too?" he replied, in low, thrilling tones. "You are certainly much thinner than when I saw you last, but you have retained your beauty, and, no doubt, your powers of fascination—that fatal power that lured me on to my destruction. But I. Look! See your work!" drawing his fingers through his iron-grey locks. "Look at me—a young man of twenty-eight, bearing the impress of age! Have I not suffered?" and he buried his face in his hands, as though he would hide from his sight the fatal beauty that had wrought him such havoc.

The Doctor had, meanwhile, left the cabin, closing the door after him, and the two were alone together. After a few moments of silence, the girl again spoke:

"Arthur," she said, and the tones were imperious now, brooking no denial, "come here. Sit down by me that I may make an explanation, or, rather, a confession. But, first, answer me a question. Did you know for whom you risked your life?"