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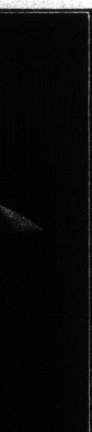
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able resorts further along the coast. "The natives," as they called themselves, were self-contained and content with their superior knowledge, and the summer visitors were as yet simple in their tastes, as they had need to be in that primal community, where the ocean was regarded by hotel keepers as supplanting lesser bath-tubs.

The place where we landed from the dusty and somewhat rickety stage, in the shank of a placid summer afternoon, was not the fort-like one hotel, frowning on the Point, but Mrs. Dow's gray cottage, amid a cluster of big apple-trees, where for his own reasons, Doctor John had chosen to ensconce himself. He said it was because he liked the portrait of Captain Dow, a wonderful crayon which hung in the little parlor. Here Mrs. Dow, a determined woman of middle age, aquiline nose and temper, ample figure and firm voice, dispensed a well-ordered and measured hospitality. For Mrs. Dow measured everything; through her gold spectacles set firmly on her high nose, a pair of keen eyes measured the world with infallible accuracy.

Though my friend declared that he selected this place to get away from silly women and finish his book, I quickly found out why he had really chosen this quiet corner of Rock Ledge, and avoided the hotel with its commanding position and long piazzas where, through the hot mornings, the summer boarders travelled back and forth in their yellow rockers

them were working like beavers in the sand, digging trenches; building forts, or running up and down, toiling almost as much at their amusements as if they had been grown people, while their nurses and governesses gossiped or screamed after them like so many gulls.

But apart from the ruddy children sat a little sickly-looking girl, in all the panoply of stiff white muslin and lace, with her nurse by her side. As we came on her we saw her nurse turn and shake her up as a child shakes a limp doll to make her sit up straight. And for a few seconds the doll sat up. But the little weak back would bend, and the child sank down again with a look of utter weariness and despair which struck even me. Doctor John gave a deep growl like a huge mastiff, out of which I got something about "the fools who were allowed to live." And the next moment he was in front of the nurse, bending over the child and talking to her soothingly, asking her about her mamma, and her dolls, the puppy he had given her, and many other things besides. The governess appeared to be a trifle suspicious at first of this new old friend, but the Doctor quickly disposed of her. He announced that he was the child's doctor and had come down to see her. This was the fact. Having learned that Mrs. Durer had taken the child down to the seaside as he had ordered, but had not remained with her, he had run down to see her himself. In a few minutes he had the



and "cultivated their minds" or "roasted" their acquaintances; and where, it was said, ladies of literary tendency, hung placards on their chairs, reading: "Please do not speak to me."

The only other boarder in Mrs. Dow's cottage was a little high-shouldered girl with a pinched face, glorified by a pair of wide and startlingly blue eyes that gazed at everything with singular intensity. She was a patient of the Doctor's and had come there by his orders. No one was with her except her governess, a spare and angular woman of middle age, with kind eyes and a minor note in her voice, who was conscientious to a degree and appeared to have the "fear of Madame" always before her eyes. She had not been with her little charge long, having, as appeared, been engaged by Madame just before the child was sent to the country for her health by the direction of "a big doctor in town." This I learned from Mrs. Dow in the first conversation I had with that well-informed person.

The governess was almost as lonely as the little girl. This I learned from herself in the first conversation I had with her. We had come on her, the Doctor and I, the morning after our arrival, as we strolled, at his suggestion, down by the curving bit of beach, where the tide was licking the yellow sand with a placid motion of a tigress licking her flanks.

It was, however, as I quickly saw, not the sea that my friend came to watch, but the children. A score or more of

little girl up in his arms showing her a ship coming in, and when he put her down it was to take her off with him on a hunt for shells.

Meantime he had felt the little twisted back and knew just how she stood.

"Why don't you let her play in the sand?" he demanded of the nurse when he brought her back.

"She don't care to play these days, and she gets her dress so soiled."

The Doctor growled. "I thought so."

When he came home it was to hold a conference with Mrs. Dow, and that evening I heard that stern and unbending guardian of her own rights singing his praises to one of her serious-faced neighbors in terms of eulogy which would have surprised the departed Captain, whose name in the household was "Lishy Dow," and who, by report of Captain Spile, had not always received unstinted praise for his spouse during his lifetime, though, as the Captain remarked, he "guessed he got all he deserved, for Lishy was one of 'em."

"He's dead, is he?" I inquired.

"We-all, I didn't see him laid out," drawled the Captain; "but I know he's buried all right, for I helped to bury him."

But whatever he had been during his life, the Captain always received the due meed of respect from Mrs. Dow, now that he was dead. Morning after morning she would tear the brown paper from the chops or leg of mutton which Josiah Martin, the young man from Gill Car-

ver's, the meat-man, brought, and shove the meat back into his hands with the same phrase, "You take that back to Gill Carver, and tell him I say he needn't think he can sell such meat as that to Lishy Dow's widow just because Lishy Dow's dead and gone." And morning after morning, as Josiah started off with the meat, she would call him back and

say, "Well, just wait a minute—I guess you might's well leave it to-day, as I'm obliged to have something for my folks to eat, but you tell Gill Carver he ought to be ashamed of himself to try to sell such meat as that to Lishy Dow's widow just because Lishy Dow's dead and gone."

A circumstance which I did not know

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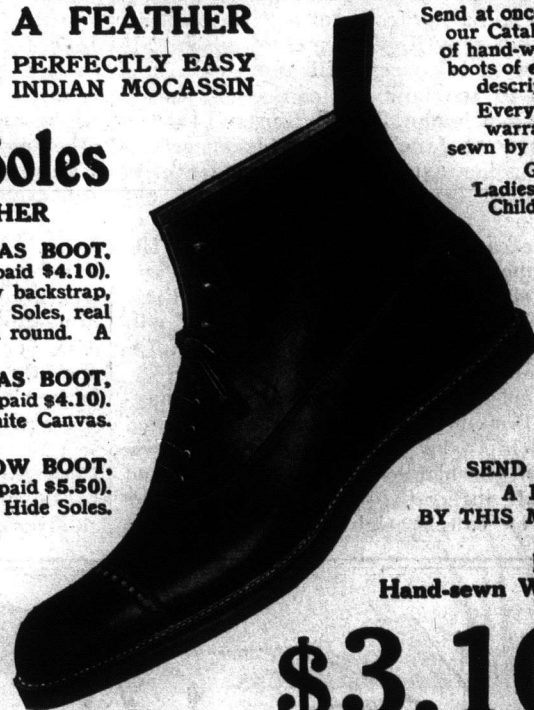
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