

"Do you know Virginia?" she asked eagerly.

He nodded slowly, thoughtfully, and with each nod he momentarily blotted out the landscape with a big cloud of white smoke.

"Yes, I know Virginia," he said, "or, rather, I knew it. Virginia is the home of romance to me."

Across the face flitted a wistful, hungry little expression. It was gone in an instant. It did not strike him at the moment as curious that he should be discussing a matter which he had never spoken about to a living soul.

"I come from Virginia," she said.

"So I learned from your voice," he replied. "But I have not been in Virginia for nearly thirty years—think of that! I loved the country. I was young and impressionable in those days—and there are associations which make Virginia almost a sacred soil to me."

His strong voice dropped to little more than a whisper as he gazed fixedly at the hills on the far horizon. She did not speak. Whatever her own sorrow was, here was one as poignant. She read in his voice something of the wistfulness she had seen.

"You will scent a love affair," he said, with that little smile of his; "and the love affairs of older generations are very fascinating to the young. Yes, it was a love romance. I loved an American lady—and she married

—an American gentleman—a better man than I; and that is all."

He knocked the ashes from his pipe and looked slyly at the serious face of the girl.

"When a man reaches his anecdote," he said with mock exasperation, "it takes little to induce his confidences, and that pretty southern voice of yours, young lady, opened secret drawers in my mind and set all the machinery of garrulity into creaking and squeaking motion."

"And did you never see her again?" she asked softly.

He shook his head.

"And you came home and married?"

He laughed.

"No," he said, "I found no consolation. I took the advice offered in an advertisement. I rejected substitutes: there was nobody just as good."

She sighed. The story he had told, the little glimpse he had given her of a life which was even remotely associated with her own beloved Virginia was enough to overshadow the throb, throb, throb of a sorrow which did not leave her day or night.

"I wish," she hesitated, "I wish—you would tell me some more; isn't it forward of me? And yet—I just love Virginia, and things that have happened there have a beauty all of their own. It isn't curiosity, and yet it is in a way."

"There is so little to tell," he said between the puffs. "She lived happy ever after, except—he stopped, as though debating the loyalty of his next words—"except that they had a great trouble a few years ago, and I wanted to go out and help them, but it seemed officious, so I didn't. They are very rich people, and they had a daughter, a very beautiful girl, I am told. She married a rascal, an Italian count—however, I did not intrude myself."

The girl was on her feet, white and shaking.

"I must go now," she said, mastering the tremor in her voice with a supreme effort.

He jumped up and gathered his rods.

"You will want assistance up that path," he said, the practical man of the

world in a second. She accompanied him without a word. If he felt the hand on his arm trembling he made no remark about it.

The path was treacherous for there had been rain overnight, and the soft loamy earth was slippery.

He guided her safely to the hilltop, and here she paused as though to regain her breath. He stood waiting to bid her adieu. He knew she would take the same path as himself, but an instinct warned him that she wished to walk alone.

"Do you believe in God?" she asked him suddenly.

"And the justice of God?"

He heard the passionate thrill in her voice and wondered.

"I believe in the justice of God," he said slowly. "I believe most implicitly in that; slow moving as it may seem to impatient eyes."

She was looking into his face earnestly. The straight line of her delicate brows were bent in a doubting frown.

"Sometimes I do, too," she said, nodding her head; "and sometimes the justice of mankind, the law which is designed only as a channel in which the Divine justice may flow, seems a very shallow channel to carry so great a stream. And, when God's judgment does not overflow its narrow confines, I doubt—indeed I doubt."



Canadians in France listening to an address on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of confederation.

She offered him a small hand abruptly, and he took it and returned the firm grip. She smiled at parting, the hard lines melting from her face.

"I am staying here for a little holiday," she said. "I came here because —" She paused and looked at him sharply. "I know why I came now—I know why this place is so precious to people." She smiled again. "I hope you will allow me to—to fish with you."

He laughed like a boy detected in an illicit act, and stood cap in hand, a little puzzled by her disjointed words, till she had descended the slope and vanished in Brakes Cope. Then he followed. That evening he came down from his sitting-room where his solitary dinner had been eaten and into the parlor of the "Lion."

There was a good company present; they shuffled awkwardly to their feet as he entered, and somebody pushed forward a big Windsor chair to the fireplace, for spring nights are chilly.

These evenings were a sheer joy to him. He took a malicious delight in lading the bucolic mind out of its depths.

The village oracles had offered a united and an assured front to him on the burning question of church against chapel. A churchman himself, he shattered their defences, though they were for the nonce combined in the protection of Establishment.

To-night he was neither so eager to provoke controversy nor to be engaged in argument. He nodded to the landlord, and that cheerful soul brightened visibly.

"Now, gentlemen," he said briskly, "Mr. Coggs asks the company to drink with him; step out and order your refreshments."

There were uplifted mugs in his honor, and old Bill Hoggin, who by common acceptance was the most powerful of the controversialists, having failed to lure the stranger into a discussion on the relative merits of the French and German soldier, grew reminiscent.

"You remind me, Mr. Coggs, sir," he said ingratiatingly, "of old Justice Grilby."

"Oh!" said the stranger briefly, "Friend of yours?"

A rare joke this, by the standard of the "Lion" parlor.

"Never seed um in my life," said Old Bill, wiping the tears of merriment from his eyes, "and don't want to, but when he'm down to sessions at Devises they say he thinks nothin' of goin' into village ale shop and disputin' with folk—he'm a rare walker by accounts; not a village 'round he don't visit when fit's on 'um."

Mr. Coggs looked at the elderly Hoggin from under his shaggy brows.

"A fine story that," he said dispar-

hushed tones of the landlord, conscious of his responsibilities to a sleeping guest, and the domineering voice of one who respected neither slumber of man nor scruple of host. It was a voice peculiarly shrill for a man, and had a snarl at the end which was not pleasant to hear.

Mr. Coggs turned in his bed patiently. He had no desire to overhear the newcomer's conversation, but his voice was penetrating.

"You shall go to Horrocks' at early morning with a note—I have it here. You shall ask for Mrs. —," he did not catch the name—"you understand?"

A mumble came from the landlord. "I do not care whether you take or send it so long as it goes," said the other; "it is sufficient that it goes."

The unwilling listener turned over again, this time less patiently. There was a little more conversation, and then the shutting of a door. Mr. Coggs fell asleep.

He learned next morning that the new guest had arrived in the adjoining market town by the last train, and had driven over to the village at two o'clock in the morning.

"A quarrelsome chap," muttered the landlord; "but, then he's a foreigner."

Mr. Coggs smiled.

"Give me my rod, Smith," he demanded. "If trout were gossips, I should come home with a full creel."

He made his way to his favorite hollow. He did not expect to see the girl that day. He was not curious as to the business which brought a querulous foreigner to visit the "American lady." Curiosity was a vice he had long since outgrown. To anticipate events by speculating upon their causes was to introduce prejudice to reason, and was by all his canons without profit.

He presumed without much thought that the business was urgent and vital, and he was surprised to see her standing by the water's edge, her back to him, and evidently waiting. She turned at the sound of his footsteps, and walked slowly to meet him. She wore a dress of dark blue cloth, but the white broderie at her throat was no whiter than the face she turned to him.

He quickened his steps. "Are you ill?" he asked anxiously. She shook her head.

"No, but I want to see you," she replied. She glanced nervously past him up the hill, as though she expected somebody.

"I want to tell you something," she said, a little breathlessly. "You spoke yesterday of somebody you loved—in Virginia—long ago."

"Yes," he said quietly, and waited.

"It was—Margaret Bray, was it not?"

He was not surprised, yet his heart beat faster, and for a moment the landscape swam a little. Commanding his emotion with a superhuman effort, he said, in the even tone he had employed before:

"Yes; it was Margaret Bray."

Her eyes were filled with tears; there was a look of infinite tenderness in them as she stretched both her hands to him.

He caught them.

"Oh, Uncle Faraway—Uncle Faraway," she sobbed, and fell on his breast.

She looked up almost at once, smiling through her tears.

"You don't know that name," she whispered; "it is the one dear mother always taught us to think of you by. She never told us anything, but we guessed there was somebody who had