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Synopsis of Previous Chapter.

After the tragic death of John Amesbury, his prostrated wife, one of America's greatest scientists dies. At her death Prof. Stilliter, an agent of the interests, kidnaps the beautiful three-year-old baby girl and brings her up in a paradise where she sees no man, but thinks she is taught by angels, who instruct her for her mission to reform the world. At the age of eighteen she is suddenly thrust into the world where agents of the interests are ready to pretend to find her.

The one to feel the loss of the little Amesbury girl most, after she had been spirited away by the interests, was Tommy. In a few days, however, he found himself living amid luxurious surroundings as the adopted son of Mr. Barclay. Time in its flight, brings manhood to Tommy and great expectations to Barclay, who has planned to have Tommy marry into wealth. But Tommy's lack of interest in Barclay's business affairs changes matters. Barclay meets with success in breaking up the match he had really planned. Turned down by the girl Tommy goes to the Adirondacks to forget the affair. While there he meets by accident, Celestia.

INSTALLMENT III.

To rescue the girl who called herself Celestia from Professor Stilliter had been the work of instants and impulse. But what to do next was not to be decided without plenty of reflection. Reflection did not come easily to Tommy, however, especially in the present circumstances. For any train of logical thought upon which he tried to get started was soon interrupted, either by a stolen look at his companion, the necessity of helping her past some rough place, or by some naive question or other which she would ask from time to time.

He could not make her out at all to his satisfaction. At one moment she seemed perfectly sane, at the next completely mad. The only things of which he felt certain were that she was beautiful and good and that she was suffering from some form of amnesia by which her powers of memory had been undermined.

"How long have you known that man?" he asked, referring, of course, to Professor Stilliter.

"Not so long as I have known you, but sometimes I feel as if I had seen you both before. But I can't ever have seen you, can I? You can't ever have been in heaven and I've never been on earth."

"Of you were seeing him for the first time why were you afraid of him?"

"For the same reason that I'm not afraid of you."

"And you're not—not a bit?"

"He," said she, simply, "is bad and ugly. You are good and beautiful."

As Tommy guided her through the woods toward his camping ground of the preceding night, he kept on saying to himself: "But there's got to be a show-down soon. What am I to do about her?"

He almost wished that he had not taken her away from Stilliter, but had instead stayed with them, dogged their footsteps from place to place until he was sure that the girl was in no real danger from the psychologist. Indeed he was in a state of great mental perplexity, and at the same time there was a novel and romantic quality to the episode that he could not but enjoy.

"If only," he thought, "I might play around with her for the rest of the day and then turn her over to her proper guardians and have no further responsibility I'd ask nothing better."

They came to a black pool of rain water. Before Tommy could prevent, Celestia had stepped upon the surface, as if upon a solid pavement, and gone in above the knee.

She gave a little cry of amused astonishment.

"Why it's—it's"—she cried.

"Yes, said Tommy, "it's wet water. You appeared to think it was a boardwalk. But never mind, you'll soon dry out. Don't they have water in heaven?"

"Of course, but not black and still like that. In heaven it's all alive with rainbows in it."

"They speak English in heaven?"

"Oh, yes, and French and Italian and Spanish and German and American and all the others."

"Can you speak them all?"

"Of course. What good could I do on earth if I couldn't talk to people?"

"Just what good are you going to do?"

"I'm going to tell people to be better and not so foolish, and they are to do as I tell them."

"That's a splendid idea," said Tommy, feeling that it was best to humor her, "and then what?"

"Then? Why, when I've made everybody rich and happy I'll go back to heaven, of course, and be happy, too."

"Are you unhappy now?"

"No; not unhappy, but if I were back in heaven I wouldn't be all wet and muddy and hungry and thirsty, would I?"

"Of course you wouldn't, you poor child," said Tommy, "but, soon we'll be at my camp, and then I'll hustle around and make you comfortable."

"And I feel as if my face were on fire, too," she complained.

"Feverish," thought Tommy with dismay. And then he said:

"Stand still a moment and let me look."

He noticed for the first time the extraordinary whiteness and delicacy of her skin. It was as if she had always been veiled from the sun.

"You're getting sunburnt," he said with concern. "That's what's the matter."

"Oh, the sun!" she cried. "The sun! Do show it to me! I've heard so much about it."

"Isn't there any in heaven?"

"How you talk; why heaven is so far off."

"Well," said Tommy, pointing, "that's it!"

"That?" exclaimed Celestia—but she could not look the sun in the face for more than a fraction of a second.

"That!" and she burst into laughing.

"Do you know what I thought that was?" she said.

"What?"

"Why, I thought, of course, that that was the gate to hell. And, so that's the sun, and it's burning my face?"

She touched her face with her fingers and then looked at their tips as if expecting that the burn had come off on them.

"I've got some stuff at my camp that will take the burn out," said Tommy. "Look out for that green stuff. It's got thorns, and you can't afford to tear that dress."

They begun to climb the eminence on which Tommy's camp was perched, and with every step Celestia showed increasing fatigue. He walked a little behind and at one side, now helping her forward and upward with an occasional touch of the hand between her shoulders and now with a steadily maintained pressure.

"Of course I'm not used to walking," she said; "I'm sorry. I suppose I'll get used to it."

"If you are determined to push on to New York, you will," said Tommy.

His quick ears caught the sudden appetizing cluck of a partridge.

"Let's see if we can get that fellow!" he exclaimed. "You sit down and rest yourself, Celestia. Nobody hunts much in these woods, and the birds are tame as chickens."

But Tommy's first move was really the opposite of a move, for he stood as still as he could and listened. Now a partridge or a ruffed grouse, if you give him his right name, is a born ventriloquist.

First the partridge clucked to the right of Tommy, then to the left; then in front of him and then back of him. Tommy walked a few paces and once more stood still and listened. This time the clucking came from directly overhead, and Tommy looked upward in the dense branches of a young spruce tree, and after so looking for a few moments suddenly smiled. And although she did not know what Tommy was smiling at, Celestia smiled, too.

She sat down and leaned against the stem of a birch, her breath coming and going quickly, her great eyes following every movement that Tommy made.

STILLITER AND SMELLS-GOOD WATCH THE SHORE

Having located the partridge, Tommy "assembled" his trout rod, and, with the end of the line, made a running noose. Then he began very quietly to poke the rod up among the branches of the spruce tree. An interested clucking attested to the fact that more eyes than Celestia's were on Tommy.

Tommy, his right hand clasping the butt of the rod, his thumb breaking the reel, reached gradually higher and higher until his arm was extended to its full length. He added a few inches to his reach by standing on tiptoe. But even this was not enough. So Tommy bent his knees a little and then jumped.

Before his feet regained the earth a frightful squawking and flapping arose in the spruce tree, and then there was dragged from it what looked like a pinwheel going at top speed.

Hunger is the most cruel tyrant in the world. Tommy's thumb sought and found the base of an egg shell; there was a sharp scrunch, one last wild whistling of the pinwheel, and then there was one cock grouse the less in the North woods.

But Celestia looked pained now and troubled.

"It has wings like an angel," she said, only darker."

Tommy was just going to say: "It's got whiter meat than an angel," but stopped himself in time, and changed to:

"Even people who come here to make the world better, Celestia have to eat."

And he slipped the dilapidated bird into his pocket.

A few minutes later they reached Tommy's camp, and after he had given Celestia a cupful of spring water he cut fresh balsam boughs and made a thick mat for her to rest on, and rolled his coat and some other odds and ends into a pillow, so that she could watch him make the fire and do the cooking.

In the midst of this he remembered that she was suffering from sunburn, and he made her bathe her face in a lotion that smelt of camphor and niter and which burnt a little and then felt cool.

For lunch they had tea, biscuits (one of Tommy's most lamentable culinary failures) and the partridge. Cooked, he no longer looked like the victim of murder, but very beautiful and appetizing.

Celestia ate her full share and then lay back on her balsam boughs and watched Tommy fill and light a pipe.

"Why do you do that?" she asked. "Wasn't the partridge cooked enough?"

Tommy narrowed his eye at her and for some moments didn't answer. Then he said: "I don't know what to make of you at all. First you say you come from heaven and act as if you did, then you talk and act like a regular girl, then you pretend that you never saw a moving picture show and then—what are you trying to do to me, anyway? Is that really the only dress you've got in the world? Do you always wear a golden band around your hair with stage jewels in it?"

And then suddenly a light dawned on Tommy, and he smote his thigh in applause of his own cleverness.

"I know what you are," he said. "You're the queen of the movies. You're up here staging a show, and you got bored and let me run off with you for a lark. Professor Stilliter has had something to do with the scenario. The heroine is supposed to be a little looney. That's you, Celestia—and thank heaven, it's only acting. Why, I really thought you were mad as a hatter!"

"No," said Celestia, "I'm not in the least angry. But I'm sure I don't know what you mean, but I like you when you get excited and talk fast and your eyes smile. It rests me."

Tommy shook his head at her and smiled reprovingly.

"You can't keep on fooling me," he said. "Come now, what's your real name?"

"Celestia," she said.

"All right, if you don't want to tell me yet; it will keep, it's bound to. But tell me then are you"——he hesitated and blushed. "I'd really like to know. You see I'm rather crazy about you. You're not Mrs. Somebody or other, are you?"

The embarrassed smile froze on his lips. He leaped to his feet and stood listening. Faint and clear, sounding cheerful rather than ominous, there rose to them from the valleys below a baying of dogs. Tommy had gone once with a posse of deputy sheriffs to see how a murderer is hunted down with the bloodhounds. Whole scenes of that pursuit flashed through his mind, and he knew that the baying, which now sounded in his ears, was not that of deerhounds running out of season, but of bloodhounds following a human trail.

He climbed swiftly to the top of the Hub and stood listening, his field glasses glued to his eyes.

That there would ever be any difficulty of evading such a man as Stilliter in the North woods had never occurred to him. He had pictured Stilliter a man of resource in a laboratory or in a dissecting room with an insensible guinea pig staked out on the operating table, but not out of doors. The man was fat, unhealthily white and appallingly near-sighted. That such a man could be so hot upon their trail had about it a sinister quality that brought Tommy's heart into his mouth.

A glimpse of two bloodhounds and four men, one of whom was Stilliter and another a full-blooded Indian, crossing an open space, recently crossed by Celestia and himself during their unhurried escape and in the same direction, brought Tommy down from the Hub in a great hurry.

As for Celestia—well, she couldn't be a movie actress; no movie actress playing truant would be hunted down with bloodhounds, and he felt that she must be accounted for upon some other hypothesis, but later when there was more time.

Meanwhile there was nothing to be thought of but instant getting together of such things as might prove most useful and flight.

"We've got to beat it, Celestia," he said. "I'm sorry, because you are tired, but that man" then by contracting his eyes with his hands he indicated Professor Stilliter's eye-glasses—"is after us."

She rose obediently to her feet. "I don't know why he wants to catch you," said Tommy, "and either you don't know or you won't tell. But you dislike him, and you're afraid of him, and that's enough."

A kettle, frying pan, salt, tea and matches rolled into a blanket and strapped to his shoulders, his field glasses, axe and fishing tackle were about all that Tommy could carry and make speed under. Especially if he had to help Celestia over difficulties. His rifle he abandoned. It would be better, he thought, to be unarmed than to attempt with of heavy calibre. And furthermore, Tommy, a light twenty-two to oppose repeating rifles though prepared to stand up for Celestia's rights and to fight for them, was not prepared to kill anybody in an affair which was entirely a mystery to him.

They were soon under way, following the higher ground, where the granite outcroppings neither received any impress from their feet, nor long held the scent of the leather soles. But the crests of the ridges were not all granite, and Tommy knew very well that in places they were making what woodmen call a broad trail. A trail of footprints and bent and broken branches which an Indian will read as casually as a comby bloodhounds, he will follow as easily as muter reads his newspaper; and which, aided small boys follow a procession through a city street.

That broad reaches of unbroken granite would occasionally baffle their pursuers was all that Tommy could hope for. He counted on these moments for making up for the difference in speed between men and dogs, traveling light, and a girl already too tired and utterly unused to the woods.

He had at first only a vague idea as to just what part of the wilderness he would take her, but gradually his mind cleared up on this point and he became occupied with the problem of getting to that place by a route which their pursuers would find the most difficulty possible in following. He had hopes, indeed, of throwing them completely off the trail.

They turned a little more to the westward, and began to descend from the high ground. The baying of the hounds at this time seemed if anything a little closer.

"Where are we going?" she asked suddenly.

"We're going to hide on a little island in a deep lake, Celestia. Even if they find out that we are on it they'll have trouble getting to us. Very few sailors and fewer woodmen know how to swim. I used to fish in that lake a lot, and I've an old dugout hidden on the shore, and there's the remains of a hut on the island. And I left an old moth-eaten buffalo robe and a blanket there only last Fall. If there's anything left of them they'll come in mighty handy, I can tell you."

They came to a broad, shallow stream that flowed brightly under an arch of dark foliage. "Here's where we begin to make trouble for them," said Tommy. Holding her elbow with his free hand, to keep her from stumbling and falling, Tommy led Celestia to the middle of the brook, and then they waded down it for upward of a mile, as if it had been a winding road, and only left it when the rocky nature of the country through which it was passing offered them an opportunity of so doing and leaving a minimum of trail.

All at once Tommy realized that a great silence had fallen in the forest. And he knew that at last the bloodhounds were in difficulties, for they had ceased to bay.

The oftener Tommy helped Celestia through, over or under some difficulty of the wilderness, saved her from being torn by brambles or encouraged her with his voice, the more infatuated he became with her.

Mary Blackstone's image could be recalled only by an effort of memory. And yet it was only a few days since he had fancied himself in love with her! He confessed this to himself more than once, and could but feel ashamed and sheepish. How long would it be before he fancied himself in love with Celestia, after how long a separation would he discover that he did not love her in the least? He had no stability. Was he never to have a serious purpose in life? Love? Even hate?

All of a sudden they caught glimpses of blue water between the tree stems, and in a few moments they saw before them and below them a lovely lake with densely wooded shores and in its midst a densely wooded island.

"Oh!" exclaimed Celestia. "But this earth is beautiful."

"Remind you at all of Heaven?" asked Tommy, a little mischievously.

"Not in the least," said Celestia, and as if she did not wish to discuss the comparative beauties of the two places. "Is that our island?" she asked.

"We'll be hard to find," said Tommy, "and now the work is almost all over."

They descended the narrow strip of land which divided the lake from the forest, and here Tommy told Celestia to sit down and rest while he hunted for the dugout and got it into the water.

He returned in ten minutes, paddling quietly, and found Celestia playing with the sand as if she had been a little child. Her eyes were bright with animation, and she had gotten sand on her forehead and in her hair. Perceiving Tommy she tossed a double handful of sand into the air, and as the sunlight caught the myriads of bright surfaces, she cried: "What is it? Oh, what is it?"

"Sand," said Tommy.

"Sand," cried Celestia.

"Didn't you ever play in the sand when you were little?"

"I used to play with diamonds and rubies," said Celestia. "Oh, but this is wonderful. See, you can write in it and draw pictures. Look, I am making the man Stilliter."

And, indeed, with her forefinger for pencil, she made an excellent caricature of him.

"Who taught you to do that, Celestia?"

"An angel," she said, simply.

"Well," said Tommy, "I've heard of people who could draw like angels—but—oh, Celestia, aren't you a little tired of playing this heavenly origin business on me? I don't take any stock in it."

She looked at him with a sudden grave wonder.

"When I tell you that I come from Heaven, you don't believe me?"

"Why, Celestia," he said, meeting her gaze with equal gravity, "you're just a regular girl. Why there's blood on your cheek, where a deer fly has bitten you."

"You've got to believe me," she said, and it seemed to Tommy she was trying to master him with her eyes.

"What are you trying to do to me?" he said. "Hypnotize me?"

And then he laughed, and looked so brown and handsome and good natured that Celestia had to smile at him.

"Now, Celestia," he said, "I'm going to take you for a boat ride. But you've got to sit still—mighty still. You pretend that you're back in Heaven listening to Israfel accompanied by the Spheres."

But she spoke with a sudden sternness that made him very uncomfortable.

"Is there no reverence left on earth? No faith? It's high time that I came."

He helped her into the dugout, his eyes on the back of her head, enamored with the way her dark, strong hair met her straight, white neck, and as he paddled he kept saying, "Who the deuce is she, and what the deuce is she?"

And to these questions he could not find any answers that were altogether satisfactory.

Just as they were landing on the island there came to them once more, faintly, and from far-off the baying of the bloodhounds. Celestia gave Tommy a look full of anxious appeal.

"Don't be afraid," he said. "They are miles and miles from here."

So they were. All of them. Stilliter, the guides, the hounds, and the Indian who rejoiced in the name of Old Man Smells-good, which if it referred to anything about him except his ability to follow a trail was an inappropriate name. They were all there, several miles away; but Old Man Smells-good was in the head of an exceedingly tall pine, which overtopped the rest of the forest, and from which the view was exceedingly fine and expansive. Old Man Smells-good had a pair of eyes that resembled a pair of telescopes. He could see anything that was in sight.

"See anything?" Stilliter called up to the Indian.

"No see a damn thing," answered the Indian without changing his expression. As a matter of fact, by miracle of optics, he had just discovered Tommy helping Celestia ashore on the island.

Smells-good dismounted the tree and stood shaking his head.

"No see any damn thing," he said. "Dog no good. Smells-good he think a little. Think up where um mos' likely to go."

The old fakir. He seated himself upon his heels, filled and lighted his pipe, and closed his eyes as if in deep thought.

Stilliter began to show signs of impatience, but one of the guides said:

"Better leave him alone; he's got a hunch, likely as not."

Not until he had finished his pipe did Old Man Smells-good give any signs of what had been going on in his head. When he rose to his feet, he said simply, "Me find um soon," and started off in the direction of the lake.

Fifteen minutes later he knelt suddenly and appeared to bury his long, hooked nose in the ground. He rose after a moment's sniffing and said: "Me got um, sure." Then he ordered one of the guides to remain behind with the dogs.

And then he went forward, pretending to follow a trail, pointing to marks, which the other couldn't see, for the simple fact that they didn't exist, listening, pretending to hear sounds that couldn't be heard, sniffing, kneeling, and poking his long nose into the ground. Once he poked it into a ground hornet's nest, and had a narrow and undignified escape from being badly stung.

He led them to the shores of the lake, and pointed quietly across at the island. Even Stilliter could see a pale column of bluish smoke coming from among the trees.

"Bimeby, swim over," said Old Man Smells-good, "for two dollars. Fetch dug-out. Better wait till dark."

And they waited till dark. Then Old Man Smells-good, having been definitely promised an extra two dollars for the wetting, stepped forth stark naked, except for a newly filled pipe, and slipped quietly into the lake.

Meanwhile, with Tommy and Celestia all had gone well. Tommy's old camp was less dilapidated than he expected. A few balsam boughs had made the rotten roof sound above and sweet beneath. Celestia had had a long rest and then she had followed Tommy along the shores of the island, while he fished. Finally, Tommy's long casts were rewarded. He hooked a fine trout and began to draw him strongly toward the beach. In her excitement and eagerness to help, Celestia ran into the shallow water, stepped in a deep hole, and, falling forward, was for the moment completely submerged.

Laughing and scolding, Tommy pulled her out and literally ran her back to the fire. Steam was soon rising from her wet, clinging robe, but since the fire could only warm one side of her at a time, and since the chill of evening had begun to set in, she shivered, and now and then her teeth knocked together.

"Celestia," said Tommy, "you better take that dress off and let me dry it."

To the young man's horror, he had hardly finished speaking before Celestia had slipped the robe from her shoulders, and was on the point of letting it drop to the ground.

"Hold on! Don't," he cried. "For he had seen quite enough to realize that underneath that robe there was nothing whatever—but Celestia. She looked at him, puzzled and wondering.

"Don't be in such a rush," he said. "You wait."

He went into the little hut and brought out the buffalo robe, which he had left there. It was very much the worse for wear, but huge and warm.

"Now," he said, "you take that off and put this on."

Then he turned his back and walked swiftly away.

"You sing out," he called back to her, "when you've changed." And he walked at a distance, frowning and laughing, until he heard her calling to him.

"Are you angry?" she said. "What did I do?"

"Nothing," said Tommy, "but you see, on earth, young ladies don't take off their clothes when young gentlemen are looking at them. It's just the custom, that's all. It's considered very bad luck. Of course, I've never been in heaven"——

But Celestia did not encourage him to speak lightly of heaven. And he dried her theatrical white dress, and made shift to iron it with a smooth hot stone, and watched her from the corner of his eye, and thought how charming she looked, even in that bulky, clumsy buffalo robe.

After supper they sat for a long time by the shore and watched the stars grow brighter and brighter, and as the moon began to rise, dimmer and dimmer. They were happy at being together, spoke in low tones and Tommy answered many questions about the affairs of the earth.

"But then, of course," said Celestia, "you are wicked."

"I?" exclaimed Tommy, "I like that! What do you know about it?"

"Of course, if you are not a man"——

"But I am," said Tommy. "Is that why I'm wicked?"

"There couldn't be a better reason. If you are a man you are wicked, sinful, greedy and covetous of what belongs to other people."

"That's only a judgment of men in general that has been handed to you all ready-made. But use your own judgment, not somebody else's. Since you've known me have I done one single thing to make you think I'm wicked?"

"No, you haven't," said Celestia, "but that makes it all the worse. It—it smacks so of hypocrisy."

Tommy laughed aloud, thinking that she was joking. But he ceased instantly when he saw that she was not.

"Celestia," he said, "don't for a minute think that I'm pretending to be good. But wickedness is different. If I were wicked it wouldn't be safe for you to be with me. But as things are you'd be safe as long as you wanted to be safe, and afterward, probably. In my opinion, very few men—even murderers and wife-beaters—are really wicked. For the most part they are just unintelligent."

"Exactly," said Celestia; "and there is nothing wickeder than that."

"It was more fun talking about happiness," said Tommy. "Suppose we forget the world. Now, you are not going to New York to work yourself to the bone for other people. You're just going to stay on with me in the good, clean woods, and be worked for and made much of. We'll just go on and on through the woods, camping at night by pretty lakes and brooks."

He looked her very earnestly in the eyes and sang in a clear, quiet voice, with a kind of gallant tenderness, those great lines of Stevenson's, beginning:

"I will make you brooches and toys for your delight,
Of bird song at morning and star shines at night,
And I will build a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea."

"What is that?" said Celestia, when he had finished.

"That," said Tommy. "Why, don't you think it's a sort of hymn?"

After that they were silent for a little. Then Tommy said: "Are you warm? Are you comfortable?"

She nodded.

Then very softly:

"Celestia," he said. "Are you happy?"

"I don't know," she said, "Can you be happy when it isn't right for you to be happy? It isn't right for one to be happy, because other people aren't."

"I am," said Tommy, "At this moment the sufferings of others don't get me. You see, I have to be shown. Suppose at this moment the entire population of China, having eaten immoderately of contaminated rice, was dying of fits. I wouldn't care. I wouldn't even know. Celestia, if you stayed long enough in the woods, don't you think maybe you'd forget all about Heaven and your mission to earth, and be content to be happy? Listen. Once in my life I was really happy. I was a little boy; she was a little girl. If she'd grown up she would have looked like you. Perhaps that's why I'm so happy to be with you. She and I were always happy when we were together or looking forward to being together. Then one day she went away, Celestia. She went to Heaven, they told me. And for a long time I was terribly unhappy."

"But you ought to have been happy."

He shook his head.

"If I could have gone with her, perhaps."

"But in Heaven she is blissful always."

"But I haven't been. When some one love—dies"——

"There is no death."

"There are separations that seem to us humans to last a mighty long time, then," said Tommy.

Celestia sighed.

"But I'm happy with you," said Tommy, because I can almost imagine that you are she—grown up. I'm going to pretend that you are she. That she is the angel they've sent back to earth to make us all better." And he smiled very tenderly upon her.

"But, Celestia," said Tommy, "if you insist that this world is so unhappy, tell me this: Why am I perfectly happy? I'm not good. I'm not sensible. I've never done anything noble or self-sacrificing. And yet behold me happy as the day is long."

"And I'm happy, too," said Celestia, smiling.

"You're happy," he said, "because you feel perfectly sure that you are going to make everybody else happy. But that's not why I'm happy. I'm happy because I'd rather be right here than anywhere else; because I've had a good supper, after plenty of exercise; because the night smells of balsam, because the moon is shining, and because I've got a delightful companion."

"All these things make me happy, too," said Celestia, "but they couldn't keep me happy for long."

"No?" said Tommy, somewhat chagrined. "If these things are enough, why want more?"

"Why," said Celestia, "after a while I'd get thinking about people who haven't delightful companions, and for whom the moon isn't shining. I couldn't rest then until I'd gone to them and tried to make their life grander and their loves stronger and (here she laughed softly) their heads fuller of sense."

"It would be the opposite with me," said Tommy, "the longer we stayed here, the less I'd give a thing about other people and the more I'd get thinking about us. Every mortal man, I suppose, has his conception of heaven (he pulled luxuriously at his pipe), and this is mine."

After awhile Celestia became sleepy, and then she slipped her hand into one of Tommy's and leaned against him and laid her head on his shoulder. It was as if she had been a little child. Tommy was deeply moved and touched, and at the same time the close physical contact began to trouble him, to frighten him. He spoke and it seemed as if with his voice he was trying to lift a weight.

"You poor baby," he said, "you're dead tired. It's bed time."

He rose, a little roughly, and helped her to her feet.

When they reached the little hut, Tommy said:

"Now, you turn in there and make yourself comfy. Good night."

"Good night," she said, and went into the hut.

Tommy stood looking at the fire. He stood for quite a long time, in a deep reverie. Celestia's voice brought him out of it.

"Aren't you coming?" she said.

He turned and looked her in the eyes. What was she? Was she the most innocent and guileless creature in the world, or was she something quite different? Was he a chivalrous young man in her eyes, or simply an idiot? His heart suddenly began to beat hard and fast.

And toward that theatrical, beautiful, and entrancing figure in the door of the hut, all silver in the moonlight, he began to walk slowly.

In his hiding place close at hand, no word or motion had been lost on Professor Stilliter. White with reluctance and antipathy, but strongly resolved, he rose on one knee, cocked his Winchester and aimed at the small of Tommy's back.

(To be Continued)

SMELLS-GOOD DISCOVERS TOMMY HELPING CELESTIA ASHORE ON THE ISLAND