MC2397

POOR DOCUMENT

blow. It was new to his experience to be struck by a foremast hand. He was as much astonished as angered.

"That whelp there," said he, "refuses duty and has struck me."

"What! Refuse duty and strike an officer before the ship's clear of the dock!" cried the captain. "Holder, take your chest and traps ashore. You can't go on this ship."

"I don't want to," was my reply.

"No words back, young man, so long as you're on this deck," replied the captain. "Mr. Pell, see that this man's things are put on the wharf directly."

I walked ashore and my luggage soon followed me.

So I left the Ann Mary Ann, in full view of my townspeople. I did not remain upon the wharf. I walked and kept on walking. I knew not, cared not, whither. I left the village and went into the forest, with which Eastport is thickly surrounded. I found myself going past the two beautiful lakes—our skating ponds in winter—then over a salt water creek crossed by a bit of bridge. Mile after mile so I traveled on, reckless, angry, ashamed, discouraged, despairing, flitting from mood to mood, from resolution to resolution. Oh, if I could but live in these woods—live on walnuts, bark, leaves, anything—sleep under the trees without discomfort, that I were not fettered and a slave to a house, a table, three meals a day and the thousand necessities with which man has burdened himself. That I were as independent of these people about me as were the ducks I startled from the salt water ponds near the beach.

I found myself upon a high point of land at the harbor's entrance—full six miles from the wharf (in my unnoted wanderings and turning, I must have traveled twelve.) I looked up. The Ann Mary Ann was before me, about half a mile distant in the main channel, with every sail set that would draw, and as the watch "bowsed away" on the main tack I heard coming over the water the strains of the old sea song with which I was familiar:

"Oh, the bully boat's a comin',
Don't you hear her sails a hummin'."

The Ann Mary Ann was a pretty sight in her cloud of white canvas, and the life, animation and joyousness apparent on board might have mocked me, but for a thought which suddenly flashed upon me. I said aloud to the departing vessel: "I'll be there before you, my fine fellows," and I knew I should.

But how?

CHAPTER IV.

SURPRISE.

"Well, what are you going to do now?" asked my mother with that expression which to me said so forcibly: "Oh, this impractical, inefficient son of mine."

"I am going to New York, bag and baggage, to-morrow," I said. "Don't be alarmed, I shan't hang about home, and I shan't trouble you for many a year to come."

I intended going to New York with the general purpose of escaping Eastport, which now was for me unendurable. What, definitely, I should do when there, I knew not—save that in some way I should get to California. Of money my store was very slender. I was casting myself on the broad uncertain sea of chance.

A boy came to the house with a note for me. It read:

"Meet me to-night after dark where we last talked. BLANCHE SEFTON."

All day I kept aloof from the village. At night I went thither. The girl was there now, all herself, calm and self-possessed.

"John," said she, "I am going to ask of you a favor—a great favor. Will you grant it?"

"Anything you ask," I said, impulsively.

"Anything is a big word. What I ask of you may not be so easy to grant as you imagine. I want to put something in your hands. What, you are not to know until you have left this village, for I feel that you will leave, and that very soon. What you receive from me I want you to use as I direct. That is all. Can you promise me that?"

I was eager enough to promise. The thought of Blanche Sefton's asking of me a favor—something apparently of more than ordinary importance, the reflection that she deemed me worthy of a serious trust—compensated for all I had recently suffered.

She put in my hands a sealed packet. "Remember," said she, "not to be opened until you are in New York, and when opened its directions to be implicitly obeyed."

"I promise," was my reply.

"That's a good boy," she said. "Now, let me kiss you." And she did so.

"That's a good boy," she said.

Kissing among the young people was in Eastport a regular business. At their parties all the plays had kissing as their grand aim and end. Indeed, the play seemed merely as a pretence for the kissing. I had never looked with much favor upon these indiscriminate osculatory melees, and when forced by circumstances, I had taken part in them, it was always with a feeling of indifference—almost disgust. Still, I supposed that it was the thing to do, since it was a part of the life around me. I had noticed that Blanche Sefton never participated in these "plays." Blanche was not a kissable girl.

I shall not attempt by any of the numerous hackneyed phrases to describe my sensations at that moment. They would go astray of my meaning. The time, the place, the circumstances, the withdrawal from the immediate range of Eastport's petty gossipping, meddlesome sphere, seemed to place me in another world, whose standard of life, action, motive and impulse were entirely different from this. In that kiss I seemed to feel Blanche's purity of soul and depth of affection—a nature luxuriant in every department of being, capable of a tempestuous abandonment, yet capable also of perfect control at any moment of ecstacy. Externally it was but the pressure of a rich pair of lips, but if there be within us other and finer senses than our material ones, these seemed in that momentary contact to absorb and retain a portion of the intellectual and spiritual richness and nobility of that girl's being. Nor did her act make me bold or presuming. On the contrary it seemed to bring me a realization of respect almost amounting to reverence for Blanche Sefton, which I had never felt before. It seemed to me as an inspiration to become more manly, more courageous, more energetic; not the inspiration of a moment, but one to remain by me many a year after. Her caress, too, had in it something of motherhood, something I longed for, but found not at home, something which every man needs as a protection—protection against degradation.

"Perhaps you think I'm very bold?" said she.

"I think I understand you," I replied.

"I believe you do. Otherwise, I could not do as I have done. You must feel yourself very much complimented, too," she added, in a lighter tone, "for you are the first of your sex I ever kissed in my life."

Here I wanted much to say something very polite and gallant. But all the words coming into my mind for such expression seemed to savor so much of the mawkish novel that I felt it a profanation. I said, quite without premeditation: "I thank you." On the whole, I think I said about the best thing I could.

My tongue was not so tied afterward. Hand in hand we walked to and fro on a level, grassy space lying along the edge of the bluff overlooking the Cove's waters. We talked—well, of things belonging to our own world—as if we were navigating together rivers, creeks and inlets, barred to the majority. I know now she led the conversation on these subjects to divert my attention and ease my mind of the strain to which it had been recently subjected.

The village clock struck two. "These are unseemly hours for Eastport," said Blanche. "We must go home."

We walked again to the half-opened gate, and again parted, not without another kiss—this one mutual.

Between us passed neither pledge nor bond, spoken or inferred. We parted as if but for a day. Blanche's last words were, "Remember, now, your promise!"

CHAPTER V.

SURRENDER.

My chest, which had been carted back to my mother's house, I had removed that very night to the ferry boat which communicated with the terminus of the railroad leading to New York. I went on the boat in the morning, before any other passengers came down, and kept myself out of sight. My leave taking with my mother was a brief affair. We had eaten a silent, comfortless breakfast. At its conclusion, taking my hat, I said, "Well, mother, I'm off for good now."

Perhaps it was a presentiment that my words were true that made the change in her manner. With a softness unusual to her she said: "But, my son, what are you going to do? Where are you going?"

"Never mind now," I said. "I've talked enough before of my plans. Now I'll keep silent. I've an idea that talking things out leads to bad luck. I'm going away, that's all. So good-by."

She said nothing, took my hand and kissed me. I never recollected having been kissed by her before. She may have done so when I was an infant. Favors of that sort are not appreciated or remembered during that tender period. This was not from lack of feeling or affection. It came of that reserve and repression of all external signs of emotion bred in the bone way back through I know not how many generations of Puritan and Roundhead ancestry, until not only had outward sign of emotion been considered as bordering on an impropriety, but the very ability to manifest it had been destroyed. It was a turning of the softer side of human nature inward and the harder outward, and the fruitage was harshness and austerity; not intentional, but the natural growth of unnatural lives.

I left the house, wondering if it was in the natural order of events that proofs of affection, parental and otherwise, must come at the last moment, like the best dish at dinner being placed before one for a second and then snatched away.

In a few hours I was in New York. Taking a room at a hotel I shut myself therein, and opened the packet received from Blanche. It contained bills to the amount of $300 and the following note:

"I desire you to accept this money from me as a loan, with interest at 7 per cent., for three years. This is business, you know. I'm glad for your sake you did not go on the Ann Mary Ann. You will go now to California as a gentleman should. Mind you take a cabin passage. Don't go in the steerage to save dollars. It doesn't save them at all. There was a Providence in that pig, and Pell, too—pigs both—to take you out of the ship. Shut up on board of her for five or six months, eating their coarse food and leading their coarse life, would have put you back as many years. When you got to California you would probably have done as five-sixths of them will do—strike for the hardest and coarsest way of making a fortune, by digging and grubbing—the very way not to make it. If there is gold there, mind you, it's not for those who dig for it, unless they dig with their brains, and you can't dig with your brains and work like a hod carrier and live on hod carrier's fare. So, my dear boy, live like a gentleman and you will have a gentleman's luck. BLANCHE."

So this was the promise I had made—to accept a pecuniary favor of a woman. The unwritten code of the time held this as hardly the correct thing, unless you married the woman, when everything she had became yours, and the favor, if such, ceased almost to be one.

Blanche had a few years previous been left a few thousand dollars by an eccentric uncle, who, possibly recognizing something of her independent spirit, said, when closely questioned by some over-anxious relatives as to his reason for so doing, that he believed Blanche was a girl who could use her own money for herself, and he wanted to give her a chance. He didn't think, he added, it was the fair thing that a girl's capital should be salted down until some lazy loafer of a husband came along to use it, and generally lose it. He didn't care what she did with her money, so that she used it for her own pleasure in any and every possible way except that of handing it over to a husband. "I give it to you," he remarked, "not to the man who, not content with robbing you of your name, wants your money along with it. Lend it, spend it, scatter it, do anything with it, except bring it, like a good little girl, to the chuckle-head who wants to marry you for it."

Uncle John Sefton was a nondescript in opinion, and seemed to take pleasure in holding none that were popular. He had been a privateersman—some said also a slaver, and others a pirate—carried a bullet in one leg, the mark of which he was fond of showing without much regard to time, place or fitness.

I resolved to use the money. She had been diplomatic in not offering it as a gift, and in putting the transaction on a business footing. To refuse it under the present circumstances would result, I felt, in putting a great barrier between myself and Blanche. It seemed as if she said to me: "I am in this giving you the opportunity you need. You are no man if you quarrel with the instrument put in your hands because it does not come exactly in the manner you would have it."

I could see in imagination, as clearly as though she stood before me, the way in which Blanche would have taken back from me her gift. I saw her calmly listening to my statement and as calmly receiving from me the notes, and then continuing conversation on general topics as if the whole affair had not a feather's weight in her mind. But under all that seeming indifference I knew there would be imagination, disappointment and two miles distant, on muleback; the vegetation and flowers entirely different from those of the east; the birds of other species; the very air seemed made of other elements. It was all another world, and it brought to me continually a sensation of newness.

"My boy," said Broener, one evening soon after our arrival, "you want to know about the mines and mining, eh? All new comers are more or less crazy on that subject. Now, I'll sum it up in a word. The mines are a humbug—a gigantic humbug."

"A humbug!"

"Practically, for three-fourths of those who dig, yes. The cream of it won't last over three or four years. Thousands more are to come. Every digger who takes an ounce out of the soil takes it out forever. Gold don't grow again—soon. Then there isn't half as much dug as people imagine. One lucky find blinds everybody's eyes to the nineteen or twenty-nine, or may be more, people who find just enough to scratch along on. It's the hardest kind of work. Knocks a man's constitution over in short metre. No let up, summer or winter. It's digging, lifting rocks, or standing in ice-cold water for hours. No recreation but cards, poor whisky, or worse. You dig out a dollar, and must spend half of it for what would cost you but three cents in the states. The men who are really to make the money are the merchants and land owners. These idiots all about here are now really digging for them. You wonder to hear me say this. Not a bright picture, is it? Now, I'm a lucky miner. You think this about here is my claim. Well, it isn't. This dirt pile is a blind. My real claim is half a mile from this spot. I'll show it to you to-morrow and reveal you some mysteries.

The next day we went to the spot he had indicated, first ascending Scrub mountain, in the rear of our cabin, at a pretty steep inclination, and after attaining a height of about 1,000 feet, going down again.

"Look down," said Broener, as we came to an opening in the manzanita bushes, where our way led along a steeply jutting projection of the mountain.

I did so. The river's bank—in some places rocky and steeply inclined, in others denting the rapid current with little level beaches—was alive with working miners. Hundreds of cradles were rocking to and fro. The grating of the pebbles on the iron bottoms of their top selves sounded like the crashing roar of some great factory. Men were toiling to and fro with dirt-laden buckets. Others were lying in all manner of cramped-up positions on the bare, steeply shelving rocks, already hot from the glare of the morning sun, drawing from deep crevices with long spoons, or pieces of iron hoop bent at the end, bits of dirt and placing them in pans at their side. At other points men were standing waist deep in the river, occupied in laying semi-circular walls of stone projecting into the stream.

"I take this path," said Broener, "to keep out of the way of those fellows. It's a hard one, but it pays. Could reach my claim in ten minutes by the river. This route takes near an hour. Reason: I mustn't let those chaps scent out my lead. They'd avalanche me if they should. I've got, you see, a big thing; but if they got wind of it, there's no law could protect me. They're all in Egyptian darkness now. They think all the gold in the country is in that dirt. Hope they'll think so for some time to come."

Walking down the mountain at varying angles, we came to a little shelf densely covered with foliage, about five hundred feet above the river. Miners at work were thickly clustered directly below us.

"Softly now!" said Broener. "Stoop here, so they won't see us, and don't talk loud."

Stooping, and at times half crawling through the chapparal, we crossed a shelf, coming directly on the rocky mountain side rising an overhanging barrier before us. Fragments of gray and white rock lay all about as they had tumbled down the mountain.

Broener sat down on a fragment and whispered to me:

"We are at the mine."

"We are at the mine."

"I see nothing here like a mine," said I.

"Of course not," he replied, "I don't mean that anybody shall. But those fellows down there would give their heads if they knew what was up here. What do you think of that?" and he handed me a bit of white rock, the outside thickly crusted with gold, brighter far than the dust I had seen taken from the river and its banks. "That's a part of the mine. That's quartz. They haven't got on the trail of quartz yet in this land. When they do there'll be a bigger whoop up than ever."

"You see," continued Broener, "I happened to get whatever education has been filtered into me at a German university. Mineralogy was my favorite study. There I became acquainted with Madame Quartz—the matrix, in fact mother, of gold—a mother who has a good deal to answer for in bringing so much of the root of all evil into the world. So soon as I arrived in these mines I knew that the gold which has through ages drifted into all these rivers, creeks and gulches, must have tumbled some time or other out of this kind of rock, and wherever the rock was, there was the chance of finding gold in the 'original package.' So I hunted and I found it at last, and here are more of the original packages."

He turned up a flat bowlder as he spoke, and underneath, in a cavity, lay a pile of the yellow-flecked white rock. Pieces were there varying in size from a potato to a human skull. Some seemed half gold. I picked up the biggest, and was astonished at its weight.

"That's a hundred ouncer," said Broener, "outside the rock it carries. Seventeen hundred dollars more than the whole crowd on the bar below will get out in a day. It makes me laugh to think of those poor devils humping themselves down there, and fighting over sardines of thirty-three feet claims to the man, when there's enough up here to send them all to the old boy. For there's where most of 'em would go if they struck it."

And he laid back and had his laugh out in an expansive, silent grin, whose heartiness seemed to pervade his whole being. "Singular," he remarked, "how circumstances alter cases. Rich as I am, I can't afford to laugh aloud, lest the peons below hear me. They alone can enjoy that luxury."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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8.40 a.m—For St. Stephen, and for Bangor and points west, Fredericton, St. Andrews, Houlton and Woodstock.
4.45 p.m—For Fredericton and intermediate points.
8.30 p.m—(Except Saturday night)—For Bangor, Portland, Boston, and all points west, (except Saturday and Sunday nights), for Houlton, Woodstock, St. Stephen, Presque Isle and Grand Falls, with Pullman Sleeping Car for Bangor.
ARRIVALS AT ST. JOHN.
5.45 a.m—(Except Monday Morning)—From Bangor, Portland, Boston and all points west, and from St. Stephen, Houlton and Woodstock, Presque, Isle and Edmundston.
9.00 a.m—From Fredericton and intermediate points.
2.20 p.m—From Bangor, Portland, Boston and all points west, and from Fredericton, St. Andrews, St. Stephen, Houlton, Woodstock, Grand Falls and Presque Isle.
7.00 p. m.—From St. Stephen, and from St. Andrews, Fredericton, Holton and Woodstock.
LEAVE CARLETON.
8.00 a.m—For Fairville, and for Bangor and all points west, Fredericton, St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Houlton and Woodstock.
4.30 p.m—For Fairville, and for Fredericton. and intermediate points.
ARRIVE AT CARLETON.
8.40 a.m—From Fairville.
5.05 p.m—From Fairville and points west.
H. D. McLEOD, Supt. Southern Division. F. W. CRAM, Gen. Manager.
J. P. LEAVITT, Gen. Pass. and Ticket Agent.
St. John, N. B., October 17, 1887.

INTERCOLONIAL RAILWAY.
1887 WINTER ARRANGEMENT. 1888
ON and after MONDAY, Nov. 28th 1887 the trains of this Railway will run daily (Sunday excepted) as follows:—
Trains will Leave St. John.

DAY EXPRESS	7 30
ACCOMMODATION	11 20
EXPRESS FOR SUSSEX	16 35
EXPRESS FOR HALIFAX & QUEBEC	18 00

A Sleeping Car runs daily on the 18 00 train to Halifax.
On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, a Sleeping Car for Montreal will be attached to the Quebec Express, and on Monday, Wednesday and Friday a Sleeping Car will be attached at Moncton.
Trains will Arrive at St. John:

EXPRESS FROM HALIFAX & QUEBEC	7 00
EXPRESS FROM SUSSEX	8 35
ACCOMMODATION	13 30
DAY EXPRESS	19 20

All Trains are run by Eastern Standard Time.
D. POTTINGER, Chief Superintendent.
RAILWAY OFFICE, Moncton, N. B., November 22nd, 1887.

Grand Southern Railway.
ST. STEPHEN & ST. JOHN.
EASTERN STANDARD TIME.
ON AND AFTER MONDAY, Feb. 20, Trains will run daily (Sundays excepted), as follows:—
LEAVE ST. JOHN at 10.45 a. m., and Carleton at 11.10 a. m., for St. George, St. Stephen, and intermediate points, arriving in St. George at 2.11 p. m.; St. Stephen at 4.12 p. m.
LEAVE St. Stephen at 8.30 a. m.; St. George at 10.35 a. m.; arriving in Carleton at 1.35 p. m.; St. John at 1.50 p. m.
Both trains will stop at Musquash for refreshments.
Freight, up to 500 or 600 lbs.—not large in bulk—will be received by JAMES MOULSON, 40 Water street, up to 5 p. m.; all larger weights and bulky freight must be delivered at the Warehouse, Carleton, before 6 p. m.
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