

SIR WILLIAM'S WILL

Mollie laughed shortly. "Because she wouldn't go."
"What you want is change," he said, after this piece of defiance. "I mean change of scene, place, surroundings, and freedom from worry. Let me see." He considered for a moment. Mollie waiting with a semblance of patience, and meeting Clytie's reproachful gaze with a grimace. "Yes; I used to send you, when you were a child, to Withycombe. You remember?"

Mollie clapped her hands. "Rather! Of course! Dear old Withycombe! That jolly old farmhouse on the hill running down to the beach. With the fishing-boats and the lime-kill! The very place! Let's go there, Clytie, dear; go at once. It's only twenty miles; and we can put up at the farm, and take some horses, and the pony jingle, and make a regular picnic of it. Mother Bunce at the farm—what a dear, fat old thing she used to be."

"Mrs. Bunce is dead," said Doctor Morton. "But the farm is being run by her married daughter."

"I don't remember her," said Mollie.

"I dare say not. Really, I think you can't do better than go there, and at once, as Miss Mollie says," he resumed.

"Yes," said Mollie. "And tell Mr. Granger not to worry her with letters, and papers, and things."

"I will obey your royal highness commands," he said.

Mollie nodded, not at all crushed by his sarcasm.

"I always like you; you are so sensible," she declared, with emphatic approval. "I'll send word to Mrs.—what's her name—at once, and we'll start to-morrow or the next day at latest. And I'll bring Clytie back as fat as one of the Butleys' little pigs, and burned as black as a nigger; then you can go around and boast how you've cured her."

Dr. Morton grinned. "Thank you. Do you know what I should prescribe for you, if I had my way?"

"No, and it doesn't matter. I shouldn't take it. I once poured a bottle of medicine into a flower pot; and the way that poor flower shrivelled up and died was a lesson to me. Ask him to stay to lunch, Clytie; he's been so sensible and good."

The doctor declined, gently displacing and patting the arm thrown around his; and when he had gone, Mollie, ignoring Clytie's attempts at a lecture, set about their preparations.

Simple as they were, they took three days in the making; for Mrs. Fry, at the farm to which they were going, had to get the rooms for her expected lodgers, the horses had to be sent on, and so on; but on the evening of the third day the two girls arrived at the quaintly beautiful combe, or valley, which, like a cleft in the hills, wound in serpentine fashion from the uplands to the sea's margin. It was one of the most secluded spots imaginable, and the Hill Farm, as it was called, looked down upon a thin line of thatched cottages that stood on the edge of the narrow road which the new inhabitants proudly designated a "street."

These inhabitants were, with the exception of the few farm laborers, fishermen, as simple and as rustic as children of a larger growth; the place was seldom visited by tourists—who made for the neighboring and more famous combe, Pethwick—and no spot would have been better chosen for Clytie's troubled mind.

The farmhouse was a large and old-fashioned one; and Mollie, as she



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looked round their sitting-room, gave a nod of satisfaction and approval.

"Just the very thing you want, my dear!" she declared. "No state, no ceremony, no ffoles, no flunkies—by the way, I like flunkies—and, better still, no Mr. Granger and his business letters, and best of all, no Mr. Hesketh Carton! I like Mrs. Fry; looks a sensible sort of woman, and she doesn't threaten to fuss. It's more her misfortune than her fault that she doesn't remember us. Tells me that she went abroad with her husband 'long, long years ago.' But she is evidently and properly impressed by the honor of having the two Bramley princesses beneath her roof—and oh, yes, some clotted cream, by all means! I remember them of old. How ill they used to make me! But I'm stronger now; plenty of cream, Mrs. Fry. What are you mooning about, Clytie?"

Clytie was looking out of the window at the sea, which lay like an opal in the setting sun, and she started slightly.

"I was thinking that it would be good to live here forever," she said, dreamily.

"That's symbolical of your condition, my dear sister. Withycombe is all very well for a time; but give me Bramley Hall, and the flunkies, for a permanency."

Clytie slept soundly that night. Mollie, creeping from her bed and listening at Clytie's door, heard the regular breathing, and nodded approvingly, and the next morning came down with a touch of color in her cheeks.

After breakfast—the wholesome breakfast of broad rashers and golden eggs, of home-made bread and butter and clotted cream—Mollie insisted upon dragging Clytie down to the beach. Some of the fishermen were pottering about their boats, or mending their nets, and they and their wives and children greeted the young ladies with evident but unreserved cordiality, and watched them.

"And we spoiled your chance this morning. I'm sorry," said Mollie, though she did not look so.

"Not at all," responded Jack politely. "It is very pleasant in the bay this morning. I hope you're comfortable," he added. "The backboard isn't very soft, I'm afraid. I could put this tarpaulin—"

He unshipped the oars, and, folding the tarpaulin smoothly, arranged it at their backs.

"Thank you," said Clytie, with a little surprise in her voice; for he had moved so easily, had so carefully avoided touching them, though the boat was rocking slightly, with a certain self-possession quite unlike the ordinary rough, though respectful, movements of the ordinary Withycombe men.

He went back to the thwart, and the two girls leaned back with the usual feminine little settling of themselves.

"That's much nicer. Are you married, Douglas?" said Mollie, again evoking Clytie's murmured rebuke.

"No, miss," said Jack gravely, but repressing a smile.

"You managed this thing behind us so nicely that I thought you might be," she explained. "You don't mind my asking you?"

"Not in the least," said Jack pleasantly.

"Most men are married, aren't they?" she suggested idly.

"What a number of gulls there are," put in Clytie, before he could respond to this piece of generalization. "Ought we not to turn back, dear?"

"Oh, not yet," replied Mollie. "What could we do better than this, if we went back? I've seen Mrs. Fry's pig, and I've fed the fowls. Let us ask him to take us to Jess' cave. Do you know it?" she asked of Jack.

He replied in the affirmative, and pulled a little more quickly, and presently in toward the shore, and into the mouth of the cave.

"Let us get out," said Mollie. "There used to be a quantity of shells here, and I should like some."

She jumped out and held her hand to Clytie, but as Clytie took it the boat, notwithstanding Jack's efforts to keep it steady, rolled away from the boulder on which Mollie stood, and as she still held Clytie's hand one or both of the girls would have been dragged into the water, if he had not called out rather sharply:

"Let go!"

Mollie obeyed, and they escaped the ducking; but Mollie looked at him rather curiously than indignantly, and Jack said:

"I beg your pardon, miss, but I was afraid—"

"Oh, that's all right, Douglas," she broke in, accepting the apology in her free-and-easy way. "Now, Clytie, you're not going to sit down, you might as well have stayed in the boat! Help me find some of those nice, nobly little shells."

Jack was unshipping his left oar as the flame struck on his ear, and he

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let the oar fall with a splash into the water.

"Oh, what's that?" cried Mollie.

"Nothing, miss," he said, as, very red in the face, he picked up the oar. He was a trifle pale by the time he had got it, and resumed his former position.

Clytie! Clytie! Then she was the Miss Bramley his father had willed him to marry. Yes; what an idiot he had been not to recognize her! He stole a glance at her, and, of course, with the clue the name had supplied, remembered her distinctly. Was this the almost scraggy little girl all legs and arms, with whom he had once played? It seemed impossible. What a beautiful young woman she had grown into. How she had changed! And how changed he must be, seeing that she had not recognized him!

It was an awkward moment for him; for the fact of these two girls being the Miss Bramleys affected him, he told himself, almost more than it should have done. For, after all,

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he asked himself, what did it matter? Plain or pretty, he had surrendered, renounced her; no, set her free, that was the pleasantest way of regarding it. He was rather glad that he had seen her. She would make a beautiful and gracious mistress of the old Hall—the house of her fathers—in every way a fitting and suitable mistress. He should always be glad to remember that he had spent some hours with her, had seen for himself that she was worthy of the position he had it dreamily, could not help thinking of the strange fact that for a year, at any rate, she was the mistress of it.

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She had scarcely bestowed a second glance on the fisherman whom Mollie, in her masterful way, had "commandered," had scarcely noticed whether he was young or old.

Mollie leaned forward, her hands clasping her knees, her bright eyes flitting from one point to another, occasionally resting for a moment on Jack's grave face.

"Pretty girls, both of them," Jack thought. "The elder is right down beautiful. Reminds me of some one—can't remember who, though. Seems thoughtful and rather sad; in mourning, too, I suppose." Each girl had a black band to her white dress. "Lost somebody, I expect. Wonder who they are—visitors?"

"Jolly, isn't it?" said Mollie, throwing herself back and trailing her hand in the water. "Do you think there is another place in the world so beautiful as this?"

Clytie looked round.

"No, dear. Oh, yes; I imagine there must be."

"Well, I doubt it," said Mollie. "Abroad, perhaps. What do you say? Have you been abroad, in foreign lands?" she asked Jack, abruptly, so abruptly that he almost started, for he was aroused to the consciousness of the fact that he was staring at the older girl.

"Yes," he said. "I have traveled a good deal. It's very beautiful, though. Perhaps some of the bits along the Portugal coast—and Sydney Harbor—"

The tone of his voice was so unlike that of the Withycombe fishermen that Clytie's attention was attracted to him, but only faintly and transiently.

"Oh, I know," said Mollie. "Australia raves about Sydney Harbor, and

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when the ship is going into it they run about among the strangers and ask them what they think about it. One man hung a board across his chest with "Yes, it's a fine harbor; but you didn't make it!"

Jack laughed. "That's a good story," he said, approvingly.

"I should have thought you'd have heard that," said Mollie, "if you've traveled much."

"I have," he admitted, "but it's worth hearing again."

His sang-froid gave Mollie pause for a moment; then she said:

"Are you living here, Douglas?"

"Yes, for the present," replied Jack.

"You know it very well?" she asked, casually.

"I only arrived here a week or two ago," he answered, with strict veracity.

"You're a sailor, then?"

He nodded. "Yes; and several other things; tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, apothecary—yes, most of 'em, barring the thief," said Jack, cheerfully.

"Mollie!" murmured Clytie, in an undertone; and Mollie was silent for a moment or two; then, as if she were pining for intelligent conversation, she began again.

"I suppose you have some friends, relations, here at Withycombe?"

"No," said Jack, calmly, and looking over his shoulder. "Nary one. I just happened to come to the place."

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"I'm taking a bit of a holiday."

"Oh, then, why didn't you say you didn't want any work when I asked you to row us?" she demanded.

"Well, this is scarcely work," he said, with a smile. He was amused by her sharpness and pertinacity, and was rapidly taking a liking to her. "I mean—that it isn't hard work."

"You've done a good deal, I suppose, in your time?" she suggested.

"A fair amount," he said. "Oh, yes."

"Have you been ill? Why did you want a rest?" she asked.

"Just laziness," said Jack.

"You don't look lazy," she remarked, with the frankness which in any one but Mollie might have been offensive; but Jack laughed, as most of her victims did.

"Appearances are deceitful, miss," he said, suddenly, remembering that his manner of speech was rather too free and easy for his assumed character. "I'm one of the laziest of men—when I get the chance. It isn't often I do, though."

With smiling but unobtrusive interest, as they made their way over the rocks to the sea edge.

"A sail—no; no wind; a row wouldn't be bad," said Mollie. "It's years since I was in a boat. I wonder whether there is a man who could take us."

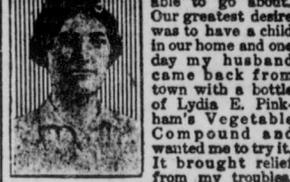
she added, looking round.

A young man, in a blue jersey and fishermen's long sea-boots, was sitting on the edge of a boat with his

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arm folded and a pipe stuck in the corner of his mouth. He had been observing the girls for some time. Mollie went up to him.

"Can you take us for a row?" she asked, with the calmness, the freedom from embarrassment, which belonged to Mollie.

He took the pipe from his mouth, and his hand went up to his hat, but dropped again, even in the act of lifting the sailor's cap. He eyed her for a moment; then, as if regretting his hesitation, said:

"Certainly, miss." And began pushing his boat into the tideway.

"He will take us," said Mollie, returning to Clytie, who had seated herself on a rock and was looking out to sea.

The young fellow launched the boat, and brought it to a boulder and stood waiting. He helped the two girls in without a word and shipped the oars.

"Not far," said Mollie, "and keep near the coast, in case—"

She broke off and looked steadily at the fisherman. "What is your name?" she asked in a casual fashion.

"Douglas—Jack Douglas," he replied.

"Oh! Well, don't go too far out, Jack," she said, more casually even than before, and stifled a yawn.

(To Be Continued.)

Stuffed Potatoes.
Six potatoes, one tablespoonful chopped parsley, one very small onion (chopped), two ounces butter, one ounce ham (chopped), a little cream. Bake the potatoes, then cut in half, and scrape out the middle. Mix with the other ingredients until smooth, add cream, fill the cases and bake in the oven until a golden brown.

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In accepting an invitation to a poker party you naturally expect to take pot luck.