

Captain Macklin

DOBBS FERRY, Sunday, Midnight

It's all over. It will be a long time before I add another chapter to my "Memoirs." When I have written this one they are to be sealed, and to-morrow they are to be packed away in Aunt Mary's cedar chest. I am now writing these lines after everyone else has gone to bed.

It happened after dinner. Aunt Mary was upstairs, and Beatrice was at the piano. We were waiting for Lowell, who had promised to come up and spend the evening. I was sitting at the centre-table, pretending to read, but watching Beatrice. Her back was turned toward me, so I could stare at her as long as I pleased. The light of the candles on each side of the music-rack fell upon her hair, and made it flash and burn. She had twisted it high, in a coil, and there never was anything more lovely than the burnished copper against the white glow of her skin, nor anything so noble as the way her head rose upon her neck and sloping shoulders. It was like a flower on a white stem.

She was not looking at the music before her, but up at nothing, while her hands ran over the keyboard, playing an old sailor's "chantey" which Lowell has taught us. It carries with it all the sweep and murmur of the sea at night.