

"The post always brings me strange tidings now," he said, quietly; and then he told the tale of that letter.

'Lisbeth listened eagerly. What! could it really be true?—one of Michael Proudfoot's boys alive in New Guinea, saved in that dreadful massacre—Jesse, was it—little Jesse, of whom Perran had so often spoken?

"Oh, Perran, Perran! but that is good news—good—the best you have had for many a long day—is it not?" she broke out.

"Yes, yes, if it really be so. My little Jesse—my little brother! But look, 'Lisbeth, it is but a rumor. The letter says there is great doubt about the matter. No one has seen the child; report alone alleges that a young white boy is kept by a tribe of natives in the interior, as a sort of god, and almost worshipped. The news has reached Sydney, where they consider the child to belong to the wrecked ship *Medway*. It may be so, and, anyway, I am in a great difficulty now as to my line of action."

"Oh, Perran! There is but one thing to be done—we must go and find Jesse."

"We"; the little word was sweet to the young husband's ears. He drew the shawl closer round 'Lisbeth, and did not take away his arm.

"Dear, you are right; I must go and seek my little brother; but not you, 'Lisbeth, not you. New Guinea is not Australia; it is a land of savages—nay, cannibals, it is said; your father would never give his consent to my exposing you to such dangers."

"Perran," said 'Lisbeth, sitting up very straight on the old-fashioned sofa, "till the other day I would never have gone against one word of my father's; now I am your wife, and I have other duties to think of. Where you go, I shall go."

Then 'Lisbeth took the great strong hand which grasped her shoulder and held it tight in her own. "You are mine," she said, "as much as I am yours. Now, let us talk about how this is to be done; or, stay, father will let us have the trap. Ruby is roughed; let us go directly and see what Captain Mostyn says, he knows all about those countries. Come, Perran; better do that before we tell the others downstairs."

But Perran still held back; he had something more to say, yet it was hard to say it.

'Lisbeth waited, wondering.

"Child, you do not see what all this means. I do; and God forgive me if for a moment the thought of little Jesse come to life is not all joy. Do you not see, 'Lisbeth, that if this rumor is true I am not master of Green Meadows, and you are not mistress—it all belongs to the little lad among the savages."

There was a moment's dread silence—'Lisbeth had not realized this, indeed. Did it come, for a second, like a swift, sudden shadow

over her life? If it did, the girl struggled back into the sunlight directly. "Let him have Green Meadows; I've got you safe," she laughed, almost gaily. "Poor Perran! I see it all now; but, oh! it makes everything so plain, so very plain. Now, indeed, we must find Jesse. *Straightforward*, you know. And it must be straight to New Guinea instead of Green Meadows."

Innocent 'Lisbeth! She talked as if Truro and London were under discussion, and New Guinea as little to be feared. Perran's face was still troubled.

"What will your father say? Oh, 'Lisbeth, if only this letter had come last month!"

"Before our marriage? Perran, I shall think you never loved me if you say such things! But you are my husband, and we can't be parted; the Bible says so, so I don't mind. I don't mind *anything*!"

There was a cheery decision in the girl's voice which roused Perran, and he took fresh courage.

"That was a good idea of yours, 'Lisbeth, about Captain Mostyn; but I will walk over alone to Cobbe—nay, you may trust me," for 'Lisbeth's face was all one appeal in a moment. "I will make no plans without your consent. And, meantime, try not to let them downstairs know anything is wrong. Wrong! Oh, how wicked money makes us! My little Jesse—God bless him!"

'Lisbeth quite understood her husband's feelings, and she had a dread of the tone her father would take when he heard the strange news.

She tried, therefore, to meet the group in the old hall composedly, so as to raise no suspicion. Perran had had a letter from Sydney, she told them, with new arrangements proposed in it; he must consult Captain Mostyn; and, meantime, what about the package? Revolvers for Perran and the Captain! Nothing but guns. What a stupid box!

She laughed in rather guilty fashion. Her mind naturally wandered to that land of savages where such weapons might be sorely needed, and to which she and Perran were bound by every tie of nature and honor. She needed, however, petting and cheering; for things went terribly against her in those following days.

All the world—all her world of loved and honored counsellors—decreed that she ought to stay quietly in England, under her father's roof, while Perran sought to discover the truth of that strange rumor of the hidden child in New Guinea. She would only hamper him in the search, people said, and then the risk of life would be so terrible.

When they came to that part of the subject, 'Lisbeth's face would grow stern and her eyes fall. Bad signs both her mother knew.

Only one sentence could be got out of her: "Nothing shall part me and Perran."