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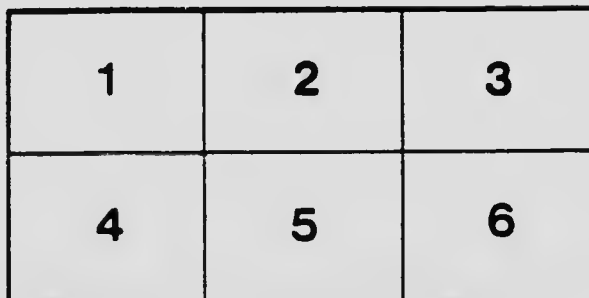
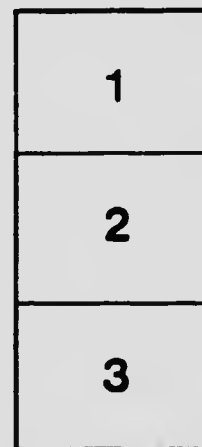
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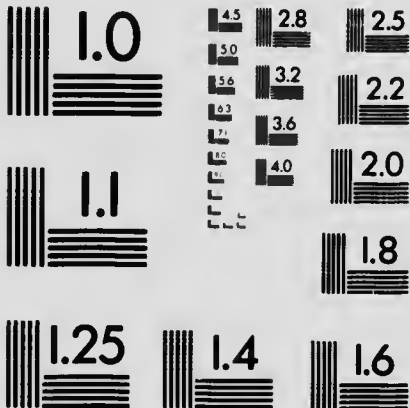
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**THE SEA-FARERS**





THE  
SEA-FARERS

A ROMANCE OF A NEW  
ENGLAND COAST TOWN

BY  
MARY GRAY MORRISON

TORONTO  
THE MUSSON BOOK CO.

1901

PS 3525

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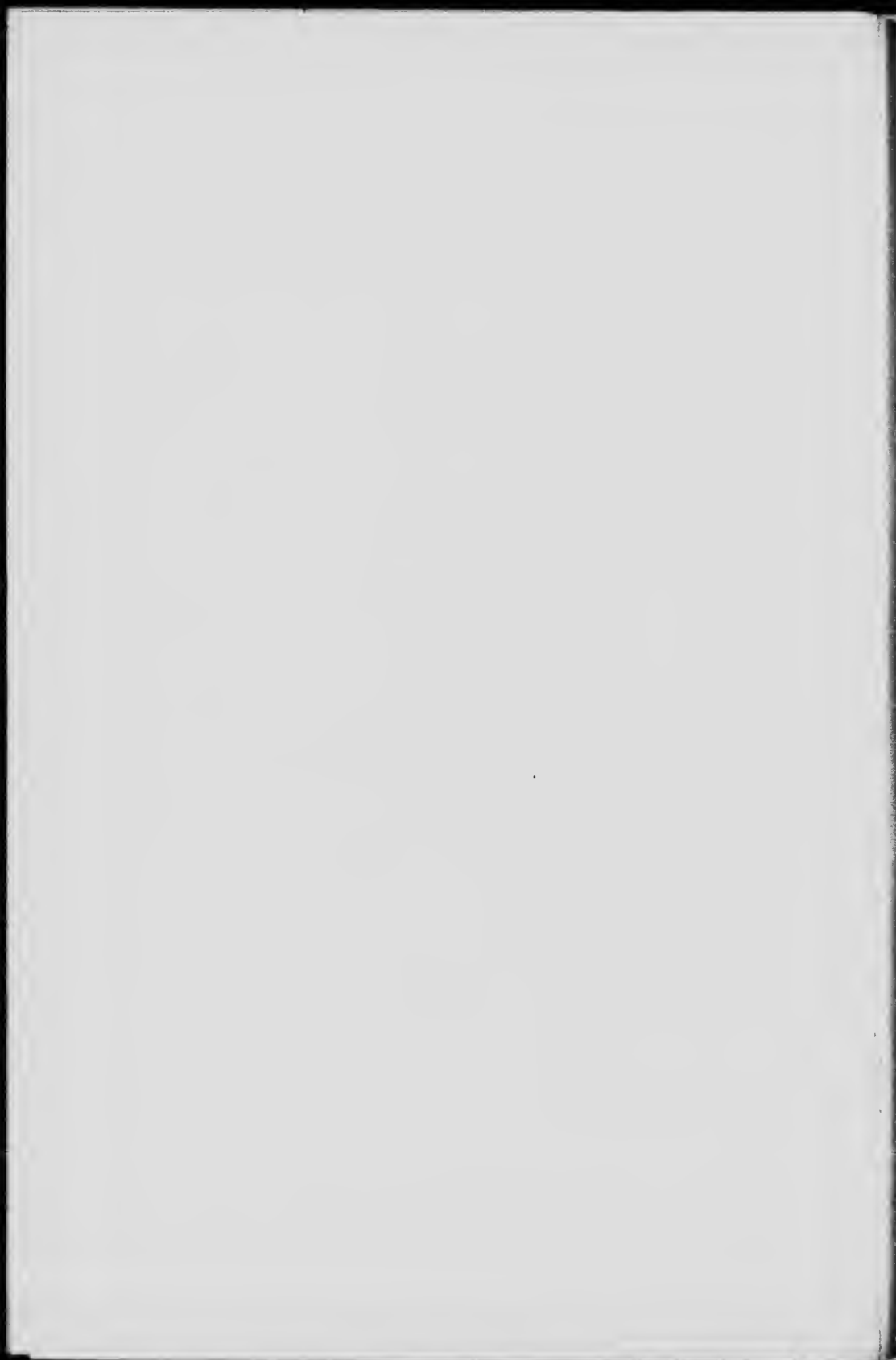
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1901

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NEW YORK

TO THE MEMORY OF  
MY MOTHER



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# THE SEA-FARERS

## ANCESTRY

THE tide was nearly full. The crust of barnacles and the stain of salt water upon the piers of the oldest quay were hidden by new waves washing restlessly over them. As far as eye could reach from left to right stretched the wharves, and the masts of ships at anchor seemed to crowd the sky with delicate dark lines. Myriads of men, blue-eyed New Englanders and black-bearded Spaniards and Portuguese, shouted hoarsely to one another in uncouth English or foreign jargon. Out of the apparent confusion great wagons which they had been loading rumbled across the docks and rattled away through the narrow streets close by, where old men and idle women and children stared from windows and doors, speculating on their contents. The gambrel-roofed houses seemed to be wondering too. They stood at all angles to the highway line, peering at the ships over one another's shoulders, as if they had hurried down to the shore in the early days, homesick for England, but had been refused in their prayer to be taken away. They were once the best houses in the town, but they would never be painted again. Mean little shops, representing spiritless attempts at living had been

opened on their street floors and the squalid poor crowded the rooms above. Beyond the busy wharves the harbor shores, dressed in the faded green of the late fall, stretched out protectingly. A brig at anchor was hoisting its sails, the great folds flapping loosely as they climbed the masts. A ship from the east was slowly moving up the bay. Beyond its three masts, beyond the harbor arms, was the sea. A haze was upon it, and the sky line was dim. The old mystery waited there, leading the senses away. The ear heard no longer the oaths and clatter on the wharves; the smell of cinnamon and musk mingling with the saltiness from the brine was forgotten. As though in answer to a call the mind flew from the land-locked present, out to the ancient sea, there hovered, dipping now and then, or swinging up and down with the wave.

Fitfully, at intervals, we realize the truth of our descent from this mother of all life. Faintly at such moments we trace the line of that unwritten pedigree. Her nature, echoed in our humanity, we recognize; the transmutation of the ways of matter into the ways of spirit. Her witless storms and surges repeat their motions in our wrung and passionate human heart. We are her many times great-grandchildren. Time has broken the links between. Her language we have lost. Lonely and hungry and mysterious and large she is, rolling on about the world when our small atoms rest



under the younger earth; a ravening mother, who has forgotten her offspring and would devour us if we risked our lives too near. The wild tiger is nearer her than we,—ages nearer and more like. Separated between us and her is something which impels us to attribute to that huge, moaning savage the longings, despair, fancies and hopes which she has never known. Always young because she cannot feel, she sees us age and die. We go to her, and she seems to listen; it is but the echo of our own voice calling. Sympathy she has none.

And therefore has every vestige of that dawn from which we came faded out of us? The vast, phantasmal atmosphere of the commencement of worlds is hers, and when we need that breath of a simpler day,—for complication chokes us, and we must begin anew,—we go to her for whom there is no modern life. A bigger unrest, but still one akin to ours is hers, and the lesser dies away in its mightier presence. Struggle, born of swarm and desperation, is too new a thing for her to understand. Alone she was at her emergence, and lonely she is still in all this varied world. Thought, creation, faith, aspiration, in the modern force called soul, what has the long-outgrown sea to do with these? She does His will and waits, far back in time, soulless, mindless, pitiless, loveless, but our mother still. And we, who were atoms driven to and fro as foam is torn, crying for a moment, then forever silent, or else tossed upon the shore, gasping, fight-

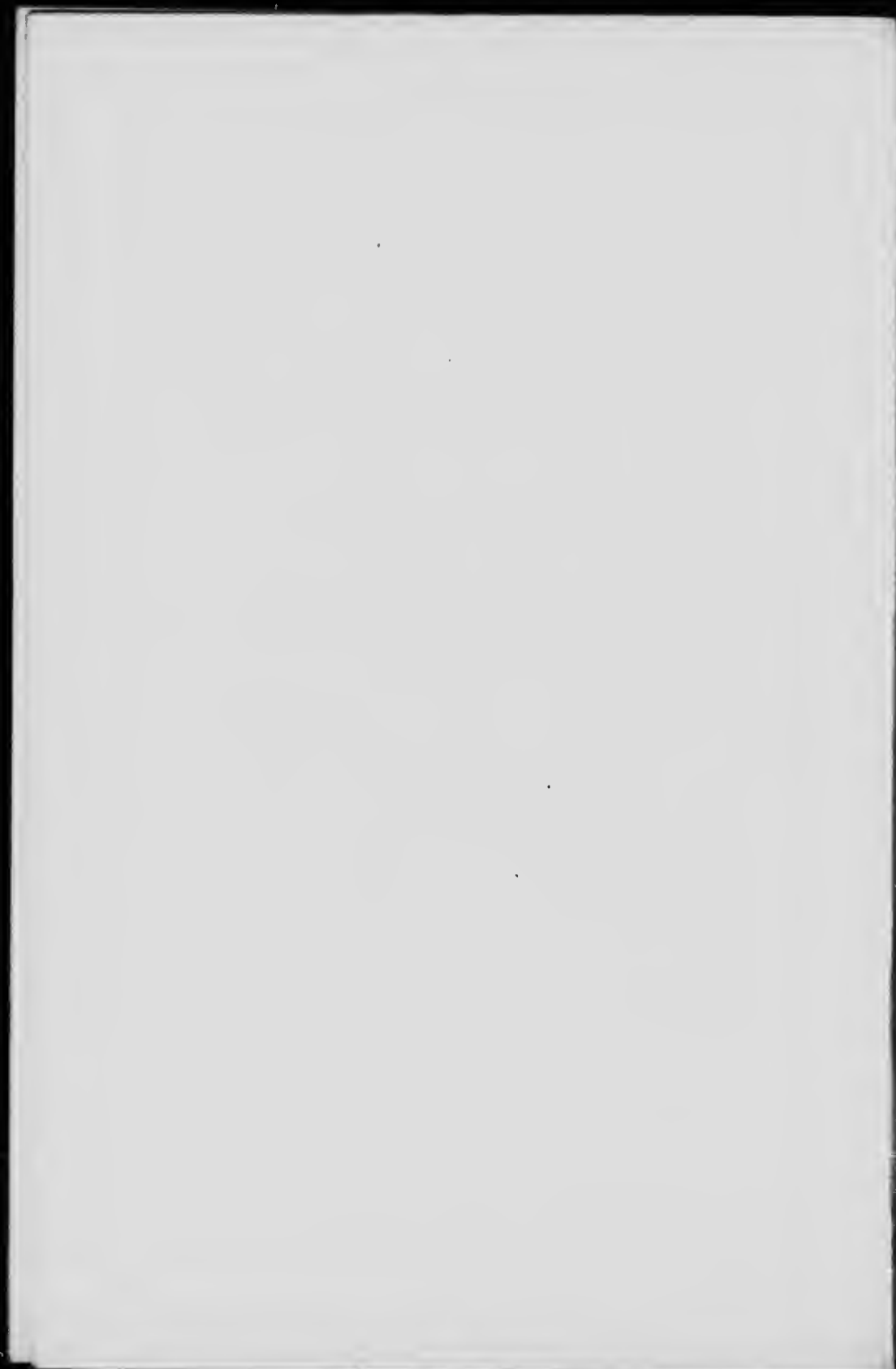
ing, we have age by age been growing, humanizing, levelling mountains, chaining rivers, lifting our small imaginings in wood and stone against the sky and winds, the greens and snows, of the longer thoughts of God.

Such has been what we call our life. But the sullen sea we left has never changed. Some gentler natures of us turn to her in pain, with perhaps some faint remembrance of the tie between. Some wilder natures of us are not far from her; more one with storm and waves than with the quiet land, they recognize upon their hot hearts a mother's touch of healing. Such are of the ancient order, the early world, at odds with this, unlearned in the latest lore of soul and heart, savage sons of the grey sea.

The brig that was hoisting her canvas has weighed anchor and sailed. The incoming ship is lying at the wharf. The past is dead. The present with its loaded vessel home from Celebes, its cargo ready for Sumatra, its merchant and its deck-hand, seem all that really is. The sea is dim and out of mind; all but the sound of its small impatient waves fretting against the piers.

Book First

**FLOOD TIDE**



## II

### BARBARA

THE iteration of the strokes droning musically in from the hall roused Barbara Temple when it was eleven o'clock. She drew the shade at one window and looked up the street. Her eyes were so dazzled by the firelight into which she had been staring for an hour, that at first the night seemed to be alone outside, but she was soon aware that a wind was with the night, swaying the elm branches, delicately fine in their last leaves, and sweeping their shadows restlessly back and forth across the closely shaven grass. The gorgeous leaves which had been dropping from the maple-trees all day in the sun, were disguised in dark dominoes now, and went whirling by to some merrier dancing ground where it was light. Barbara glanced in the direction from which they came, but the lamp in the hall was shining upon the wide low steps and the fluted stone columns of the portico so that she could see nothing beyond. The house, which stood at a distance from the wharves, was separated from the street by a small lawn, and a paved roadway to the left led to the stables in the rear, as well as to the conservatory from which a bridge crossed to one of the long windows. The elm-tree, the swinging shadows

and flying leaves looked strange to Barbara as though in some sense she were seeing them for the first time. "Behold I make all things new," flashed into her mind amidst a chaos of other images hurtling through it. Her breath was short against the windowpane, her eyes wide open, her cheeks flushed. For the moment the barriers seemed down between time and eternity, between life and death. A tide within had risen above its high water line; it had lifted old landmarks away, wrecks of many things were driving here and there upon its crests, the roar of its strong wave was beating in her ears. Bits of forgotten songs, stray verses from the Psalms, illuminated, flashing with meaning, faces of old friends suddenly interpreted, all were flung up in tumult from the deeps and were the sport of this almost awful rising of the inmost nature through which she had faced herself as a stranger. The waves were subsiding now, but she wondered as she stood there whether the face of the world would ever be the same again, or would always remain a place of vast possibilities, new and bewildering and beautiful, like this.

All at once she pressed her forehead against the cold glass. "O, poor papa!" she said in a whisper,—"poor mamma!" A man and woman had started out of the shadows in the street. Both glanced up when they were opposite the window and the man nodded and smiled. Barbara ran into the hall and opened the door before her father could find his

key. "Well, I'm glad to get home, little girl," he said as he followed his wife into the house. "Thank heaven *that* dinner will never have to be eaten again!"

"Barbara," called Mrs. Temple, standing under the lamp before she loosened the lace about her head, "I wish you would see if there is any mud on the skirt of this dress. Light grey shows everything, and that crossing was a disgrace to the town. No, farther round at the side. I don't know but it would have been better to have had the carriage out even for that distance. There, do you see any?"

"No, mamma," said Barbara after a careful search. "You never get splashed as I do."

"Only because I am more careful," replied her mother in the same even voice in which she had made her complaints.

"I've had two of those old twinges in my shoulder to-night, Barbara," continued Temple, pausing on his way to the drawing-room door. "No, come to think of it, I've had three; one was slight. I'm convinced they're always worse when I'm bored."

"Dull, was it?" she asked.

"Dull!" echoed her father expressively, walking away into the room Barbara had left.

She stood watching her mother's face as the elder woman folded her lace scarf, a pretty face, with pale brown hair about it and not a line in the skin

but the single furrow between the grey eyes. A remark she had made the day before was in her daughter's mind.

"I often think," Mrs. Temple had said, "that I would rather risk my health by staying indoors indefinitely than get into the state you did in the rain this morning. I could not think of my eternal welfare nor that of anybody else if I had mud on my shoes. I shouldn't feel that things matched."

Barbara slipped her hand under her mother's arm as they went together into the room.

"I'm especially glad your dress escaped to-night, mamma," she said softly.

"Let's have more light, little girl!" exclaimed her father with his head resting against the back of the large armchair before the hearth. "I hate a lugubrious pit like this."

Barbara brought another lamp and poked and lifted the logs until the fire roared with flame. Then she sat on a low seat between her parents in a silence they did not at first notice, for the thoughts of both were busy with the festivity they had just left, the man lazily denouncing the soup, the cigars, the politics of the host, and the plainness of the women.

"Who was there?" Barbara asked.

"Your mother had young Tweedle-Dee Corenzio next her. He can talk if he can't do anything else," said Temple discontentedly. "Piano strumming seems to be looking up. I heard him talking about



saddle horses. I had a woman visiting there; deaf as an adder; Lord, Lord, how she tired me!"

"You started her on the subject of foreign missions; what could you expect?" asked his wife calmly.

"Missions! I asked her if she had heard Grisi sing, and she answered me that her father was one. The only fun I had was watching John Sumner. He had the oldest Fosdick, Saccharine Sally."

"Mr. Temple!" corrected his wife languidly.

"'O, general,' she says, 'I suppose you really killed *dozens* with your own hand! Isn't it *thrilling* to be a patriot?' John jerked a bud out of his buttonhole and threw it over his shoulder against the wall. 'Well, ma'am,' he says, 'I lost an arm in a war I never believed in; if you call that patriotism!' I caught his eye two or three times but he would not laugh. What do you want my hand for, pussy?"

Without answering Barbara reached for her mother's slim fingers also, which drew that lady's eyes to her.

"You're sitting too near the fire, child," she said. "Your face is scarlet. At twenty-five you still think that it is no matter, but you'll have no complexion at all by the time you're forty."

The girl turned her head and gave her mother one glance, shy, bright, and full of some new expression which checked Mrs. Temple's speech for

an instant, then she hurried on as if she had not noticed.

"I don't want you to be silly or vain, but it is unfeminine not to mind about one's looks, to a reasonable degree, and care does a great deal."

"Yes, mamma."

"I don't see that it does much," remarked the man. "Here am I having twinges just as if I sat in draughts like Tom, Dick and Harry, and was careless about my flannels. Well, how have you come on this evening, pussy? Any one in?"

"Yes, papa." Then after a faint pause, "Alden."

"O, Brother Alden! I wish you could have seen his father when he was asked if he didn't thrill. Well, what did *he* want?"

Barbara loosed her hands from those of her parents, and clasped them tightly round her knee. "He wanted me, papa."

"What! What!" exclaimed her father.

Her mother sat upright in her chair.

"O, I didn't mean to say it like this," Barbara went on breathlessly, "I meant to lead up to it!"

"Let me understand,"—and there was a little tremble in her mother's voice,—“has Alden Sumner told you that he—that you ——”

At this period in New England delicate consideration for others showed itself by sparing them all emotional expression, so Barbara hurried to say,

"Yes, mamma; if you and papa,—but you will!

You're glad, mamma? Papa, tell me! You're glad, aren't you?"

He made an ineffectual attempt to rise from his chair, for she held him down.

"I want my cigar," he said.

"I'll get it."

When she had turned away he remarked in a tone that sounded sulky, "It's too much like marrying your first cousin."

"O, he's seemed quite distant since he was at home this time," she answered, laughing with a little catch in her voice. "Haven't you noticed how seldom he has come here?"

She seemed to have a long search for the cigar, and when she brought it she stood where she was until her mother raised her head. The lines about Mrs. Temple's eyes had contracted, and she looked older than usual. Barbara knelt upon the cushion where she had been sitting and her mother took her face between her hands and kissed her.

"Now, papa," said Barbara, "if *you're* satisfied that's the main thing of course."

He removed his cigar to say, "I suppose so."

Barbara faltered. "I'm new to myself. I'm not used to it. But I know I can't be perfectly happy unless you both are. I couldn't bear that anything like this should be built up on any one's unhappiness. Say you're glad, if you honestly can! Do, papa."

"Of course I'm glad if you are. There, there!

Don't cry, or I'll go upstairs and not hear another word. How did all this come about?"

"I hardly know. It seemed to happen all at once, as it were," explained Barbara with natural embarrassment. "He says he hadn't meant to tell me just yet. He expected to find you both in, you see. He says he has thought of it—always."

She was looking into the fire, and her mother was watching her with an expression in which curiosity and sympathy were oddly mingled.

"I know he's immensely clever; everybody says that. But I shouldn't care how clever he was if he weren't good. I think he is the best man in the whole world,—of his age, of course. Then his father being such an old friend of yours, papa, makes a difference, doesn't it? Alden says the general will be glad. He wanted to stay and tell you both himself, but I said No. I made him leave before you came. I thought you would rather he did. It is a strange, strange thing," she went on softly after a pause, "that a girl can go on year after year, contented and commonplace, doing little things, and then be suddenly dizzy with a happiness above anything she ever deserved or imagined, like this. But you know how it is, mamma; you've been through it."

"I thought young Tweedle-Dum had half a chance, some time ago," suggested her father.

"Never!" exclaimed Barbara indignantly. "He always admired mamma much more than he did

me. Mamma's the belle of this family," she added with loving flattery, patting her mother's fingers.

"Alden went out quite the fire-eater to-night, I dare say. He will be wanting to carry you off and then he'll see how it feels to have No said to him."

"O, there's no danger of his hearing it," replied Barbara laughing. "He said that was one reason he hadn't meant to say this to me yet. We can't afford it for a long time."

"Can't afford it? Stuff! I should oppose any such high-handed proceeding, as I told you, but he can afford it as well as other army men."

"He says not," replied Barbara contentedly. "It's a comfort to me that you always liked him so much."

"Um! As the son of my old friend he was well enough, but in the hard light of a son-in-law he has developed all sorts of flaws."

"O, papa, flaws!"

"He gives me the impression of a scoffing young blade, not over-respectful to his elders. I know he's conceited."

"Just fancy such a thing!" laughed the girl. "Alden! Why, he told me he wasn't half good enough for *me*, and he couldn't be less conceited than that, I should think."

"Dear me! Did Alden say that, just like everybody else?"

"He didn't say it like anybody else, I thought."

"I suppose we agree that he's not good looking."

I don't like his hair. It was red when he was a boy."

"You can be just as unappreciative as you please to-night, but mamma agrees with me that his eyes are wonderful, don't you, mamma?"

"Wonderful in what way?" asked her mother.

"Haven't you ever noticed that they are the color of the leaves in the bed of a brook, when the sun is shining down through the water?"

"Dear me!" observed Mr. Temple protestingly.

"I'm not worth it!" announced Barbara, leaning forward to arrange the logs which had fallen apart.

"But perhaps I shall grow to it. I've never had to find out what the world was like without Alden, and now perhaps I never shall. It is as if everything I've ever read or seen or imagined has somehow become *him*. Lately when I've seen him pass in the street it seemed to me that the sun followed him."

Her father moved uneasily in his chair, and her mother bent forward so that Barbara met her astonished eyes when she turned from the fire.

"But you know how it all is. It was so with you once, years ago, and you can understand."

"Yes," said her mother vaguely, sitting back again.

"Yes, yes," echoed her father as she looked at him.

He rose abruptly to his feet. An old memory, too far back for the lady in the grey silk to share in

it, lifted its reproachful head and he stood instinctively, to put his heel upon it.

"Well, pussy," he said, shutting off one of the lamps. "Your poor old father is no poet and must have his sleep. You will think of nobody but the red-haired lieutenant of engineers from this time forth. Why did I have a friend to rear a son! There's the new barque waiting for her name. I'll warrant you've never thought once about it. But as I'm to be deserted so soon I had better begin to find names for my ships myself."

"Call it *The Flight*," suggested Barbara mischievously, holding her father's head between her hands.

"I will," he said.

"No, no!" she cried, seizing him by both arms, and shaking him to and fro. "You shall not! I was only in fun. I'll think of a pretty one."

"That one strikes my fancy. *The Flight* it shall be!" he replied disjointedly. "My shoulder, pussy! Dear me, child!"

"O, I forgot! I'm so sorry, poor little, little papa!"

The attempt at a laugh ended in a catch of the breath; two tears overflowed and hurried down the cheeks.

Her mother detained her at the top of the stairs after her father had passed on. She kissed Barbara and then said in a hesitating way she had when alluding to awkward subjects,

"My daughter is a—a—is naturally rather demon-

strative. She means no harm, but now that she is—is engaged, as it were, she must remember that gentlemen, though they may be careless themselves, always respect a girl more if she is—is quite dignified—quite reserved.”

“Yes, mamma,” replied Barbara. Her forehead flushed scarlet. “I—I let him—kiss me,” she added huskily.

“Well, I believe that is considered, in certain cases, more nearly proper than when I was a girl,” admitted her mother, whose embarrassment at the necessary turn of the conversation was greater than Barbara’s own, “but I am sure no daughter of mine would ever allow herself to have free ways with gentlemen. I feel I can trust you, Barbara.”

“I told you there was something of the kind going on,” remarked Temple to his wife a few minutes later.

“It was evident enough,” she answered.

“Will she keep up that poetic strain from this time on, do you think?” he proceeded.

“Of course not.”

“Lord, Lord, I trust not,” he groaned. “What does she mean by that talk of poverty? What does he do with his money?”

“I’m sure I don’t know,” answered Mrs. Temple with unusual irritation.

She pulled off the lace about her neck carelessly, as Barbara might have done, letting the delicate meshes catch as they would.



"I'm glad he feels so about it, but there's no sense in it," asserted her husband, and turned to sleep.

She lay awake, and across the new calamity old memories flitted; common, common things; her pretty young self in the midst of her restless, shock-headed pupils, release coming with a letter from this well-to-do merchant whose only encumbrance, a yellow-eyed, tawny-haired boy, was sent away to school. Now Barbara was going to leave her. How dull and grey the years would be! She had never felt as Barbara did to-night, and she almost fiercely envied the vividness of her girl's experience. Bitterly she said to herself that she had been cheated out of half her life. She thought the tears in her eyes were for the loss of her child, but they were for herself.

Barbara meantime was leaning out of the window of her room and letting the cool wind blow in her face. The excitement was past and she was calm, but the old look had not come back to the world. Mingled with an awed gratitude, a large sense of things seemed vaguely to have come to her,—a wider horizon, a recognition of the whole. Henceforth there was no outsider anywhere in the universe of God. Beyond her own possession of him, Alden seemed to be in a new way the type of something eternal, of something the world needed, not she alone, of some great and beautiful, but dimly comprehended truth, of some sweet and universal experience. And so in her deepest emotion she felt

the drawing of the tie between eternity and time.  
The effect of such moments is never wholly lost.  
To Barbara up in her window this inner air had  
come, and life was its word, life even in the leaves  
which seemed to be dead, hope in the sweeping  
wind, and high up in the kind and sympathizing  
heavens Venus was evening star.

### III

#### FATHER AND SON

"No, sir, I didn't get nothin' like I expected on that there pension and I didn't expect I *should*."

Military discipline and a habit of silence had not tended to clarify Locker's speech. He had rashly attempted to express himself with a water pitcher in one hand and a bread plate in the other. He set them on the table.

"Pensions and prayers I guess ain't no great different, come down to it. I heard a preacher say that the use o' prayin' was that if ye kep' on yer knees long enough, hollerin' to the Lord for anythin',—he put it maybe more fancy, but that was his idee,—at last you'd quit wantin' it. I'm thinkin' o' tryin' that on with my pension. I'm thinkin' o' hammerin' at the gover'ment till I don't want no more pensior."

"The log c seems convincing," said Alden Sumner.

He rose from his chair, laid down his volume of Emerson's Essays,—they were comparatively new in this year of grace 1855,—and leaning both arms upon the mantelpiece looked down into the fire upon the hearth.

"That view of prayer interests me. A woman

loses her child. She searches the house and runs down the road. Here she meets a man who tells her, 'It is pleasant to see you looking for your child. It develops your imagination, it excites your torpid brain; it is an excellent physical stimulus. You won't find your boy to be sure, but if you keep it up long enough you won't care to find him.'

A smile played about his eyes while he spoke, but the subject seemed even more humorous as he thought it over and he laughed softly aloud. Locker did not echo him. His was not a plastic spirit and he had brooded upon his pension. Anything amusing in his presentation of so serious a topic had been accidental. He was laying the tea-table in the sitting-room, disposing each knife and fork with patient precision. He limped, but not painfully, and three fingers of his left hand were mere stumps. His square figure was rigidly erect, his small, joyless eyes saw everything and his hair was cut in a thick grey shock straight across the back of his head.

"Locker's first enlistment," Alden had once said, "was with Oliver Cromwell." After pondering this Locker had repeated it to his friend Jacob Minns. "It ain't true so it must be a joke," he added, "but book-larnin' jokes never do have no laugh in 'em." To which Jacob had replied no, and that they were often of a very questionable character.

Locker's face wore the expression of waiting, of trying to read the will of another, of repression carried into the habit of the life, which we see in dogs and other animals that have lived with men. It was a look which exasperated Alden and he was always trying to break it up, and spoil Locker, as his father said.

"I suppose you attended to this pension matter yourself?" Alden presently asked.

"Yes, sir, I done it."

"You went to some cheap fellow who advertises in the newspapers."

"Yes, sir—advertises in all the papers."

"Why didn't you speak to my father about it at once instead of letting the matter drag on for years, and then come out like this? He knows more than that man and has more influence."

Locker began to cut even slices of bread with a very sharp knife and muttered something unintelligible.

"Come," persisted Alden, "why Locker?"

"The general, sir," responded Locker, scowling at the loaf, "is a general, sir."

"What of that?"

"Wal, it's considerable, sir!" exclaimed Locker, irritated by this insistent call upon the expression of his feelings. "Mebbe a feller *doos* talk up to a general as if he was common truck. Mebbe he doos, I don' know nothin' 'bout it. Mebbe he doos."

"Talk to him as man to man, can't you? He's a soldier as you are. In Heaven's name what are you afraid of?"

"I follered him up the hill at Cerro Gordo. I fit behind him in the gateway at Molino del Rey," explained the goaded Locker. He cut two slices of bread in rapid succession and turned upon Alden. "If him an' me had a been throwed up on a desert shore," he continued in an outburst of imaginative eloquence, "one strip o' that there sand would allers be betwixt my old Colonel an' me an' I never could 'a' put my hoof acrost it."

The tall figure at the fireplace straightened and Alden laughed.

"How Cromwell must have stalked over you in his day, Locker," he said. "What a tidbit for tyrants you'd make!" He laughed again, a pleasant laugh, not loud but as if out of the depths of many well conditioned and cheerful thoughts. But as he turned to look at the man he saw in his face something of the break which an unusual effort makes in stolid features.

"Locker, old fellow," he said, "I never saw a Mexican hill or a Mexican gateway. Bring me your papers to-morrow morning after breakfast."

"Yes, lieutenant."

Locker brought boiling water for the tea before he spoke again.

"He's been that worrited, two years," he added.

"Yes, I know."

As Locker opened the door to the dimly-lighted hall, a fox terrier waiting outside dashed across the room to Alden and stopping close at his feet whined piteously.

"What is it, Tray?" the young man asked, stooping to pull his ear. The dog, searching the human eyes with his, and restless for flight, uttered a prolonged howl.

"What's the trouble, old fellow?" But listening to no soothing words the animal rushed through the door as he had come, whining, and his quick leaps could be heard as he went up the stairs.

"Is that dog mad, or what is the matter with him?" roared a deep voice from the hall.

A tall man, with large thin shoulders, on which an old coat hung loosely, stood on the threshold. His eyebrows were ferocious and white, every separate hair on his head stood up with a distinct energy of its own. He held a double daguerreotype case in his hand.

"He's been a yelpin' an' yawlin' since you fetched him home this afternoon, sir," answered his subaltern, setting the tea-pot on its old-fashioned stand.

"Locker," proceeded the newcomer in a hoarse tone of displeasure, "was it you who took this case off the mantel in my room and put it on the table by my bed?"

"No, sir," said Locker.

"Of course it was you!" in a still louder voice.  
"Don't keep telling me over and over that it was

not! I saw it in its place when I left my room. You changed it, Locker! You changed it, I tell you."

The man made no reply.

"Once more, Locker, didn't you change it?"

"No, sir."

"You're losing your mind! You're denying a plain fact!" asserted the old man in a furious bass, which was echoed by the howl of the dog on the stairs.

"I ain't seed the inside o' your room, General, since I half done it up this mornin'. Ain't even dusted it, sir."

"Why not? Says he hasn't dusted it! Why not?"

"You locked the door an' kerried off the key, sir, an' spent the day at Mr. Temple's, sir."

The questioner felt in his pocket and a whimsical expression spread over his face; his hair dropped limply on his head. The key was in his hand.

"General Sumner begs your pardon, Locker," he said, in a tone as quiet as his son's own. "You've all the mind you ever had," he added, with grim pleasantry. "It's your superior officer who is losing his. Be off for the mail now, quickstep."

The light from the two lamps and the flickering blaze of the fire brought out the points of his face and figure as he crossed the room. He walked stiffly erect, measuring his steps with old-fashioned exactness. His keen eyes burned deep under his



white brows and one empty sleeve was doubled back and hung flatly from the shoulder.

"Can you explain that, Alden?" he said, when they were alone. "I knocked it over by accident this morning and set it up, so I remember all about it,—yet that case was on my table, where it's never been before, and closed—*closed*, sir, just now. Who did it?"

He placed the open case upon the mantel and both men paused to look at the faces within. They were portraits of two girls. The eyes of the one on the left had the delicate brightness and the shy hostility of a bird; the intelligence and the faint smile of the other face belonged to one who looked without revolt upon a world which had always been kind. It was Barbara Temple. The younger man glanced to the right as they stood there, the elder to the left.

"I'm a forgetful dog myself," said Alden as they turned from the hearth-rug, and he sat down at the table.

"No, sir! No, sir!" shouted the general, jerking out a chair and dropping sharply into it. "I did not do it! I knew you'd say that. I did not!"

"Tea, governor, look out!" said Alden, who had poured the beverage and now passed his father's cup. "What spirits the little girl was in, wasn't she? I haven't heard her laugh like that for years."

"Perhaps I walk in my sleep," the general went on, for he had passed the facile stage of life. "I've

read of weak-minded creatures who did. May be I balance and teeter on ridge poles and cut capers without waking up. Go on! Say what you think."

Alden had thrust a long toasting fork through a slice of bread and reaching from his chair held it before the fire; then he turned it, browning the other side, buttered it quickly and passed it on the plate to his father. He smiled across at him as he did so, a peculiar quiet smile which the general inadvertently met.

"You disrespectful young popinjay!" he murmured in a caressing growl.

A flash of resemblance passed over the two faces, usually so unlike. Alden's mother had long ago said to her husband in her epigrammatic way, "He is my boy in ordinary circumstances and yours in extraordinary."

There had been times in the past two years, during the Government survey for the proposed railroad to the Pacific, when his resemblance to his father would have been very marked to those prepared to see it.

With eyes narrowed against the heat he was now applying himself steadily to toasting bread as long as either of them needed it.

"No tarts," said the general with an indifferent wave of the hand when Alden passed them, "no tarts, thank you."

"I have been young and now I am old and I have

never seen the tarts forsaken," began the son, still holding out the plate.

"I object to your degrading the scriptural form of expression, sir," said the general shortly.

"First eggs, then cigars, now tarts," remarked Alden slowly, setting the plate down. "There's no need of it, governor."

"I don't care to discuss my appetite," snapped the general.

"I had a letter this week from old man Jackson out in Pittsburg," Alden proceeded. "He's struck something on his place,—oil, or some spouting thing or other,—and he means to pay me, he says, a matter of two hundred dollars I lent him three years ago. If he does,—I've known him to try being honest for luck—if he does we'll turn that in. Take a tart, governor."

"Nothing for me, Locker?" the general asked with the abrupt change to a colloquial tone which made conversation with him a series of surprises.

Locker was crossing straight to Alden with the letters and papers, but he saluted and said, "Nothing, sir."

Every night the officer made the same inquiry and received the same reply, if Alden was not at a distance. He sat waiting in silence while his son hastily ran over the few enclosures and then sat down to write at an old desk in one corner.

"Locker," Alden said as his quill creaked off the address, "take this to the office like a good fellow.

I want it to go to-night. There," he added after the messenger had left the room. "We are so much nearer the end. Jackson's squared up everything, principal and interest. I must fall on his long neck by letter to-morrow morning."

The general's hair bristled on his head.

"Alden! See here, sir. You didn't send that check to Corenzio just now."

"Yes," serenely answered his son, "it's gone to the bottomless pit."

"Why didn't you tell me before you did such a fool thing!" shouted his father.

Alden rose and strolled back to the table. "Have one now, governor," he said taking up one of the flaky jam confections, "I'm going to."

"No, sir!"

"They're better than eyer. Do."

"Jehoshaphat and Mars!" roared the general, with an accent like pain in his voice. "Let me have the say about something, won't you?"

Before Alden had finished the tart his elder said with his abrupt change of tone, "Look here, Alden, show just a little sense if you have any. You're sweethearting and all that tomfoolery now. A man has to have some fling with money then. Drives by moonlight and such fiddlededees. Flowers, man."

"Barbara's not like most girls. She'll understand."

"Stuff, stuff! She won't."

"She will when I tell her."

"Tell her!" thundered the general, rising to his feet. "Do you know what that means? It means blackening your grandfather's name, sir. Blackening his name."

"As I have always said," observed Alden, "I think the odium lies with the man who broke faith with a poor fellow who trusted him, not with the descendant who speaks of it twenty-five years later."

The general stalked twice across the room and at the second turn stopped before the flat and dun-colored painting of a clergyman in gown and bands.

"He was settled for life as minister of the gospel in this town," he said stiffly. "He was respected throughout the State. He was a just man. He believed in justice above everything. You're young and so you're hard as steel. You judge him by one act. It was not like him. I knew him, sir. It was not like him."

"Governor!" exclaimed Alden, "see here, see here!" He went up to the general; his eyes were like his mother's. "I ought not to revile my progenitor, I know that, but it's like this, governor. If Barbara must wait two or three years for me she has a right to know why. She's one of us now. She's going to take poor little Susie's place to you. It will go no further. That fellow and Barbara and you and I are all that need ever know it. You say he was just. I've inherited the quality. *This* is just."

The general stood silent, but Alden knew his father.

"Look here, governor. Command me never to abuse my grandfather's memory again. Go ahead! Have I ever positively disobeyed you?"

"No," admitted the general, "not exactly, but,—” He avoided his son's glance, for gruffness meant dignity when he learned his soldiering,—  
"But I've had to be more chary and discriminating with my commands than my parents were with me. Lucky generation! Paradise of fathers! I wish I had belonged to it."

"You and he weren't half the chums we are. Come, now."

"Chums!" ejaculated the elder man, going back to his chair. "He thrashed me Saturday nights on general principles. He made me learn Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy by heart. He tied me up in a dark closet all one Sunday for picking up apples by the front orchard wall before church. But it was good for me. It was the making of me."

"O, he was a greater success as a father than you've been," said Alden, rocking back and forth as he stood, both hands in his pockets.

"He was conscientious. He was!" asserted the general, who having relinquished his point about Barbara, was determined to have his way for some time to come. "I recollect when the decision was left to him about the site for the meeting-house

There were the two lots, the one where John Merriam's house stands now, and the one where the church is. What are you laughing at, sir?"

"I've helped pump out the cellar of the one he did select,——"

"That wasn't his fault! The tide comes up higher than it did in his day. I tell you he walked the floor all one night before he decided."

"O, I see. That explains it. If he had only walked the floor say till twelve o'clock, and then gone to bed and had some sleep, don't you think, candidly now, he might have chosen John Merriam's?"

"Don't *you* think I shall grin with you while you flout your ancestors!" growled the general, "for I will not, sir."

A long howl from above echoed him. Alden went to the door and whistled. Whining all the way down the stairs came the dog Tray. "Stop whimpering. Hungry? Here," and Alden put some food on a plate by the hearth.

"What's the matter with that confounded brute?" asked the general anxiously, for the dog, after hastily swallowing his supper fled with another howl upstairs.

Alden had already turned to the desk.

"Do you feel like going over those figures now?" he asked. "Then we will start for the Temples'!"

"Again? We've been with them all day,"

grumbled the veteran, but pulled a chair nearer his son.

"It won't take long. If you can see just read off those items and I'll do the figuring. Go ahead, governor."

"To mending fence, five dollars, seventy-five cents. To Corenzio, Ugh! three hundred and fifty,—now by your infernal stubbornness, two hundred and fifty more. You didn't show common sense about that,— To provisions twenty-two dollars and ninepence. To—Sums,— I can't make out your new tricks of writing,— Sums *what?* Right there."

"Susie's stone," said Alden with a change of tone.

"Um! Um! I don't see the place. Yes, fifty dollars. To flour seven dollars. To pew rent, quarter, ten dollars. They've raised that; minister's struck on salary; preaches from notes, too."

The general read on for some time from various bills, scraps of paper and notebooks. When he had done Alden fell to figuring at the columns for some minutes. The lights from lamps and fire threw distorted shadows upon ceiling and walls. Locker had come in and was clearing the table, his quaint figure moving unobtrusively back and forth.

The room was square and low with a great blackened fireplace and diamond-paned windows. The carpet was faded and the red curtains streaked by the sun. Men's hats, pipes and newspapers occu-



pied the most prominent places. A crayon portrait of a lady in a cap with lace strings, hung over the mantel, and here and there were to be seen womanly belongings of a later date; a guitar lay on a table, its blue ribbon tossed across it, a red silk cap embroidered in gold such as women in the Orient might wear, hung at one end of a swinging shelf upon which a few books, mostly fairy tales and Italian grammars and romances were piled in disorder. All about the room was the unmistakable evidence of man's occupation and any one with moderate perceptions would have been sure that a woman's presence was in that house no longer.

"We've done pretty well lately," announced Alden briskly. "At this rate it will take just two years and one month longer."

"When I'm sixty-four years old," commented the general. "Give Barbara a few of her sweetheart's rights and make it sixty-five."

"O, we're all right," answered Alden cheerfully. "Come on. Tray! Tray!" he called hastily, gathering the papers into a drawer. A prolonged howl replied.

"Is that fool dog mad, or what is the matter with him?" exclaimed the exasperated general, going out into the hall. "Stop that noise, Tray! Come down!" The dog gave one shuddering whine but stood still at the top of the stairs. "He's mad," said the general, "mad as a March hare. What has he been doing up there, Locker?"

“Pawin’ and yelpin’, sir. I promised to whack him with a club, sir. Nosin’ the floor, sir. Barkin’.”

When Alden was ready he called Tray and the dog after a little hesitation walked down the stairs and went out protestingly with the two men.

hack  
sir.

the  
stairs

## IV

### AN EXOTIC

BARBARA in her white dress appeared in the hall as soon as they were admitted and a sound of voices followed her from the room she had left. The general shrank back against the door.

"Corenzio here?" he asked in a loud whisper.

"Yes. He has just come in. You don't mind."

Barbara smiled at him; Alden was still holding her hand; the general saw the path of his duty, stiffened himself and stalked alone into the room. "Evening, sir," he said gruffly after he had shaken hands with Temple and his wife.

A young man who had been sitting next to Mrs. Temple sprang up and stood beaming upon the newcomer, his eyebrows, half closed eyes, smiling lips and black moustache all forming so many parallel lines tilted slightly upward at the ends.

"How are you, general?" he said with easy familiarity, widening the circle of chairs about the hearth as though he were at home while the others greeted Alden. The old soldier making no reply, the other surveyed him with genial scrutiny. "Color's excellent," he remarked, "eyes full of martial spirit. You hold your own charmingly, general. Sit here, please."

"He does not like being so near the fire," inter-

posed Barbara. "There. Now he and papa can have their favorite seats."

"But you—where are you to be?" asked the young man.

"O, never mind me. I sit anywhere. Here's your footstool, mamma. Now Mr. Corenzio can have his old place. I am going to sew by the lamp."

"Come, little girl," said her father, "you were just about to sing again. Don't run off till you've given us something lively to take out the taste of that last doleful dumps of a song. Don't you know a jig or something to wake us up? No psalm tune this time."

Barbara went to the piano and sang one of the negro melodies just coming into favor, giving its swinging rhythm in a clear, high voice. Her father led the clapping of hands when it was ended and asked for one more; so she sang another, and even a third. Her mother murmured that they were not ladylike songs, but her father laughed uncontrollably and asked the rest what better songs any one wanted, and added that he ought to be a judge of music, for Barbara, after weeks of work with his big stiff fingers, had taught him to play "*Come ye disconsolate*" so that he had once gone through it alone without a mistake; he wished that he had put the great effort of his life into a nigger melody instead. He wondered at his daughter's taste for songs of longing and sorrow, but at his time of life

all ideality in grief is generally over and the unforgiven sin to middle age is to make it either uncomfortable or sad.

The engagement had not been announced to young Corenzio and he preferred to remain blind to any symptoms of its existence. He was tolerably successful in ignoring to his inner self what he pleased; he believed that if a man refused to recognize what was painful, disagreeable or sad he blotted such things from the world, at least, so far as that human being was concerned. He hoped to perfect himself wholly in the course of life later on, but as he had not fully done so yet, he reseated himself rather slowly to take up the thread of conversation with his hostess.

Leaning forward while he talked he could slip a sidewise glance unobserved under his lowered eyelids at the two figures who had elected to sit by the lamp. Barbara had a square of embroidery in her hands and was smoothing it out on her lap before beginning to sew.

"That's the stitching piece I always enjoy seeing whenever I am on leave," said Alden, bending nearer to study the design. "Preserved cherries, isn't it?"

"Strawberries," laughed Barbara. "It's company work. The pattern is old-fashioned already. My last hope is that it will wear."

"I'm sure of that; it has worn so well already. Your father says *The Flight*——"

"See how stubborn he was!" interrupted Barbara. "I'd rather he had kept the old name."

"What! The *Amiable Matilda*? O, never! We watched her loading all the afternoon; gimcracks and lumber. She will sail to-morrow. Your father says there will be a nor'easter."

"He never has been right about winds," smiled his daughter.

"That's why I know *The Flight* will sail. How do you manage not to tangle those silks? See, I've knotted the only one I've touched. The evergreen self-confidence of the weather prophet seems to point a moral, if I could only find it. I should think the clergy would snap at it. Why does our friend by the fire drive me to conventional speech by staring at us so?"

"You must be mistaken. He is still deep in the Italian singing method with mamma."

"Perhaps so. If *The Flight* sails to-morrow shall we see her off and then take a walk somewhere? I want to talk to you about several things."

"O, yes. Where shall we go?"

"Anywhere you please. You always know just what you want to do. I don't. If I'm with the people I like I don't care where I go or whether I do anything but breathe."

A skein of crimson silk slid from her white dress toward the floor; Alden's hand detained hers as they both tried to stop it, and their eyes were for an instant fixed on each other. Then they both

glanced apprehensively in the direction of the hearth, but the episode seemed to have passed unnoticed.

The general was plunging the logs into wild and strained relations by his goadings with the poker.

"He's been restless since daybreak," said Alden, bending forward again. "I've kept him moving and talking all day. That's why I stayed at the wharf this afternoon. It's two years to-day, you know, since poor little Susie was drowned."

"Yes, and poor Robert," Barbara gave another furtive glance at the group near the fire. "But, Alden,—I never said it before to any one,—it has sometimes seemed to me that papa has been more—more cheerful,—no, of course not that exactly, but less irritable since that day. I do hope I'm not saying anything wicked."

"You couldn't," remarked Alden briefly.

"You see I never really knew my brother Robert; he was always away from home. Even in those last two months of his life ——"

"Was he here two months then? I supposed it was only a week or two."

"Yes, August and September; not in the house, you know, but in town. What was he like when he was a boy, when you were at school together?"

"Handsome fellow; hair and eyes yellow, like a lion's cub. He was the best boxer and hurdle jumper there. What a curious stitch that is. I

never could understand how you do it so evenly. Let me see it nearer like a good girl."

He drew the work out of her hands so firmly that she looked at him in amused astonishment.

"You keep your attention so fixed on it," he said apologetically. "What color are your eyes, dear, blue or grey?"

"Whichever you like. You are sure to have your way."

"It will take me longer to decide. You must try me again."

Barbara lifted her face in which the pink beneath them had once more modified the color of the non-descript eyes. The eagerness in the young man's own was replaced by a look of intent and perfect satisfaction.

"I like them, dear," he said below his breath.

"I'm glad," she answered in the same way.

"No, sir!" thundered the general from the hearthstone. "He didn't know what he was talking about, sir! *Paper fighting!* As hot as the world ever saw. Paper—ugh! He was a fool, sir! A fool!"

Corenzio's sidelong glance left the two figures by the lamp as Alden straightened himself in his chair, and was changed to a wondering inspection of the soldier, who with hair bristling and nose curved was glaring at him from the armchair opposite. A ring flashed in the light as the musician brought the tips of his slim fingers together.



"Well, well, John," Temple was saying, "the young man was only asking for information."

"Merely for information," echoed the offender, smiling into the face of the angry old man. "I did not mean to excite you, general."

"You said the war with Mexico was paper fighting, sir!" retorted the veteran loudly.

"My dear sir, hear me, pray! Not I at all. A friend of mine, my dear general, a simple-hearted man, with malice for none, said in the course of conversation that our affair with our neighbor state was a toy war."

"That was enough! Jehoshaphat and Mars, man! Was he at Chapultepec? Was he at Cerro Gordo or Buena Vista? Toy war!"

The maddened general raked his upright hair with his fingers in impotence of explanation.

"Ah, my friend was a clumsy, tactless fellow like me, dear general, while you, a gallant officer enjoying a good pension ——"

"Good pension!" roared the general rising to his feet and glowering down upon his smiling tormentor. "Did you know, sir, that General Scott appeared before the Congressional Committee, when a bill was up for increased pay to army men? 'Don't you have pay enough?' says the Chairman. 'Leave me out!' says Scott like a man, 'Leave out the generals!'"

Alden and Barbara had risen and were strolling down the room.

"How unfair that would have been, wouldn't it?" and Corenzio seemed to meditate. "He knew they wouldn't leave those brave officers out and yet he said it—said it handsomely I have no doubt. I tell you," he added with a kind of archness, "it takes you old army men to handle committees!"

"They did leave them out!" shouted the general and with a muttered exclamation, which luckily no one caught, he turned sharply from the group about him.

"I say, general," began Corenzio rising.

"That is enough," said Alden Sumner quietly.

Corenzio avoided his eye by bending hastily over Mrs. Temple; an occasional word reached the ears of the rest. "Please excuse,—natural—heated—yes, yes, at his age,——"

"Toy war!" snorted the general, who for the first time snatched his hand away when Barbara made a mute attempt at consolation.

"O, forgive and forget, general! *Please do!*" cried Corenzio from Mrs. Temple's side.

"Paper fighting!" gasped the general, struggling with his overcoat which Temple was holding for him.

"There, there, John. The young fellow meant nothing. You and I ought not to go off half-cocked at our age," said Temple, who hated a disturbance of any kind.

"Enjoying a good pension!" muttered the general, seizing his hat.

Meanwhile Alden, leaning upon the back of a chair, kept his eyes upon the young man beside his hostess whose murmured phrases became fewer and smaller until they ceased altogether, and Corenzio suddenly flushed with annoyance. He lifted his eyes, and swept each face in turn except Alden's. "What can I do," he exclaimed sharply, "except to say I am sorry, desperately sorry?"

Then Alden at once left his place, took leave of Mrs. Temple and went out to the hall, whither Temple and Barbara had followed his father. She was holding the general's one glove, standing beside him as he waited for Alden, his old face swelled and quivering with feeling. Though Temple tried to make light of the matter to his friend and Mrs. Temple came out and shook hands with him, they both, after the door had closed, felt ashamed of him.

Corenzio had already seated himself at the piano and as they passed the windows the general and Alden heard the plaintive rippling of the notes and the passionate plea of the heavier chords.

Once out of the house the general expressed his mind with such force and freedom of speech as to effectually calm himself by the end of one block. Then he remarked to his silent companion in the mildest voice and manner, "I'm afraid you wanted to stay longer, my boy, didn't you?"

"O, no, not to-night," replied Alden with a grim smile under his moustache. "But I tell you, gov-

error, I wouldn't let that fellow work me up so every time. He does it on purpose."

"O, he tried to do it, I know that. Tried hard," replied the general in the friendliest tone. "I had to keep cool. Perfectly cool."

The two men entered the blackness of their entrance hall at home together but when Alden had lighted the candles left ready on the old settle, he found his father emerging from the dark sitting-room with the daguerreotype case in his hand.

After they had gone upstairs and the general had been a few moments in his own room, he went without stock or coat to his son's door.

"That poor, pitiful, toadying, sneaking Jackanapes over there didn't mean anything, I guess. He doesn't know any better," he remarked. This was pardon and confession in one and he went back to his room. His spirits were fully recovered and he moved briskly about, preparing for his rest in his plain iron cot like a soldier's pallet.

He set the case upon the mantel and Alden heard him say, "Now stay there this time," as if he were speaking to a disobedient child. He took up an old Bible from the table and standing still with his round spectacles on his nose, he read the psalm where he found a faded ribbon as a mark. His wife had always done this before retiring and after her death he had taken up her old book and gone on where she had left off.

"For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of

the deceitful are opened against me," read the General slowly. "Set thou a wicked man over him and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath and let the strangers spoil his labour. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out."

He read on with perfect content. Not one thought of personal application in the words entered his mind. Any such use of the Bible would have seemed to him almost impious. Its anathemas were remote and sacred. Scrutiny and criticism of The Book were not common in 1855. It was the word of God and that was enough for most people of General Sumner's generation.

His son in the next room, already in his bed, but with his eyes wide open and his mind busy with many thoughts, heard the recurrent sound of the creaking of a board as his father crossed and recrossed the room, when his Scripture reading was over and he had begun to sing as he made his preparations for rest. He had a way of doing this

at such times, using some old hymn he had learned in his boyhood. The habit was probably a reminiscence of family prayers to which he was long ago accustomed, now robbed of any social or perhaps even religious significance.

“Far in the deep where darkness dwells,”

quavered the general's bass. His voice sounded much older in singing than in speech, and this hymn had always been too high for him.

“The land of Horror and despair,  
Justice has built a dismal hell.”

Here evidently a refractory something disturbed the flow of the melody, but with a jerk on the first word it moved on,—

“And laid her stores of vengeance there.  
Eternal plagues of heavy chains—”

Here the window went up and the blinds were arranged,—

“Tormenting racks and fiery coals,  
And darts to inflict immortal pains,”

crooned the general, creaking lengthwise on the plank toward the candle—

“Dipt in the blood of damned souls.”

The faint light Alden could see shining into the hall went out.

“Dipt in the blood of damned souls,”

softly carolled the singer for the last time that night, the tune demanding the repetition of the closing line.

Utter silence followed. Alden still lay revolving many things in his active brain, but the gentle old soldier was asleep.

## V

### BY THE SHORE

THERE was no squall. At three o'clock, beneath a cloudless sky, and attended by soft but vivid September airs, the *Flight* sailed upon the only fortunate voyage that was ever to be hers. Those members of the Temple and Sumner families who were most interested in her departure dined hastily at one o'clock instead of the accustomed hour of two and were upon the wharf as early as possible to watch the last preparations.

Mrs. Temple had declined to accompany them as she saw no good reason why the nap ordered by her physician should be given up because one of her husband's ships was bound for the Mediterranean fruit and wine ports, instead of pepper-ridden Sumatra. This passage had to Temple and his daughter, however, the importance of a new venture. Not only had the brig *Amiable Matilda* been altered to a barque and its name changed, but, chiefly through Barbara's agreement with the views of several sea-captains in whose company Temple laid out his moderately lucrative but monotonous voyages, he had decided to risk a new course.

These men had given glowing accounts of the ease, speed and certain profits connected with the



nearer ports, and Barbara whose mind was active in more directions than her mother thought quite lady-like, had warmly expressed her approval of the Mediterranean route. She knew the particulars of lading, the composition of cargoes, the geography of the east, the winds and distances, as well as her father did, and many a time an old East India captain, as he planned a voyage after dinner with his host, turned in his chair to explain some point to the pretty young lady waiting at her father's request to sing for him, only to find she knew all about the matter and was ready with suggestions.

When the bustle of the *Flight's* weighing anchor was over, and she was moving lightly down the harbor with the sun on her new sails, the little party who had been watching her walked away together up the wharf and broke up where the street began, the general and Temple separating from the younger people. Their steps fell together in accustomed rhythm and at a slow pace. Long ago the impulsive soldier had learned to fit his quick stride to the persistent evenness of his friend's progress. When he was alone he moved quickly still, but he had walked with Phineas Temple before he had marched for the United States and the habit of the boy was the unconscious adaptation of the man. When they reached the first corner both men stopped as though by mutual understanding, and looked toward the two figures hastening away to the left. Barbara turned at the same moment and

waved her hand to them, while Alden, reminded by her, swung his hat boyishly above his head.

"I thought they were going along the shore," said the general as the two men went on their way.

"Her mother wanted a message left for Venus Diggs, I believe. They seem to like each other well enough so far," his friend answered.

"No mistake about that, I guess," and the general jocularly clapped Temple's thick shoulder to emphasize his belief more strongly. "Hope they'll have a chance to get married some day."

"Well, John, you know me," replied Temple. "I'm not going to stand in my girl's way when the time comes, if she *is* all I have. But that boy of yours, spending the best part of his life out in that desert is the worst feature of the case. I wish he'd leave the army and build bridges nearer home. He'd make money hand over fist."

"After he's paid the United States for his education he might consider that," replied the general grimly. "I've respected money and status all my life, and I've tried to bring him up in the same way, but I don't know whether I've succeeded."

"That's a faithful old joke of yours, John, isn't it?" said his friend, the brief irritating quality of his voice giving way to its accustomed conciliatory gentleness.

"Money's such a new thing that a lot of old moss-backs like our family haven't the hang of it yet. That's what Alden said one day when he thought it comes

pretty near being true. We haven't learned how to get it or how to look at the possibilities in it. You always think I'm joking about this thing. I'm not. I recognize that making money is a test of capacity, Phin, a modern test. And I tell you this: if I had to choose whether I'd live under a government of what's called blue blood or a government of money, I'd say money every time. It took brains to make it.

Well, you're a fighting cock who bled for his country, laugh. Temp. "That sounds better. Your biography will tell how you rose to the top."

Phin said the other shortly.

They had walked some distance in silence before Temp said, "I had quite a start yesterday."

"What kind of a start?" asked the other.

"I was walking home just as usual in time for tea. I raised my eyes—you know I walk looking down usually,—raised them for no particular reason at a crossing. I saw, just before me, on the other side of Fruit Street—Robert "

Robert!" echoed the general aghast.

"That is, I *thought* I saw him. The roots of my hair felt queer on my head and I stood still where I was. The young fellow came straight toward me across the street. He stared at me as he came close. I suppose I looked dazed. And will you believe it, John, I saw at once that he wasn't even the least

like Robert in any way. Now how do you account for that?"

"For an accidental resemblance? I don't account for it."

"It was not even a resemblance, I could see that in a moment. But at the first glance I thought it was he. I haven't been warm since."

"Come in and get something hot. You're nervous, man."

"Stuff! I'm as well as you are. It isn't the first time this sort of thing has happened to me. But every other time I met the real person just afterward."

"Well, it's certain you can't meet that boy. Neither he nor anybody else comes back from the grave. So pull yourself together and come in and take your dose."

Barbara had been asked by her mother to leave a message at one of the tenements near the wharves, so she and Alden began their walk by turning into the decayed street close at hand. At several of the doors black women with red and yellow bandannas twisted about their heads, and ebony babies held in their arms formed one of the picturesque reminders of distant lands with which New England seaports were filled forty years ago. Barbara knew a number of them and stopped to look at each child in turn as its smiling mother held it toward her.

"Venus ain' feelin' peart to-day," a young mulatto volunteered.

"She may be ill," Barbara said to Alden. "If not, I will be back in a moment."

While he waited he crossed the road to speak to a Portuguese sailor he had often seen with Robert Temple in former years. A dark old face, sunken black eyes, long grizzled hair and a ferocious beard, a scarlet handkerchief tied loosely about the throat made the man an ideal pirate of the Spanish main whom it was a distinction to know. Some dramatic instinct in him, awakened by the curiosity he excited, had caused him of late to add a watch-chain of small gold nuggets, strung roughly together, and now dangling across his greasy waistcoat.

Barbara went upstairs and knocked at a door at the head of the next landing. It was wrenched open at once, and a woman's African face peered through the aperture, the flat features swelled to an unnatural size and the eyes dim with distress.

"O, honey, am dat you smilin' sweeter dan de May?" she said pulling the door wider,—it had sagged on its hinges,—"Praise de Lord white folks can be peart. Set right down dar, honey, an' res' yo' little feet."

"What is the matter, Venus?" asked Barbara in dismay.

The room looked as if a wild beast had been let loose in it. Chairs were overturned, dishes smashed to atoms, axes, shovels, knives, brooms, baking pans and clothing were strewn in confusion.

"Don't pay no 'tention to dem dere tings," said Venus carelessly, "I was jes' 'spressin' my min', dat's all."

"But why?" asked Barbara.

The negro standing where she was in the midst of the wreck, uttered a sudden, long-drawn howl. "It's dat 'Dolphus!" she cried, when she drew in her breath. "It's him. Dat's what it is. O! O! O!"

"What has he done? You haven't been married to him six months."

"He done run away, Miss Barbara. Run away wid dat rancid, cross-eyed nigger Tamson down de alley. Dat's wot he done, Miss Barbara. O, lemme cotch her! I'll razor dat Tamson ——"

"Hush! Hush! Don't talk like that, Venus. Where can they have gone?"

"Don' know, don' care. He's trash an' he allus was trash. Don' see how I could 'a' took up wid him nohow. When youse had t'ree husbands, besser stop, Miss Barbara. Dem after dat is scum ob de earth, allus is. Don' you nebber try more'n t'ree, Miss Barbara. I 'spised dat nigger de fust time I seed him grinnin' wid him green specs on. Den spite o' dat I done marry him. Done so. O! an' he stole dem pants o' yo' pa's wot yo' gib me for Israel; dem wid de checks on 'em. I was savin' 'em up for Israel to grow to 'em. An' dey're gone! O, Miss Barbara, wot trash are dat! Dey was hangin' handsome in de pantry. Stole! Dat's wot dey is. O, lemme cotch him!"

"Had you any reason to think he would do such a shocking thing?" asked Barbara when she could be heard.

"Steal dem pants? He's hankered on 'em, I knowed dat. I had orter kep' 'em under my pillar. Had so."

"No, I mean his leaving you."

"O, *dat!* Lor', Miss Barbara, he's allus dat way. Mean doin's like dat don' s'prise me 't all. It's Israel's pants dat worries me. Israel's dyin' mad. Wisht I'd cut 'em off long ago. Lor' be praised, I reckon I besser pick up dis yere trash. Reckon yer ma wants me, don' she?"

Barbara gave the message and expressed regret that Adolphus had turned out so badly.

"Lor', you can' make no use ob a nigger like dat," said his wife. "Men-trash bees all alike. Won' hab no more 'em roun'. Don' you hear to none ob 'em, Miss Barbara. My little missy down under de salt waves, she ain't know de bodderin' wid 'em. Dey'll bring down yo' gray hairs, Miss Barbara, an' bring down yo' brown hairs, too. A lyin', lazy, selfish, drinkin', thievin' lot. Wisht de good Lord would razor 'em all. Would so."

The door had been left half open and Alden after waiting until he was impatient, went into the house. Both women saw him appear at the head of the stairs and Barbara stepped into the hall closely followed by Venus who adroitly pulled the door after her, shutting out the scene of destruction.

"Well, how goes it with you, Venus?" asked the newcomer cheerfully.

"Wal, I'm spared. Lor', if it ain' Mahsa Alden an' handsomer dan ebber. I done been talkin' t' Miss Barbara jes' now dat de good Lord's ways warn' our ways nohow," answered Venus, who having lived many years in the Sumner household had preserved a vivid fear of the general's military discipline and an equally vivid remembrance of Alden's teasing cleverness from his youth up. "I says t' Miss Barbara I ain' know but one young gem'men dat was good 'nough for her. 'Good looks,' I done tell 'Dolphus when he was cockin' him hat in dis kink and dat kink fo' de glass, 'good looks,' I says, 'is on'y skin deep, 'Dolphus, 'cept in Mahsa Alden. Dere's a young gem'men clear on through him,' I says. 'You razor way inter Mahsa Alden,' I says, 'an' you'll keep on strikin' gem'man 's deep 's you go. An' handsome gem'man, too,' I says."

"How I have improved!" laughed the young man.

"Reckon I didn' 'preciate yer in dem ole days," grinned Venus. "How's yer pa?"

"I suppose she's 'got her come-uppance,' as Locker prophesied when she left us to marry that sneaking little barber young enough to be her son," remarked Alden laughing when they were again in the street. "He's left her, hasn't he?"

"Yes, poor soul," said Barbara.



"I thought so. She didn't want me to ask any questions. I know her of old."

The first, second and third husbands of Venus, indeed, had successively reigned during her allegiance to the Sumners. Two of them had been also in the employ of the family. The third was a chicken-hearted African whose flight under the stress of a bill of wood from the hand of his wife was the final result of a scorn which had long been less convincingly expressed. With her last view of his black eyes rolling in terror over his shoulder she considered that chapter in her life closed. She promptly accompanied the youthful barber to the altar, brushing aside the trivialities and delays of divorce, even after her attention had been called to them.

"She doesn't think out everything years in advance. Now if you should make a mistake in an affair of the heart," and Barbara looked out to the sea with a smile all about her mouth and eyes, "there'd be no sort of excuse for you."

Of course Alden improved the opportunity to say something pleasant, thus presented to him. As she talked he turned constantly for the satisfaction of seeing the strong young figure and bright face, as well as to feel the certainty that she was walking there beside him, for Alden was a New Englander and although he had somewhat freed himself from doubts concerning the righteousness of happiness, he had retained his birthright in a doubt of its probability.

The excitement of motion and air and of his presence had for the moment effaced the hereditary seriousness of Barbara's eyes and mouth. With head erect she went, well equipped, for the latest fashion was always pretty to her and she was quick to catch a certain style in wearing it. Inexperienced on many sides of life, she gave the impression of being prepared for anything. It was partly because of this alertness that Alden, whose temper was more introspective, admired and wondered at her. "The *readiness* is all," he thought involuntarily as her firm step kept pace with his ; and more than once, in love's humility, "The readiness is *all*."

As they skirted the shore, still following the road, he suddenly said, "I was thinking afterward about Robert being at home so long that last time. What was he doing ?"

"I don't know where he spent the greater part of every day ; in his boat, I think. I used to ask him to walk with me, to go here and there, but he seldom did. Papa was restless and mamma silent. Perhaps women are never very fond of their stepsons."

"Susie did not see much of him either, I suppose."

"Nothing of him at all. Your father forbade it years ago, so of course she never spoke to him. I was at the window that afternoon when I saw old Tom Briggs, the boat builder, coming up to the door. I knew by his face something had happened.

I see his eyes in my dreams yet, sometimes, and I wake from a sound sleep."

"Poor child; I ought not to speak of it. But I've never had a good chance to ask all I wanted to know."

"You were away so long on that survey! Is there anything else I could tell you, Alden?"

"What sort of boat was Robert's?"

"A little cockle shell thing. Poor boy, he had no chance when the squall struck."

"And Susie's?"

"Hers was a white row boat that could be used with a little sail. They found it afterward, you know."

"Yes."

"It was very still on the water that morning. Susie promised her father not to go when it was choppy."

"Yes."

"I can't think of her as dead. She was the most wholly living creature I ever knew."

"Yes."

Barbara glanced up at him, his eyes lowered as he walked, and with love's clairvoyance she said quickly, "Alden, Susie never had anything to do with Robert. She never disobeyed the general in her life."

"She owed him that," Alden answered. "He was strict with her but she must have known how much she was to him. He would not give her up

till the last East Indiaman that had sailed before that day was in. The *Laughing Sal* was gone twenty-two months, and when she was in port we put up the stone. You can convince him easily enough that he is mistaken sometimes, if you go about it right, but rank disobedience the dear old fellow cannot forgive."

"I know it," replied Barbara making a desperate leap from the subject. "Papa says it is quite a responsibility to give an order, remembering that you also have to see it obeyed."

Alden laughed. "I was thinking what a contrast he makes to *his* father. The voice of that bluff old sea dog was hoarse with shouting at people to keep moving. It takes two generations of you to show the pattern, doesn't it?" he said.

"I dare say it does. We shall make a good foil for you. Your father can show the whole of it in two minutes," exclaimed Barbara laughing, and turning suddenly from the road she sprang from one rocky ledge to the other toward the water.

The black hulk of a brig lost years before lay at a little distance from the shore. The rocks over which Alden hurried after her were worn and dark, cracked into fissures and streaked with veins of useless stone in paler hues, or colored by dyes burned into them in their hot youth. In the depths of the clefts here and there the water boomed like distant cannonading.

The young man and woman sat to rest at last

upon a flat rock warm with a whole day's sun, and leaned against the face of the stone behind them. Near by a few white butterflies flitted, restless and unafraid, like bits of flying foam. Inland the autumnal silence, which means the ceasing of numberless unnoticed but blended noises of the day, had begun to be felt in the migration of birds and the chilling of insects at the first touch of the fall. But this change had not come near the sea. The roar of the incoming tide was louder and deeper than in the summer days, as though the premonition of winter had brought an added note of seriousness into the voice of the ocean. But above the rhythmic thunder of the waves sounded the shrill chirp of crickets in the coarse grass growing in crevices of the rocks mingled with thin blooms of golden-rod.

The leaves of a bush which had gained a precarious foothold not far from the two silent figures were rustling in a stray breeze for even at this distance from the sea an early frost had smitten them and they were brown and dry. A little way out from the shore the base of a rock looked black where the seaweed was laid bare. The water about it was crinkled by a million petty waves, stirring and glittering in the sun. A sail still farther out was a patch of white, another was dark as ink. At intervals an insect passed with a sharp, whizzing sound and a salt smell came up over the rocks far below.

Alden had taken off his hat, and the fitful breeze occasionally lifted the hair about his forehead.

"I wish I could do that," Barbara said, "but I should get tanned."

"You'd be all the prettier. Try it and see."

With a furtive glance around her and out to sea, Barbara slipped off her hat and threw it down beside her. "My face will shock mamma and papa at tea-time, but I like it," she said, tilting her head back and half closing her eyes against the light. "Alden, the girl you have chosen is not quite a lady. It's best you should know the truth."

He turned to look at her, ready to smile when he should see the point.

"She hates gloves," she continued, checking off her faults on her fingers.

"Yet she *will* wear them!" interjected Alden.

"Of course. Haven't you learned that that is as it must be in this life? She has a vulgar appetite, especially after being long out of doors. She has rough hair, not like either of her parents. She has enormous feet."

"She hasn't," said Alden comprehensively.

"Look at them!" and she brought the heels down decidedly upon the rock where they rested beyond the ruffles of her blue dress. "Anybody who was truthful would say they were huge. Four and a half. Keep it to yourself, won't you, Alden, for it's a most mortifying thing. I don't see how it

happened. Papa's mother wore only number one, and mamma wears number two."

"I'm sure I should have guessed yours were number two, if you had asked me," replied Alden, gravely. "I despise very small feet myself." They both laughed aloud. "Haven't you noticed," he went on after a pause, "how groups of men in sea-ports sit on the rocks like this hour by hour, not talking or thinking, everything of them but their clumsy bodies drifting in a dumb sort of way with the tide? Of course Hamlet lived by the sea. I'm so content now that my mind is sinking into a calm and all my purpose is dulled. My dear little girl, I have two things to tell you. See how tightly you can hold my hand so I shall not float into a blissful silence and not say them."

He took her hand between both of his and Barbara looked at him searchingly.

"Tell me, dear," she said, "if it's unpleasant, let's have it over."

"You know the ships have brought stray Italians, Spaniards and Greeks here for a good many years," began Alden, frowning at the water in his efforts at concentration. "The father of that young fellow Corenzio was a strolling Italian fiddler who came with one of the cargoes. I never heard any harm of him. He spoke broken English, worked hard and lived on half rations with his wife and a large young family. My grandfather was the parson here and interested himself in the children, I suppose, so

that Corenzio met him in that way. He seems to have had a mania of distrust, was afraid of banks and business men, so what he saved from his teaching, or made by bargaining with other foreigners, he deposited with the preacher.—Are you comfortable, little girl? Let me put an end of your shawl between your shoulders and the stone. There, is that better?—O, yes, I'm all right, more than comfortable. Well, this thrifty and worthy Italian had some sort of accident from which he died suddenly. His wife was an American, but a silly, inefficient woman, and we find he never told her he had saved anything. My grandfather died after a long illness. Twenty years went by." Alden paused and Barbara observed that the one slight line always between his eyes had deepened. She reached up to smooth it with her finger and he smiled.

"I shall keep you beautiful as long as I can, if warning you will do it. That's what mamma says to me when I contort my face, as she calls it. And twenty years went by——"

"One day," resumed Alden slowly, "the son, the one you know, came to my father with a package of ragged papers. A part of them were receipts for sums of money, written in the old parson's hand and the rest were the corresponding items scrawled upon the backs of envelopes in Italian. The son said he could find no evidence that the money had been returned, either through papers or the memory of any one in the family. His mother was living



then, nearly three years ago, and she said nothing had ever been paid to her by my grandfather. Their poverty after the husband's death seemed to verify her statement. The last date in the papers Corenzio brought us was about a month before the Italian's accident. We examined every scrap of writing in the old desk at home, my father and I. We found a memorandum book in which the corresponding sums to Corenzio's list were set down in order. And there was one other paper. Corenzio had evidently called at the house, and, not finding my grandfather in, some one had given him a sheet upon which he had written a request for the return of his money. This was dated one week before the Italian's death."

"He paid it at once and so never chanced to speak of it. That looks simple enough, I should think," said Barbara promptly.

Alden only frowned and hurried to the end of his explanation. "The family were left penniless. I know that. Everybody helped them to keep the old house, to be fed and clothed. The three children who lived turned out decently well, two of them went West. Of course my father told young Corenzio that as no receipt could be found the money should be paid. With interest for twenty years it would reach above ten thousand dollars. My little girl ——"

"Yes, Alden."

"It will take us two years more unless some

miracle should happen. Did you ever hear of a lieutenant of engineers being miraculously assisted in money difficulties?" asked Alden with an attempt at a laugh.

Barbara did not speak for a moment. "I shall read everything about life on the plains," she said at last, "I shall not make so many mistakes as if I went now."

"It's an eternity!" exclaimed Alden with sharp impatience, "and there's no use trying to pretend anything else."

"Why should he have done such a thing, if he ever did?" she asked presently.

"O, I don't know, I don't know. I never thought he pocketed the money. I believe he invested it with poor judgment and lost it. But if so some note ought to be found."

"What was he like personally?"

"He seems to have been particularly interested in Satan," replied Alden, his impatience breaking up in sudden amusement. "Studies of his character in the shape of warnings form the bulk of his writings; but that personage seems to have got even with him."

"Alden! How can you joke on such a thing?"

"You ought to be glad that my generation can look at his ruling passions in such a cheerful light."

"O, Alden!"

"I was very severe on him three years ago, but now I fall to wondering what the stress could have

been. My mother used to say 'Never wonder till you know the circumstances and then you'll never wonder.' At any rate it will all be set right now and no one else need ever hear of it. My father's attitude is a curious one. All at once the lawgiver of his youth turns out a weak and faulty man. If he were living my father would hardly have saved him from prison, but he would have loved him for the first time. He thinks the old parson tried to say something just at the last; perhaps, as he believes, it was an attempt to explain this. I dare say a man like him suffered his fill for it. Let him rest in peace."

Thus Alden blackened his grandfather's name.

When Barbara spoke again it was of the trouble in both their minds.

"Very likely two years passing along day by day won't seem so long as it sounds in a mass," she said, "I'm quite sure it won't."

"If I weren't moving about so—" began Alden. "But no, it wouldn't do. I couldn't risk it for you. My dear, how can I stand it! How can I!"

"We won't look ahead. We'll just fill each minute, you out there and I——" Barbara stopped short. "I'm glad you told me," she added after a while.

"I did it because I thought it right you should understand," said Alden with a sigh.

"It wouldn't have mattered to me about that."

"Mattered?"

"About understanding."

"You are a dear good girl."

Then by common consent they changed the subject.

Alden related the incident of the misplaced miniature and expressed his opinion that his father and hers were a couple of well-meaning chaps, old-fashioned, of course, to which Barbara responded quietly that all old people were a little queer.

There was no evident decrepitude in either of the men under consideration, for the loss of his arm had not broken the general's iron constitution, but they were spoken of by these younger people with something akin to the pity which most of us feel for the dead.

"Alden, we are to be sacrificed to our friends. The decree has gone forth," proceeded Barbara.

"In what form are we to be offered up?" he inquired.

"An evening party, mamma says. O, Alden, don't look like that!" laughed the girl.

"But why, dearest heart? Why an evening party," groaned the man.

"It's the custom to announce engagements in that way here."

"Question: What is a custom? Answer: An unbaked law. When will the torture be applied?"

"In ten days if that suits you. Mamma told me to ask you."

"Ten days," repeated Alden blankly. The recall

he had then in his pocket, received that morning, gave him just ten days more. "Could she make it eight days, do you think? I can hardly wait for it you see," he added, trying to smile pleasantly.

"Who will be there?"

"Every one we know."

"How jolly that will be. Corenzio, of course."

"I suppose so."

"I didn't know until lately that he cared especially for you."

"You don't know it yet. He behaves the same toward a dozen girls. Some people think him handsome."

"You?"

"No, indeed," declared Barbara, "I never did. I—think—I like a different coloring myself. O, Alden, somebody might come!"

"Yes," replied Alden, "this rock behind us might speak its mind. I see some emotion has cracked its heart once and perhaps jealousy will split it again. Of course some one from Portugal may drop in untimely, as Corenzio did last night. But let's sit here and risk it."

The tide was rising, for the black ring of seaweed about the ledge was gone. Across a cleft of rock close by a spider was sitting at the centre of his frail, bright house upon which the sun was shining, and the wind at random swayed it to and fro.

"Not just yet," Alden said to himself, remonstrating with the message of recall that seemed

clamoring to be heard, "Not to-day." But the unspoken words colored his thoughts and guided his tongue more than once to talk of that savage outpost where his work lay.

"Even though there's no possibility for a man to see the end of a thing, don't you think he's lucky to see the commencement of it?" he asked, after they had talked and fallen into silence several times.

"What do you mean, Alden dear?"

"I mean we don't know how big a thing we may be doing out there."

"Yes?"

"When that railroad comes it's going to bind the states together as fast as the new ones grow. The people will come from the east and the south, but the civilization they build will not be eastern or southern, see if it is! I should not be surprised if the section I am in out there turned out to be the most representative and American place in the Union."

He laughed apologetically as he met the puzzled gravity in her face.

"I think of these things on the plains because I'm alone so much."

"It's interesting," she said. "Tell me about it."

"There is a curious imitation of the sea on the prairies; the wind blows the grass into waves, the sky spaces are as huge and of course the loneliness is something like it. We are going to survey the

copy, though, whiz across it and seed it down, dig it and pave it and upholster it."

"Not for ages yet."

"Very soon, I think. You've no idea how strongly the tide sets that way. Did you know one-fourth of all Americans leave their own state? I tell you there's an immense impulse everywhere. I feel it so that it makes me restless. Such a lot of cramped old rubbish is breaking up, so many new things are coming on. Why, that very upward dash of families toward elegancies they've never known, that *parvenu* freshness, is inspiring if you only look at it right. What an opportunity! The last chance the world may ever give for a nation to commence with every advantage. Ours has been in training a hundred years and she's now ready to start. It's splendid to live at just this time of all times and help give the United States a send-off.—Dear little girl, dear little heart, why don't you remind me now that I cannot even settle the affairs of our world of two as we both wish?"

"I liked to hear you."

"You see I have a habit of talking to you exactly as if you were another self of my own; just as lately, between me and my ugly image in the glass, I see brown hair and pink cheeks and eyes that are blue one day and gray the next. So I find myself talking exactly twice as much as I used."

"Dear," said Barbara, "I see a difference between us that makes me afraid sometimes. You look so

much farther. Don't get discouraged with me, Alden, yet awhile when I stumble along behind. You must wait for me."

"See here!" exclaimed Alden with his pleasant laugh. "See here! I've been showing off all my good points ever since I came home. I am a rough, impatient man. You make me a little better every time I see you. But don't get discouraged with me, sweetheart, for at every point except bridge-building and fighting you must wait for me."



## VI

### A WILL O' THE WISP

THE day of the party given in honor of Barbara's engagement was bright until nearly sunset. Then the white and decorative clouds were succeeded by rougher masses which grew darker and darker toward the close of light. Finally through the level grays low in the west a last yellow gleam glittered for an instant and then sank from sight.

A monotony of murky color spread over earth and sky, the faces of those who looked out of the windows were darkened and the serious night came down.

After the general in his blue coat with flat gilt buttons, and Alden in his uniform had set out in their different moods for the scene of hospitality, Locker seated himself before the deserted fire in the sitting-room when his evening duties were done. He put out the lamp for he meant to do nothing but rest, and he leaned forward in his chair, holding one hand to the heat of the blazing logs until the palm was nearly blistered before he warmed the other, as though to remind himself that even this hour of physical ease might not shirk its due share of life's unremitting ills. He was counting the days which must still elapse before an answer to the application

made out by Alden and endorsed by the general, could be reasonably expected from Washington; and he was further reconciling the comfort of the moment with his conscience by assuring himself that if there were a way by which he could be cheated out of his dues, the Government could be depended upon to find it.

The schism between conscience and sensation was honorably ended by the arrival of Jacob Minns. He settled with an old sailor's clumsiness into the chair Locker pushed toward him. Though all ceremonial of visiting between them had shrunk into a symbol, Jacob never omitted that, and upon entering the general's house he always patted down the straggling lock which had remained on duty over the centre of his forehead when all the rest of his top hair had deserted its post. The fact that he forgot this observance until after he was seated marked a grave preoccupation of mind.

"Wal, what's in the wind now, Jacob?" asked Locker, for it was evident enough that something was there.

"She's off," replied the guest, jerking a thick thumb toward the window.

"When?"

"Jest before supper, I guess. Table was set and kettle a boilin'. A piece o' paper on my plate says 'Gone to sister's for an hour. Jemima's sick. New gingerbread in cake box.' That means three days. Sometimes it's Almiry Ann that's sick. I left every-

thing as it was and come out. I didn't feel no call for victuals."

"Be they all three jest alike about it?" questioned Locker with smothered indignation.

"Wal, no, they bea'nt. Maria doos wrastle with it. She don't know anything what to do she feels so bad. And she don't never keep none in the house."

"Queer about them three respectable females all takin' to drink in their old age, ain't it, now?"

"All risin' forty 'fore they teched a drop," asserted Jacob stonily. "Inherited, every mite of it. Rum killed the old man." He shifted one knee to the other by assisting it with both hands, his gloomy eyes on the fire. "Wisht she could make out to stop it," he said thoughtfully. "She's a dom good woman all but that."

The expression as Jacob used it had an emphasis of benediction in it. But Locker who had less sympathy with the erring wife held his peace, smoking in silence some moments before he added, "Things that ain't straight in your own house has got a heap o' reasons *why* that they ain't got in nobody else's house."

"That's so," admitted Jacob Minns.

The friends sat ruminating upon this matter for some time. Locker's tactful remark, though merely intended to express disapproval of his course without really wounding his friend, had, like all generalities tended to calm the whole situation, by lead-

ing its conditions up from the hot and personal into the cool and universal.

"She see a ha'nt last time," Jacob said after the pause. "Did I tell ye?"

"No. Where?"

"She was comin' home on the third day, kinder slow and shaky, and jest by Sam Parker's orchard she see it. She says she warn't ten feet from it, right in the path, and she stood stock still and shet her eyes a mite an' then looked agin an' it was gone."

"Was it in a sheet or in flames o' fire an' horns?" asked Locker with heavy waggishness.

"It warn't in none of 'em," replied Jacob stolidly. "It was as lifelike as a wax figger. That's what she says, eyes an' all. It had took the shape of young Robert Temple who was drowned nigh on to two years ago."

Locker turned in his chair and stared at his friend. "What put him into her head to see?" he said in slow surprise.

"Wal, she done sewin' on the mournin' up there, I recollect, and what with havin' seed him roysterin' around that fall and then heerd of him drowned all at once, I guess it was some of a shock to her. So when she ain't quite right it all comes back as a ha'nt. That's how I sense it. It scairt her good, I tell ye. She was shakin' like the numb palsy. I couldn't make out to git her dress off for a spell. If she'd jist had the luck o' seein' it on her way to her

sister's three days afore, I swan! I believe she'd 'a' turned back."

"Is she oftin took this way, Jacob, seein' things?"

"No, sir, never was afore. That was one thing that scairt her so. She thought she was goin' queer the way some on 'em doos, I've heerd, when they keep it up a good spell. I did think then it'd 'a' cured her of the taste. But she's gone agin."

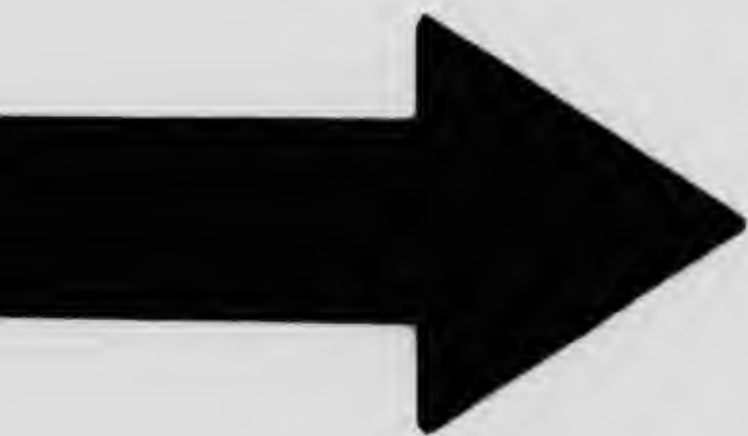
In Locker's opinion the symptoms were too bad for any hollow phrases, so he attempted none. When at an early hour Jacob rose to go his friend went out to the door with him and stood looking up at the dull sky.

"I allus leave a lamp at sich times in the settin'-room," observed Jacob as he lingered on the paved walk. "An' when she gits round to comin' back she puts it out if I'm not there and goes to bed."

The two men turned their eyes in the direction of Jacob's home, though the house could not be seen from that point. Then without any ceremony of farewell they separated and Jacob went with bent head as was his wont along the dimly-lighted street. He raised his eyes from habit as he came within sight of the small house. It was dark from top to bottom. Incredulous he blinked and looked again. Stumbling with haste he hurried forward. The extinguished beacon was lighted again in the man's unbeautiful but eager face.

After Jacob had gone Locker went back to the room where the logs had declined from winged





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sympathizers to red-eyed blockheads, as fires will which have been tamed with burning upon hearths, but which like other domestic pets resent being left alone and preen themselves the best when human eyes are watching them.

He sat down with a sigh again in his old place. It was very still in the house; even Tray had been taken to the Temples' to pass an evening with their dog with whom he had agreed upon a truce. Now and then a log dropped apart with a soft sound. The stairs in the hall beyond the open door creaked sharply at intervals, as though with the progress of a ghostly foot the dumb boards cried out. Locker threw another log upon the embers and in the noise of snapping sparks and cheerful blaze the stairs were silent and the ceasing of the footfalls of hurrying passers-by became less noticeable.

Locker had resumed the alternate heating of his palms, the fire was settling down to quiet flame when he thought he heard a footstep, light and guarded but at regular intervals, somewhere beyond the door leading to the hall. When he sat up and listened as sharply as his slowly dulling ears would allow he concluded he was mistaken, but a moment later he fancied he heard a door close. If so it must have been that between the kitchen and the shed which always gave out a small creak when it was nearly shut.

He rose and walked along the hall through the open door into the kitchen and there stood. The

darkness was absolutely still. He felt for the door to the shed, opened it and going down the three steps struck a match. The light flared up as he held it high above his peering old eyes but showed only the usual array of articles, silent and unsuspecting.

"I'm a durned fool, I guess," he mentioned aloud.

The match went out, he trod the spark under foot and returned to the sitting-room, leaving all the doors wide open. He was again sinking comfortably back in his chair when he was convinced that another sound came from the same direction as before, and when he stiffened himself to listen he certainly heard the click of a latch falling as though inadvertently dropped. With an exclamation of rage he hurried out to the shed door. Determined on a thorough search this time he reached for the lantern upon its hook in the wall beside the three steps. It was not there. Bewildered by the discovery Locker stood where he was an instant, then hastily took down an old lantern which had been seldom used since the new one came three years before, lighted it, put on his working hat and went out of the back door. It had a heavy latch and was not bolted.

Somebody had been there and stolen the lantern. He ran down the path to the street and there holding his light behind him, inspected the long straight highway in both directions.

A spark at some distance to the left was flitting

away into the darkness. Locker dashed down the street.

The spark swung as the holder moved, not quickly as if in haste but at a leisurely pace, as though unsuspecting of pursuit.

Locker's breath soon gave out and all he could do was to walk as fast as possible and keep the light in view.

Around the separated figures the change in the landscape which night had wrought was having its weird way. All gradations of color had died with the sunlight and a prevailing sombreness of hue had wrapped the world whence the cheer that dwells in green had departed. A great melancholy seemed to brood over the trees. Was that a jocund orchard, that gloomy grouping of dun masses held aloft upon slender stems? By night's strange transformation the foliage rising without evidence of effort from the trunk by day, seemed now to weigh like a heavy bulk upon stems too slight to bear it. Here and there an elm-tree in its soaring height, the dull sky showing through its leaves and branches, avoided somewhat this sense of weariness and burden.

At the corner the swinging spark turned to the right, and Locker relaxed his panting speed. "It's that cussed little Dan of Jackson's," he growled as he went. "He's been at our pears twice this week. I'll wallop him good."

When Locker turned the corner the light had gained upon him and looked smaller.

"It's passing Jackson's," he said aloud in his amazement. "If it ain't Dan that's got it, who has?"

The road after passing Jackson's was little used and he stumbled more than once in its uneven places. The light in advance moved steadily at the same pace as before. The narrowing street had now no goal but the graveyard on the hill. Locker's surprise was overpowering his indignation.

Close to the path beyond the open gateway through which the spark had passed the grass was heavy with dew and its chill was brushing against his ankles. It was very still, the trees closing in about him here and there, each a shadow of itself; the headstones as his light struck them standing out as if they answered to their names and disappearing again. But at some distance ahead he saw that the light which he was following had stopped. A wind rose suddenly and blew a dark fold against the stranger's lantern. Locker paused in his rough walk so as to see better. A second time was it whisked against the light, obscuring it, and Locker said to himself that no man's cloak could be lifted like that, and the garment reached too near the ground besides. The fitful breeze could only raise something thin and loose of fold.

"It's a woman!" whispered Locker.

Slowly and cautiously he moved nearer, drawing into the shade of the cedar trees and slipping from one to the next. The other light was quite still, as

though the holder were looking carefully at something.

"I vum it's the old lady's stone she's reading!" he observed to himself as he reached another tree.

While he spoke the light moved on, but stopped suddenly again. The gleam of a white stone among the gray ones flashed as the lantern's beams fell upon it. Then the light was set down and glittered starlike in the tall grass for a moment, while the figure stood beside it. In his curiosity Locker unguardedly stepped out from the trees and pressed forward. Perhaps the lantern-bearer saw his light, for all at once the spark was swaying from side to side and moving quickly away.

Locker hurried to the spot it had left, but no flower or other sign of the halt could be seen at the gray stone, none at the white one beside it upon which he turned his lantern rays, so that the new words cut upon it might have been read as he ran.

*Susan Rockingham, only daughter of John and Martha Rockingham Sumner, born June 13, 1831, drowned September 27, 1853, aged 22 years, 3 months, 14 days. And there shall be no more sea.*

Without further delay Locker followed the light, which was not advancing as rapidly as it might, because it constantly flitted to left and right like a fire-fly. Whether this were done to bewilder the pursuer, or arose from some superstitious feeling about treading on the graves, there was none to tell. Tired and angry he plunged forward in a straight

line across the mounds, shuffling, catching in black-berry vines, trampling the flowers which loving hands had tended, while the light before him went daintily on without pause or stumbling, until all at once it was gone.

When the exhausted Locker reached the street it was far away, a mere spark moving straight as an arrow, and soon lost at the turn of the road.

Jackson's old dog sprang fiercely from the darkness upon the tired man, snarling and clinging to the sleeve of his coat until he gasped out the brute's name.

"Jack, Jack, old fellow!" and the dog let him go.

Why had he let the other figure pass unharmed?

When Locker reached the street on which he lived, wet, weary, one sleeve torn by the animal's teeth, no light was to be seen in all the world of darkness before him. Two figures hurried from the narrow street, whose corner he was nearing, and crossed the thoroughfare just in advance of him.

"Say, anybody lef' me a fortune? Jes' tell me dat much anyhow—" urged the woman, panting at the man's elbow.

Locker lowered the lantern which he had raised to scan the couple now lost in the gloom.

"That good-for-nothin' Venus was hired to stay through an' they ain't more'n begun to eat at the party yet. What's she traipsin' after that Portoogee cutthroat for anyhow? She ain't more'n half baked, that nigger," he muttered, shambling on.

His light had grown dim, for there was little oil in its can, and as he shuffled up the path to the door, it flickered and went out. He lifted the latch, set down his useless lantern and crossed the shed, drawing the back of his hand along his streaming forehead and flinging his hat from him. He struck a match. The small flame flared up and was reflected back from something near the women door. A lantern hung by its hook upon the wall.

Locker's match went out. He groped to the steps and reaching up he touched the lantern above him with his hand. The glass was warm.

## VII

### AN UNINVITED GUEST

"FOR the first time in my life I'm glad to be poor," muttered the general, breaking the silence in which he and his son had walked the greater part of their way. "If I were rich I suppose I should have to give a tumtum like this for you."

"No fatted calf for good boys!" observed Alden.

"Um! Phin's going to grill his friends. I can see the shine of his lamp oil clear across the street. They class this bonfire under amusements, don't they? If you can't get married and let me settle down and be quiet, I'll be hanged if I don't secede."

Alden laughed aloud from a sudden impulse of gayety as he stepped into the flagged walk upon which the light streamed when the door opened.

In the branches of the elm overhead lanterns glowed as if Barbara's dreams on the night of her engagement had blazed out little flames to tell the secret to the world. Beneath the tree the darkness by contrast seemed blacker than usual.

The young man checked his laugh and stopped short at the foot of the low steps. "Who is that?" he said sharply. He was looking intently into the gloom between the large wisteria trellis and the trunk of the elm.



"What did you say?" asked his father from the doorway, but his son had already stepped into the shadow near the house wall.

"What's the matter, Alden?" demanded the general impatiently.

The lieutenant came back slowly past the light of the nearer window. "That was queer," he only said in reply, and they entered the house.

"Gem'men one flight back, sah," explained the official, whose old black face was the first to greet the guests and the last to speed their parting as he stood at the door on special occasions in house after house whose only servants were women.

"Ah, Sambo," interjected Alden in recognition of the negro's grin, "very queer."

The perfume of roses filled the hall. He leaned back to smile at some one just within the entrance to the resplendent drawing-room, who was quick to catch his eye as he ran up the stairs.

"Did you notice anything in that shadow near the door, governor?" he asked as they prepared to go down.

"Nothing at all. There wasn't anything," answered the general with his usual promptness.

Was there nothing then? The orchestra below were tuning their pieces, sounding the same note over and over again: men and women talking and laughing were coming nearer up the stairs. Unseen, the girl near the drawing-room door was calling to every impatient pulse in him.

Was it only a clever trick of shadows or had he seen a figure break the mass of darkness with a swift thrust of its arm? Did he hear a whispered "Curse you!" or was it only the swish of the wisteria leaves and the delusion of unaccustomed light and shade?

"Well, I'm ready when you are," announced the general to his waiting son.

Half a dozen men met Alden and stopped him with the boisterous congratulations of old acquaintance, as they passed him in the hall.

There was no tragedy in air like this. The incident took on the unhuman qualities of a remembered dream, and from unreality passed to forgetfulness with the touch of Barbara's hand.

"I hoped you would like it," she said in answer to his first remark. "It's the same old combination, white and roses."

She looked more vivid even than usual in the brilliancy of the lights and in contrast with her mother's clear pallor and gray velvet.

"You look fine as a fiddle. Where's your father?" the general asked her after he had shaken her hand with a stiff motion which seemed to say that his relations with society were distant and he meant to keep them so.

"I haven't seen him since I came downstairs," she said in some wonder, glancing at each door in turn. "I know he was dressed early. I heard him walk toward the desk-room on the next floor. I'm

glad to see you, Mrs. Whittemore," for a stream of guests was now passing her mother and Barbara had not an instant more to herself.

The rooms were indeed half filled before Temple quietly appeared at his daughter's side. His wife gave him a look whose depth of displeasure he well understood though it was accomplished at so slight a cost of facial change.

"Did you fall asleep?" exclaimed Barbara, turning to him at the first opportunity.

"Perhaps so," he said, glancing vaguely at one buzzing group and another. "How is it going?"

"Well enough, I think. What is the matter with the lights, papa? Or don't you feel well?"

"Perfectly well," he answered impatiently. "Aha! Judge, glad to see you. Isn't Sam here? O, I see with Mrs. Temple," and the slowly moving file, broken for the moment, swept past the hostess again.

Within the memory of those whose only gray is a few threads about the forehead, the evening party in New England was the one compulsory form of social entertainment for those who aimed to fulfil such duties at all. In theory it had good points; an open house, a generous and catholic hospitality, like that of the great democracy under which it flourished. In practice it was a mass of heated humanity, of all ages except childhood, of every shade of taste, profession and business, crowded into a space which gave small choice of compan-

ionship during the entire evening. In due time aisles were formed by vigorous shoulders through which men and women pushed steadily toward the dining-room where the same large and indiscriminating spirit governed the provision for the appetite, so that the supper given by well-to-do families like the Temples was discussed for weeks by those who had partaken of it and to whom it had been the objective point of the four hours.

The essence of the evening party was drearily material and was the natural outgrowth of the crudeness and the haste after riches of the time. Neither condition had developed social tact but had imposed the promiscuous gatherings of the village or the mining camp upon the more varied society which had resulted from the growth of towns and the spread of financial prosperity.

The houses in which these hospitable rites were performed had a kinship with the feasts. Beautiful in the owners' eyes were the heavy gilt of the cornices, the crimson brocade of the draperies, the baskets of huge roses at exact intervals in the carpet, the horsehair and black walnut, the mawkish engravings and the chilly crayon portraits. The women, more facile and more sensitive than their fathers, husbands and brothers, had been quicker than they to grasp the opportunities for refinement which the improvement in domestic conditions had provided for them. The men, excited by prosperity and engrossed in new and wider schemes for mak-

ing money had not as yet the freedom of mind or the leisure to give to the artistic possibilities of their natures. The Puritan blood in their veins had not hastened them toward the graces of life. People still spoke of dramatic artists as play actors and the words had in them an echo of the spirit of that brief commonwealth over the seas two centuries before.

These men were proud of their delicate wives and daughters; proud, too, of their own newly-acquired talent for spending money. Their fathers had known how to make it nearly as well as they, but had never been graceful in letting it go. The will being there, it was not a difficult art for these men and women to learn, and generously and joyfully did they practise it.

The women were fair in a style which had gradually become in the Eastern States the type of a lady; spare of figure, contracted of waist, dainty of appetite, with flitting rose color in their soft, fine-skinned faces, pouring the innocent upwellings of their hearts through the small pipes of sentimental songs to guitar accompaniment. The most of them went wonderingly to their graves with quick consumption. To such a texture outwardly had the women of the stalwart race of English Puritans come when half the century was over. Cold, strain and repression had attenuated the broad figures and shrunken the rude vitality to this. No foreign element had as yet mingled with its blood; it was an

English race, surviving after a long war. But in some way those families which had outlived two hundred years like these, were strong, must have been strong. Something had helped them in the struggle they had passed through besides muscle and bone. Intelligence had entered into the hewing of their trees, the building of their churches and schools, the sailing of their myriad ships, the conquest of their stony fields.

A vast amount of talent, wrote Emerson about this time of the English in the old home, runs into manners. So, too, a vast amount runs into common needs before a state is built up in all its branches by the hands and brains of the same men and women.

The intellect in New England had not wasted with the flesh. Up sprang among the people then the giants of the country's literature, and the mind of New England was lifting to them: its body, long bent with toil, stood up released, straightened itself, with outspread arms, and cried aloud, "At last!" An integrity which had not faded with the red color in their cheeks, a refinement of inner life which the Puritan self-questioning had left as an inheritance, a new sense of freedom and of shy joy in life, marked those years when with the loosening bondage of material things the spirit in many ways was straining upward. Clumsy and mistaken many of the efforts were, but it is a noteworthy period to any one who feels that nothing is so inter-

esting in this world as the upward movement of souls.

Barbara was a daughter of her age, and was as ready as her mother to banish the clawfoot sofas and straight-back chairs to the garret's dust. She was ashamed of her rounded figure and the cheeks in which heat and excitement this evening had deepened the color to a rich crimson, and she looked with admiration at her fragile friends who followed their mothers to take her hand; slender girls with pure eyes and thin white shoulders bare above their lace berthas.

"Mamma saves the family. She is certainly lady-like, if I am not," she thought consolingly.

One of the lulls which break the monotony of advancing crowds had come at this moment and her eyes searched the room for Alden. She watched him an instant after they had exchanged a quick smile over the heads of the intervening guests. He was moving toward her, listening to Dr. Lyman, with a look of courteous amusement in his eyes, and she wondered, just as all other girls in such circumstances have wondered since the world was young, how it was possible that any one could find another man in the room interesting when he was there.

As the two men came quite near they paused while she heard Alden say, "Of course you are right, doctor, in special instances. But I can't agree with you about this wholesale vulgarity. Our aim

to have the biggest hotels and the biggest cities is only the taste of a child. It's natural to our age, and I don't call it vulgar or hopeless any more than a half-grown boy's fancy for giants is hopeless. For my part, I'm glad to be young and growing. I'm a rabid optimist yet, Jim. Miss Temple is free for a minute; excuse me, won't you?"

"Where's that deserter, papa?" she said after a little.

"There's a tangle of bored fathers condoling together in the alcove. He's one, mine's another. He's all right to-night, isn't he?"

"I don't know that anything is the matter. Why?"

"Only that the governor found him locked in the desk room just after we came, and ——"

"Locked in the desk room!" exclaimed Barbara. "I went there to look for him before I came down stairs at all. I stood on the threshold and the room was quite empty then, the door open."

"He wanted forty winks, I dare say. What a crowd! Our friend Corenzio seems to be doing his duty by his hostess, which is more than I have done. I must talk to your mother when I get a chance."

Corenzio was evidently doing his duty with cheerfulness. His slight figure was erect and he smiled continually; he had large, long eyes, a small mouth, a weak chin concealed by its short beard. A shock of dark hair was tossed with apparent



carelessness about his head, but those who had troubled themselves to make a study of the subject, found that it invariably disposed itself so that one loosely curling lock fell into exactly the same relations with the right side of his forehead. Of course this may have been its line of least resistance, but there was a rude suspicion among such as did not have temperament that it was a bush placed to proclaim the wine of the gods within.

"Art," he had said with a laugh to his young admirer Richard Adams, "art isn't only long, Dicky dear, it's wide and it's deep, I tell you. Emotion's weak. Hold yourself in, Dicky boy; don't let yourself go or you're lost for an artist. You don't want to feel anything except just enough to build your work upon. That's the way I manage. Hang it, let other people do the feeling and you just look on and take notes. That's being an artist, Dicky *mio*."

He often spoke tenderly of Italy, the land of his race, though he had never seen it, and to a few intimates, of the pain it was to a fellow with an artistic background to be imprisoned on this money-grubbing coast where his soul was vexed hourly by its churls, or its girls. Perhaps he was not far wrong in his estimate of the æsthetic shortcomings in middle-aged men of business who had so far advanced as to recognize in art a decorative grace for women, but looked still with Cromwellian eyes askance at men making a profession of it.

The general and Temple, though the latter willingly paid the young man the highest price ever known in town for Barbara's instruction, agreed between themselves that it was a pitiful sight to see a grown man thrumming a piano, especially if he did it well, and that it showed some lack of moral fibre when a clever lad like this young Corenzio left a good place in a merchant's counting-room where he was doing a man's work, to philander in parlors over young ladies' music lessons.

Corenzio could wax witty among his friends when he disposed of these men and their class, and young Adams took it much to heart that a genius should be depressed by association with fellows to whom, as Corenzio sarcastically said, a man who was reading a book was doing nothing at all and a man who was writing one was doing next to nothing.

Mrs. Temple, in the secret revolt in which she lived, was ready to take the side of any one who was dissatisfied with existing conditions, and she sympathized with him, not in words, she was chary of them, but by a flattering attention to his pert cleverness, and a profound belief in his talents. As she stood listening to his half-playful, half-sneering comments, spoken in a slightly foreign accent, though he was born in the town, she was more amused than she had been all the evening and did not guess that the young man who nursed his popularity too carefully to risk a lack of attention to a

woman of her importance, was at the same time aiming to attract her daughter's eyes to himself, after having frankly failed to make her notice his pointed avoidance of her. What force he had left was employed to accentuate the envy in the furtive eyes of a group of his pretty young pupils gathered not far away.

Mrs. Temple's eyes, the only restless feature in her face, turned with unconscious jealousy to follow him after he had bowed himself backward at Alden's approach, and she received her future son-in-law without effusion. Her unsatisfied temper gave her a resentment against him which she could not have explained except to say that in taking from her the only being she really loved he seemed to treat it all as a matter of course. Her glance, after leaving Corenzio as Alden talked to her fell disapprovingly upon her husband. He stood against the wall half-way down the room, but even to her unsympathetic eyes he looked pale, almost haggard; his mouth half open as though for air, his thin hair clinging damply to his forehead.

The rooms were cooled by open windows above, and no one else had this look. She said to herself that he could not be as tired as she; he had had no care. Everything Corenzio said was received with a burst of merriment by those silly girls. Surely it must be nearly morning.

Alden saw she was not listening to him, and he soon moved away. Except for the unavoidable

glamour which surrounds the relatives of the beloved she would have been wholly uninteresting to him. He understood her no more than if he had been the dullest clod of her acquaintance, nor did he care to penetrate what he called her artificiality and see what it concealed.

The rooms seemed filled with people, all clamoring at once. One after the other men tried to interest their hostess for a moment in some living subject, Sebastopol, Rachel, the Paris Exposition, Walker in Nicaragua, the Kansas elections or Florence Nightingale. They supposed her manner must be perfect, but their words seemed to fall back from its surface. Most of those who had been through nearly four hours of heat and a struggle to say pleasant things and attain their supper, were flushed and limp.

The young things who in time detected a small white space of floor left, while their elders were in the dining-room, and had hurriedly seized the opportunity for a cramped polka, were laughing as they smoothed their well-ordered hair; the dainty head and perfect folds of their hostess' dress seemed to rebuke the vulgarity of deterioration.

Corenzio among the other young men circled about with one after the other of the prettiest girls or the richest, and with his usual audacity even asked Mrs. Temple to dance with him. When she refused she smiled more genuinely than she had all the evening. There was a call for him to play.

Alden stopped the orchestra, and Corenzio, after a little persuasion, shrugged his shoulders as though to say it was too trifling a thing to discuss, walked quickly to the piano, and struck into a florid concert piece of the stamp he personally despised. After a moment his cold, pale hands moved more languidly through its cheap harmonies, giving the performance the character of an improvisation. His eyes were wrapt and uplifted, his fingers wandered over the keys as though groping after a lost trail of inspiration. When he quickened the action his seeming impatience with the heavy hair which fell across his forehead was effective; but the note deepened perhaps in spite of himself, for the musician was truer than the man; something thrilled in the last chords that seemed to beat against the hearts of those who heard.

He took Adams' arm when he rose, bowing slightly, as if the applause were a profanation of his mood, and moved away through the parting crowd. "Where was she?" he asked, as soon as they were out of the press.

"Back near the door. She left her place to talk to those three old tabbies in lace caps. She's looking downright sad. Shoot a look and see."

"Ah, well, poor girl," replied Corenzio with a slight sigh.

It had been agreed between these two young men that Barbara had accepted Alden Sumner from *pique*. Corenzio himself had not really believed it

at first, but his vanity had caused him to impress it as a fact upon Adams, whose unquestioning faith almost persuaded the original instigator.

If Corenzio had ever trusted the sincerity of any one who had brains,—he never paid Richard Adams the compliment of reckoning with him on any score but dog-like devotion,—it was to Barbara Sumner that he had given that confidence, and something more than mere vanity had suffered when she became engaged to another man. Adams' invulnerable hero was ashamed to acknowledge this, but an impotent malice was in consequence at the bottom of his feeling toward the Sumners, unsatisfied by his lucky discovery of past money relations between his family and theirs.

"And by George," Corenzio went on, still strolling with his henchman, "the old lady is as bad as the rest, Dicky. Did you see her watch me? What's a fellow to do? Just tell me."

Adams replied that it was a thing, don't you know, that all the big chaps had to put up with, and Corenzio went on,—

"I say, Dicky boy, wouldn't it be a great joke to see how much nonsense the old lady would swallow? That would be something new, I swear, in this monotony of emotional buds. Hang it, a man can't speak a civil word to a woman, but the first thing he knows she's in love with him and there's no end of trouble."

Barbara had in truth a wistful face above her fad-

ing roses. She had been busy from morning till night for several days, and unwelcome thoughts of the coming separation, images of danger and tales of Indian uprisings were crowding into her tired mind, now that her responsibility about the evening was over. Hazily through these intruders loomed the faces of departing guests, and even her unobservant father, meeting her serious eyes as he stood near by recognized with unwonted sensitiveness tonight a something akin.

Alden was patiently waiting for a few last words when he caught a glimpse of his father at bay against a wall, that gadfly Corenzio, as Alden mentally called him, hovering in front of him, bent on mischief.

The young pupils had been carried off by resolute parents, the ladies of the house were busy and Corenzio espied the general, bored and weary and quite alone, the carnation in his buttonhole wilted about the edges.

"Private soldier, sir!" Alden heard his father say loudly as he drew near. "I never spoke of my men as common soldiers in my life, sir, and I never allow any one else to do it in my presence."

"Had you any idea that you're dramatic, general?" asked the young man with head tilted critically to one side and eyes narrowed to long lines. "He is dramatic, isn't he, Dick? I'm always in admiration of your style. It's splendid you know, the way you did that just now. 'I never spoke of

my men as common soldiers, sir, in my life, sir—' I wish I could hit it. It's Early English but it's big, it's the grand style. You'd make your fortune on the rostrum in the South and West; or even on the stage, by George! Wouldn't he, Dick? Ah, lieutenant, hail and farewell," he added airily but swiftly turning away, and taking Richard's arm sauntered down the room before Alden could speak.

"Clown! Fool!" gasped the almost strangled general.

"Come, governor, nearly every one has gone. I'll manage to have a few words with that school-boy before I leave home. Come ahead, governor, it's late."

"I wouldn't demean myself to care a brass farthing what he said," fumed the general, whose face was scarlet,—“putting on his confounded airs and patronizing *me!*” He walked a few steps by his son's side in silence, and then almost groaned, “That debt! That debt! It takes a man's dignity out of me.”

The carpet was strewn with ragged rose petals, the lights were going out, and when the last guest left the rooms Mrs. Temple immediately retired.

The general and his host considerably went to the supper-room so as to leave their son and daughter alone a moment.

“Great affair, fuss and heat and noise,” said the general testily. “Takes all this, does it, to get



young people engaged nowadays. What's the matter with you to-night?"

"Matter with me?" repeated Temple faintly. "Don't I look all right?"

"Thunder and Mars, Phin, don't shuffle with me! What is it, liver or rheumatics or what?"

"I'm five thousand dollars poorer than I was last night," replied Temple slowly.

"This rout didn't cost that money, man."

"Not for this at all."

"By investment or wild-cat speculation?" demanded the general sternly. Temple hesitated.

"By investment," he answered finally.

"Then don't growl, don't whine," said his friend, sharply jerking the flower from his button-hole with a characteristic movement. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Their host went out upon the doorstep with the two men after Barbara had taken leave of them and only when they had walked down the path did he turn to go in. A faint light, he did not notice whence, was glinting under the elm upon the huge wisteria vine, and by one of the tricks of memory some words rose in his mind at the sight of it.

"*Good-bye, dad.*"

He shivered, hurried inside and slammed and locked the door. But for the one lamp in the hall the rooms were dark. Barbara had offered to examine with him the windows and bolts, but he had said, "No, no, child, go to bed." He wanted to be

alone. He felt tired to the last limit of his strength from the strange trembling in all his limbs which he had endured for hours. He went into the deserted drawing-room where the smell of heated flowers filled the dusk in which the glimmer from the windows soon lost itself. The wisteria vine was crowding against the pane.

*"Good-bye, dad."*

He held his breath but there was not a sound; reaching out for the sofa near by he sat down, and laying his arm along its wooden back, rested his head upon it.

The images he had fought with all the evening swarmed into the vacant, weary mind. He was in the desk room upstairs, the window was open upon the balcony. "*Robert!*" he heard himself say again, "*you were drowned.*"

The relief there had been in the conviction that this boy was quiet under the ocean, the sick despair at the thought of taking back the burden of anxiety and complication, he acknowledged unreservedly to himself here in the dark.

*"No such luck. I never was more alive."*

*"Where did you come from and what do you want? You can't stay here."*

*"Stay here!"* His odd, short laugh; his father shivered as he recalled it. "*Stay here! The new madam turned me out when I was six years old.*"

How like his own mother he had looked as he stood there! She had held her head like that, her

thin nostrils and small ears had stirred a little as his did now under excitement. Yet the beauty of the woman had once been enthralling and this was only terrible, repelling.

*"Little Bab is to be married, I hear. Sumner thrashed me once, but it was fair enough. When a thing's fair I bear no grudge. But I hate a fellow with his luck. Curse him, what a run he's had! Suppose I should step downstairs,—don't stir. I'm not going to do it."*

*"What do you want?"*

Temple huskily formed the words with his lips as he remembered them.

*"A little money, that's all. Two gentlemen are waiting who will not be put off."*

*"What have you done this time?"*

*"Nothing."*

*"Nothing! I'm not quite a fool. Don't lie to me."*

*"I stopped a game of theirs,—I don't expect you to believe me,—and they were too much for me. I must pay for it. I shall never ask you again."*

*"Papa, where are you?"*

Temple started and sat rigid as though he heard his daughter's call again. The clock ticked loudly in the hall. He rose to his feet. His heart thumped as it had after that quick flight to the balcony whence he had seen in his outer darkness the white-robed figure in the study doorway.

*"Five thousand dollars. I must have it. Now."*

How strong he looked, standing with his back against the closed French window.

*"You shall not have it."*

*"Come! Listen! It is the last time! I will take my oath."*

*"Settle down under my eye and work like a man. I will give you five thousand dollars to start in an honest business here. But I will give it for nothing else."*

*"I'm in too deep. I'm in over my head. This may get me out. Can't you understand? I must have it, now!"*

*"Not one cent more of my money to squander on thieves and——"*

Ah! Temple stopped abruptly in a hushed tramp across the floor. He felt the same cold dampness on his forehead, the same sinking at the heart. His breath was short as it had been when he stood helpless in that savage grasp and heard the sharply whispered, *"Will you sign the checks?"*

*"No! no! no!"*

*"Then I will fling you over this balcony!"*

He had not struggled or cried out any more than he did now, standing tense and alone, staring into the dark. The horror of it was not mere physical terror, any more than it was now. Was it his son, his flesh and blood, that tall demon glaring with the quick fury of a wild beast? Why should he have remembered at that awful moment how two childish hands had held his arms so, many years

before, begging for a toy? But the poignancy of human pain is in association like this.

*"I will sign. Let me go."*

His signature was hardly recognizable after he had written it at the desk behind the locked door.

*"Thank you. I didn't hurt you, did I? I sometimes hurt more than I mean."*

*"Go! Go from my sight! I never want to see your face again."*

*"This seems rough to you. You're not used to it. I've been shot at so often, chased by dogs, chased by men, starved in swamps, nearly drowned,—it seems tame to me, you see, this kind of thing."*

*"Will you go? That is all I ask. Only go! Go!"*

The figure had slid over the balcony edge and paused half-way. *"Good-bye, dad."* A repulsion which made him shudder now at the mere recollection of the words had kept his eyes turned away, though he seemed still to see the face, even as he heard the voice. It was gone.

Merciful Heaven, had he come again? No, only the old and mutilated moon had pierced the branches outside the window. In his relief he fiercely pulled the curtains together to shut out the reminder. The movement roused him. He tried the house door, forgetting he had fastened it, and went up the stairs. Through the window over the hall door the persistent yellow moon spied on him, throwing nodding shadows in advance of him like

the trellis, like the climbing figure. Faces in the darkness below peered unsympathetically to see how he bore this new revelation of his only son. He felt tired, tired, tired. But thank Heaven! It was over. The law should deal with him next; perhaps there were bars strong enough even for a tiger like him. How wearisome, how insistent, how uninteresting suffering was! He had avoided a strain like this all his life by the simple method of averted eyes, not knowing that in unwillingness to accept its tragedy he was living but half his life. Perhaps his race had suffered so much in two hundred years of harsh conditions, that its heir was weary from his birth, and turned a sick man's eyes from any form of pain.

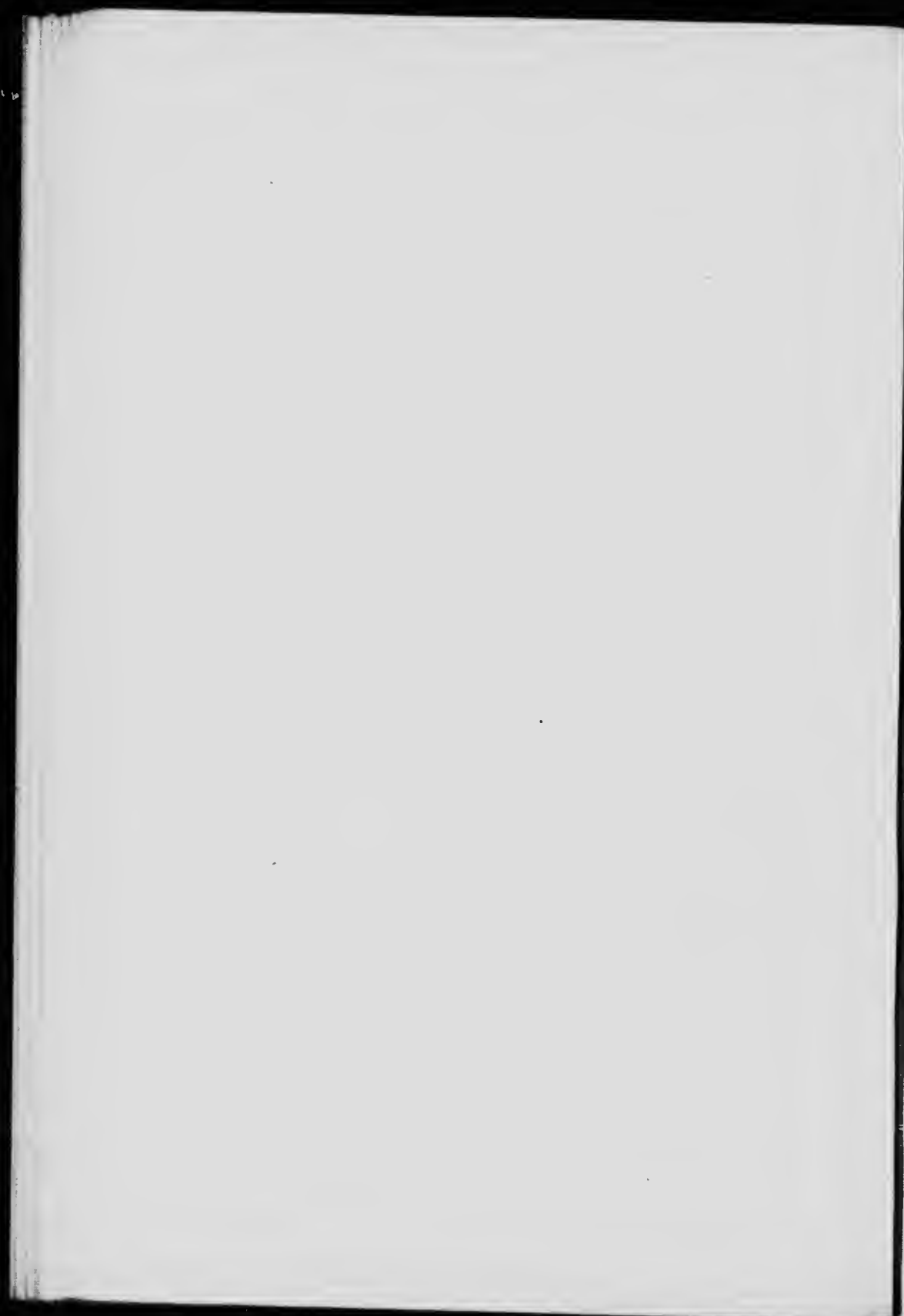
He said to himself as he reached his room that he would sleep until noon and get this business out of his head. Everything weakened in force with time; this would. Doubtless by to-morrow it would be a dull ache only, which would soon pass. As he entered his dark chamber the misshapen moon was looking in.

*"I will fling you over this balcony."*

He hurried across the floor with an unaccustomed oath below his breath.

*"Good-bye, dad."*

He shut and locked the blinds.



Book Second

**BREAKERS**





## VIII

### AN ODD ANGLE OF AN ISLE

THE room was as small as a cell. The dark silence outside of its curtainless window was not the dense hush of midnight but the expectant hush of dawn. A woman who had been hurriedly dressing without light or noise lumbered softly across the floor and slid her large shape through the half-open door. Before she had taken her first step down the black passage a man's voice came out from the gloom somewhere beyond. "Who's there?" it said, not in the tones of one aroused by a sound but with the deliberate clearness of a person fully awake. "It's Venus, mahsa. Cahn' sleep," she answered in a thick whisper, and the voice asked no more.

She groped to the house door, lifted the heavy bar of wood from the iron supports at each side and set it carefully in a corner. When she had opened the door she eagerly drew in two or three whiffs of air as if she had not breathed freely for some time; then she listened sharply. The stars were still overhead although they looked faded and thin with the approach of day. A pale light fell from them upon the sea before her. Closing the door she stepped cautiously down the beach, stopping at intervals to

look about her and listen. A low ridge of rock stretched away to the left and as the side nearest her was an easy incline she walked to the crest.

The sea spread out before her, which she dismissed with one hasty glance, was one whose personality is unique and unequalled. If it be true that inundations deep into the heart of a continent have stimulated the brain of man then this broken coastline has roused into activity more generals and poets, lawgivers and philosophers, artists, scientists and statesmen than any other seaboard in the world. Around its borders the chieftain races from the commencement of history have encamped, as Plato said "Like frogs around a swamp." Its intensely salt waters owe their brilliant blue to the impurities below in the ooze, sharks slip shadowy above its coral beds and lower still imprisoned fires chafe and threaten, envying their free brother to the north who puffs his vaporous breath from his hot heart forever in scorn of empires and time. Its poison and its pain alike concealed, without a restless wave these deeps borrow the glory of a perfect world and a peace that looks eternal.

The day was dawning upon the island of Lampedusa in the Mediterranean Sea. Mariners have named it The Enchanted Island, and after one night on shore have gladly hoisted sail and sped away. Far below its surface, like the hidden links of our own life, lie the proofs of its ancestry, the explanation of its spirit. As we put up our heads above

chaos into time so it rears upon its past a peak of existence above the waves. But beneath the dolphins' playground, beneath the coral and the ooze, lies the long bank that connects it not with alert, progressive Europe, but with Africa—mysterious, savage Africa. Outwardly, because of man's greed, it is the acquired property of Europe; inwardly, haunted by demons and played about by phantoms, weird, untamed and ill-understood, it is always and unalterably an African in bonds.

To the east Venus saw a range of purple hills, every peak of their dark outlines sharp against the horizon. She did not remember that no coast lay there by day. The expanse of stillness was so great that at this height she could hear the breeze, compounded of its myriad murmurs, as it passed through trees somewhere in the distance. All was dark and still about the huts below upon which her eyes were watchfully fixed. They were grouped into the form of a settlement around one of the little coves toward which the abrupt and craggy coasts of the island had shelved in the southwest. The dwelling from which she had issued was the only house to be seen and, although one of the comfortless meaner sort in which not a door or window would properly shut, it yet represented what touch of elegance belonged to the camp. In one of the numerous attempts at habitation through which the island had passed since it had made one of the last Phœnician strongholds in the west, this

house was built. The huts extending from it to the right varied in their construction, but the larger number were erected of poles woven with reeds and partially covered with sails from lost ships. To the west the heights above the white cliffs were crowned with swart masses of dwarf olive-trees and not far out on the water lay a barque, a black object swaying slightly upon its anchorage of gravelly sand. No hope of anything which she might be seeking lay in that dark vessel. It belonged to the settlement and its peculiar business was generally conducted after nightfall not many leagues from its present roadstead.

As Venus pulled her shawl tighter about her thick shoulders she thought with bitterness of her last night at home when she was lured away from a splendid supper in the Temples' kitchen by honeyed intimations of good fortune given by the Portuguese sailor at the rear door, and in her rooms had found Mahsa Robert come up from the grave with two foreigners. Constrained, as it then appeared, by a relentless doom, she had thrust a few things haphazard into a bandanna handkerchief and then had been spirited out of the house and upon a ship, in almost exact reproduction of her mother's experience a generation before on the west coast of Africa. Fifty years of America, however, had prepared Venus for a more intense dissatisfaction with such methods than her parent had had at her command, and this resentment set in as soon as she had

"sense." Two tears of self-pity rolled over her great cheeks as she stood on this peak of Lampedusa rehearsing her immolation and her wrongs.

All at once out of the dark came the voice of a man singing, the melody keeping time to the oars of a boat. Venus could not see the singer, but every one of the unfamiliar words was distinct to her ears.

"I'm wearin' awa', Jean,  
Like snow in the thaw, Jean,  
I'm wearin' awa' to the Land of the Leal.  
There's na sorrow there, Jean,  
There's neither cold nor care, Jean  
The day is aye fair  
In the Land of the Leal."

"Singin'! Singin', are ye? Ye must aye cackle yer new mischief like a hen that's laid an egg," growled a deep voice so close that Venus, too startled to stir, cowered where she stood with her frightened eyes rolling in the direction of the sound. Even by the faint light it was unmistakable that the speaker who stood not far away was a woman. She was a thick-set figure in a very short skirt and she was looking off at the water apparently unaware of Venus' existence. She held a gun in her hand and after a moment more she raised it, and aiming below at a spot on the beach, fired. The report seemed to shock the sacredness of the coming dawn, but the woman who strode at once toward the water took no heed of that. The song

which had stopped an instant after the shot was fired now went on as before.

“ Our bonnie bairn’s there, Jean,  
She’s baith good and fair, Jean,  
O, we grudged her right sair  
To the Land of the Leal.”

“ Scairt ye, did it ? ” chuckled the hard voice of the woman who returned to her old place before the cramp of terror had left Venus.

“ Bide yer time. It’s no lang. It’s no lang, noo. An’ ye think ye’sel’ canny, McCoy ? Ye’re a fool, and a poor fool, McCoy.”

The rude cadence had been taught by a rougher sea than this.

Suddenly a tongue of fire leaped upward from one of the purple peaks in the east. Summit after summit flashed into light. In a blaze of splendor the unsubstantial pageant of the hills burned itself away. The sun burst forth a globe of fire, sweeping the sea, flaming up the sky, shaming the expectant dawn with its boldness of fulfilment. A boat in which a man was rowing so that he faced his course, came into sight around the curve of the small bay. Still singing softly as though determined to finish the air he propelled the skiff to the beach, jumped out, fastened it, and walked up the shore. He glanced sidewise at first one and then the other of the two women, but making no salutation, passed on. His face was thin, the cheeks dropping abruptly into deep hollows from the high

cheek bones. His mouth shut stubbornly beneath the coarse red beard, and his eyes were bright, narrow and very small. His figure though not tall was broad and lean, his firm legs were bowed, his large, pale hands much freckled, his cap drawn over his whole head to the ears. He did not look like a man who had been singing "The Land of the Leal."

"How be ye?" asked the deep-voiced woman, turning sharply on Venus as soon as the sullen figure had passed. She held in one hand a limp wild duck which had just accomplished its weary migration across the sea, and whose head she had shot away.

"Wal, I'm so's to be outer bed, missis, thank you," Venus said with frightened haste, having never in her life been known to say she was well.

"Sight anything o' nights here?" questioned the other, keenly fixing upon her eyes which were embedded in furrows.

"Debbles. Nightmares," replied Venus briefly.

The number and depth of the wrinkles became formidable as the newcomer gave a hoarse croak of amusement.

"Ye will na be so distrackit wi' 'em after a bit," she went on with another outburst of questionable mirth, "they'll be company for ye. Spiteful idle devils those be. My ain wee folk ha' tellt me mony a bit thing. Mebbe it'd coom true if they had na warned me in time. Do ye mind me, eh?"

"Yes, missus," faltered Venus.



"If a body should be thinkin' of fleein' awa' on a ship frae here, say," continued the stranger carelessly, "I'd ken it weel. That makes things interestin' here, for me. Dinna ye think so, eh, woman?"

"I been goin' along home now," said Venus faintly, turning away, hardly knowing what she was doing.

Her tormentor walked beside her. The short locks of her thin gray hair straggled about her wrinkled face, her eyebrows were white and so long that they drooped over her eyes, the blood on her knotted hands, as she swung the dead bird when she moved, sickened Venus.

"What's ye name, eh?" was the next question.

"Venus Diggs, missis."

"Like it?" inquired the stranger.

"Yes, missis."

"He! He! Fetched by the cap'n an' *her*, was ye?"

"Yes, missis."

"Fetched frae hame?"

"Yes."

"She's bonny-like, yon," proceeded the brisk old woman, jerking the object in her hand in the direction of the house. "Did ye mind that weddin' ring o' hers? I ha' na tellt her where't was bidin' afore she had it."

"Mahsa Robert can stan' de dispensary ob a

gold ring for Miss Susie hisself, I reckon," replied Venus, with a temporary stiffening of the backbone.

Venus, in assuming the grand air, always presumed upon her slight acquaintance with Latin derivatives in the same intrepid spirit with which she treated the marriage laws.

"Aye, aye," observed her companion with a short guffaw and surveying Venus with closer attention. "I ha' na had laugh enough for me guid o' late. Mebbe there's a jig or twa in *ye* yet, Judy, if I jerk yer strings sharp. They sailed awa' in sair haste frae the weddin', she tellt me, sae she hadna a ring. I kennt where tae find one. It was as guid as new, yon. Hadna been wore lang."

Something in the tone more than in the words set Venus' knees trembling.

The figures of men and women now moving on the beach among the little huts, the smoke curling upward in the sun, looked like home to her as she floundered on.

"I'll tell ye aboot it some day," added the hag, nodding pleasantly.

"No!" gasped Venus.

The stranger seized her arm, driving the small bony ends of her fingers deep into the flesh.

"Hoots, woman, don't pry an' peep into things here that are no yer beesiness. Dinna ye speak o' that ring to livin' soul or hist noo! I'll beckon a crony o' mine, that harries bad folks for me an' it'll

coom o' nights tae ye, wi' bluid drippin' frae every finger. Be off wi' ye!"

Venus needed no second hint. She left her companion standing as though to obtain a comprehensive view of the settlement before entering into its details. Shrill voices of two angry women were exhibiting the coarse possibilities of the Sicilian speech. A group of men had gathered around two crouching figures who were already playing *morra*, a game in which gambling was conducted on the simplest principles. Each extended at the same instant as many fingers as he chose, while they shouted together the guess at the combined number on the two hands.

"Three!" yelled the players. "Six!" "Four!"

A lame dog limped about the place where smoke was most actively ascending, sniffing eagerly. A man with an exclamation which was like a growl of thunder amidst the shrill voices, kicked him out of his path. It was he who had sung "The Land of the Leal." The sailcloth, partially covering some of the huts near by, glittered white under the shelving cliff. Along the beach were strewn cables, spars, rags of sail, fishing nets and row boats. The sea as far as eye could reach this morning was an intense blue, except at a short distance from the shore. Here its color seemed to reflect the green of grassland, as if like other mothers it entered as far as its own nature would allow into the life of its child, the youthful earth.

For a moment after Venus left her the old woman stood taking in the whole scene then with an utterance between a grunt and a snarl which was more contemptuous than a spoken word, she strode down into the midst of the busy groups below. Since she was dressed in a suit of faded brown and the kerchief about her head was of the same dingy coloring, she was as inconspicuous an object as hues could make her. Occasionally some one in the scattered company started and mechanically crossed himself when she passed. An odor of coffee was in the air; a man with a wide flabby face was boiling something in a kettle suspended over a crackling fire.

A deaf man looking on at the noisy camp would have known by the variety of movements in the mouths that it represented a number of races. Italians predominated among the twenty-five or thirty figures, and it was evident that the few black-browed women, wearing large earrings and grimy white sleeves were Sicilians. McCoy, with a mug of coffee in one hand, and a lump of bread in the other, was walking restlessly about as he ate, stopping to speak to a man here and there, who then eagerly questioned him; and he paid scant attention to the consumptive Italian who waited for him each time and matched his gait to the Scotchman's uneven steps, turning a face dark with its combination of jaundice and tan continually toward McCoy as they went.

The air of the November morning was fresh and radiant. Groups of Italians, men and women, were eating their frugal breakfast of barley bread and salted olives, the epicur-s among them having soaked their crusts in oil, or procured sardines for a relish. A man carrying coffee, bread and sardines in an improvised wooden tray dashed hurriedly across to the house and disappeared within. He returned empty-handed in a moment, flung himself on the ground beside a knot of his countrymen, and with one arm supporting his recumbent figure began his own breakfast.

A neat, small man whose close-cut hair was nearly white, and whose face was disfigured by a scar which crossed the nose and one cheek to the ear, was sitting upon a cask, swallowing boiling hot coffee in easy gulps. One of his eyes did not follow the direction of the other. Perhaps it was blind. It looked however, as if it were plotting schemes of its own; as if it had attained an independence of its owner which its fellow had not. The man lounging on the ground beside him, drinking his black coffee from a can which held a quart, was evidently an Englishman. Huge of build, square of shoulders, with thick brown hair and muscular throat, the man seemed at first sight to be a giant of strength and endurance. His immense frame was lean and seemingly sound, his blue eyes as he raised them to the alert little face with its pointed moustache and beard were slow and dull,

but wholesome enough, though he was paler than a strong man of his ruddy race should be. The Frenchman beside him was the best dressed man in the company; his blue frock coat with brass buttons was well brushed and closed across his breast, his stock and collar worn with rigid exactness though the collar was not clean, and leaning against the cask on which he sat was a small silver-headed cane. Two mongrel dogs, snapping over a bone disturbed the current of his speech, and he skipped lightly down from his seat, stepped to the fire, daintily dipped a tin of boiling water from the kettle and flung it deliberately over the curs. Their howls made him smile and he resumed his breakfast cheerfully on the cask near the impassive Englishman.

“In the land of unlick-cub you and Gomez have found the family Temple in a respectability ver’ great, he tells me yesterday,” he began.

“Rich,” replied Swan briefly. “Give me half that—that—” he indicated by a dull impatience of gesture the bread in the Frenchman’s hand.

“More potboil was a—was possible?” suggested Delavigne, dividing the bread unequally and giving Swan the smaller piece.

“Rich. Rich,” muttered Swan with his mouth full.

“Ah, ah! Pity! I tells Charpiot. I says *more!* You see this pious family?”

“Saw them through—through,” Swan seemed to

have dropped his bread and to have paused while he clumsily felt for it, but his huge face hidden from his companion was contorted with an agony of effort as he repeated below his breath "the—the—the——" Then a look apprehensive yet vacant spread across his features. He had lost the idea as well as the word.

"Through the window?" asked Delavigne sharply. "How many was they?"

"How many what?"

"Temples! Temples! Temples! Pull yourself whole, man!"

The abruptness was tonic; Swan's eyes brightened.

"Temple, yes. Pretty sister," he said wagging his head slowly to and fro. "Give me!—" and he reached for the bread the Frenchman was still fingering.

Delavigne watched his last morsel disappear behind the immense teeth. His own appetite was flickering but he was of a greedy temper and he grudged Swan his capacity of getting more than his share.

While Swan was picking up every crumb which had fallen within reach Delavigne spoke again.

"Pretty sister, rich father, pretty—um—wife, and captain. Captain! Pah! Zat brute! And I am here. Who should be chief in Lampedusa?"

"I! I!" exclaimed Swan thickly.

"You! It vill have ze brain or ze strength. He is stronger zan you."

"No!"

"Yes, and quicker. His muscles are steel."

"No, no!"

"You are flabby. He does not drink."

"I hate him!" roared Swan, and brought a big, swollen fist down on the pebbles beside him.

"Pfeu! You are old. You have no ze elastic, *pauvre!* He spring three metres at Juarez."

"I hate, I hate him! I hate him!" groaned Swan.

"No *finesse!* No delicate, no grace," complained the Frenchman. "Has you see a lion in trap?"

"I am stronger! I am the strongest man in Europe," blubbered Swan in a sudden gush of self-pity.

"I has. He had kill nine men. He walk in his trap like ze mutton. *Captain!* To-day he fight, he fight like ze devil. To-morrow he fight *à contre cœur.* Ze fools vote, vote, vote for heem. He is big, zay say to me, he has no ze fear. Pah! Pah! Ze hag deal ze card. Cat!"

"Cat!" echoed Swan.

He turned his dull eyes toward the point to which Delavigne had swept his. The old woman wheeled about and darted a swift glance at the two men. She could not with mortal ears have heard the word, but her look said that she had.

Delavigne met her stare with his narrowed eyes.



Swan dropped his. "Who's afraid? Who's afraid?" he muttered.

The pebble upon which his glance fell seemed to wither his body from neck to foot. His eyes dilated and stood out veined and bulbous from their sockets as they travelled restlessly from spot to spot near him. A pallor had altered his face; only his eyes seemed to live. The Frenchman turning from Mother Graham laughed as he watched the convulsive hands, the mouth which had begun to twitch.

"My pale Swan," he said, "how he is drôle!" and with his cane made two or three thrusts at the sufferer's arms and legs.

The sharp lunges given with a fencer's skill roused the man. He caught his breath, his features recovered their stolidity. He rose heavily to his feet.

"Did they creep or crawl, my dear?" asked Delavigne. Swan gave a short loud laugh. "I was joking you, Frenchy," he said roughly, and with several vigorous imprecations brought his heavy hand down upon Delavigne with a weight beneath which the small frame staggered; then with broken laughter he slouched away down the beach, his arms hanging inertly with nerveless fingers at their ends. The Frenchman gently brushed the shoulder of his coat as though Swan's touch had left a mark upon it. The eye under his control followed the man as he went; something had sent the blood into the ugly scar.

A man suddenly appeared at the open door of the

house. Delavigne glowered at him, then at the broad back of Swan, then again at the newcomer as though comparing them. The stranger stood looking keenly at one after the other of the individuals before him, and gradually talking and quarreling ceased as the whole assembly drew near to him.

It could only be the new captain, Robert Temple. In his tall figure, which nearly filled the narrow door, the shoulders and back seemed to have been broadened and deepened to an unusual degree, leaving the lower half of the frame at its ordinary size in a large man. From a belt about his waist hung a fringe of foptails, hinting of a life in colder lands. His eyes, passing from face to face, were of a yellow tinge, flecked with brown, and the white about the iris was singularly clear. His hair was a mass of tawny color, thick and rather long, and the short beard of the same shade did not conceal the heavy squareness of the jaw. The neck at which the shirt lay open was large, and in spite of weather, noticeably white in comparison with the skins about him. His eyes in the search over the company had a look of anticipation in them, and indeed the whole figure from head to foot suggested readiness. Not only the alert eyes seemed to see, but the whole body was, as it were, impregnated with the special senses, as though he saw with the vivid hair, heard with the rigid shoulders and the ever ready jaw and hands. Yet behind the vigilance a close observer

would have caught a glimpse of that melancholy which lurks in an animal's eye, and might have noted also that his ears moved slightly at the least sound.

"Where is Carriacci?" he said with swift emphasis. "Bring him, Gomez. The rest come on."

The men made a rapid and disorderly movement forward, pushing in at the doorway after him.

"Ah, but he is handsome, our captain," one of the women turned her head over her shoulder to say, with a smile thrown at a man who had lingered in passing her, among the last to go in. He scowled blackly at her and cursed the captain under his breath. Mother G. Ham after all the rest walked deliberately into the house, and the beach was left to the black-haired women, munching and snarling at one another, or breaking out into shrill laughs that had only emptiness or mockery in them.

## IX

### A PIRATE CHIEF

FOR the size of the house the room into which the men jostled and crowded was large. The ceiling was roughly groined from the corners and the floor was of stones which had settled into hollows and ledges. The newcomers stumbled about into places which suited them, some leaning against the wall, some perching upon kegs and bales whereon the names of merchants and cities, Marseilles, New York, Bordeaux, London, Liverpool, were to be easily deciphered beneath the clumsy attempts to erase them.

Though Mother Graham was the only woman present, she did not obtrude the fact upon the consciousness of the company after she was seated and only the brown face, fierce eyebrows and bristling hair upon lip and chin were prominently visible. A creased plaid handkerchief was knotted about her throat so low as to display the mahogany-colored skin, deeply furrowed horizontally and intersected by strong, sharp cords. Her custom was to sit with closed eyes, or what appeared to be such, since beneath the eyelids upon which the veins stood out in ridges, she had never failed to detect the most compromising move of a conspiracy or the most pertinent expression of rebellion or hatred. This

band was made up of the remnants of several outlawed organizations, reinforced by individuals whose career or tastes fitted them for the association; Mother Graham had come as one fragment of these survivals. Of the section to which she belonged McCoy alone was left. She had appeared among the Scotch robbers upon another coast when her son Andy was dying of wounds. She said she had a warning and none of them doubted it. After his death she stayed to complete the cure of the other sick and injured men. She could probe and bandage. She knew the virtues of herbs, and few in this company at Lampedusa had not needed the help of her scraggy old hands. She despised the men about her but she took a savage pleasure in keeping them in condition for their fight against an unjust and mismanaged world. Dreaded yet indispensable, hedged about by mysterious powers and usefulness, she was a factor to be reckoned with among them, and her influence over any one man was only discovered by him when some occasion arose in which she hurled the force of her will against his.

A few of those mustered in the room were old, the most were very young; only one here and there was in the prime of life. The majority were evidently descendants of the restless Latin races and many wore the short, blue cloak of Sicily. Black eyes, and coarse black hair, regular features and faulty skins, were the rule among them.

"Where is Carriacci?" asked Robert angrily as the man for whom they waited still failed to appear.

"Washing his hands, captain," answered Matteo, the consumptive Italian who had the only cheerful face in the room.

A burst of rude laughter rewarded his seemingly good hit. The young men shifted from one spot to another but on the whole it was not a talkative throng. McCoy stood sullenly against the wall, a pipe held between his short, discolored teeth.

Whether or not it was due to the scars upon many of the faces and heads an impression was certainly conveyed that this was an assemblage of men who were in some way maimed. The eyes of a large number, whether from intemperance or strain, were bloodshot. They had the appearance of individuals for whom life has held little but struggle, the gloom of some, the low heads and ill-balanced expression of others, displaying little in common with a light heart. Perhaps the shadow of the spectred night on this rock was still upon them and the sun had not yet worked its cheer. They looked thin and hungry in the bright daylight as though regularity of food, sleep or habits was unknown to them, and it was a striking fact that the lines of most of the faces, even in those who were quite young, showed the predominance of anger. It is possible but not probable that more than one of them had aimed only at liberty and followed a will o' the wisp into license and proscription. Physical unrest, vague

hopes of easy gain and mere vulgar lawlessness had plainly led to a score or more of broken lives. Of a few, like the boy the rest called Lorenzo, it might be guessed that a sudden act of crime or weakness had sent them beyond the pale of law. In more than one face could be read the evidence that some influence behind their own existence had lamed the soul and disordered the will.

But the joy of life without restraints, where was that? The gayety and daring, the lusty cheer, the freedom, reckless and vivid and irresponsible, where were these? Vikings and buccaneers, adventurers and sea-kings,—the names felon and pirate, convict and murderer are poor substitutes for splendid words like those.

Perhaps, degenerate as they were, these men were less harmful here, out in the open air, having the freedom that comes from following the instincts, than if worming through the dark places of cities, preying upon the effort of civilized life.

“All here,” shouted the captain when the dazed and begrimed Carriacci, evidently just out of bed, had bolted through the entrance with an impetus not his own. “Bar the door.”

The lithe Mexican who had brought the straggler tossed the wooden beam from one hand to the other in mere pride of dexterity before he dropped it upon the bent irons driven into the wall at each side.

Temple spoke slowly and distinctly.

"Men, I have only one thing to say. McCoy tells us he has sighted a brig, disabled, drifting south-east."

He paused and swept a quick glance over the eyes intent upon him. The word "wines," whispered in many tongues passed along like a breath.

"We have provisions for three months. The *Vishnu's* cargo is still on our hands. Even beasts only eat when they are hungry. The flat boats and harpoons for the tunny net will be ready at the time I ordered last night. The barque will not go out."

There was a sharp exclamation from those who understood and eager cries of "What is it? What does the captain say?" from the others. Temple repeated his words loudly in Italian amidst a rising tumult.

"Tyranny! Tyranny!"

"Santo Diavolo, what outrage!"

"Slavery! Slavery!"

The room was filled with the din, with wild gesticulations, angry eyes. The confined space blended the cries into an uproar.

"It *shall* go! It shall!" yelled a Sicilian, leaping up and down and buffeting the air with his fists.

In the rush forward men became entangled in an inextricable mass, storming oaths and curses as they shouldered one another. A half circle surrounded the captain, arguing, threatening, clamoring.

"Captain! For the love of the Virgin hear me!"

"Captain! Listen!"



“Charpiot was a tyrant. Be warned by him! Be warned!”

“It was not rough when he went overboard!”

Temple's half-closed eyes had in them more of menace than defence; the lines of his face had all drawn toward the mouth and the heavy jaw.

Delavigne moved about the outskirts of the mob with his neat step, speaking here and there to men who were lookers-on, but wherever he had paused a man dashed forward crying dreadful words, as though volcanic fire had touched a pool and it leaped up in hissing steam.

“Down with traitors!” shrieked Matteo with all his feeble lungs and slipped his thin shoulders between the crowding men. The boy Lorenzo seized his arm, bent back his lean waist until the bones cracked, wrenched open the fingers and thrust the stiletto he had found there into his own belt.

“Assassin? *You!*” he cried with a contemptuous laugh into the other's face in which impotence and unconquerable passion warred as the man stood gasping, the hectic flaming in his hollow cheeks.

Those at the centre of the tumult mouthed violence but the half circle around the captain did not close upon him. Some of them remembered Juarez, some another, and life was sweet to each man. An Italian whose voice had broken with shouting beat his head against the wall and whispered “Tyranny!”

Swan pushed roughly from the back of the room

to the front rank of the mutineers. His smouldering face had kindled. He flung the last two men out of his path with a loud oath and stood before his chief, his shoulders squared and his jaw set with the coarse courage of the professional bully.

"The barque goes out!" he said raising his husky voice. "It goes to-night! Do you hear? It is our ship and not yours and it goes out!"

"It will not go out," said Temple.

The Englishman stepped a pace nearer. "You Yankee ploughman!" he exclaimed, every vein swelling in his head and neck. "It is because McCoy says the brig is American. You will sack our ships but not yours. You are a brute! A sneak! You are—you are——" A spasm of effort; another. "Delavigne! What—what——" A pained blankness wiped all passion from his face, standing where he was.

At his first words Robert Temple's eyes opened wide, and flamed yellow and white, dark cords swelled in his forehead, his hands curled, the muscles at the corners of his mouth drew upward toward the wings of the nose, showing the gleaming incisor teeth. The great body swept backward for its momentum.

"Sh! St-t!"

The sharp hiss cut through the voices as though a sword had smitten them. The clamor thinned suddenly, the tangle of men and outcries fell apart.

With superstitious shock those nearest him

watched the captain check himself, poised as he stood, saw the blaze in his face react, recover, recoil again and drop into sullenness. Inch by inch as though compelled his eyes turned toward Mother Graham and fell before the steady light that shot from amidst her furrows. Leaning half across a rough box she kept her close watch on his face which had grown swarthy as if the red blood had been changed to black.

The Englishman had not stirred. He did not shrink from the ominous change in his chief's face. His lips moved now and then but there was only a vacant disquiet in his heavy features, no terror. All at once he swayed as if he would have fallen. The smaller men impatiently jostled his huge frame to and fro; a Spaniard and a Mexican upon whom he had leaned too heavily hurled him against a wall where he lolled inert, his big head rolling forward on his breast.

“Rebels!”

The two men turned swiftly from Swan. Temple had sprung upon a cask head. The excitement of his thwarted purpose was in his quivering nostrils and bloodshot eyes.

“I hear you! But board my ship if you dare! There it lies. Touch it! I am captain here. It goes out when we want food. Can I fight then? You fellows know me. Am I to be obeyed? If not, you five scoundrels with stiletos along your wrists strike now! I am unarmed.”

There was an instant's pause. The men seemed to be taking in the sense of his words.

"Viva il capitan!" shouted the boy Lorenzo, pushing to the front.

"Viva! Viva!" cried one man and another in his path.

"Our captain!"

"Down with them!"

"Our friend!"

"Our chief!" yelled the volatile crowd stimulating one another with their cheers.

They were eager for the outer air. They had exhausted their own rebellion.

"Good!" exclaimed Temple when he could be heard. "Have the flat boats and harpoons ready in an hour. Go!"

The men swarmed out of the door seemingly as contented as if they had won the day. The captain strode across the room and through a side door into another part of the house.

"Andy McCoy!"

The man had stood, pipe in mouth, leaning in his place all through, watching Temple with his narrow, sidelong glance.

"Ye're canny, McCoy. I hae no doot o' that *noo*," said Mother Graham with one arm akimbo as if to bar his way as he slouched out alone. "Yon was a braw fine tale, Andy boy. Ye kennt it was *American*, wi' out doot, didna ye? An' hoo mony leagues oot did ye say? O, Lord! Lord!" she cackled.

He pushed her roughly out of his way.

“Ye wadna run frae a wumman, McCoy? Though it's no a black-haired hizzie the day,” she continued keeping pace with him. “Gin I be in mickle haste I'll e'en gae wi' ye a bit, though a body aye speaks louder that's walkin'!”

The man stopped short.

“Hark noo. If I tellt the captain where the night-watch was bidin' till nigh the dawn what wad he say? American barque! Huh! Ye were na bidin' in the track where barques be sighted. Weel eno' ye kennt he wadna gae oot, but ye hae na set his men on him this time. Tak tent wi' yon tricks, mon. Tak tent. I canna read print as I read a Scotch face, Andy McCoy.”

The man's hands moved like claws but he made no sound as he shuffled past her. She turned squarely about upon Robert as he came out of the house.

“Aye, but ye're a bletherin' idiot, Temple!” she said scornfully, fixing her beady eyes on his face. “Aye, glower, mon! I dinna shake for ye. So ye'd strike down the dazed fule, wad ye? An' his wits gaein' frae him.”

“Wits?”

“Aye, wits. Ha' na ye eyes, mon? Sin he fetched ye back frae America wi' that spy Gomez a bairn might see he's broken. He's scairt o' himsel'. Drink, drink, drink night an' day an' nae sleep,—he kens that he's gane. But there's a bit o' gude fight

in him yet. Shoot him like a mon when ye'd be rid o' him. I'll deal wi' Matteo. Lorenzo was braw but he's feckless. Watch McCoy sharp."

"McCoy's well enough," said Robert sullenly.

"Huh! Ye've yer one chance as chief. Keep yer eyes wide open, mon."

As she walked on beside him she changed the subject.

"O'Connor'll no last a day mair. He'll nae be mickle loss. His head's been flighty nigh on to a year. He robbed the mail, I mak nae doot, in New York. He was baggin' the letters an' shakin' an' mumblin' o't all the night through."

"Did you stay with him all night?"

"Aye, aye. Cat naps serve me. A' looked about a bit when he slept. A body that wad be canny mought pick up information mebbe, sperin' about. But a'm ower old an' dour an' me eyes ha' failed me."

They had turned down the beach. Two women were strolling in the same direction at a little distance in advance. One was unmistakably Venus. The other's figure was slender and her motions were those of youth. The mass of her hair was dark but certain short threads escaping from the rest and struck by the sun formed a bronze haze about her head.

Temple did not call but loosening one of the fox-tails at his belt went swiftly forward.

He moved with a singular grace which to many

had something terrible about it. No one ever heard Robert Temple's coming ; ears of civilized life were not quick enough for that. It may have been due to some peculiarity in the placing of his feet, but the movement was not stealthy since it was evidently neither acquired nor intended by him, and was probably the result of his unusually acute sense for sound. His reputation for seeing at the back of his head was probably due as much to his ears as his eyes, though these were keen beyond the habit of his fellows.

Mother Graham hurried after him as fast as her breath and her squat figure would allow. His eyes, dull and sullen under her reproof, had quickened with some purpose. She was still far behind when she saw Robert lightly toss the fox-tail through the air so dexterously that it dropped upon the shoulder of the younger of the women, brushing her neck and cheek. With a piercing scream and a spring to one side which threw the offending substance far from her, she gasped for breath and turned her pale face toward him. Her startled gray eyes darkened swiftly as she looked at him; she threw off the hand which Venus had laid upon her stiffened arm.

"Why did you do it?" she cried as soon as she could speak. "What had I done? What had I done?"

Robert standing still stared at her in sheer perplexity.

"Susie!" he said, "I—meant ——"

"You meant to be cruel to me! That is all you meant! I've told you"—choking as she went on,— "that the touch of fur is like death to me, and you—you—O, can't I get away somewhere? Away from this fearful country? Must I stay here and die? I hate it! I hate it! I will not be treated so! I will not be married any longer! There!"

She wrenched the gold band from her finger and flung it down the beach. Robert's stupefied eyes followed the glittering circle hurrying away.

The same instant Susie turned and ran wildly down the shore. Her hair loosened and streamed abroad as though every part of her body were in sympathy with the desperation of her mood. Robert, after an instant's hesitation, sprang after her.

"Missy! Missy! Missy!" Venus called impotently.

Mother Graham came up out of breath and temper.

"He's as fit to take care of her as a dumb beast," she snarled, panting in loud puffs as she watched the figures of pursuer and pursued. "Mind her weel, do ye hear?" she exclaimed, turning sharply upon her companion and clenching the fist not encumbered with her gun. "I'll see yer black skin pinched, pinched o' nights, pinched wi' hot irons. Do ye mind, Judy? Do ye?"

Venus involuntarily fell back a step, but her conscience was clear. The intention hidden in her



heart to escape from daily and nightly terrors by flight in a ship had been detected and had withered as if by the evil eye.

"I did'n nebber circumbobble dis yere globe for git to Miss Susie," she replied, with breathless grandeur, "an' den go 'way an' exert her." The large roll of the words steadied her nerves. "My black am on de *outside* ob de skin where de sun kin git at it, bress de good Lord," she added, backing away.

"Ye've reached a state o' grace, Judy. Let it bide," replied the other with her usual mixture of humor and contempt, and having recovered a measure of her breath she walked on. Once she stooped to pick up the belt of fox-tails which Robert had flung aside as he went. She stood still an instant. "It's to cross the seas," she said aloud, and so it came to pass.

The race was short, for Susie was hindered by her stifled sobs. Robert seized the little figure in his arms and held her with merciless firmness.

The small rebellious head was thrown back in vain struggle, the hair not imprisoned by his arm tossed about the face as with eyes shut and panting breath she wildly and frantically tried to escape. She could not move, but the hands at her sides were clenched and white. Robert had not spoken a word, looking down at her face and never relaxing his hold. Her strength soon failed and as she strained with less force she weakly sobbed.

After one helpless last effort she opened her eyes and looked up at him. Perhaps the heavy beating of the heart against which she was held had worked upon her; perhaps the dumb haggardness in his eyes broke her anger, or utter weariness had conquered her. She gave one long, gasping breath and dropped her face against him. The arm he had held around her shoulders moved up about her neck, but not a word was said between them.

When Susie did raise her head she smiled up at him. There was a pallid ring still around her mouth. She rubbed her cheek against his shoulder and closed her fingers upon a fold of the rough shirt he wore.

"Let's find it," she said.

In retracing their steps they soon came face to face with their defeated followers.

"Well, well," exclaimed Susie in her usual tone, "they look black as crows, don't they, Robert?"

"Aye, aye, me leddy. A ha' seen bairns but a' ha' na met mony bairns o' five an' twenty years," retorted Mother Graham, snappishly.

Venus looked away in hurt dignity and Susie laughed. Except for a slight paleness, her face now retained not a trace of what had passed. "Croak! Croak!" She imitated a raven's note with startling exactness and laughed again. "Come, let's all look for my wedding ring. I dropped it about here somewhere. What will you give to the one who finds it, Robert?"

He did not reply. He was stalking on beside her with eyes to the ground. Susie's glance was searching right and left along the beach, but it took a quick, bird-like survey of him several times after her unanswered question.

His skin looked as smooth and young as ever but the expression of the eyes gave to his whole face the seeming of a great change. The emotions of the morning had been undergone at the expense of some strain which mere waste of muscular tissue had never caused thus far in all his reckless life. He could bear cold, wet and hunger, could carry immense burdens; he had been often wounded when his flesh had healed as a cleft closes in growing wood. But feeling seemed to age him in a moment; to be an effort which no easily angered, easily appeased natures could understand.

"Don't glower like that, Robert," exclaimed Susie impatiently, stopping to stamp her foot on the white ground. "When a thing is over and done with forget all about it," she went on, hurrying beside him. "Think of something else. That's what I do. Why can't you?"

"I don't know, Susie."

"You can learn," she continued, still impatiently. "I did. It is easy enough if you make the least effort. Will you try, Robert?"

"Yes."

"Try now, then. Look at me and smile.

He raised his head but something in the attempt

made her laugh and avert her eyes. She braided his fingers in and out with hers, turning her head now and then to make some noise but always flippant endeavor to conciliate her other silent companions.

All at once she and Robert walked faster by a signal from her.

"Dear," she said when they were alone, hearing, "dear, dear, dear," as a bird chirps or a note over and over with a iteration that has been brick walls would tire restless nerves. The wind in woods blends with the hum of insects and the wind through trees so that it seeps to the brain which passion has inflamed and its old dull calm. So she slowly wrought upon the man because he loved her. "Dear, dear, dear."

He led her without an inkling of his uncertainty to a hollow among the pebbles and shells above the highest water line. She slipped the third finger of her left hand ready and he slipped the ring again.

## X

### A TEMPEST

A FEW years before the barque *Maybird* anchored in this cove Sicily had forcibly populated Lampedusa with immigrants and had since then expended generous sums for their contentment. She had built bastions, improved the small harbor, restored the castle of an earlier day, erected a chapel. But something was wrong; the numbers of the inhabitants remained stationary and the happy colonists of the government reports toiled sullenly in boat and field, hungering for home. Rabbits burrowed about the roots and bit off the tops of their carefully nurtured sprouts, the damsel, most graceful of cranes, set her sentinels, and calmly devoured the pods as they formed; suns parched their fields of new and unfamiliar grains, and the dread sirocco swept them. Their homesick eyes turned from the splendors of cerulean sea and sky, white cliffs and gray green olive trees, and strained to see the cone of Etna. On holidays men and women came sometimes to this cove where saints' days were like other days, and talked with the Sicilians among the *Maybird's* crew, watching the chance to pick up and slip beneath their cloaks a bit of rope, a piece of sailcloth, as an ant hurries

away to hidden places a dead fly's wing. Sometimes a girl at work in field or vineyard looked up, half coy, half frightened, to meet the bold young eyes of one who had strayed from the camp into the outside world of Lampedusa; not often, for discipline was strict and every man was watching his neighbor in Robert Temple's crew. If one betrayed the rest he, too, lost all, for the treasure in the chest would be confiscated and only hated governments would profit by it.

Little did the poor exiles of Lampedusa know of the work of the *Maybird*. She weighed anchor at midnight, and silently dropped anchor a day, two days, later. England had only recently resumed her long broken relations with the east and wrecks were frequent in the Mediterranean when half this century was over. Ships mysteriously sank at that time when the knowledge of certain shoals now marked upon every chart was the property of a few who did not tell. The chief treasure of the *Maybird's* men was not the gold secreted in the chest, guarded night and day by one of their number; it was their acquaintance with a shallow spot upon which it was sometimes their delicate task to persuade a merchantman to go. There had been wild hours in their experience before the cargo bound for America or England was deposited upon the beach at Lampedusa and carried into caves before dawn. The sale of such merchandise, piecemeal, —not a simple matter,—was always entrusted to

Delavigne. As he was the only one in the company fit for such subtle bargaining the rest sulkily endured the payment of a commission out of proportion, as it seemed to them, even to services like his.

Constant alternations of shock and lethargy, wounds from these midnight raids,—for the merchantmen were armed and the crews fought well,—sickness and the dissipation which was the expression of desperate and breathless rejoicing among the survivors, all were weakening influences whose paths led toward the end, since a jealous disinclination to admit new men to share in their hard-won gains made them choose rather to attempt by plotting or by reckless daring to do the work of twice their number. More than once they had come close to detection and capture. Several nations would have been interested in their punishment, England among the rest, sane England of whose carrying trade the perverted *Maybird* had once formed a part. The rapidity of the change of flags had become a fine art.

A whispered charge against the new captain had risen into sound and fury in the late revolt. A few like Delavigne had previously suggested the probability, which his attitude at the council confirmed as fact to them all, that he did not mean to take the vigorous steps for the increase of the hoard which had been as the breath of life to the former chief, whose passionate temper, greed and cruelty it now seemed to his men, might have been endured a lit-

tle longer. It had occurred to the more avaricious and the more intelligent among them to ask themselves before the election whether a man, who, because he was careless about possessions would not snatch more than his share of gold, might not be equally indifferent to such acquisition on the part of men who worshipped it. But his undeniable charm made him the choice of the unthinking masses who had drowned all doubting voices with cheers.

To a community in which thews and sinews are the ruling force a man like this is a natural leader. They soon discovered, however, that his ignorance of command other than by dealing with men singly was a serious failing when contrasted with the discipline *en corps* of Charpiot who had been a soldier of Napoleon. This man, taking advantage of a knowledge of the family circumstances obtained piecemeal from Robert himself, had sent him by a passing vessel on *parole* to collect from his father the fine imposed upon him for an act of insubordination. This insubordination had been his vigorous resistance to a cold-blooded and unnecessary order. His father's refusal to accept his word had roused his always too ready sense of injustice toward himself into a fierce and hasty threat. The desperation of his need goaded him like a sword. His life, perhaps more's, hung upon the possession of that one last sum of money, and he could not make the man see! He had given his promise to return with it as the price of his release, and Char-



piot, who knew men, had shown him a soldier's confidence by allowing his wife to go with him. Unwelcome care indeed she would have been to the old chief had she been left behind. On their return they found the captain gone. It was reported that he had been accidentally knocked overboard by a falling spar, and McCoy was acting temporarily in his stead. By almost universal consent Temple, who had meant to move on after his restless fashion to other scenes of activity, had been elected to the vacant post and so remained.

At noon of a day late in January a rude tattoo of blows upon the wood brought Venus to the house door. When she saw Carriacci she stood on the centre of the threshold so as completely to bar the entrance and waited for him to speak. The winter rains had broken the uniformity of the smudge on his face into zigzag patches and his black eyes twinkled out from the midst like bits of coal in a mud-bank. After a glance at her as she stood on guard he fell back a step, pulled his red cap low on his forehead, clasped his sides with his hands, puffed out his thin cheeks, stiffened his neck, distended his eyes into indignant spheres, and stared back at her. The imitation was too patent to ignore.

Insults from the contemptible nip the heart. Venus waddled backward, seized the door and slammed it against the man's shoulder and foot which he had inserted just in time.

"Blacky, my heart," he said softly while she

viciously hurled her whole weight upon the wooden barrier between them. "Sweet Sooty-face, tell captain that the gallant Carriacci would speak with him," and with practised agility he slipped out unharmed.

"Delavigne is missing," announced Robert abruptly, when he returned from an interview with the messenger.

"Missing? There has been no storm since he went out with McCoy day before yesterday," Susie answered, looking through the branches of red pomegranate flowers in the jug she was carrying toward the table, for it was about the hour of the midday meal.

"The smack is coming in. McCoy signals that he is alone. I must eat something and be off to see him land."

He flung himself into a seat for an instant, but was on his feet again, walking the length of the floor with such impatient strides that Susie went away to remind Venus that the master was in haste. When she returned she pushed aside to their limit the dull blue curtains that the fitful sun might brighten the room, then as she stood waiting beside the brazier of charcoals burning in the middle of the stone floor she threw sugar upon them to perfume the air.

"I wonder," she said, "if it was an accident. I wonder if his cane went with him, and if it made a hissing sound as it struck the water."

One waking from sleep in this room might have believed he was at sea. It was evident that the articles of furniture had never been at rest before, but in ships' cabins had traveled east and west and north. The curtains were made of faded latine sails, a whale's tooth hung upon the wall beside a shark's skin which had once softened and moistened in an East Indiaman at the approach of storms. Shells from Asia, branching coral, fans and bowls of sandalwood, an ugly idol of yellowing ivory, bits of embroidered silks fastened like pictures to the wall, books of many kinds, a chart of the Mediterranean, all were flotsam and jetsam. Rods of blossoming pink stood in great blue jars here and there about the floor, for all over the island the almond tree was flourishing.

Venus brought in a dish of smoking pottage with macaroni and bread, and Robert threw himself into a seat opposite his wife.

"We shall take a long breath," he said. "He was like a miasma."

As he hurried through his dinner Susie's eyes seemed to be following the gloom in his own back to its farthest recesses. Never until recently had he been impatient, restless, anxious, and at times now all expressions of eye and feature sharpened into one—that of the recklessness of the captive.

Lawlessness hung like an atmosphere about the camp. Life to Temple had become unbearable there. The men were right in their instinctive

impression that there was no consistency in his course. Honor may fail among thieves, in the long run, but logic does not, and there was a suggestion of insufficiency about the captain's logic. He would fight fiercely for his rights; he was unequalled in reckless courage at the boarding of a merchantman; he would work his men inhumanly at the nets or on the ship, through night hours and hot noons; he would exact obedience to himself on pain of death; but on the other hand he was indifferent to most things, to money, to drink and cards, to all that implied comradeship, and his immense and tyrannical energy was followed by periods of utter inaction when he would lie for hours on the warm beach seemingly asleep but seeing and hearing everything with his half-closed eyes and sensitive ears. The men had logic on their side when they asked one another if this was all that banishment from the world was to mean for them, and, if they were not upon this inconspicuous island for prey, what were they here for?

His own discontent arose from other causes than theirs. He had soon wearied of hearing complaints, devising punishments, marshalling men, appointing guards, listening to details of provisions, quarrels, sickness, crime. Incapable of reasoning he felt by instinct that a combat was being waged between the forces of his life. On the one side, holding him back from impulsive ferocity were two women, one constitutionally timid and gentle, the

other old but strong with some strange power under which he had again and again writhed and struggled and sunk. His popularity had steadily waned. Delavigne was he to whom the men listened, his bitter gibes voicing their own unrest. For some reason, which could but be sinister coming from that source, he elected to defend Robert Temple to his crew, and the captain owed what authority he still held to this Frenchman. Wherever the man appeared a group of idlers ready to be amused surrounded him, like the buzzing of flies about rotten fruit.

“No more, no more!”

Robert left the table and was out of the house with the swiftness of wind. His wife set down the plate she was holding toward him, on which sections of an orange she had separated lay like wedges of gold, and followed him to the door. She saw him crossing the pale beach with strides toward a knot of men in red caps who were gesticulating and shouting to a solitary figure standing in the skiff in which he had just left an anchored fishing craft. The fellow did not even lift his surly head in answer, but sent the boat skilfully forward with one oar. Susie watched the tall captain mingle with the unquiet men before she went in and closed the door. It was unusual to see them collected at the beach during the hours of the siesta. At such time of day all through the island it was still, and things that were hidden crept

forth then, whether shy creatures of the woods or schemes in the brains of men. As though the days yet were when the gods also slept away the noon-tide, human beings who were astir went softly and spoke low, like the goatherd in Theocritus who dared not play on his pipe for fear of awakening Pan.

When Temple opened the door again a clamor of rude cheers blew in with him, such a sound as had long been unheard at the cove even from the demonstrative Italians. Robert met his wife with bright, peremptory eyes. It was a look she knew, one which was only in his face when the savagery, inherent in youth and which he had never out-grown, had risen at some call. She surmised what his sudden flash of popularity meant, yet she made her protest.

"No, no," she said breathlessly, with her back against the house door.

"Must, Pussy, must," replied Robert hastily. "Delavigne has been picked up by a Portuguese barque only twenty miles southeast. She's out of her course. Be reasonable, Pussy. Where's my belt? We must get him back or the rat will sell us to the highest bidder."

He had found the belt while he was speaking and Susie stood beside him while he pulled on his long boots. He turned away from her to slip pistols and knife into their places.

"Robert!" she cried sharply, seizing his arm with both hands, "Don't! And don't let *them!*"

"There, there, there! You're a silly baby! It's the custom to be armed, isn't it? Then kiss me and don't fuss and fret. It's going to be a wild-goose chase. It's as black as thunder in the west. Yes, I'll be in before we start."

The crew entered eagerly into the preparations for weighing anchor. Interest and action, even for the veriest trifles, were not hard to rouse in this singular community in which no man was indifferent about anything, except his sins.

Mother Graham left an unruly Savoyard, her only patient for the time, and went to the beach to see what the stir meant. She strode up to McCoy and with hands on hips put a few short questions to him.

"The dour rascalion tellt the truth," she reluctantly admitted to Temple, clutching at his arm to stop him as he hurried past her. "I' fixit him wi' me e'e an' he didna shuffle. He's no gabby but he kens a barque, a bit dismasted an' a'. O yes, he's sure about the silks an' the wines. Deil tak him! I askit him hoo cooms that yellow snake aboard an' he tellt me a lie. Yes. So tak tent, mon. Bide here. Dinna gae!"

"Be still, you busybody!" Robert jerked his sleeve from her grasp. "I've had enough of meddlers. Leave my work to me!"

"Huh! So a' will, so a' will!" screamed Mother Graham after him. "O yes! Ye're sae shrewd! Ye're sae cunning! Y. puir bletherin' loon!"

Yet none was generally quicker than this elderly dame to recognize the mood upon which wits can but be dulled. Impelled by a vague uneasiness like a petrel before a storm she scudded up and down the beach. Old age, wooden shoes and heavy skirts flapping above the ankles seemed unnatural trammels for this fierce spirit.

The broken clouds drifting across the sky all the morning had not dimmed the color of the sea which was deeply and vividly blue. The men worked with might and main. The ship was soon ready. Robert, who was the best sailor among them, directed every move. He went to the house again as he had promised and when he returned he stopped abruptly on the beach before the glowering counsellor he had spurned.

“If anything happens to me ——”

“Huh! It will na coom by water, ye ——”

“Remember what I told you to do for ——”

“Hoots! A’ ha’ na the trick o’ forgettin’s, like ——”

In a few moments more the barque was moving, all sail set.

In less than an hour later the clouds had thickened so fast that the persistent blue of the sea began to give way. The wind had been veering from east to south, and when the sky was wholly overcast the waters had become a sombre green. The night came on before its time, black but without rain. Round patches of phosphorescence followed in the wake



of ships, as though the moon had fallen into the sea and was deliriously dancing with other moons, perhaps dead worlds that dropped from the sky ages ago and had achieved an undignified immortality.

As the evening wore on Susie grew so restless and insisted so strongly upon having a walk that Venus reluctantly prepared to accompany her with the understanding that she would go to bed after she returned. The darkness outside as the two women stepped into it was unusually still, but for the uneasy waves. Flashes of lightning had begun to play about the horizon and grumbings of thunder came from great distances. The wind blowing in their faces was fresh but not yet boisterous. Susie said not a word, looking as she walked out at the scrambling upheavals of water lighted by broken phosphorescence.

Venus made a few attempts at conversation but receiving no answer retreated into resentful but unheeded silence. Missy seemed to her to be growing more mute day by day and her old nurse felt the difference in her to be a personal slight. She thought of a morning not long before when Susie, who had been singing Italian peasant songs quite as usual, had become suddenly silent, and at some trifling question from her had unaccountably flung herself upon the stone floor and sobbed aloud. Venus had gone painfully upon her knees beside her calling her "Darling heart," "Honey love,"—all the pet names of her childhood, but only once had

little missy spoken. "O, mammy, mammy! I shall never be happy again! I shall never be young any more!" Then with a start she had sat up, rubbed her eyes dry, pushed Venus away, and when upon her feet would allow no allusion to her action then or since. Venus remembered Israel also as she lumbered along against the wind, and yearned for the stupid boy who was yet her own. The too amorous 'Dolphus had probably come back to his own wife long ago only to find her gone, not as he would fear with another mate, but to a loverless rock in the sea where missy was treating her ole mammy like a nigger hired by de day.

"I'm tired," Susie said at last, turning her back to the wind. "It's no use. I can't see anything. Let's go home."

She went obediently to bed but could not sleep. She heard the thunder coming nearer, and mammy in the next room cry out in thick terror now and then when her dreams were especially insistent; but Mother Graham's prophecy had come true and Venus would have missed the excitement of her fears; they were her theatre, concert and revival meeting. A ship's lantern hung by a hook on the wall of Susie's room. Once when she sat up to listen a white moth blindly fluttered from beneath her pillow and wheeled toward the light. The heavy sailcloth carefully drawn across the window by Venus before she left missy for the night could only partially screen it against the hideous pink

flashes as the storm broke overhead, nor could it dull her ear to the crash of thunder close upon them. With head covered by the blankets and eyes tightly shut poor Susie lay until the worst had passed, then rose and went to the window again and again when she fancied she heard a new sound. The receding lightning glared occasionally upon the leagues of water which seemed empty of sails. She had no drowsiness, but at last through sheer weariness she slept.

She woke with a great start. The lantern had gone out and in the darkness she was at first bewildered and could not recall her anxiety. She cried out as it came back to her and rising she threw a furious about her and pulled back the curtains.

Over the sea the morning was breaking and the ship was uneasily swinging at anchor. A group of men were on the shore busy with its boats. She felt the rhythm of a step creeping back and forth below the window where she stood. Softly she stole to the house door and opened it.

Robert stood alone outside. Even when he saw her he did not go toward her but stayed where he was two paces away. The first rays of the sun were touching him as he stood bareheaded and his very hair had the upward toss of strength in it. Though he was past thirty in years, youth had never been more emphasized in him than now in the trying early light which exposed no blemish

nor haggardness in the skin, no droop in the strong figure; yet in the eyes was the look of one whose spirit is weary unto death.

Susie held out both arms to him with a little cry of gladness and relief.

"Wait," he said. "I gave the order to board that ship."

A shadow appeared to start from within her eyes and to settle beneath them when he had spoken, and she swayed backward from him, but only as it afterward seemed so as to make the impulse forward of tenderness and outstretched arms the greater as she leaned toward him again.

"Poor love," she answered. "How you have suffered for it!"

A moment later as they went down the room together he wrenched himself suddenly free from her and walked alone in advance.

"That's not the worst of it," he said shortly.

"Don't tell me yet," Susie replied, following quietly behind him.

It was indeed late in the day, after he had been refreshed with bath and food, and when the excited crew, among whom he passed several more dangerous hours than she ever knew, had for the most part become passive either from exhaustion or through the potency of Bordeaux wine drunk in cans from a broken cask, that Temple slept soundly for an hour. Then he told her, helped on by her questions, for his powers of

continuous narrative were of the slightest, the story of the night.

McCoy had been at the wheel. After dark they saw the lights of a merchantman. The converging courses of the vessels soon brought them nearly side by side. The stranger was not moving at full speed. The *Maybird* carried no light; it was not her custom nor was it unusual at that time. One murky lantern was hanging to the mast, and when the storm came on, the St. Elmo's Fire glowed like a misty star at the ends of the yards. The lightning running along behind the merchantman showed her mass and how near she was coming.

"I was leaning on the rail watching her. I heard breathing close behind me. It was Matteo. He had a grappling hook in his hand. He was puffing for breath and his eyes were bright as fire. At his back were the rest of the gang, all with hooks and all looking at me. McCoy steered us close to her side. I heard her helmsman yell to us. Somebody jerked our lantern down. We grated her side. I said 'Let go! All together!' They cast like one man. The hooks caught. We were over the rail—on her deck— What's the use talking about it!"

"What next?"

"A fellow fired at us and hollered 'Come on!' in English. Rickety voice. I thought he was scared but he wasn't. O'Brien knocked him over with his pistol; only stunned him. Three Jacks behind him fired and stumbled backward down the

cabin stairs. They looked white, like corpses. Our fellows were making such a noise I strained my throat yelling at them."

"Was Delavigne there?"

"He came up from the cabin and I asked him if there was a plague on board. They were all sick; I could see that. I couldn't hear him answer. It was thundering and lightning like a thousand devils. Our men were hoisting bales and casks to our deck by a pulley."

"And you?"

"I went down to the forecastle. I couldn't see much; the lantern was black with smoke. I made out two fellows in bunks, face down. Somebody from the far end said, 'Robert! Robert Temple!'"

"What!"

"Just that. I told you there was worse——"

"O, go on!"

"I went up to him. He was leaning on one arm, staring at me. He looked like an old tree covered with snow. One of the other fellows turned over then and looked up at me. I knew him. Name was Jacob Minns."

"Yes. Yes."

"'Robert Temple,' the old one says again, and I asked him, 'Who are you?' He didn't tell, only kept mumbling 'His father's ship, father's ship, father's ship,' till I told him to shut up. I asked him was he Peter Dane, and he said, 'That's my name.' When I was a boy he ——"

"O, Robert! Robert!"

"Yes, I know. What's the use? The thing's done."

"He will never forgive it. Of all the ships that sail ——"

"Yes, yes. McCoy swore of course that it was Portuguese. Dad never had a barque called the *Flight*. How was I to know? You would hear it."

"I must know it if you must. He has never forgiven anything that made him uncomfortable for an hour. What is to come of this? What is to come?"

"O, he'll come round. I'll send the casks back. He needs stiff measures when you've no time to argue with him, but he isn't the worst fellow to deal with, dad isn't."

"What else?"

"'What ails your crew?' I asked Peter, and he said 'poisoned, last night.' 'Who?' and he said 'Delavigne.' Planned it with McCoy, you see. Took one of the boats and played off being adrift."

"Where is he?"

"Shot through the shoulder and thigh."

"Killed?"

"No. I haven't dealt with him."

"Then it wasn't you?"

"Who shot him? No, the captain, the fellow O'Brien stunned, pulled himself together and fired.

Delavigne laughed all the way to our deck and then fell on his face."

"And then?"

"That's all. I meant to send the cargo back. Their fellows made a stand at the hold but it was no use. The gold was there, and our men knew it. I covered the gangway. Six of our men mutinied, but I managed them somehow. We hoisted one cask to pitch it back, but the ships had parted. Somebody had cut the ropes."

"Then you did nothing."

"I put McCoy in irons with my own hands."

"I dread the man! Dread him!"

"Pouf! He's a human being. Delavigne isn't."

"Peter Dane?"

"Dead. It must have been while I was carrying him to our deck; he was too heavy to have been alive."

"Did you tell him you did not know what ship it was? That you did not send Delavigne?"

"Yes, I said something about it as we went. But that was like all the rest."



## XI

### SPRING

DELAVIGNE lived. His wound stretched his helpless body on his bed, but his shallow, malignant eyes watched day after day the raindrops gather and fall in a corner where they had gained an entrance through the roof of his hut. He first muttered and then railed at their remorseless rhythm until he screamed in his high-pitched fury, reached for his cane and madly flung it at the glistening spot. This was after an inflammation and fever had set in, during which Mother Graham nursed him faithfully but without unction.

"Ye're frettin' lest he'll dee, mebbe," she suggested to Robert with one of her short laughs. "Dinna grieve, mon. A'll hae him ready in his war paint for ye. Trust auld Tibbie."

McCoy wore his irons three silent days, then he asked to see the captain, asserted that the poisoning was done without his consent or connivance, and that he mistook the barque for one he knew, American-built, but sold ten years before to a Portuguese firm; a ship on whose deck he had been felled with a blow, the scar of which he still wore on his forehead. Mother Graham heard this story from Temple with hooting and laughter, but

Robert, who always insisted that McCoy was no worse than a sullen boor, released him.

"His e'e is black," she said scowling when told that he was free. "A' ken an' e'e, an' yon's *black*. 'Twas an uncanny e'e forty year syne when it coom frae Lord, or deil, an' the carle's been rubbin' on the deil's ain polish tae it till it's noo nobbut a fearsome gem o' wickedness. Aye, aye! Gae yer ain gait, ye stubborn fule!"

But the days went and McCoy seemed to do nothing to justify her harsh opinion. He fished alone or with Matteo, between whom and himself there seemed always to be a loose bond of sympathy, and when he had been drinking he made awkward love to the peasant women and bragged of his Scotch ancestry and connections as of old.

The cargo of the unfortunate American barque, with the exception of three casks which were not intact, was deposited by Robert's orders in a place by itself and while there was wine to drink and Delavigne was too ill to attend to its disposal, the crew had made no objection.

The only change apparent in the picture of the camp was a deepening of the shadows. Attacks upon the villagers became more open, gambling more reckless, quarrels more violent, the marks of dissipation and gloom more evident in the faces, while the careless glances of the authorities were sharpening into espionage.

Meanwhile spring crept over limestone and marl

in Lampedusa as universally as the wind unseen stirred every leaf. A sense of movement, like an inherent soul, was everywhere. The peasants sowed fennel in patches of ground left bare when they had pulled up the green barley for fodder a month before; then dragged the harrow over the same small spaces, which lay between fields where wheat was flourishing, or where the crimson-topped clover was nearly ready to bloom.

Although the February morning of the Feast of St. Agatha, the patron saint of Sicily, was as warm as summer there was the lift of spring in the fresh, hot air. Susie who was interested in any show however meagre, started early with Venus in time to choose a quiet place near the old grotto chapel to which the image was to be borne as a guest, since it dwelt of late in the fine new church upon the strip of land stretching out into the harbor. Mother Graham accompanied them to the entrance of the narrow path leading upward from the beach.

"Was the drowned lady dark or fair? I never asked you that," Susie said, pausing at the leave-taking of the old woman and glancing toward a cross near by made of two rough fragments of timber bound together.

"Black-browed, so they *tell* me," replied that estimable person, but the instant Susie turned away the hag seized Venus's arm, in quick pantomime touched the third finger of her left hand, jerking the thumb first toward the wooden symbol, then

toward the young climbing figure. The loud breath which the negress drew seemed to reward her entertainer.

Susie stopped often to rest in the ascent. Myrtle and bramble encroached upon the path, ivy swung from tree to tree. "There's the chapel," she gasped at last, leaning against an old fig-tree at the end of the dim path. It was in truth a cave, the largest among the many upon the island. Sumach and bramble had stepped aside at its low door to give a clear space for myrtle and roses. There were indeed little plants in Lampedusa which had retreated as far as they could from the sumach and bramble, descendants they of the wild bloom and leaf that had rioted there once before human eyes had stared at them. Susie had found them hiding away in secret places, shrinking smaller and smaller every spring as they cowered before the triumphant growths that had followed in the footsteps of man, able to bear his gaze, his presence, his ruthless violence, and yet live.

"Some say that this is Prospero's cell," Susie said, after she had regained her breath.

"Prospero. Yes, honey, mammy knows all dat," replied Venus, who did not know but whose nature recoiled from instruction.

"Where Ferdinand and Miranda played at chess,—"

"Sho! Yes, yes."

"And where the two fathers were reconciled."

"Reckon so. O, yes, yes, so dey was. Reckon so."

Down in the gaudy new chapel at the harbor mass was now being celebrated; lanterns were hanging above the roadway near by ready to be lighted in the evening; Catherine wheels and rockets were waiting to brighten the moonless night in honor of her to whom most of the Sicilian prayers ascended. But about this ancient place of worship, which Nature herself had built, all was still as yet.

Susie walked softly to the open door, hesitated, and then entered. On one side, against the wall of limestone rock, was erected a meagre little altar of the Christian church. In the lump of stone resting upon it might be traced the faint resemblance to a woman and child. Small hearts of wood, of wax, of shell, miniature boats, locks of black hair, were suspended from this image or grouped about it. Discolored and almost unrecognizable under dust and mould were these symbols of forgotten gratitude and outgrown prayers. On the opposite side of the cave, facing the east, was stretched the prayer-rug of the Mohammedans. If this were in very truth the poor cell of the magician, a greater reconciliation still had taken place within it where the two young faiths of the world knelt side by side.

When Susie came out she stood looking about her a moment as though slowly realizing her surroundings, then crossed the open space before the chapel door and sat herself down at the foot of a

fig-tree. Venus, who had waited for her out in the sun, followed her to the spot she had selected and lowered herself heavily to the ground, apparently unnoticed. Close to Susie's hand lay a dead beetle on its back, its stiff, helpless legs uplifted. Slowly scraping at the hard earth with a bit of twig she hollowed a shallow grave in which she laid the early victim of mischance and covered him with dust. As she brushed away a morsel of earth which had fallen upon her sleeve, the black, averted face beside her seemed to rouse her consciousness of another presence.

"What sort of dress does Barbara wear in these days, mammy?" she asked. "I did not see her."

"Sweet purty. Blue. Sweet purty, an' de ruffles done go roun' an' roun', up to de waist. Dat am lubly," asserted Venus with a touch of aggressiveness.

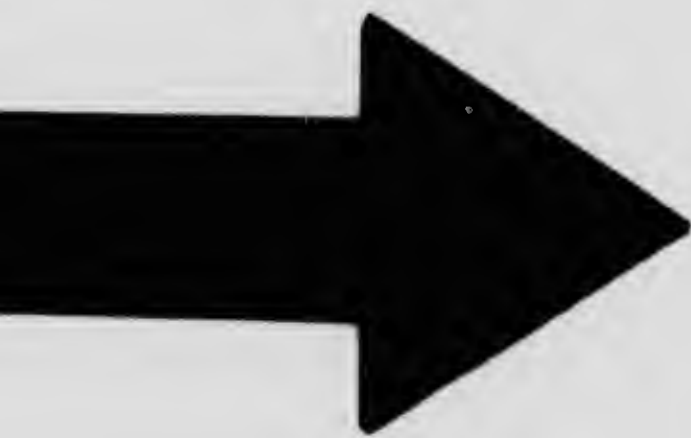
"Ruffles!" exclaimed Susie, in some dismay. "And all up the skirt! O, it's no use. I couldn't manage ruffles. I made this myself, and I put a sort of fold on the bottom of it," she added, kicking the edge of her skirt lightly and contemptuously with her foot, "but it isn't much."

"Reckon it'll do fur common," admitted Venus.

"Reckon it will," echoed Susie. "What makes my father's hair look so queer?" she demanded suddenly.

"Reckon it's cos o' de ways him chile done treat him," replied mammy, dryly.







# MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



1.45

1.50

1.56

1.63

1.71

1.80

1.88

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1653 East Main Street  
Rochester, New York 14609 USA  
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone  
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

"No!" cried Susie, sharply. "Nobody's hair ever turned white from feeling bad but Marie Antoinette's, and it took the French Revolution to do that." She clasped her hands tightly on her knee. "I promised not to let them see me. I gave my word to come back. He said he would tell his father the fine wasn't for anything bad, but he wouldn't listen to him. Everything went wrong and here we are. Mammy"—with a swift change of tone,—“I have been up and down the stairs at home. I saw them but they didn't see me, and they've put up a white stone for me. I'm counted out in the family, so you can't ever say again that you never saw a ghost, mammy. I'm one."

"Don't talk dat!" exclaimed Venus, starting away from her. "What yo' pa say to youse talkin' in dem dare wicked ways!"

"I like to scare you, mammy. I like to see you shake and your head wobble. Fat people are ten times as much fun as thin ones when they're frightened. There! Listen, the band's coming."

Drums and fifes were drawing near and nearer; soon young voices mingled with them. Then a vanguard of children darted out of the twilight of the path into the sunny open, many of them clad only in their one garment of tow cloth. The band behind them advanced proudly at the head of a poor but gay little show. Drums were overzealous in the music. Behind the players walked two little boys in tattered red cassocks, throwing

rose petals right and left as they went. After them followed a man, also in red, sturdily lifting a huge brass crucifix. Behind him strode the priest, and close at his heels, borne by two red-robed, shabby acolytes, was the stand upon which rested the image of St. Agatha, decked in tinsel and ribbons, her hair freshly powdered. Lastly came the men and boys who had chanted the service just ended in the chapel below, their grimy scarlet and white vestments swinging as they passed, their hands filled with the pomegranate flowers of peace and the roses of love. Behind them fell in the disorderly mass of the people—men, women and children, scrambling for the rose petals, their clothing mingling into a kaleidoscopic mass of colors as they moved. The drums seemed to be beating upon their hearts.

The forward part of the procession with the image passed into the cave. Some of those left outside knelt a moment, then flung themselves upon the grass, gesticulating, chattering, arranging for their gambling in groups. Half hidden by a rose-tree Susie silently watched them. Money seemed scarce with them all. Some of the men risked small coins, but the women and children used beans or buttons, or even bits of macaroni. Venders of sweets and pasteboard saints vainly thrust their wares under the players' eyes, and children nearly smothered by the flowers they carried, lingered about the assemblage with gentle insistence in their dark eyes. They soon found the two heretics from

a far country sitting apart from the activities of the morning, and Susie was their best customer. She was soon crowded by a ring of bloom and small faces. A musician near by began to play for her pleasure upon two pipes inserted in an inflated dog's skin from which the head and paws of the animal stood stiffly out. Judging by the sounds which were produced, it would have seemed the poor beast still retained all his old faculties except the powers of retaliation and retreat.

"There is nothing more," said Susie, and rose to her feet, but seeing her companion still engrossed in the scene she waited a moment before making the move to go. As she stood she herself became absorbed in watching a young woman who was coming toward them with a baby in her arms. She was one of the peasants who had followed the procession.

"Neber see de like o' dem head rigs since I got sense," muttered Venus as the Italian came quite close to them.

Her dark eyes were fixed on Susie in admiring wonder. She looked like a mere girl as she advanced, but when Susie made an involuntary gesture for her to pause, there was no doubt about the relationship she held to the child in her arms. The unmistakable something that means motherhood in the youngest face was there. She was tall and strong as though she had come from the mountains, her dress neat but poor and her gentle eyes looked

questioningly at the stranger who had stopped her. Susie asked some trivial question about the *fête* day and the Sicilian smiled as she answered that St. Agatha would visit Our Lady at the old chapel for two hours. The baby with eyes like its mother noticed nothing but the string of branching coral about the strange lady's neck, and he beat ineffectively with a fat fist against his mother's arm. Susie lingered, asking one question after another the answers to which she knew already. Venus condescendingly looked on. The Sicilian, holding herself in pleased readiness to say or do anything the lady wished, seemed puzzled as Susie stood full in her path with hesitating words and eyes that wandered from the child to the mother.

"Mammy," she said at last in English, "walk on without me. I will follow."

"Cahn' nohow. Mahsa am dat particler. Dere ain' no hurry on me, I reckon."

"Go on!" cried Susie, with a little break in her voice, "go on!"

After one look of lofty stupefaction Venus turned with a grand motion and walked away.

"How old is he?" Susie asked when she had gone.

"Four months and twenty-one days, signora. Toni, let the beautiful eyes of the lady see you clap your hands."

But the baby with unwinking gaze fixed on the coral looked as if he pondered many things.

"He never will," the mother said in smiling apology. "You must forgive him, signora."

Susie reached out one finger and stroked the little hand nearest her, timidly and softly.

"Would you like to hold him, signora," volunteered the Sicilian. "He will not cry."

"O, no," said Susie quickly.

She drew back her finger, but from two steps away made a close study of the bare head and small round face.

"Do they cry much?" she asked.

"Some do. O, my sister's, how it cries! All night. Her husband wishes it dead. But Toni sleeps till five in the morning now, the Blessed Virgin be praised. Is your husband good to you, signora?"

"Yes," said Susie.

"I am glad. My Beppo is very good to me when he wins. See what he gave me."

From her bodice she pulled a tinsel locket held by a brass chain, and showed how it would open and close.

"I pray every day to the Blessed Virgin that he may win at cards," she added. "We are always laughing when he is lucky, and it is hard to play nearly all night and then lose."

"Do they die if you are not very careful?" inquired Susie with eyes on the child.

"O, no. they grow, like him. He is not much trouble. He is never ill even for his teeth. He has

two, see." She parted his lips to show them. "I pray Our Lady that his back may be strong. Bep-po's is a little weak so he cannot work in the fields like me. And I prayed that his hair may curl. See, I think the Blessed Virgin has answered."

She turned the child about to show loose rings of fine hair just above the neck. "It was not so when he was born," she added triumphantly.

When the baby was in his old position on her arm she asked with a touch of doubt in her smile, "The signora prays to Our Lady of Mercy?"

"No."

"O, do, do, signora! She hears every word. I want something for Toni now and I ask on my knees every night and morning."

"What is it?"

"O, I must not say, signora," the young wife said, with sudden shyness.

"Are you sure he would not cry if I took him just one moment?" asked Susie abruptly.

"He will not. O, no! See, but it is better to hold him *so*," and she laid the child in the stranger's arms. "Now laugh a little Toni, sweetest dove! Show the pretty lady how you smile! Come!" But the child only clutched at the coral with grave energy.

Susie slowly and timidly drew him nearer to her, bent her cheek against the warm bare head and closed her fingers about the small hand that was free. The Sicilian made encouraging but unintel-

ligible sounds to him meanwhile, chatted about her sister, her husband, her work, but she stopped short when Susie lifted her eyes from the child's face. The indescribable look of one moving forward into a great mystery was in them and it awed the simple soul before her. The peasants of all ages have not understood the whole of what they saw theirs has ever been the outward vision that unconsciously observes.

The boy made a little impatient cry for his plaything as Susie gave him back and she stooped, took one of his chubby feet in her hand and kissed it. Then she loosened the string of coral and put it about his neck.

"O, but the signora ought not!" exclaimed the Sicilian breathlessly. "It gives health and happiness to a child. The beautiful and gracious lady will need it for her own."

"I have another," Susie said.

"O, then all is good!" cried the other, her face beaming with pleasure. "Our Lady be praised! Did I not tell you that she heard? It was for a string of coral to put on his neck that I prayed night and day. And see how it comes, more beautiful than when I dreamed of it!"

"I am glad. Good-bye."

"The Blessed Virgin and all the saints give you joy! *Felice notte!*"

"Happy night," echoed Susie and turned on her way.



She found mammy at a short distance, her back and shoulders rigid with hurt pride ; and yet her great black face was curiously picturesque since she had come to live on Lampedusa, due to some harmony of environment, as though she had been a statue of Africa which had been hoisted into the right position.

Missy slipped her hand under the fat, unyielding arm and leaned her face against it as they walked on. There was a little catch in the soft monotony of her voice and she said very few words, but Venus uttered such a sound as an animal makes to its young and turned upon her with a gesture which signified she would take her up in her arms as if she were a child again. With uncouth ejaculations, explosive and tender, she was her old self now that this silence which had seemed to her alienation was broken at last.

When the bonfires were flaring in the evening and the musketry still crackling at intervals, when the non-resonant little bells were jangling, the lanterns lighted across the roadway and the whole population of Lampedusa gathered at the harbor, Robert and Susie were at home. The captain had made his round of the camp, seen that the guards were on duty and then walked to the scene of festivity, recognizing some of his men at each of its noisiest centres, for the bonds laid upon them by his predecessor had snapped one by one and the crew mingled with the Sicilians to their mutual disadvantage.

Anchored at the harbor on the point lay huddled a few light craft, and as if at the beck of this petty commerce, castle and bastion, storehouse, even chapel, elbowed each other upon the headland above them. This cape, now seemingly dedicated to religion and the arts of peace, had entertained quite different visitors. Plague-smitten ships, driven by storms without and horrors within, shut out from port after port, long ago took their terrible presence to this lonely island, and when they sailed again most of its inhabitants were dead.

On his way back he detected Mother Graham moving like a ferret through the dark, just starting on one of her nocturnal prowls.

"He'll put in a sair nicht," she said, when he stopped her and they spoke of her detested patient, "or else mebbe he's shammin'. A'll ken aboot two o' the clock, an' so it's ain o' his curst tricks a'll gie him it!" she added viciously. She peered up at the tall figure before her. "Get oot," she said sharply, "get oot o' this pest hole! Ye're decent fouk. Tak her hame."

"I can't," answered Robert shortly.

"What ha' ye doon ower yon?" she inquired as sharply as before. "Oot wi't!"

Robert for answer gave an impatient shrug and pushed past her, but the old woman with incredible quickness intercepted him.

"Ha' ye killt a mon?" she asked relentlessly.

"I thought I had," replied Robert sullenly. "It's none of your business."

"O, yes, O, yes! It's nane o' me beesness! An' ye'll kill *her*, too, will ye? Ye ha' nobbut a puir, silly auld body for freend, an' it's no her beesness hoo ye fare!" replied Mother Graham with intense bitterness.

Robert was striding on but he stopped.

"He didn't stir," he said with surly reluctance. "I had good cause. I left on a ship."

"When?"

"Four years ago. I went back once. You know that."

"What did ye find?"

"He was dead."

"Ah!"

"Not then. Three months after I struck him."

"Gae hame, then, like a mon, ye dour loon!"

"His brother heard I was there. I would have fought him out in the air, and six more like him."

"Wal?"

"But he had a warrant of arrest."

"So ye ran awa', did ye?"

"Whatever you call it!" he exclaimed with a fretful impatience that was like his father. "I wanted *her* and I could not breathe in a jail."

His companion said nothing.

"A cell!" he continued in the same tone, "black, barred, close! A man could not live,——"

"O, aye, hoots! A body can live in 'em. A've doon it."

"I will not! I am not afraid of death or of men, or of beasts. But a jail! A jail!"

He strode on at full speed. Mother Graham ran at his side.

"Risk it, mon!" she urged breathlessly.

"No! No!"

"She mustna bide a month more here!" she exclaimed, gasping for breath with the speed. "She will dee!"

"I am in a trap!" he cried savagely, stopping short, flinging both arms out as though to break the meshes of a net. The old woman sprang back to avoid the reckless force of the movement and when she had recovered herself he was out of sight.

His last gesture was characteristic of himself. Another's point of view, his victim's side of the question except in certain matters of the simplest justice, had never troubled his mind. The questions Is it right? Is it best? had seldom in his life weakened the native vigor and impulse of his will. In his vague anxieties about Susie and in his misdirected energies as a leader he found himself racked with tortures of late such as he had never known before and which he fiercely resented.

When he went into the house he found Susie in the fragrant gloom of the room. A fire of charcoals burning in the brazier at the centre of the

floor and a ship's lantern hanging on the wall were the only lights. It was very still there after the din of the *festa*, and the scene he had just passed through had left on his brain the effect of noise. Susie met him at the door and when he had flung his cap across the room in a way which had become his habit he tramped quickly up and down the room for some time. The night wind on his forehead and the haste at which he had stalked through the darkness since he left Mother Graham had partially quieted him but he still felt a repugnance to enter upon other subjects. Susie stood looking at him a few minutes as he passed and re-passed her, then she sat down under the dingy lantern and waited. She had not spoken a word.

Contrary to what might have been expected from a frame so large, no place in which Temple was ever seemed small because of him. Something in his long, free stride, in his uplifted head, or, quite possibly, something less easy to define, caused the impression of confinement or of size in his surroundings to be forgotten in connection with him. The captain carried his spaces with him.

No sound but the distant firing of guns came from without. Robert suddenly stopped before his wife, lifted her in his arms and sitting in her old place held her on his knee. She laid her head against his shoulder as she often did when they sat and talked together.

"They're a crowd of jolly beggars down there," he said, with an effort to throw aside the insistent memory of Mother Graham's meddling. "Everybody out who isn't in his grave. I saw a fellow sitting on a boat reciting some gibberish, a battle-piece I should say, to a lot of old hulks and cripples who couldn't dance."

"Orlando Furioso," murmured Susie, without raising her head. "I heard him once. Beloved ——"

"Yes, pussy."

"When the little boy comes where shall we live?"

Robert stirred as though he would have risen, but relaxed and was silent. She had never spoken of this voluntarily before, impatiently or perhaps with a thrill of fear, keeping her thoughts to herself. "Not here," she added, seeing he did not answer.

"No," said Robert promptly. "No. Not here."

"He will have to be educated, won't he?" she went on taking a long breath. "And yet you must live where you are free. I can't see anything for us to do."

"Free!" exclaimed Robert with a loud, sharp sigh. "I expect to be always crazed in a cage as I am now!"

"O, I wonder you haven't left me long ago!"

He strained her suddenly close to him.

"I'm a brute!" he said.

"I wonder if there is such a thing as freedom," she began after a pause.

"I've never found it," answered Robert with another impatient sigh.

"A man with wife and children isn't free," proceeded Susie, "and a man who cares for right and wrong, like you, isn't free."

Robert gave a short laugh. "I haven't much to do with wrongs and rights. I just live," he said.

"I should think a person would have to be utterly selfish to be free in these days. And perhaps he would get into some chains even through his selfishness. Shouldn't you think so?" Susie asked after a moment.

"O, how do I know! I thought I was going to be free when I was captain. That's why I stayed here. But look at it! I'm nigger for every rickety jail-bird here. There may be nothing better for us but at least let's leave this!"

"There is something better."

"What is that?"

She was sitting upright and she laid both hands on his shoulders. "We needn't be thieves."

His muscles stiffened under her fingers.

"You *won't* understand!" he exclaimed, jerking his head angrily back. "Can't you see a plain fact when it's put to you? I've explained it often enough. It's a fair fight, I tell you again! Except that last cursed affair it's been hard work. We must live. Everything we need is owned by some-

body. We all fight and the strongest takes what there is. It's natural. The world's made so. Why can't you see?"

"Alden's work is hard and dangerous, but it's——"

She stopped as she saw the look that came into Robert's face at the mention of Alden's name. Alden had never wronged him and Robert had a certain sense of justice which acknowledged that. His feeling was not defined to himself. It was the instinctive shrinking of the savage before the civilized man. Alden's mental construction was an offence, a restless cause of dislike, to this man between whose nature and his own were countless æons of time. He could not breathe in its company. Susie dimly understood how it was. She slipped both hands from his shoulders and clasped them behind his neck.

"Dear, I can't say what hurts you," she said. "We mustn't hurt each other. We agree we will go away from this place. It shall be where you will. My home is only where you are. We will live in the woods in America somewhere. You shall hunt and fish, and I will teach the little boy what I can. Mother taught me until I was seven, and I learned quicker with her than at school. I might try it. Don't you think so?"

"You've read everything worth reading I should think," said Robert.

"O, I don't believe quite that," replied Susie,



modestly. "I wonder if he will hate school as we did?"

"O, yes," said Robert.

"I knew all the parables when I was seven," Susie added.

"Parables?"

"Yes, the house on the sand and the prodigal son——"

"O, is that one?"

"When I was lying awake last night I tried to remember that psalm about the shepherd and the pastures and the other one about the water brooks. I found I knew every word. They're pretty for children to recite on Sunday afternoons. I used to wear my blue shoes when I said them."

"Yes."

"I'm afraid he'll ask me questions I can't answer. What should I do then? I don't know the answers to ever so many things myself."

Robert made no reply, the subject having passed the bounds of his exact knowledge.

"Shall it be in the west, dear?" Susie asked after a pause.

"You ought to be in a town somewhere," began Robert, slowly. "I know that. If I must live my sort of life it ought to have been alone. It's not fair."

"Yes, it is! We are alike. We both belong out of doors. But the child——"

"Not for any child! If I stifle my lungs and

starve my muscles, mince and truckle and lie in what's called Christian civilization, I do it to be just to you, understand that, and for nothing else. Perhaps dad would give me something like a man's work to do about the wharves or ships if I'm not in — Whatever comes you shall go home."

Susie laid her head back on his shoulder. "If it is all for me," she said, "may I say what it shall be?"

"Yes."

"Then I choose the woods, dear heart."

## XII

### CLOUDS AND NIGHT

McCoy was in an evil mood next morning. It was nearly noon when he dragged himself from his bed fully dressed as he had been the day before. While he searched for his cap among the piles of rubbish in his hut, kicking everything right and left and swearing at his luck, one of the men pushed aside the sailcloth hanging across his door and stepped in without ceremony after the habit of the *Maybird's* crew. The visitor was received with so fierce a volley of anathema from the man who had been over-genial with him the night before that he flung a letter across the floor and left without a word, feeling light-headed and indisposed to quarrel on so hot a morning. McCoy pursued him to the door with expressions whose variety could not keep pace with their vigor, and when the man was out of hearing the Scotchman still mouthed abuse of him as he clumsily stooped to pick up the letter lying with its large black seal uppermost. Heavily seating himself upon a cask he shattered the seal and tore the sheet half across in opening it. After he had read it he sat arms on knees, head and shoulders hanging, for some time. When he rose, straightened and shook himself his face had

changed; a glitter had come into the dull eyes, a copper-colored flush into the dingy cheek and a look of relief was mingled with an elation which was not noble. He made no pretense of breakfasting, but when he had found his cap among the coverings of his bed he sidled out of his door and hurried behind the hut to avoid the notice of a group of idlers near by, skirted the cove in the shadow of its cliff wall and shambled on toward the harbor.

He hung about the barracks until the sentry asked his business, when he advanced and with his surly bluster said he would see the commandant. He would give no explanation of his message in reply to the sharp questions of the soldier except that it was important and immediate. He was reluctantly allowed to pass.

When he returned to the camp an hour later he had evidently supplied the need of food by something other than bread, for his high-pitched boastfulness had reached its limit. Hardly had he arrived before every man and woman in the settlement knew that his uncle was dead and that he was now Laird of Duntulloch. Oil-skin jackets and grimy white sleeves pressed upon him, rough tongues and shrill questioned him. Under the spur of this excitement he became eloquent over the past glories of his house, numbering among his ancestors many a Scotch hero powerless to deny the relationship. At last he broke violently through the crowd, shout-

ing that he would let the Yankee chief know what manner of man he had handcuffed, called to the others to follow a gentleman when they had the chance and stumped away toward the house. Stepping up to the door he struck the panels several blows with his fist.

“Stop that!”

The captain's voice behind him made him involuntarily pause and look over his shoulder.

“What do you want, McCoy?” demanded Temple.

“Have a care, mon! Ye spak t' the Laird o' Duntulloch. Aye, that!” and McCoy tried to square his short figure which barred the way.

“I don't care what you call yourself. Say what you want and be off!”

“I'm about tae cut loose frae this den o' damaged characters.”

The representatives of damaged characters before him groaned and laughed as McCoy threw them an uncertain smile.

“I'll bide amongst gentlemen the rest o' me days. I'm a gentleman born.” McCoy steadied himself and gave a heavy thump to his chest. “O, yes, cap'n, O, yes. Ye'll think o' me when I'm gone, willna ye, cap'n? Ye will, ye will. Ye'll find ye canna forget me. Ye may try, cap'n ——”

“The sooner the better,” said Robert, brushing him aside with an arm that nearly threw the Scotchman on his back and opening the door. “Do you

leave to-day?" he asked sharply, pausing at the entrance.

"Yes, an' I'll—I'll——"

"Your share will be given you at three o'clock."

McCoy lunged forward with a muttered threat of violence if he were not treated fairly, but the door was already shut in his face.

"Cap'n would rather insult a gentleman than eat," suggested one of the men with a laugh at the deepened purple in McCoy's face.

"Jealous," replied that fire-eater, tapping his follower on the arm with unsteady fingers, "Jealous."

With a quick, fierce gesture he stretched out both arms so that the red ring left by the handcuffs was visible about each wrist.

"Do ye see *that* an' *that*?" he asked in a thick, trembling voice, turning from one man to another. "I took me oath them shouldna fade till I'd got even wi' him."

He dropped both hands and bent his body toward his listeners. "I've got even," he said in a hoarse whisper.

"How? How?" asked several in a breath.

"Ah, I dinna trust ye," he said, nodding and cautious. He slouched on after speaking, his hands buried deep in his pockets.

"Come, tell us!" urged the men mockingly.

"I maun see Frenchy first," he answered, shaking his shoulders as though to cast off the curious and mischievous swarm about him. They jeered at

him, they baited him with every gibe their idle minds could invent.

"Ah! Ye'll see!" he said over his shoulder.

"Before to-morrow dawns ye'll see."

"Then speak up now," they cried laughing.

"I maun see Frenchy first."

He shook them off at his hut but he came out as soon as they were gone, watched Mother Graham's brisk figure out of sight, shuffled hurriedly to Delavigne's door, pushed it softly and went into the sick man's room.

At four o'clock he passed the captain's house again without a glance or farewell, accompanied by two-thirds of the crew, a disorderly rabble, singing and laughing their loudest. The laughter in Lampedusa had indeed lost all genial character and was but a sardonic outlet for spleen, like the bubbling of a poisoned spring.

The procession straggled toward the harbor in which the small vessel which made regular trips to the parent island lay ready to sail. The rough escort waited on the wharf, eyed closely by a detachment of soldiers, until the anchor was weighed and they saw the last of McCoy, the only one among them destined to pass from Lampedusa to worldly honors.

Matteo, Carriacci and Gomez, the leaders of the opposition to Robert, were not among those who thus took their leave of the Laird of Duntulloch. All three had an interview with the sick Frenchman

during the time that Mother Graham and Robert were anticipating an outbreak of some sort among McCoy's noisy followers. When these returned to the camp the three men mingled with them.

Temple had not acted upon his first impulse, as was his wont, but had unwillingly deferred the announcement of his resignation for a day. This was done at Mother Graham's earnest request since the men were invariably late and quarrelsome after a *festa*, unfit to make a peaceable agreement on his successor. Soon after their return from the harbor, however, he sent Lorenzo through the settlement to call a meeting at nine o'clock the next morning to consider the surrender of his command.

The news had a strange reception. Some men laughed aloud, others nudged each other, turned their half-closed eyes with a sidewise glance at the messenger and winked slowly, while a few enfeebled in wits and body stared dully and clamored with questions. Lorenzo was puzzled but had no opportunity to show his aggressive loyalty to his chief by calling out any one, the temper of the camp was so determinedly amiable. Swan sat at his hut door bare-headed, his brown hair auburn in the slanting sun as he sifted snells and sand through his huge fingers. His eyes looked glazed when he lifted them to Lorenzo and horrors within the man had grooved his face into ridges. Matteo, Gomez and Carriacci talked apart now, their hands as they gesticulated making gigantic menacings beside their



gaunt shadows. Matteo made a palpable excuse to sit before lo'g, for though he allowed none to speak to him of it he was more easily fatigued day by day and his breath was short. Dissipation and excess in greater or less degree marked every face upon which the setting sun was shining, for each man there lay in bondage to the ways of his own spirit.

"Midnight?" questioned one man of his companion when he thought Lorenzo had passed.

"Promptly at midnight," was the low answer, and the captain's messenger supposed they meant the appointment for a game at cards or a lawless lovemaking.

Meanwhile the captain walked through the camp in the long sunset. No man in all that throng but Lorenzo said one word of regret at what they had heard. The dislike of him and dissatisfaction with him, then, was as general as this! He felt even more keenly than had his youthful ally the atmosphere of gesture, of glance and grimace, of airy comment, soundless mirth, as if all space were filled with taunting spirits, unseen but flouting him with their wings. Groups parted as he came near, low words ceased or men ostentatiously spoke of trivial things in a louder key. He supposed they were busy with the name of their new chief, with the construction of binding promises which, taught by experience, they would exact of him in advance. One fragment of talk which reached him seemed to confirm this.

"His share would have been a third?" one man asked another.

"Charpiot said so. McCoy only got his slice of two-thirds," replied his neighbor.

That night at twelve Susie cried out and sat up. "What is it, Robert?"

He was softly going out of the door. "Nothing, nothing," he said, looking back.

"Is anything wrong?"

"No, no. I am going once around the camp. That is all. Go to sleep, pussy."

He slipped out with no further word and Susie lay down again.

He often had done this since he was chief and had felt a new sense of responsibility. To-night, however, a vague sense of ill which had colored the dreams of his first thin sleep deepened with waking.

The night outside was moonless and dark except the occasional glint of a misty star just overhead, but the sea itself was a blaze of splendor. Along the shore was a band of white light, glowing, soft, and the base of every cliff was a wreath of fire. Over the calm surface of the water on which the milky waves were undulating, green sparks and globes of fire were flashing, quivering.

Something black against the white sea moved! It skimmed too slowly for a huge speck flitting before imperfect vision.

The ship!

The sails changed suddenly to shadows. It had veered northward.

Temple ran down the shore. The huts were dark and still. No late marauder was singing and cursing on his way to bed, with dulled instincts that no longer forbade him shock the brooding silence of the night. Nothing stirred about him as he sped. A clump of olive-trees upon the bank above him seemed to have lost the frank cheer with which they looked men in the face by day. Mysterious, suspicious, gloomy they were now, furtive like outlaws, scowling, or with heads together, whispering; not malignant it may be, but defensive merely, for perhaps strange forces are abroad by night and honest nature stands at guard against shapes we cannot see.

At full speed Robert passed hut after hut. A lame dog dashed from one of them, barked harshly and flung itself against him.

Temple kicked open the door Delavigne had with much toil swung at his entrance. A faint sound met his ear. The darkness was heavy with odors of oils and pastes. He struck a spark and by the flaring tow he lighted a candle near his hand. The slight and husky moan seemed to fill the room but the bed was empty, the clothing dragged upon the floor.

The next instant he had sprung across the space and cut the ropes about Mother Graham's hands and feet and the handkerchief tied fast across her mouth.

"The ship!" she gasped with her first breath.

"Gone."

"The chest?"

He did not seem to hear her. He stood vacantly turning his eyes from place to place in the room. His alertness had suddenly left him.

"The chest, mon!" screamed the old woman, striking at him with her bruised fist. "Gae, look if it's gang wi' 'em! McCoy was tae canny for ye! I tellt ye! I tellt ye! But auld Tibbie was a gouk. O, yes! a pair, silly gouk. Gae! Look!"

He did not stir. She half raised herself from the floor, pouring a volley of imprecations through her stiffened jaws.

"Will ye gae or sall I shoot ye like a dog where ye stand?"

Her cramped legs failed her and she fell back, but she seized a rusty gun from the corner and flung it at him with all her force. Its barrel struck his arm and he turned a dull glance upon her.

"What is it?" he asked. "What is it?"

"The chest! The chest! The chest!" she shrieked, and crawled on hands and knees toward him, pushing him ahead of her with one swollen hand.

He went outside. The breeze that comes with the morning was stirring there. Urged on by Mother Graham's cries he walked up the beach, to the cave in the bank where Carriacci should be standing on guard, stooped and crept in at its en-

trance. His fingers touched two cold links of an iron chain dangling from a staple in the rock. The lower one was broken. He felt of the jagged ends again and again as though to convince himself.

When he left them it was to stand dumbly a while in the absent sentry's place. He faced the sea, but his eyes followed the undulations of the fading light upon it with scarcely more purpose than did the seaweed trailing in them. About his head fireflies flitted, glowing with hundreds of blue lights.

The constant recurrence of one small black object against the wavering whiteness on the water finally roused his benumbed attention. As soon as he had made it out as an open boat his mind was too tired to pursue the subject further.

He mechanically walked along the line of huts, pushing away the matting at the entrance of one after the other. Most of them were empty. Swan lay muttering with his eyes half open, Lorenzo was curled up in sound boyish sleep. A poor drunken fellow who had sprained a leg the day before moaned in his broken rest. A few whom disease or strong drink had hopelessly crippled, a still smaller number suspected, like Lorenzo, of loyalty to their chief, were all that had been left behind.

He walked on toward home. As he passed below the group of sinister olive-trees a thrill of his old readiness stirred in him. Instinct, not reason, warned him that he was watched. He stopped

short, his eyes fixed upon the mass of dark foliage against the sky.

A sharp word, one word, broke the stillness. A squad of black shapes hurled themselves down the steep slope.

"Surrender!" shouted a voice in Italian.

For answer Temple fired a pistol shot into the swarm closing about him. A dozen vigorous forms had flung themselves upon him before his hand dropped.

"Remember! Alive!" yelled the same voice.

Once Robert beat them back with blows so unexpected and so quick that they loosened the coil around him. But the strong men pressed upon him again, gripping his arms, tripping him from every side, choking him, dragging him down. Not a word or a sound but breath was raised during the hideous, blind struggle before Temple fell, carrying most of his assailants with him. Ropes bound him hand and foot where he lay silent, his chest heaving.

A burning torch was soon thrust into the ground, the black and oily smoke flaring in a long ribbon. By its wrinkled light two Sicilian uniforms at his side seemed but casually related to the bearded faces above them. The lame dog crouching by Robert's head growled at them until he was kicked away.

Screams and hoarse shouts came from the direction of the huts for the pistol shot had roused

some of the sleepers and the soldiers were driving the sullen and bewildered men and women before them toward the spot where their chief lay a prisoner. When they stood huddled into a group about him the torchlight in the wind distorted amazement into grimace upon their wretched faces. A few cursed and snarled; an under officer struck them with the flat of his sword. Lorenzo, who had grappled, bit and clawed like a wild bear was gagged as well as bound.

Robert spoke but once, to his guard. "Keep them out!" he shouted, lifting himself half-way from the ground. "Tell them!" He tried to spring to his feet but fell back. A squad of men were entering at his open door.

"Be still!" said the impassive guard, raising his piece as his prisoner impotently tugged at his bonds. "We have strict orders about the women."

With his eyes strained toward the house door, Robert asked where he and his men were to be taken.

"To Napoli," he was told.

"On what charge?"

"Piracy."

The chill of the night's passing was in the air; the phosphorescence had faded from the sea. The leader of the soldiers, a young man with military stiffness of head and shoulders stood in silence at a little distance from Temple waiting for the return of two detachments of his men. Half dragging,

half carrying a new prisoner whom they had seized in his boat as he landed, one squad came along the shore. Crazed with rage Matteo only used his breath to gasp denunciations of his companions who had set him adrift, refusing at the last moment to take with them a dying man.

Mother Graham sat upon the ground, her head swinging slowly from side to side. Sometimes she mumbled "McCoy! McCoy!" drawing her breath with a hiss through her toothless jaws and fumbling her bruised hands. Blue moths in swarms flung themselves upon the waving flame, and dropped scorched upon Temple's breast.

His eyes never left his door till the soldiers came out. Two women were with them. The white dress of one blew backward in slow folds. Her head and neck were lifted like those of a frightened deer. She walked straight on even when ordered to stop. She saw the figure lying beneath the sizzling torch, and nothing else. Again the under officer commanded her to halt. Venus standing where she had been told, called to her "missy! missy!"

She only stretched out both arms toward the captive and walked forward. A guard as she passed him seized her shoulder and pushed her back.

As the man touched her Robert Temple cried out in a loud and terrible voice. He sprang upward with such sudden and mighty strain of every muscle in him that the ropes about him snapped. Before a



man had stirred to stop him he held Susie in his arms.

The young Sicilian captain checked the guards with a motion of his hand.

For an instant all was still but the whimper of the dog, limping round and round the two locked figures.

The Sicilian boy captain stepped forward, sword in hand.

"Now, signor," he said.

"Take her!"

Robert called Venus hoarsely, fiercely.

Susie's head had drooped and the black woman lifted her fainting charge into her great arms.



Book Third

EBB TIDE



## XIII

### A NEW ENGLAND GIRL

"THERE! There! Stay where ye be! I'll be stirrin' my stumps fur hum 'fore long:" said Jacob Minns, settling heavily into a wooden chair, whose arms had been polished by the smoothing of hands that repeated the motions of ruminating brains.

"She don't let ye out late now days, doos she, Jacob," commented Locker, thriftily passing his finger around the top of his pipe-bowl to save the shreds of good tobacco which had lodged there.

Jacob wadded his own brown lump into his curved palm a moment before he answered. "My rheumatics git their 'tarnal work in after dark, I tell ye. I'm nigh jacked up double some nights with 'em. How's leftenant?"

"Fair to middlin'."

The door of the kitchen stove was open before which they sat and thus arranged after supper the little bed of glowing coals economically encouraged to die out instead of wasting itself by burning out reproduced the lost open fire of earlier kitchens in the shape of this wizened reminder.

"Leg better?" inquired Jacob after he had succeeded in starting his pipe with one of the red hot morsels from the stove.

"Got ahead the last fortnight like a house afire."

"Old Sawbones is here, ain't he?"

"In the settin' room, jawin' on as usual."

"I see him as I come along. Passed me when I stopped at the minstrel show. Cocky little bantam, ain't he?"

"What was you doin' at the minstrel show?" asked Locker.

"Buyin' tickets."

Locker slowly turned his head and looked at Jacob, who was studying the coals.

"Um," said Locker. "So!"

They smoked in complete silence for a while before Jacob remarked, "They don't come so dear as meerschaums."

Locker lifted his eyes at the words and let them rest on a pipe-case of red leather braced against The Farmer's Almanac on the shelf over the stove. For many years he had desired above all other worldly possessions, a meerschaum pipe, a passion not even Jacob had suspected in the lonely man. With his first pension money he had half defiantly bought one, and night after night since had looked up at its case as he smoked his blackened clay stump beneath it, for it was still beautiful with the beauty of a grate in which a fire had never been kindled. With its purchase his desire seemed to have been sated. He knew that he should never smoke it; and, beside the mere outlay of money, it had cost him an object in life.

So when Jacob had uttered this saying about the expense of meerschaums he responded, "That's so."

This sort of frankness between the friends had kept their relations wholesome for many years.

"As you've said agin an' agin," Jacob proceeded, changing his attitude so that his hubbly hand should rest on his right knee instead of his left, "As you've said agin an' agin, Ebenezer, *she* did take rayther a queer kind of a time of life fur sowin' her wild oats, but I swan, I guess the crop's in now for good an' all."

Locker made no answer. Long acquaintance generally does this much for us, that we know when our friend is bringing up a subject for some definite purpose and we need not waste our words.

"She ain't teched a drop sence she seed that there *ha'nt* six months ago."

"Which?" asked Locker briefly.

"Miss Susie Sumner. When she sot eyes on *that sh-* jest cut an' run all the way back hum. She despises the sight o' liquor sence."

"O, now it's *Susie* she seen, is it?" asked Locker lazily. "Wal, I guess when them air kind o' things is a raisin' theirselves outter the ground anyway, it ain't much matter how many they be, nor which ones they be. Bi' ye tole me at the time it war young Robert Temple she sighted."

"Robert—Temple?"

"Yes. Don't ye recollect? In the settin'-room. The night o' the jaml' oree over to Temple's?"

"Yes. That was the very night she seed her an' cut home."

"Seed *him* ye mean. She ain't hed a hull graveyard of 'em, hes she?"

"Seed *her*, I tell ye. But—a spell afore—she—Lord!" The explosion of the last word seemed to heave the sailor to his feet. He turned his back to Locker while his lips opened and shut without a sound. He had sailed for the old house of Temple and Son since he went cabin-boy. He stood there now, too loyal to speak, to even show his face. He and the owner, to whom he had gone straight on his return, alone knew what he had seen by the murky lantern that terrible night on the Mediterranean, and he had promised and held his tongue since. He stared at the blackened kitchen wall and did not see it. "Her, too; her, too," his stiff lips said but not aloud.

"Set down, man. What's the matter with ye?" suggested his friend.

"Gosh darned all hemlock!" gasped Jacob Minns. He jerked his chair half about and dropped into it.

"Got a pain?" inquired Locker with real concern.

"No, no. Chewing my cud, as ye might say," replied Jacob with effort. "No harm done, Ebenezer."

"I tell ye a man can't git to your time o' life,"



began Locker irritably, "an' rank able-bodied much longer ef he's a-goin' to worrit in his family, an' then git chewed up by pirates a spell, an' fight the rheumatics to top off with. You've looked peaked ever sence that there *Flight* business. Yer eyes stick right out o' yer head, an' yer jaw's fell in. Ye ain't lost no back teeth lately?"

"No, I ain't."

"Wal then, stands to reason what the matter is." Silence. "What kind of a darn face did that there robber chieftain hev anyhow, Jacob?" asked Locker finally. "Was he a blackamoor like?"

"No, he warn't."

"Why, he warn't light-complected? Couldn't a' ben. Who ever heerd o' a light complected pirate?"

"Wal, he warn't no black, I'll say that."

"I guess you was right sick 'long about then, an' ye ain't none o' the observin' kind at the best o' times. What language did he talk?"

Jacob Minns put down one foot stiffly and hoisted the other knee into the first one's place.

"Portugee?" queried Locker.

"No, no. 'Twarn't Portugée exactly."

"Mebbe 'twas Greek or Turkey?"

"Mebbe."

"Did it seem to hev any words like English in it?"

Jacob turned a quick eye sidewise to see if there were any sinister meaning in this chance shot, but

Locker's face showed his old friend that there was none.

"Shet up on that there subject, Ebenezer, will ye, to obleege me? It goes to my stomach," he said quietly.

"Do it? There then! I tole ye it took a grip on ye." They sat still a few minutes. Jacob slowly filled his pipe again and lighted it.

"What was ye sayin' a spell back about yer domestic affliction, Jacob, if it don't go to yer vitals to talk about that?" asked Locker.

This stung Jacob even if it did not reach any subcutaneous deeps in him. He took on a dogged air, and set both feet to the floor. "I ain't got no domestic affliction that I knows on," he said deliberately. "She ain't hed no fun in her life an' she's a-goin' to hev some if it costs me two dollars a week. She's scrubbed an' cooked an' sewed an' swep',—done 'em good, too. But that ain't enough for no woman. She ain't hed chick nor child to speak to in that house when I warn't in port. Nights when I be to hum she's ben a-peggin' at her stitches whiles I read my *Universe an' Recorder* an' then went to bed. She took to drink for some fun, I tell ye, an' nothin' else in this born earth. I see it plain enough now it's borne in on me. I'm goin' to take her to every circus that comes along, an' to every nigger minstrels, an' to ice-cream saloons, an' to hev her daguerreotype took. She's goin' to horse trots an' baby shows an' wax figgers, all of 'em."

Locker murmured that a horse trot wasn't no great place for a female to be seen at, but Jacob replied, "No, it ain't, for such females as has lived on tea an' hot milk, but for females that has got a taste for strong drinks, I tell ye it takes strong stuff to beat it. She's goin' to horse trots, an' every other dom show that comes to this town."

Dr. Lyman, sitting forward in his chair, opposite his patient, who was leaning back in his with one leg extended in an attitude which indicated care, seemed to fit his cognomen of Sawbones singularly ill. He was slender and small, with white, thin hands, and that look of studied cleanliness which is generally an accompaniment of his profession.

He had devoted skill and thought to the young engineer's case since he had been at home on leave. Alden had been thrown and his leg injured by a fall of rock loosened by frost in a cañon he was crossing. The exposure before he was relieved had resulted in a dangerous inflammation in his lungs, and at the earliest possible day he had been ordered home, where he arrived pale and lean from insufficient nursing and the jolting of an emigrant wagon. His constitution, his native air, love, care, rest, helped the doctor toward his cure and he improved day by day, but the end of his leave was near and he refused to asked for an extension, assuring Lyman that when his time was up he would be quite able to travel.

When Alden Sumner meant to be firm he had a

quiet kindness in his eyes as they met those of the person against whom his will was to be set. They had this look to-night as he listened to his physician warn, argue, threaten and urge; the expression of one who said, "I'm really sorry, old fellow,—on your account."

Gratitude for what he had been given beyond mere professional duty, deference to his opinion, and a sense of justice which recognized the doctor's right to state his case as well as his own right to do what he thought best, kept Alden from showing a trace of impatience at remarks which finally became mere impotent sarcasms. When, however, the physician had accepted Alden's challenge for a change of subject, he made no further allusion to the matter, though his failure in it perhaps insensibly affected his attitude in what followed, as our past emotions do color the problems that succeed them.

For the last two years Alden Sumner had been one of the members of the Engineer Corps of the United States Army appointed by the government to survey the territory west of the Mississippi River, the purpose being to fix the location of a future railroad to the Pacific Ocean. By four parallel routes, these energetic men during a year and a-half pushed their way across the continent. Mountain chains with summits ten thousand feet high stretched from north to south across their way, cleft here and there by gorges whose walls

rose in sheer rock two thousand feet above the midjets toiling through them. Rivers, swelled by melting snows into raging floods, plateaus over whose brief green buffaloes roamed in spring, and which became parched deserts by the early fall, waterless, treeless, trackless miles, hideous silences where animal life had departed, and only the hard glint of mineral and stone, salt, iron, granite, met the aching eyes. Snows fifty feet deep lay in the ravines, snows that in August were still there, and in summer, homesick longings for the lift of soul that comes from nature's fulness were fed by vast plains of wild sage, or but a few evergreens in two hundred miles. The strongest of these men reached the Pacific Ocean. It was one of the greatest feats of engineering ever done in the world.

When it was finished, and the young officers had made their drawings and written their reports to the Secretary of War, then the wrangle about the selection to be made from the routes began. The choice was almost at once narrowed to two out of the four. Political parties divided on the subject, the Republicans in this year endorsing the central route in their convention, while the Democrats, north and south, headed by the President, preferred the southern route, which was already the overland wagon way to California.

"Man, your central route's a track for demons, not for flesh and blood to use! My head swims at your idea of a train curling and writhing up the face

of those cliffs. Mark my words, if we're such blockheads as to take it, there'll never be a better settlement than a government fort from end to end!" exclaimed the doctor, plunging with vigor into the new subject.

"The best passes," said Alden, with his thoughtful eyes on the fire. "The temperate zone, the free states, you know."

"Buffalo grass and the dried bones of fools!" snapped the doctor. "A stunted cedar or two between the Green and the Platte rivers. Snowdrifts and wind!"

"Yes, but the other is too far south——"

"They're both detestable," interrupted the physician, irritably. "I'm tired of hearing about rough, raw conditions. I hate a growing town. I feel stretched on the rack of this house-building and haste. We haven't finished the east yet! Heaven knows we have enough to do here for centuries. Let the overland wagons crawl a while longer, I say. But no! We must be stirred up about this cursed railroad; more taxes, more breathless rush, more disgraceful building, more broken rails, more flimsy bridges. Nothing well done, nothing restful. A few of us who want to stand outside of it are deafened with the clamor in the air. I'm sick of this country, sir, tired of what is called progress. It will come to collapse, mark me! Like your rivers out there that make a great noise and end in a marsh."

"The fight those same rivers make to reach the Pacific is splendid, Jim. I've watched it and I tell you I never see that marshy lake where the Humboldt River sinks but I think of one of our fellows, Morey, who led a charge on the redskins out on the Platte. Fell, you know, just as they turned."

The doctor frowned, jumped up and thrust both hands deep into his pockets. "Stick to facts!" he said furiously. "I say, stick to facts! Don't try to bejuggle my ears with a figure of speech, sir. I'm a plain, practical man. That style of talking is an example of what I call Americanism. Ideas, O yes, ideas and to spare, and the devil take the execution of them! That's American."

"A plan of the house is a good thing to have before commencing to build ——"

"O, yes, yes, yes, but ——"

"We're just commencing to build," continued Alden gravely, prying at a log to let more air play under it. "If we only keep to the plan, I've such faith in the race we belong to that I *know* the house will be all right some day."

"I'm glad you're so hopeful."

"We're the Anglo-Saxon intensified by ozone, and prodded by the primitive necessities on one side and European civilization on the other. We're out of breath cutting trees, building roads, fighting for freedom, making states, inventing, educating, manufacturing. You're the most exacting American of us all. Give us time, old fellow, give us time!"

He looked up in the light of the leap of fire that followed his efforts with the logs, and smiled at the impatient face above him. "You agree with me?"

"No!" shouted the doctor. "Hang it, no! You're taking it for granted the American plan is right and will make an ideal state when it is realized. I say," and Dr. Lyman brought one fist down again and again into his other palm to emphasize the words, "I say for one thing, stirring up this country every four years over an election for its chief magistrate is folly in the act and folly in the idea!"

"It keeps up the public interest ——"

"It tears off one plaster every little while so as to try another. I should like to see the wound heal by the first intention, sir."

"And what was the first intention?"

"Monarchy, by George! O, yes, laugh! Laugh! I say a limited monarchy."

"O, *limited*. That's modern."

"It's the natural order of life. It's the primeval law. Heaven, if there is such a place, would look well as a republic, wouldn't it?"

Alden, leaning a little forward, gave a slight touch to one of the logs which sent a shower of sparks like quick laughter up the chimney. "He never lived under any monarchy on this earth," he remarked in a conversational aside to the bright atoms he had roused. "It is just an idea with him, isn't it?"



The doctor gave a short guffaw. "You ribald scoffer!" he said affectionately. "I did not expect you could answer me."

"It's in your blood, Jim," said Alden, laying the poker aside and sitting back in his chair. "Something from your ancestors that has been tough enough to survive the Revolution. Your father seems to be without it, but a fellow is oftener the son of his great-grandfather than of his own parents. You and I know how things that were once bone and muscle become opinions. They affect society after they have done with war. Curious, always, that transformation. Blustering fire-eaters become a part of the mass of material from which people draw conclusions; they feed the mind and the heart of us. They have been translated, in a way, and come back filtering sociably through our veins and arteries for exercise. That is where your loyalty to England is sojourning, Jim. It is mighty picturesque and interesting, old fellow. I see that though I'm an arid outsider whose heart is where his treasure is, in this raw republic; who reads his Emerson and hitches his wagon to thirty-one stars. The fighting powers of that loyalty of yours have been dead nearly a hundred years, but intellectually it is a fresh, even a stimulating subject for discussion. Sit down and be comfortable and let's have more of it."

"You're a soldier and an engineer," replied the doctor, standing with one hand on Alden's chair,

his eyes following the flickering of the fire. "To push forward frontiers is your trade. The point of view of both soldier and engineer is always this of yours. To scramble on and leave others to finish is their business, and so of course, to underrate the advantages of rest, of the broadening and enriching of civilization. I've noticed it before. It's natural."

"Perhaps it is so," answered Alden thoughtfully. "I think out on the plains we drop out of modern life too completely. But on the other hand, I've often felt that some of us ask a great deal of civilization as it follows us, and finishes what we have left undone. Away from it, we keep the ideal of it the clearer. If it does not make men better than we rough fellows have been, finer in motive and finer in act, it's a failure." He looked up, and the fire-light struck on his bright eyes. "That's what all its advantages are for, to my mind, Jim; not just to take the boor out of a man, to give him a smooth tongue and a white shirt front. If it drives the primitive things, honesty and such homely old friends, into corners to give room for graces, if it makes a smaller *man* of him on any side, it's a failure, a failure! That's what we on the plains think about it."

They looked at each other an instant, as men do who see a new expression in a familiar face, then with a few commonplace words, advice on the physician's part, thanks and cordiality on Alden's, the guest went out to the hall for his hat and stick.

Five years later, when the Civil War came, Dr. Lyman was one of those civilians who realized for the first time in their lives, whether northerner or southerner, that their native sod was dearer to them than they knew. He volunteered at the earliest call, and as a surgeon during the four years of the war, refusing pay, he gave his services to his country.

A series of sharp knocks on the street door had indeed hastened his final leave-taking. Alden heard Locker limp through the hall, then the bustle of several persons entering, and new voices greeting the departing guest.

At the first sounds Alden sat forward, leaned firmly with both hands upon the arms of his chair and pulled himself slowly to his feet. When Barbara came in he was standing, and he made two halting steps toward her. She gave a little cry of gladness and anxiety as she hurried forward to prevent another step, and holding his arm against her shoulder with one hand, to encourage him to lean upon it, she helped him back to his chair.

The girl's erect head, her bright color and a certain vividness due to many subtle causes, combined with physical health, made it seem as if all out-of-doors had come into the lamp-lighted room.

"He ought not!" she said, turning to her father and the general behind her. "But didn't he do it well?"

"That fellow Tim Smith," answered the general,

pushing a chair forward with his one hand,—“corporal of mine; you know him, Phin? Bedridden old blockhead, lives with his sister down wharf way——”

“Talks you to death. Yes, I know him,” replied Temple, seating himself with a sigh.

“Well I’ve just come from there. Fellow’ll go crazy, trying to explain the Lord’s doings.”

“Big order,” replied Temple.

“So I told him. ‘Mind your company’s bugle,’ I said, ‘and let the Commander-in-Chief do His own planning.’ I told him that. There he was, dinning it into me that the Lord meant this and meant that by Alden’s accident, as if He and Smith had consulted together about the matter beforehand. It was making too free with the Almighty to suit me. I told him so. I didn’t like it, sir. I said flat and slammed the door on it, that I hadn’t been informed from headquarters why my son was hurt and I didn’t propose to inquire.”

“He was just doing his duty, wasn’t he?” said Barbara, looking down into Alden’s upturned eyes as she still stood by his chair.

“I should hope so!” roared the old soldier. “I should hope any poor stick of a man would do as little as that! But was he ordered to do his work like a chamois goat? By the Lord Harry, no! Well, what did Lyman say?”

“He said he wished we had a limited monarchy,” replied Alden in the quiet tone of the last remark.

"The fellow's a traitor!" shouted the general, who had been about to seat himself but now towered to his full height. "A Benedict Arnold! A Judas, sir. Yes, sir, he'd sell his country for— for——"

"For a box of British Lustre," suggested Temple.

"Yes, sir, for a box of stove polish! Ha! Ha! So he would, the black-souled pilgarlic! Good fellow, too. What are you roaming about after, Phin?"

For Temple had risen and was walking up and down behind the others, his hands under his coat-tails. "The light hurts my eyes," he answered restlessly. "I'm tired to death."

"Then sit down, man! That's what I do when I'm fagged."

"You said you wanted a walk, papa," said Barbara in surprise. "And we did not go a mile."

"It was too soon after dinner, and a *walk* isn't carrying soap and jelly to rat-holes like those wharf tenements. I agree to pay for jellies and soap. But I want to keep away from the unfortunate myself. I have enough on my mind without them. I hate smells. I hate sickness and whines. I hate people who grub."

"You went so uncomplainingly that I did not know it was so hard on you."

"O, I didn't mind much," he replied. "Let's change the subject. Nothing ever matters long."

Alden adroitly asked a question about business

and discovering a ship was overdue, supposed he had detected the real cause of irritation. But in truth his daughter's indignant uprightness, her taking for granted that he would always do the thing that looked right, sometimes made her father feel as if he had stood too long on tiptoe. In perfect innocence she often asked uncomfortable questions. There were times when her very trust in him tired him. With a quite transparent excuse the old friends went away upstairs presently so as to leave the two young people to themselves.

Barbara sat on a low footstool just out of Alden's reach, and steadily refused to move it one inch nearer. Her eyes were on the dull red embers, but in them was the light which always softened them for some moments after they had turned from his. She sat in silence for a while, her mind, even while Alden spoke, busy with many thoughts. Her father's words had jarred upon a tremulous mood of elation and doubt, in which the possession of a new purpose had held her for several days. Young, strong, buoyant, she was still at a loss to understand how any life could remain in a valley where hope and all energies but one lay passionless. His feeling, therefore, toward those less fortunate in outward circumstances than he, was one of the sides of his character which was always strange to her.

She was by no means dull, and she had reached that critical point when the young see their nearest

of kin somewhat as others see them. This period is the crucial test of the family bond, for if there is not left a great affection and at least a foundation of trust in the place of the unsubstantial fabric of unquestioning faith that preceded it, then comes alienation, or the fatal knowledge of the spots to which words may be sent that they shall cut the most. If, however, there be affection and this basis of trust the new insight only opens up fresh springs of sympathy, and sounds new deeps of tender understandings for the faults, weaknesses and failures which the sensitive nature now sees clearly, but which bind the aspiring but faulty child only the closer to the constrained or defeated parent.

It was in this light that Barbara was learning to know her father. She had discovered that he was self-indulgent, and easily moved to generosity in ways in which an immediate result was to be seen; that he often sentenced by the word "unpractical" what another man would call noble. But the one energetic force, which was directed toward the accumulation of money, seemed to her hardly a thing to blame in him, since it was so evidently a question of inherited inertia.

His father had struggled with moderate success toward that end, his grandfather had panted after it and failed; it had become a habit of the race. Poor Robert appeared to have broken the line short in that respect. A constantly recurring doubt visited Barbara of late years, whether the

sketch of her brother which had been guardedly shown to her, was a perfect likeness. Of course her father believed it to be correct. Not a doubt of Temple's truthfulness or his uprightness in business had ever crossed her mind.

She felt, indeed, at this season of her life, the boundlessness of the universe and the largeness of her heart. All, all were held within it. There was no outcast, no loneliness, no stranger; all humanity, even animals, trees and grass, even stones and earth, were palpitating things, were all embraced in a tender, pitying, loving grasp for one man's sake.

"I left mamma playing one of those Chopin preludes a great deal better than ever I did it," she began after a time. "I told you that she had taken up her music again with Mr. Corenzio since I stopped my lessons."

Alden laughed. "I see I am to be one of the thousands of men who are responsible for their wives' dwindling accomplishments, little girl," he said.

"I never had any talent for music and I need the time. Alden——"

"Yes."

"I want to ask you a question. Answer it honestly. You may tell the exact truth."

"Thank you."

"Mamma said once that it was sweet and womanly to be passive, not to feel too much for



any man. Has it ever seemed to you,—has it ever crossed your mind,—that I care—too much for you?"

People did not speak of loving any one in New England about the middle of this century; they liked him, or they cared for him. Puritan repression had produced a shyness in speaking of many harmless things, as well as in the expression of deeper feelings. Love seemed somehow too emotional a word to be altogether decent.

"If either of us cared any less for the other than we do," began Alden, "I shouldn't feel this absolute certainty that we belong together. I've often thought how sweet and womanly it was in my little girl to give me so much more than I deserve because I needed it so badly. I have very few who are near to me. The dear old governor and Locker, and Tom Ward and Louis Montgomery out there on the survey are about all. You've no idea, sweetheart, hedged round by affection and admiration and all that sort of thing, what this is to me."

"Dear, I want to say something to you," she proceeded slowly. "After I once get started I shall put it quite clearly, but it is hard to begin."

"I know what it is and I'll help you out."

"O," cried Barbara, lifting her head with a little gasp. "Are you sure you know?"

"I often can tell something that is passing through your mind even if you stand behind me where I can't see you. But my dear little girl, I

must not let you do this. Don't make me a weak, selfish wretch who will despise himself the rest of his life. A self-despising man would not be a winning personality in the house, would he? No, no. You haven't the least idea of the loneliness, the cold, even the dangers. You don't know the homesickness, the bare necessities of life,—a girl like you! See! Very soon when that money is paid and I am ordered to some festive spot like a fort in the east near your friends,— O, it isn't new to me! I've thought it over and put it away from me scores of times. Don't, dear; don't let us talk of it. I mean you shall never know what it is like out there!"

"If you were well," she faltered, "I could not say it. But you are not fit to go back alone. I will not cost you a cent. You shall save as much as you did without me; more, for I will help you. You don't have any idea how little I can live upon. I made over all my dresses this spring myself and did not buy anything new, so I'm sure about that. And I have a little money of my own to pay for the other things——"

"O, darling!" groaned the man, turning in his chair.

"Alden," she exclaimed hastily, "it isn't much. I assure you it is very little. I dare say it won't last much over two years. I am so strong that I never mind cold. I should like living in a fort or a post or a construction house or whatever there is to

live in. If I were to go into a life of ease don't you see I could not say this? But because it is hard and bare and poor, because you are hurt, Alden, let me have it!"

"A man has some pride. He wants to give his wife something."

"Your mother once said, I remember, that at times it is more generous to receive than to give," replied Barbara Temple."

In the long silence that followed Alden's mental vision was vivid. He saw the rough construction camp where he and the men lived. It would be impossible to take a lady there. The fort in which a few of the officers' wives existed in a state of cramped hostility, and the little community of Perfectionists, building and planting in the flush of their yet unfaded dream, were the only available spots in his vicinity. It could be done, but how different from the home he had hoped to give her! To be sure it was better than the savage outposts of the world into which the government survey had led him. The state in which he was now constructing bridges and forts was in the path of the white-topped emigrant wagons which had never ceased to move across the central plains since Massachusetts sent her hundreds of armed men to Bleeding Kansas two years before, to defend the territory against the extension of slavery. The western life had a charm to him as it had for most men to whom its relaxation in regard to accepted

standards of civilized life made the old social restraints an irksome memory, and the painful centuries of social progress seem an unreality.

But Alden Sumner was too thoughtful for mere lawlessness to appeal to him. Insensibly the vast distances widened his mental horizon. There was no limit to effort, to achievement. He saw the poor wooden roads, the frail bridges, the long trestle works hastily crossing swamps, warped, burned and shrunken by the hot engines passing over them; but he did not see them with the scorn of Dr. Lyman. He understood. He knew the west where with flying steps and breathless speed, life was rushing toward unattainable myriads of goals, and it only warned men like him to hold themselves in hand, to do well and trust the wild energy of the boy to grow to a man's faithfulness in time. His experience there gave him a new point of view by which to judge the east from which he came. He saw in its rigidity a lingering habit of mind, not an indication of its lack of sympathy or kindness; as though St. Simeon Stylites had modified his ideal of life, and were painfully stumbling and stiffly running on his errands of love.

He tried to bring to this question before him now, the impartiality his broader vision had taught him; he tried to think only for her. He fought with his own longing that shook his will again and again, pleading that life was so short, so short. His camp could be cut to pieces by Indians, he might be

drowned or struck down by some force of that nature which was fiercely resisting the invasion of her solitudes; yet this girl, seemingly safe at home might be ill,—might— He checked his very breath. He dared not think the name of death. If some mischance should spoil the promise of their lives, how pitifully poor would plain fare and a rough hut appear as cause of their separation to the one who was left! The sweep of Alden's later life had opened his eyes also to his besetting danger, the tendency to stand tenaciously by a position he had once decided to be right, and to find it impossible, even against his reason, to recede.

Suddenly now he saw it best to change his determination not to be happy until Corenzio were fully paid, and when he not only recognized that, but found himself able to act upon it, he laughed aloud like a man freed.

Turning in his chair he reached impulsively for the hand Barbara had withheld from a delicate dread of influencing his judgment by its unconscious appeal. At the touch, a mighty impulse in him rose from the depths of a human need, swept before it the poor obstacles thrown down by artificial life, poverty, material hardship, worldly ambitions; made the way of a pure and passionate love the luminous track in which suffering was accepted, even glorified, and the gray and dusty world was young again.

## XIV

### TEMPERAMENT

MRS. TEMPLE was playing a prelude of only moderate difficulty and continued her attempts to strengthen the weak places in its execution for half an hour after her husband and daughter had started on their errand to the wharf tenements which was to be followed by a visit to Alden. She was sufficiently appreciative to see that her own touch when compared with Corenzio's lacked a certain dainty grace, but she was far from suspecting the depth of shortcoming indicated by his remark to young Adams that she invested Chopin with a sort of lumpish dignity.

Outward signs of the emotional temperament with which she was born had been systematically stifled. Her life had never been articulate, and below its surface disaffection, *ennui*, contempt, strange thrills and embryo passions, stirred and crept. A woman who walked the floor of her room for hours of the night after hearing Grisi sing or seeing Rachel play and still let pass without protest her husband's theory that she was suffering from neuralgia, whose nerves quivered under her pale skin as the tide of music swept her to and fro within and the instant the sounds had ceased forced

herself to speak a few commonplace words to show her self-control, was a woman upon whom several starved impulses might even yet avenge themselves.

Her early life had given her no knowledge of the world and her relations toward humanity since her marriage had comprised only the most respectable persons in the most moral of all communities, a provincial New England town at the middle of this century. To her secret sense all who were makers of music or devotees of art were lifted into the ideal. Neither her friends nor those of her husband had been artists by any name and to her such were the race of gods. Almost at the outset this temper leads the worshipper into confounding the performer with his act, the instrument with the strains it utters, the poor flesh with the deathless spirit.

When the clock struck the quarter past eight she heard it through a shower of notes and stopped playing. She sat an instant, her eyes, the only tell-tale feature of her face, fixed with some thought. Then she suddenly rose, went out into the hail, caught a glimpse of her pale hair and bright eyes in the glass as she wound a scarf about her head, and threw about her a long cloak lying ready upon a chair, softly opened the street door and went out, closing it as quietly behind her. She stood looking up and down the street an instant from the steps, then hurried down the path. She turned at the first side street, walked quickly through it and reached the more secluded road which soon became the

grass-grown way to the burial ground, the same in which Susie had swung her lantern on the night when she had eluded Locker, and seen the apparition of the new white stone beside her mother's gray one. Trees crowded with thin spring leaves stood at uniform distances. Under the largest elm on the left side she stood still, pressed closely against the trunk, panting guardedly from her speed as she held a fold of her cloak before her face.

All was still but the regular croak of a tree toad and the occasional lugubrious sawing of one limb against another in the tree over her head, for the wind unfelt below was fitfully blowing in upper branches. The rack was obscuring the full moon, now heavily, now lightly. The whispering of two figures hidden in the shadow of tree and wall across the road was lost before it reached her.

"Ah, ha! Dicky boy! O ho! Dicky *mio*, what do you say now? Have you lost? Fairly? I told you she'd come," said one, seizing the other's arm and pulling him nearer.

"It's monstrous!" answered the other, freeing his arm and speaking with husky emphasis. "A woman of her age! It's weak and disgusting."

The other laughed softly and patted his shoulder with the tips of his fingers. "O no, no! Nothing of the kind. It's natural on the contrary. They're all alike. They can't help it, bless 'em! Give them one droop of your eyes and it's over with them, poor dears. What do you bet she's thinking about?"



Wondering why I linger, linger in the gloaming, of course. I say, it's queer now isn't it, by Jove, what they'll do for a fellow."

"Go across and speak to her," replied Adams, with unusual spirit. "It's the only decent thing to do. See her safely home at least."

"Not so, Horatio. No entanglement for me, thank you. Too poor for any risks. Do you suppose I want a scandal about myself and the old lady? Ha! Ha! Well, well. To hear such a suggestion from you, Dicky boy! It grieves me. Ha! Ha! No, there are so many pretty girls smiling on a fellow that he doesn't know what to do, let alone the faded ones. Halloa! What's struck her? Look!"

For the cloaked figure had darted from the shadow where it stood and was fleeing down the road.

"She didn't hear a word! She couldn't!" exclaimed Corenzio, breathlessly. "What happened?"

"I don't know. Let's go home," replied Adams, leading the way to the street.

"A shadow frightened her, I suppose. Ugh! How damp my feet are! I hope they're only cold, not really wet. The cigars were to be good ones, you know, Dicky."

"O, you've won. I shan't cheat you, old fellow," replied Adams.

Mrs. Temple did not pause in her hasty flight un-

til she was in her own room with the key turned in the lock. Then without loosening cloak or scarf she sank into the nearest chair, panting with a haste she had not attempted since some foolish fright in her girlhood had sent her scurrying home when belated in the winter dusk.

What had sent her now? Not human voices; she had heard none. But away from the warm room filled with music, alone, chilled, timid, a horror of her escapade had seized her. What had seemed a simple, natural thing when it was mentioned, now leered at her as lawless. Why had she not said to her husband and daughter as they all sat at their early tea, "I am going down the road to see an effect of light and shade Mr. Corenzio is to show me. He has reproduced it in one of his works—that nocturne he played us the other night, Barbara. I suppose neither of you care to see it? It is curious and interesting always to find out how artists get their ideas, don't you think so?"

This simple thing had not been easy to say, though she did not understand why. "I never supposed I could be vulgar," she whispered to herself with stiffened lips, while she sat there after her return. Words her grandmother had said to her when she was but sixteen came up to her now, and the clean, small room in which they were spoken: "I have never kissed my husband in my life. I should not think it the act of a modest woman." Reason and experience combined had not been

strong enough to wholly invalidate this ideal of womanly virtue. "You!" she went on under her breath, staring at herself in the mirror opposite, "forty-seven years old, the gray coming into your hair, lines about your eyes, your color gone, your daughter about to be married,—*you* creep out of your house at night at the bidding of a boy who has made your old nerves stir with a piano jingle. You poor, ridiculous fool!"

With two quick, indrawn breaths the hard lines suddenly softened in her face and she sobbed as she sat there, the almost tearless sobs of middle age. It was the merest dribble of a passion which she felt for the musician. She had never suspected its possibility until to-night. His airy, mocking grace fed some starved æsthetic sense in her. Unknown to herself he expressed in his life and art a certain freedom, lightness, elation, which she had missed. The occasional call of some hunger in her had risen consciously before at the sight of passionate feeling in others. Perhaps Barbara's happiness had roused the vague restlessness always present in her mother's unfulfilled life into this expression to-night, for we are strange beings, working upon each other in more ways than we know. Perhaps the vision of a satisfying love had moved the deeps of this other heart into futile movement, as the Great Spring in Boston, choked with stones beneath the feet of hurrying business men, moistens the ground above it when the April floods are sweeping the rivers of

New England to the sea. Mrs. Temple had no remembrance of the failure of the young man to appear. She recalled it next morning when she wrote the note discontinuing her lessons.

Corenzio soon exhausted the subject of his irresistible charm and Mrs. Temple's infatuation. His pleasure in mischief was brief like the naughtiness of a child. Before many minutes he was hurrying his companion along through the crooked streets, at the quick, light gait which was natural to him when his brain was active, talking of the plans for his annual concert. All at once they stopped before a blistered green door which he unlocked and they both went in.

The young man lived in the small house in which he had been born and whose shelter all the rest of his race had left for the gold fields or the grave. He had stayed there with his one servant in preference to taking bachelor apartments in a newer section of the town, partly because he had the artist's dread of a change of environment and partly because he meant to alter his outward life radically if at all. "A great leap, Dicky," he once said, "is dazzling, is picturesque, but climbing is caddish."

The room into which they turned from the hall was low in the walls, with a wide fireplace where a log smouldered. The moon shone out suddenly as they entered and streamed a flood of radiance through the two windows from which the shades

were drawn. The light fell across the piano, upon which, and upon the floor beside it, sheets of music were scattered. A violoncello stood in the corner near by, a pillow covered with red cloth lay upon the rug before the fire with the print of the young owner's head still fresh in it, and a broken-backed novel face down beside it.

Corenzio walked to the window. "Beautiful!" he exclaimed aloud. He stood with his hands on the sill, gazing. "Beautiful!" he said again, and drew a long breath.

When he turned away he was looking down at the piano. He touched the white keys softly, uncertainly. Mystery was in the involved chords, the tumbling sevenths, worn, groping, fragments of old hymns, cries like awe-stricken prayers, then in a while the grand sweep of human longing, eager, searching, passionate, straining at its bonds.

The mood intoxicated him. His breath came short, his eyes bright and lifted were following the notes. In this the sounds were madly racing through his surroundings, the moonlight on his face showed in it a pale splendor of which he was conscious, though the full, sensuous body, relaxed and parted, under no control of the will, seemed at variance with the ideal beauty of the head and eyes. The boy Adams sat watching him, listening for the first time in their acquaintance unmoved. The music was crowding the little

room with ecstasy, but young Adams never raised his eyes from the flying fingers whose mere mechanical skill was wonderful.

A cloud dimmed one side of the moon, crept across the disk. A pathetic chord crashed suddenly and Corenzio rose. He drew a hard breath; his face was wet with tears. Adams stood and the musician rested one hand upon his shoulder as they walked the length of the room together toward its shadowy end.

Corenzio was moving quickly, as though he needed relief in action. He struck with great force some heavy and unexpected obstacle, staggered and nearly fell. When he recovered his balance he limped across the room with a shower of curses and lighted a lamp.

"I told her!" he cried in a shrill and broken voice. "I said that old chair was to go to the attic to-day. She did it on purpose! Recommended to me as faithful and good-natured! Good-natured! Told me it was too heavy for her to lift, the lazy idiot, and then left it there! My old Jane never complained of lifting that nor anything else. Why need she break down and leave me to be treated like a dog! O, I'll get even with her in the morning. I wish I had her here now!"

"It is heavy," remarked Adams. "Try it."

"Try it? Good Lord, did you ever know me to lift a chair? Is a musician to have no regard for his hands at all? No, sir, I pay that woman to lift

things and do it she shall if she keeps her place. I shall be lame for a week. I struck the sharpest point of the rocker, of course. Things arrange themselves so for me. I've always noticed that."

"I'm sorry. Can I do anything? It'll be all right in the morning. Well, I must go. I won't forget about the cigars. Good-night."

Corenzio limped with him to the door to finish his complaints. He stopped before the offending article when he went back and scowled at it blackly. It was a wide chair, as if intended for a large man, and its mahogany frame though strong was not massive. The back formed of two separated bands of wood, the stuffed seat covered with threadbare crimson velvet. It had been given to his father by the old clergyman, when the parish had presented him with a new one.

Corenzio lifted his unhurt foot and tried to tilt the chair by placing it under the seat. Finding he could not, he carefully tipped it to one side with both hands. It was heavy. He whistled a few notes, walked to the piano, tried them, and jotted them down on a sheet of music paper in pencil. Then he took the lamp away after another glance at the chair and returned with a little hammer and chisel. He pried up the cushion. It was of hair and very light. He examined the wooden rest below it. He saw at once that the one piece of wood composing the top was a perfect parallelogram not fitted about the legs. He inserted the chisel, struck it with the

hammer and in an instant with this leverage had lifted the cover, for such it was.

He dropped the tools and knelt upon the floor. The space was stuffed with newspapers rolled into tight balls and he impatiently pulled them out. Three were not mere paper but were wrappers for something else. The enclosures were very heavy.

He rose, tiptoed to the door and locked it. With shaking fingers he tore one of the papers away.

A bag of thick canvas tied tightly came to view. When he had cut the string he poured the contents upon the floor.

It could only be the lost gold. He had not a moment's doubt about that from the first. He counted it piece by piece from the three bags, the dingy coins that seemed to have been dimmed by their connection with temptation as well as by the grime and sweat of their earning. It was the very sum his father had named in the note he had left recording his deposit with the Reverend Amos Sumner.

Corenzio pushed the piles of gold together into one heap with a nerveless hand. Then that old man gave it back when it was demanded. The money paid since had never been owed. He felt dull and could not think collectedly. Having grasped one idea his mind flitted from it at once upon something else.

A paper which had been in one of the bags had fallen out with the gold. He unfolded and read the few lines written upon it; the ink had faded to



a pale brown. In one handwriting were the words: *Received of Amos Sumner \$3,800.61*, and beneath them the signature in another hand, *Antonio Corenzio*, with the date, *September 20, 1830*. The old minister had forgotten to take his receipt away.

Then those two could be married at once. The payments might have prevented it for a year more. He pressed both hands to his forehead tightly and seemed to think better. He could not return what had been paid without using some of this. He had treated himself to a few luxuries needed by his sedentary life, a saddle horse, a riding dress; he had bought his new piano, his 'cello and dressing case, but more important still he had purchased a tract of land just beyond the town limits which would be very valuable in a few years if he could hold it. Without conscious intention he gathered up the pieces and filled the bags one by one.

When he rose with them in his hands he unlocked a long drawer of the desk in one corner, pushed them into it with a gesture of repugnance and turned the key. Was Alden Sumner to have all the good things of this earth, honors, strength, an old name and Barbara Temple? Men had to take justice into their own hands sometimes since the Powers above did not. With irritable haste he collected the mass of newspapers and tossed them into the fireplace, fitted the cover into the seat and crammed down the cushion upon it.

He picked up the faded receipt again and stood

with it open in his hand, looking at the words so long that they seemed to mean nothing. He walked mechanically across the room as the newspapers blazed up suddenly in the fireplace, and he threw the scrap of paper in.

By a deliberate choice to take the evil before the good is a serious responsibility, since it lessens the sum of spiritual life in the world. This man had turned his back upon the sun, and thenceforth he saw all things in the shadow of his own heart.

## XV

### A TRAVELER RETURNS

"I WISH it were not business, papa, for I would go with you," Barbara said.

Temple did not answer her until he had reached the flagged pathway. Then feeling her presence still waiting in the doorway, he muttered, "Business, business," and without looking back turned into the street.

His daughter stood a moment more, her eyes following his retreating figure. The joy of spring, the wistfulness of spring had come, and was filling the misty blue of the afternoon. "What is the matter, mamma?" she asked a moment later.

"You make me start, Barbara, you are so abrupt," murmured her mother, lifting the head bent over her sewing. "A quiet manner is always so attractive in young girls. I wish,— Matter with whom?"

"I'm sorry, mamma. With papa, I mean."

"How should I know more than you?" said Mrs. Temple, turning a corner deftly in her hemstitching, "what did he say?"

"O, it wasn't so much anything he said. He isn't like himself in a hundred ways lately. When I spoke of the wedding just now he looked dazed;

then he said, 'Wedding? What wedding?' and after I told him that of course he knew all about it and had approved it, and mentioned the day, he said, 'O, nonsense, child; nonsense! Don't talk of it.' He seems not to have it on his mind at all."

"He gets tired at the office, I suppose," her mother answered, "he does not sleep very well."

"Doesn't sleep!" exclaimed Barbara, who was still standing; "he overslept twice last week, don't you remember? And we waited breakfast for him."

"Yes," replied her mother after a little pause, "so he did, to be sure." The furrow between her eyes deepened. She did not mention to her daughter her suspicion that on both occasions the sleep had not been a natural one. It was new to her to have any worry about her husband's health.

"I've noticed his appetite is not good," Barbara continued. "Don't you remember he said at dinner yesterday, 'Roast lamb is a staple with us, isn't it?' when we hadn't had it before for a week. I spoke to Alden about that, and he suggested that papa was still fretting about that wine lost from the *Flight*,—detestable name, and no good ever came of it! That affair did take hold upon him unaccountably. You and I remarked it, and Alden says it seemed to wither him about the edges. Have you noticed how he goes down the steps lately? It gives me a lump in my throat to see his shoulders. They look old."

"Constant dread of loss with valuable cargoes is

a strain upon a man, I imagine," replied her mother with a touch of reproof in her voice which parried any emotional turn the conversation might possibly take; "it means more to the bread-winner in a family than to a careless young girl of course. Where did he say he was going?"

"To the office. Winslow Brothers' *Sea Queen* is just in, and I offered to walk to the wharf with him, but he didn't want me." And Barbara, who was not quite a careless young girl, turned away for her work and sat down by her mother. The two women stitched for some time in silence. Barbara finished basting a hem, took a deep breath, and entered upon the long monotony of its sewing. "I suppose," she suggested, "that when any one is going away from home she always thinks over the old days, doesn't she?"

"One is apt to, I think," her mother answered.

"They've been coming up to me lately, night and day," Barbara bent lower over her seam as she spoke; "things I had forgotten,—kind little things that you and papa did for me, and that Robert did, too, when I was a child." An electric thrill seemed to go through the room at the mention of this name, so long avoided and unspoken.

Barbara waited to see how her experiment of speaking of this lost member of the family would be received. To her surprise her mother replied with but slight hesitation, "Yes: what kind of things?"

"Do you remember the time I followed a hurdy-gurdy until I was lost? I wasn't afraid at all until I saw you run toward me into the road without your bonnet. That made me cry. And Robert built my boat for me. He took his whole vacation for it, you know, and he painted it."

"Yes, I remember."

"Mamma, I want to ask you something."

After a perceptible pause Mrs. Temple said, "Well?"

"Was Robert really bad, mamma, or was he only a mischievous boy, and a man who hated conventionalities, and would have his own way? I think I ought to know."

Her mother's needle snapped, and she rose to throw the pieces among the embers on the hearth. "I never knew him well," she said, when she had returned, selected a new one and threaded it. "He was a peculiar child, violent and wilful. I was very young when I was married."

"Yes, mamma."

"And my grandmother, your great-grandmother Dale, was an unusually wise woman. She had brought me up. She thought it was beyond me to attempt to manage him, so we,—so he was sent to school. It was the best school in the state, people said."

"But, mamma," began Barbara with some hesitation, "you had been a school-teacher yourself. Was he so impossible to influence at his age?"

"Your great-grandmother believed so. She was a woman of very strong character. She said he seemed to have no soul."

"Poor child! At five years old," murmured her daughter.

Mrs. Temple, with needle set, looked up at the bent head. "It sounds but a lame excuse to you, I can see," she said in a constrained voice. "If I had been older, if I had lived in this advanced age, I might have tried ——"

"O, mamma, don't think I mean to—to ——"

"I might have tried. I acknowledge it. I do not need my daughter to remind me of it. I have thought about it. I am not at all sure it would have made the least difference in his career, but I think now it was my duty. I did not see it so then, but as one gets older,—as one sees in one's self the possibilities of doing—of doing—as one gets older ——"

"Mamma," remonstrated Barbara, "don't mind what I said, don't! I am so ignorant of the circumstances ——"

"One sees how things happen—one understands ——"

Barbara looked at her mother in sheer wonder, at the dull pink in her cheeks, the strained contraction of her eyes, fixed in her unusual effort at expression.

"One understands——" Mrs. Temple began again, pushing the needle point through and through the linen in her hands.

"You are so gentle, mamma, you never could have been unkind," the daughter urged.

"I am not gentle." Mrs. Temple rose as she spoke and swiftly left the room. The girl stood staring at the door, bewildered, but after a few instants' indecision went back to her seat. When Mrs. Temple returned she appeared much as usual. Barbara placed her footstool and kissed her on the cheek.

"It is later than I thought," the elder woman said, taking up her work, "but the days are growing long." Her face was pale and composed, but her thread jerked quickly as she sewed.

Barbara, without glancing at them, noted the tense fingers, and talked of plain household matters. In all her days now the glad and the sorry mingled in about equal proportions. She and Alden had been prepared for more opposition than they were called upon to face when their plan was laid before the members of both families, for the general threw the whole weight of his influence in their favor, and Temple had acquiesced without a struggle, to the surprise of every one, agreeing with all that was urged in behalf of the scheme, and seeming to accept all of his daughter's premises.

The mother said, "Your sewing cannot be done in that time." While evidently unconvinced by Barbara's reasons why endurance and not variety was the quality needed in her outfit, she yet gave a grave consent to the marriage. The girl had put an



arm around her mother's neck, and with her cheek against hers had said, "You don't mind, mamma? You don't mind too much?" And Mrs. Temple had answered, "There, there!" patting the daughter's shoulder as she spoke, and gently freeing herself with that slight recoil of shame at family demonstration which was habitual to her. As the days went by she had, until to-day, met her daughter's eyes with that dumb smile behind which so much repressed affection lay in bonds.

The girl had been accustomed to a less strenuous companionship with her easy-going father, and it was new and puzzling to find him unresponsive for the first time in her life.

Most of the sick sailors had recovered from the effects of their experience with the pirates, and two months after their adventure the *Flight*, like a broken life, crept home. The story of the seizure of a part of the cargo, and the narrow escape of the crew, was told at every corner of the streets, but Robert Temple's name was never coupled with it. Through the loyalty of an old sailor the family honor had never been bandied from mouth to mouth among the gossips on the wharves.

Meanwhile on this spring afternoon as Barbara Temple sewed her seam the threads of fate were spinning. Mammy was walking slowly from the wharf to her old home. She set one clumsy foot down heavily after the other, and assisted her momentum by swinging slightly the bundle she carried

in one hand. The distance as we know was not great. Few idlers were about the doorways and she saw no one whom she knew. As though she had only been away over night she went up the dingy stairs, fitted a key into the lock of her old rooms at their head, and opened the door.

The room was in a confusion which was unlike her favorite style of disorder. A man's coats, boots and other belongings were scattered upon the floor and flung across every wooden chair. The cot bed in one corner had been untouched since its owner left it. The room was only incidentally a sleeping apartment in mammy's reign. It had been eminently a kitchen. Now a water kettle humming dully over the coal fire low in the stove, and one saucepan on the floor near by seemed to hint at simplicity, perhaps enforced simplicity, of taste in cookery. Mammy took up a coat and dropped it.

"Israel," she said aloud. She went into the small bedroom leading from the kitchen, in which she found a similar scene, uncomplicated by the presence of a stove. She lifted an old hat and dropped it. A slow triumph burned in her dejected eyes. "'Dolphus," she whispered.

When these two members of the family returned, preparations for corn-cake and flapjacks were going forward.

"Yas, here I be, sho's yo' born. What youse standin' dere gawkin' at? Git to work, you lazy nigger, an' fetch some wood from somewheres.

Wal, 'Dolphus, you don' *pretty* much dese days. Reckon she didn' feed ye up good after all youse scuttlin' away from yo' own wife for her an' stealin' dem pants."

"Where you been, Venus, darlin'?" inquired Adolphus in the soft voice he kept for customers.

"Don' bodder where I been. P'raps gallivantin' like youse. Han' me ober a couple dem dere kindlin's, Israel. Now fly roun', bofe of yer, an' wash up fo' dem flapjacks come aboard or you don' git none, tell yer!"

At eight o'clock when the long May twilight was turning to dusk, when her bread was set to rise and her rooms were put in order, Venus, who had acquired habits of freedom, thumped down the stairs and out of the house, deigning no explanation in answer to the honeyed questions of husband and son sitting in two dark lumps on the doorstep.

"Reckon it'll be a year dis time," remarked Adolphus, dropping back into the place from which he had obsequiously risen to let his wife pass. "What flapjacks! O, um! Ah!" Adolphus slowly drew in his lips with remembered pleasure, watching the fat figure disappear in the gloom down the street.

"She's skedaddled," replied the pessimistic Israel. "Skedaddled agin. I knowed sich corn-cakes couldn' las'."

Venus went more and more slowly after she left

her own neighborhood and made her way through old but still respectable streets, until she stopped before the little brown gate of General Sumner's house. She glanced furtively at the windows, then softly pushed the gate open and hurried past them to the rear door. Locker was out, the woman who assisted him during the day had gone home, Alden was at the Temples', and her repeated faint knocks finally roused only the general in the sitting-room. He rose, and striding through the two rooms between, suddenly opened the door. Tray dashed past him and with breathless, joyful barks threw himself upon a large something at the foot of the steps. The general peered into the dusk which seemed to have gathered thickly into one spot, as clouds sometimes form into big and fantastic human shapes.

"Who is it?" he asked sharply as if calling for a countersign.

"It's me, mahsa."

"Who are you?"

"Venus, mahsa."

The general stood still an instant and the dog still leaped upon her.

"Come in," he said, and after they had reached the sitting-room, "Sit down," he added as abruptly.

After she had obeyed, Tray put his forepaws on her knee and barked shortly twice, then clumsily whirled about several times and barked again.

"Leave the room, sir!" roared the general, and

the dog crept out of the door. He stood just beyond the threshold uttering quivering, low whines, and the soldier crossed the floor and closed the door. He paused in front of Venus on his way back, a terrific figure with gray eyebrows beetling above fierce eyes and grim mouth.

"Where have you been?" he demanded.

The black face looked up like that of a submissive animal. "With Miss Susie, mahsa."

The severity of the general's look altered to a keen scrutiny. "She's mad," he said as though to a third person in the room.

"No, mahsa," ventured Venus.

"Look me in the eye. Collect yourself. Where—have—you been these last six months?"

"I been with Miss Susie, mahsa."

"Miss Susie is not living," explained the general with slow sternness. "You were her old nurse. I am her father. Have you nobody but Israel to take care of you?"

"I done jes' come home," faltered Venus. "I been with Miss Susie, mahsa."

"Don't say that to me again!" thundered the general.

"No, mahsa." She lifted herself heavily to her feet as if to go.

"Sit down. You say you have just come home. Where were you?"

"On de *Sea Queen*, mahsa. An' missy,—O!" She stopped short.

"The *Sea Queen!*" exclaimed the general.  
"The *Sea Queen* landed to-day."

"Yes, mahsa."

"What has that to do with her? She died two years and six months ago. Do you hear? Do you understand?"

Venus crouching in her chair looked up once at the face just above her. "No, mahsa," she whispered, "no, mahsa. Six weeks ago."

The general grasped her shoulder with a grip of steel. "Stand up! Look me in the eyes. The *Sea Queen*— Now tell me, if you can, that my daughter, *my daughter*, was on board the *Sea Queen!*"

"No, mahsa. In Naples. In Naples, mahsa. O, she's dead! Good Lord! O, honey! Li'l missy!"

"Stop! No whimpering. What was it you said? Say it again. I couldn't hear."

She would have sunk to the floor but his iron grasp held her up.

"I was with missy," she said helplessly.

"No crying, I tell you! Answer me this, how came she there?"

"De men—dey carry off Mahsa Robert ——"

"Robert!"

"Mahsa Robert Temple. Yes, mahsa.

"Where was he? I'll hear this crazy rubbish to the end. Where was he?"

"With me an' missy, on de island. Didn' nobody nebber tell youse dat, mansa? O! O! O!"

The general's heavy hand pushed her down upon the chair. He stood before her, his voice forced and stern.

"Listen to me. My daughter and my friend Temple's son were drowned the same day, September twenty-sixth, two years ago. Can't you remember it, woman? Or are your wits clean gone?"

Venus huddled into a heap and with hands over her eyes answered in desperation, "Dey done got married. Dey done sail away. O, de good Lord sabe us! Hallelujah! Lord! Lord!"

The stillness that followed lasted so long that Venus ventured upon a half smothered sob. No one checked it, and the relief it gave was so great that she slipped to the floor and cried aloud. When tears failed she mopped her face with her apron and observing that the general stood in the same spot but with eyes turned away, she managed to get upon her feet and into the chair again.

"Mahsa."

He made a motion with his hand for her to go on.

"He broke de ropes, snap!"

"Who?" The general's voice seemed to come from miles away.

"Why, Mahsa Robert, 'co'se. Reckon youse forgot I tole yer dat, mahsa," replied Venus, tolerant in her turn.

"Who bound him?"

"Dunno, mahsa. Sojers."

"Why?"

"Dunno, mahsa. Hadn' done noffin'."

Again the general motioned her to speak.

"Den de baby come. Den dey fetched us on de ship. Dat's all."

"The baby?" The general's lips formed the words but without sound.

"Didn' lse tole yer dat 'fore, mahsa? Couldn' 'a' forgot dat nohow."

Impatiently he moved his hand.

"Li'l gal, mahsa. Reckon he don' hear. *Li'l gal*, mahsa. 'Peared like it done favor Miss Susie 'bout de mouf."

"Where?"

"'Bout de mouf, mahsa."

"Where is she, woman? Where is she?"

"Dunno. Done gone. Dunno, dunno," muttered Venus, rising from her seat after one look at his face.

"Think! Tell me! Tell me, I say." He seized her shoulder more fiercely than he knew, and collapsing under his hand she dropped a nerveless heap into the chair.

"Naples ——"

"Yes?"

"Dey done take her—— O!"

"Go on!"

"An' me, an' de baby ——"

"To Naples. Yes. What then? What then?"



"Den I wake up, an' missy she done gone. An' de baby ——"

"Where?"

"Dunno. Dead. I'se walk an' walk an' call 'missy!' De men done curse at me in de street. She done drown herself, an' de baby. Dey say dat an' done curse at me in de street. 'Cahn lib, cahn lib nohow,' missy done say. 'Cahn lib an' him gone, ——'"

"Was she ill? Suffering? Crazy? Tell it all for God's sake! Tell it all."

"She warn' nuffin' but skin an' bone, mahsa. Reckon her eyes was as nateral as youse be now, mahsa—more nateral 'n youse be. I done run 'bout de street an' call 'missy.' Den dey cotch me by de arm an' dey say, 'She's dead, you fool!' Den dey drag me by de arms, mahsa, an' done frow dis yere po' ole nigger down in de *Sea Queen*. Lord, dat's all. Lord," she gasped piteously, "don' know nuffin' mo'. Don', mahsa, 'clare to Gawd."

When she ventured to look up again she saw that he had walked to the window and that his terrible eyes were fixed upon that. Quietly Venus dragged herself to her feet and stole away toward the door. At its wooden barrier she stopped, not daring to go without his permission. He stood stiffly facing the darkening panes.

"Missy was allus afeard o' youse, mahsa," she faltered conciliatingly, after a long wait.

Some time after she had decided that he had not heard he answered, "Yes."

"She was mighty sweet on Mahsa Robert," softly feeling as she spoke for the latch of the door.

"Why did you leave her?"

At the swift, harsh words the black hand dropped.

"Lef' me, mahsa. Done lef' *me*."

"Was it at night?"

"Night, mahsa?"

"When she disappeared? At night?"

"Yes, mahsa. 'Pears like I done allus sleep like a log an' dat night——"

"Were you near the water?"

"Lord, yes, mahsa, as nigh as if youse was to——"

"Did she take anything with her? Anything with her?"

"De baby, yes, mahsa."

"Yes, and what else?"

"Nuffin' else. No hat, an' no cloak, an' no mammy. Done fit 'em good when dey drag me 'long. Done bite 'em hands an' kick 'em an' dey done say—dey—say——"

"What?"

"Dey 'clare fo' Gawd dey done find her——"

"Find?"

"In de water—— O!" Something had fallen from the wide window-seat and crashed in the darkness on the floor. "Li'l' missy's vase, mahsa! De roses' vase——"

"Go!" She jerked the door wide and hurried across the threshold. "Venus!"

"Yes, yes, mahsa."

"Thank you."

"T'ank you, t'ank you, mahsa. Lemme pick up dem dere ——"

"Go! Go!"

At the street door Tray leaped from a black corner, barking loudly, blocking her retreat. In nervous exasperation she snatched him up, and noiselessly opening the sitting-room door again, she thrust him inside. In one quick glance she saw the tall figure on its knees before the window, laying the bits of broken china side by side.

## XVI

### THE HEART OF A TEMPTATION

THE next morning Phineas Temple sat in his office with a map of the Mediterranean spread out before him and the point of his pencil moving along Italian, Greek and Turkish coastlines. He missed the goad of that younger mind after which he had scrambled in these latter years as it darted to brilliant possibilities, if also to impracticable ventures. Of late he had relied on his daughter for the sketch of many a voyage and upon paper seas they had traveled together over half the world. Without her he worked slowly through the details of figs and raisins, marble and rags, a deflection to St. Petersburg with oil, a return to Gallipoli, Leghorn, Genoa, for the homeward cargo. One of his oaken ships was in the Indies, loading with coffee for Amsterdam, one would land next day with pepper from Sumatra, another was selling gunpowder in Pernambuco to make room for hides.

Coasting about Africa and the stray Azores, skimming about the islands of the Indian Ocean, familiar with savage Patagonia, oriental Bombay, far China and Japan, the ships of New England went and came in the splendor of a commercial supremacy she was so soon to lose. They seemed to steep the seaports in the atmosphere of distant lands, for any

morning one might awake to find the air filled with the odors of spice and perfumes from the east and the wharves piled with silks and ivories and dyes, fruits, wines and camphor wood.

Those were the days of individuality in business, when the stamp of a man's personal character was upon his fortune, and even after his descendants had utterly spent this image of their ancestor, traces of him flitted through the family. The race was not especially adaptable, having English sturdiness at the roots, but it is evident that an inherited weariness, like that of Phineas Temple, is a soil in which daintiness would easily sprout.

A boy of sixteen sat at a desk in one corner of the office, busily writing. He was the son of a man far richer than Temple, who had considered the path along which exigency had lashed him toward success, had seen it to be good, and so had thrust his heir into it. The boy swept and dusted the offices at dawn every morning. His employer for several weeks had not worked in his private office without having one of the clerks in the room, and ten days ago a place had been arranged there in which this boy was permanently to stay. Many a time, the older man, leaning back a moment in his chair for rest, looked across at the patient brown head whose hair made one curve toward the ear on its smooth way to his neck, and said to himself that a God of justice could not blame men who, through no fault of theirs, had been given sons unlike this.

In the private office the two occupants this morning as usual worked in silence. At every point on the map before him Temple was reminded of his daughter. He could see her hand and wrist moving across the waters of the Mediterranean and obscuring the whole of Northern Africa.

A loud rap at the door brought the merchant to his feet; the boy only looked up. The door was thrown wide immediately after the ceremony of knocking and General Sumner stood in the entrance. His great height and the ferocity of his eyes, his frown, his bristling white moustache, but, more than all, some concentrated emotion in the man seemed to exhaust the air before him.

"Come in, John," said Temple, seating himself with apparent relief after seeing his visitor. "What's the news?"

Phineas Temple was not a courageous man, but with the instinct of the timid, he had discovered early in his school days that John Sumner was not to be classed among the truly dangerous, while the general himself had all his life been secretly grateful and attached to those who said that his manner was only his way, and were not afraid of him. He stood an instant glaring upon the boy at the desk before he accepted the invitation.

As soon as he strode forward a clerk appeared upon the threshold he had left, holding a small, roughly-made box in his hand.

"What is it, Ames?" asked the merchant sharply.

"I don't know, sir. It is addressed to you personally."

"Where did it come from?"

"The *Sea Queen*, sir."

"Let's see it."

He eyed it doubtfully through his glasses; the handwriting was unfamiliar to him, but the address was perfect.

"Take it out and draw the nails, then bring it here."

He watched it out of the room.

"Gunpowder, I dare say," he muttered. "How are you, John? Sit down."

The general had been pacing to and fro since he came in and paid no attention to the request.

"You're nervous, John. Aren't you well?" inquired Temple, to whom restlessness was always irritating.

"Didn't sleep. Old pain in my arm. Got it yet," growled the general, tramping more vigorously than ever.

Temple took a folded paper from his pocket, carefully opened it and extracting two brown pills held them out in the palm of his hand.

"What confounded stuff is it?" asked the general, stopping an instant.

"Only a little morphine. Go home and try them."

"No, sir!" The general resumed his walk. "I deserve all I get and I'll face it awake. I want to





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“speak to you,” and he made a fierce motion with his head toward the unconscious youth.

“Enoch, take your books into the outer office and don't come back till I send for you.”

“Yes, sir.”

The boy gathered his belongings with incredible speed and left the room, passing the other clerk returning with the box.

“Shut the door,” and when this was done and he and the general were alone Temple cautiously lifted the loose lid and pulled out a hard wad of Italian newspaper used as padding. The general took no heed until a smothered exclamation of anger and terror made him pause.

He turned to see his friend drop a scrap of paper he was reading and fling a man's leather belt fringed deeply with foxtails into an open closet behind him, slam and bolt the door. He shook his hand violently two or three times as if the touch of the fur still clung to it, his face white, his mouth working. Then he hastily unlocked an old cabinet near him, took out a squat, dark bottle, poured a glass nearly full of the contents and with an instinctive but evidently unconscious motion toward his friend, drank it off.

“Cursed impudence,” he whispered, locking the cabinet. He jerked his chair about and sat down. “I said cursed impudence! Cursed impudence.”

The general had watched him in some surprise. Temple was the first to recover himself.

"Sit down, John. You had something to say. Now, what is it?"

"Phin," the general stood like a column before his seated companion, "my little girl, Susie, has been alive all these years."

"Susie!" repeated Temple, "alive!"

"No, not now. But six weeks ago she was living."

"Where?" asked Temple. "Where?"

"On an island in the Mediterranean. With Robert. With your son."

A look of mortal sickness came into Temple's uplifted eyes, his face was gray.

"Did you know he was not dead?" demanded the general, striding forward until he stood over him. "Did you know?"

"Yes."

"Tell me! Did you know *she* was there?"

"No! No!"

"How long have you known he was alive?"

"Since—September."

The general turned abruptly from him to tramp the floor again. Muttered exclamations, his daughter's name, the name of his Creator, mingled in crude prayers and tenderness. He stopped abruptly beside the table.

"Her old nurse told me last night," he said harshly. "She was with them. Did you know they were on Lampedusa?"

"Yes." Temple was writing the letter R. all

over the sheet before him. "I knew he was there. In all that—has happened, I swear to you, John, I never knew about Susie."

"They were man and wife," the general asserted hoarsely. "I have just seen the parson's certificate. She is dead. Where is he?"

Temple turned away his head. The pencil went on moving in faint scratches.

"Where?" repeated the general.

Temple threw the pencil down and drew in a long breath.

"Sit down, John. I want to talk to you. Sit down, do, and let's have done with it. Is that door shut? Those cursed boys are always leaving it open."

He pulled himself up from his chair, walked to the closed door and sharply turned the key. The general seated himself stiffly on the edge of a chair as the merchant resumed his place.

"Go on," said the soldier.

"You remember Robert, what a trial he was, always running away from school or building fires in woods or defying his teachers; and yet I wanted that boy to turn out well, like other fathers."

"Yes, yes."

"Well, he failed me. You know that, John, as well as I do. At last we believed he was drowned. You remember that evening affair at the house last September? He turned up then."

"What did he want?"

"O, money, money, of course; money."

"Susie was with him here."

"No, no, she wasn't. We were alone on the balcony. I said he should not have it."

"What did he want it for?"

"The devil only knows. He began to tell me some yarn, but I didn't listen to it. I told him to come home and settle down and behave himself. He threatened to fling me over the balcony."

"He wouldn't have dared."

"He would dare anything. I gave him the money."

"To spare the family ——"

"Certainly, to spare the family. I heard no more of him until Minns,—Jacob Minns,—your Locker's friend,—you remember him ——"

"I don't know. Go on."

"This was after the *Flight* was boarded and sacked by robbers. Minns was lying sick in a berth. He saw their captain. He heard him speak. He watched him carry off poor old Dane to his death—no one has ever seen him since. John, the captain was Robert."

"Robert!"

"Minns held his tongue—he knew I would pay him,—a third of the cargo belonged to Greene and Weld.—He came to me and told me that the man who sacked my ship and poisoned my crew was my own son!"

"And Susie was his wife. Is there anything more?"

"Yes." He pushed back his chair,—he had been emphasizing his last points by occasionally gripping his friend's arm,—rose and walked across the floor, came back to his chair and dropped into it. "Yes. He was betrayed by one of his own men, taken and tried as a pirate." He spoke thickly.

"When?" asked the general shortly.

"The authorities would give him up for a ransom as he was an alien. The consul came to me."

"Lately?"

"It was seventy-five thousand dollars. I refused."

The general's eyes were fixed on his face but he asked no more questions.

"That was on the twenty-sixth of March. He told me—the consul told me, when—what the sentence would be when the ship went back."

"Yes."

"Last Friday, at twelve o'clock, noon, he was hanged at Naples."

Upon the silence that followed, the roar of myriad waves of sound seemed to break and fill the room, eager murmurs of human life, frettings of the aimless sea, all mingled together like the useless clamor that surges across the dead.

It oppressed Temple. He swept a glance upward at his companion's face without changing his attitude. The general's look was stern, but there was

not the horror in it he had feared. He stretched a timid hand out and moved it slowly toward him.

"John ——"

No answer.

"John, you blame me! You think I did wrong."

"No! No!" The voice was deep, like the boom of breakers pounding against stone. "He broke the law. The penalty was death. You had no right to remit that punishment because he was your flesh and blood. Phineas—you are a strong man—a stronger man than I. I thank the Lord God Almighty who has spared me such a test."

With a low exclamation of gratitude Temple tried to seize his friend's hand, but the general had risen hastily and was pacing the floor.

"It's a relief, John, to hear you say that," Temple fell in with his step and they walked to and fro together. "I felt sure you would stand by me. I've had to keep it to myself and I've needed some one to tell me I was right. The thing has nearly driven me mad."

He straightened his shoulders and drew a long breath.

"I've sometimes wondered, in these last weeks and months, when this cursed subject would not let me rest, whether I had ever failed in my duty toward that boy. But I can't see that I did, anywhere. I sent him to the best school, and I had a right to expect that his teachers would instil civilized and Christian ideas into him. That was partly

what they were paid for doing. But he was as wild as a hawk from the hour he was born. Nothing would have made any difference."

He waited for some word of corroboration but the general stalked back and forth in silence.

"I did it for my wife and daughter. They ought not to be deprived of their comforts so as to set loose upon us all a wife like his, outlawed, disgraced, worthless."

As the general still made no answer, Temple studied his face during one length of the room, then left him to unlock the cabinet in which he had taken the glass of spirits. He brought out a box of cigars and opened it. "Have one, John," he said in the gloomy tone befitting the occasion and his friend's face. "New brand."

The general gave a slight but peremptory negative by a motion of his head without looking up.

"You say I did right!" Temple said querulously, standing with the rejected cigars in his hand. "I meant right. When a man does that why should the thing cripple him for life? It isn't fair! I'm not the man I was before. Something seems to have gone out of me. It isn't just."

The general stood still, grasping the back of his chair with his large, lean hand. He moistened his lips as if speech were difficult.

"Discipline must be preserved. He broke the law of nations," he said slowly. "You were right, but it was a damnable thing you had to do!"



He relaxed his stiffened grip of the chair and rested his arm along the back instead.

"I was thinking of my little girl. I would have been marched out to be shot for her, and she was afraid of me. Pirate, outlaw as he was she was not afraid of him. She loved him to the end. Her last words to her nurse that night were that she could not live without him. He must have been kind to her, kinder than I was."

"He showed no kindness to me, his own father!" exclaimed Temple. "He threatened my very life. O, what's the use of talking about it! It's done. Good or bad, it's over. I know you were fond of Susie, just as I am of my only girl. But I'm giving her up. Practically, I've lost her."

The general lifted his eyes and looked at him.

"She is going in honor among her friends," he said slowly, "in honor and happiness; not stealing out from her home in disobedience and fear. You have allowed a guilty man to take his punishment; you haven't sent a frightened girl to her death. You haven't my reproach."

"Well, of course," admitted Temple vaguely. "But you've had two years since. In all that time you've never expected to see her again. My troubles are fresh. They give me no peace. For Heaven's sake, John, let's drop the whole subject!"

He irritably pushed away the articles before him on the table, sending a shower of pencils, rulers and papers, upon the floor. The general's eyes me-

chanically followed them there and turned back to Temple who had taken out two cigars, was measuring their lengths and examining the ends.

Some sense of incongruity forced itself upon General Sumner, producing the effect of distance. He watched his friend steadily as if to bring his face into the old focus. It was one, which to judge by the relative position of the features, had been a smaller face than it was now, and showed little havoc except such as the erosion of sixty years must work upon the flesh. The few deep furrows characteristic of the general's face were connected this morning by myriads of fainter new ones. He was a man who recognized black and white but had a contempt for the shades of gray.

Dimly through Temple's tired mind his friend's words were echoing, "You are a strong man, stronger than I. You did right. You had no choice," and he was quieting himself with them. Perhaps, after all, heroism in its essence was really this; perhaps the heart of it was always some terror, some almost involuntary and desperate act, some personal need.

And so the heights of goodness became to him phantasma.

Temple laid one of the two cigars upon the desk beside the general and lighted his own.

"No, sir!" shouted the veteran suddenly. "No, sir!"

Temple drew back his gift with a start at the ex-

plosive word but something about the exclamation seemed to refer it to other sources than cigars and he unobtrusively pushed it forward again.

"I shall make a new will to-morrow," he said, sliding slowly into his chair. "I want to tell you in confidence, John, that I'm not as rich as I'm thought to be. I haven't let it be known, but I lost fifty thousand dollars through Wales & Clinton's failure. Curse them, I wish they were both at hard labor in the mines! One speculated, the other winked at it. Then look at what luck I had with my share of the *Flight's* cargo! If I had had to pay that ransom now, it would have crippled me. I want my wife and daughter to have enough, if anything happens to me."

The general took a step forward.

"Leave it all to your wife!" he said fiercely.

"Leave it all to her!"

Temple laughed as he flicked a bit of ash from his black sleeve.

"No, no, John, no, no, no. There's enough for two," he said.

"Let Alden take care of his wife! It's his work! It's his work."

Temple with eyes half blinded by the fragrant smoke took out the cigar again.

"Why, man, what is the matter with you? Anstice will have enough——"

"Give her all!"

Temple held the cigar with its little upcurling line

of smoke in his fingers, and really looked at his friend now. The tone was more than common gruffness. The rigid lines of the face were shaken and strained.

"Let the young make their way. Their fathers did. They don't need it. Give her all!"

Temple spoke slowly when he answered, "Then you think I did wrong."

"I don't." The general stood stiff and bristling, his words sharp as gun shots. "You were right. I respect it, sir. Call me a fool! Call me a drivelling, cranky, infernal fool, if you like! A broken-down fighter has his notions. He must be humored, sir."

"You won't have the money in your family. That's your notion, is it?" asked Temple deliberately.

"I'm any kind of an idiot you please. That's my notion. Yes."

Temple sat a long time flaccid in his chair, his arms nerveless, his dull eyes nearly hidden by their lids.

"There is no justice anywhere," he said at last monotonously, as if to himself. "What have I done? What has the little girl done? I have worked all my days, for what? I will leave it all to her mother, to charity, to any one who will take it. Barbara will never understand. She will despise her father. But what does it matter? What does anything matter in this failure of a world!"

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Before he had finished the general had dashed forward, grasped his limp hand and wrung it hard.

"I will see that she respects,—respects—" he began.

He stopped short, abruptly left him and pulled violently at the locked door. Temple rose and went after him.

"Your hat, John," he said gently. "You are forgetting it."

## XVII

### ANCHORAGE

ALDEN woke in the very early hours of the morning on his wedding day and lay a long time thinking without opening his eyes. Outside in the dark a stray whip-poor-will was monotonously calling its three notes like a voice of night itself.

All at once through his closed lids light seemed to strike. He opened his eyes. Some of the strangeness of that state we call sleep must have still lingered in his brain for he saw outside the window near his bed an island in the sea. Against a dull soft blue low in the sky the peaks of its mountains cut a jagged outline, the sharp ridges defined with the distinctness which only a clear air can give. It was a long and narrow island, for through the clefts formed by its valleys he could catch glimpses of the encircling sea, pale and quiet. Above the low blue in the sky a rose-pink flush fading into faint yellow still higher toward the zenith, lighted the scene. No beams of sun, no strong shadows, the whole land and sea and sky were bathed in the lustre of a less common world than this of dazzle and gloom. Silent as though no sound of earth had ever reached it, the island had the eerie picturesqueness of a thing grown in secret which the eyes of men would pro-

fane by merely seeing; a remote world, a land where thought flashed its own speech and the faltering tongue that would speak for it was excused; a place of aspiration and ideals. Alden closed his eyes and laid his head back on his pillow. The ache that accompanies such vision, we know not why, had come with this.

A quick light in a moment more pierced his thin eyelids and he looked again. The island and its sea were gone. A row of fir-trees perforated with sparse and broken growths, stood where it had been, the sun was flooding all the sky above them and the sea of mist had dried.

He lay a moment contemplating the bare framework of the vision, his mind growing keener for the subtleties of the half-dream, its blending of his coming joy with his past and present anxieties. The joy lapped all his senses in a delicious calm, the anxieties prodded him awake. He pulled himself out of bed, for he was still lame and stiff so that bath and dressing were weary work. When, after a long, happy evening with his beloved, he had been met on his return home by his father's voice from the dark sitting-room calling him to hear mammy's tale, the two men had entered into an exhaustive discussion of the situation and planned what should be done.

Definite information on every point connected with Susie's fate and Robert's whereabouts must be obtained with only the necessary delay. Of all that

he learned from Phineas Temple next day, save only the boarding of the *Flight*, the general never opened his lips, even to his son. In the course of the coming investigation Robert's end would perhaps be known to all men, but of his father's share in that result it was not for his old friend to speak.

Alden's duties kept him at home; the general was unfitted for the work, and Jacob Minns was fixed upon as the man. He it was whom Temple had mentioned as the sailor who recognized his employer's son yet kept the thing to himself. As he had done this once so could he do again, and he alone beside themselves knew the strange truth. Naples, too, was a familiar port to Minns, for many a time as the cargoes were unloaded and loaded on its wharves, had he moused about the Sicilian capital, noting it with his narrowed Yankee eyes.

Impatiently father and son waited while the *Europa*, to which he had been transferred from the *Flight*, collected her leisurely cargo for the Mediterranean. At last, to-day, she was to sail with lumber and hardware and close-mouthed Jacob Minns.

Alden, realizing that he would have no other time to himself that day, and wishing to impress upon his messenger certain small points which had newly occurred to him, rose thus early before any one was astir. "Happy the bride whom the sun shines on," he thought as he closed the street-door softly behind him, and looked up into the misty blue with a



wordless joy and gratitude and willing acceptance of all the future could bring to him, which in his ancestors would have been conscious prayer.

Clear in the stillness the bell in his grandfather's old church belfry struck five. No one was moving in the sunny old street, upon whose pavement the dew clung in beads. Dampness left from night soaked the soft air which blew against his face. He walked slowly, leaning upon his cane. As he neared the wharves there was something like bustle in the narrow lanes,—children flitting by on errands, women hurrying past with shawls held about their heads—all with the night silence upon their unready tongues. A straggling procession of pea-jacketed backs was setting toward the water, and as Alden followed them he saw Minns, just before he reached his house, emerge from the door, accompanied by a woman whom he identified as the recalcitrant Maria. Husband and wife turned at Alden's "Jacob!" but Mrs. Minns only acknowledged the lifted hat of the young officer by unceremoniously scuttling toward the water, leaving Minns to walk back and meet him.

"What's going on at the long wharf?" Alden called again, ahead of his limping steps.

"Adams & Fales' *My Pretty Jane* 's in," answered the tar, instinctively curving and raising his hand as though to shout through its hollowed palm. "Durned old tub," he added unaggressively as he came up. "*She's* got a brother shipped first mate

aboard her, so we looked spry to give him a hand. Wal, sir, nothin' new, be they?"

The men walked slowly, talking as they went, out upon the wharf into the full air. Before them lay the brig which had just anchored. The sea over which she had come in safety stretched in a defeated blue haze behind her, but the encompassment of nights and ocean seemed to be still clinging to her hull and dropping sails. As they stood a moment watching her, Maria Minns detached herself from the mass of restless movement about the gangway, and ran in awkward leaps up the wharf, her gaunt knees thrusting angles out in her thin skirts, her hands clutching at the air to help her speed. Even as he started toward her Jacob checked himself, and turned back to Alden.

"She was allus light on her feet," he said gravely and apologetically. "She ain't teched a drop. It ain't that. An' yet that there's a *ha'nt* look." The woman rushed by abreast of them and Minns stumped after her.

Alden, left alone, stood a while awaiting his possible return, looking away from the crowd and hurry at the landing-place to the masts and sails moving phantom-like beyond the black edge of the wharf. They seemed to melt into the mood of the young man who, on his wedding morning, saw clearly but one face to which the great sea, even for the moment the universe itself, was a background merely. There it was, smiling, satisfying, between

himself and the blue, and he stood still lest he should jar the image or cause its tints to fade.

Then something happened. The face was gone. His very breath left his body; his heart gave two slow, loud beats, then seemed to stop also. From the haze which Barbara had filled two other figures had formed suddenly and were walking toward him out of the sea. With an effort he closed his eyes. Behind their lids he saw again the island of illusion, the sea of mist in his half dream that morning, and he waited as he had then for these figments of spume to be struck by sun and change to water-sodden posts fixed to the wharf.

All else was real, now he was blind; the brig's chains rattled naturally, the curses exchanged between wharf-master and sailors had only the usual quality of imagination in them. He opened his eyes. The figures were there but farther away. Their eyes,—they had eyes,—were fixed upon him, apprehension, doubt and sorrow in them, as they retreated slowly toward the sea from which they came.

Alden dashed forward, but with a groan stopped short.

"Susie!" he called in a strong voice, "Susie! Come, come here! I am lame."

He limped onward before he ceased speaking.

"O, he knows me! And he's kind, Robert! He's kind!"

She crossed the space between them as a sea-

bird skims. She threw both thin arms round his neck as he held her close, bowing his head over hers in silence. All at once, in the midst of a shower of kisses on his cheek, Susie straightened herself, and Alden lifting his face met her eyes. He loosened his arm and walked toward his reluctant brother-in-law with outstretched hand. As the tall man before him shifted a small white something from his right arm to his left, to free his hand, Alden's amazement, which had taken on cordiality, now changed to stupefaction.

"It's the baby, of course," Susie explained in her nervous, shaken voice which yet held such familiar accents in it. "She is named for mother. I knew he'd be good to us, Robert. I told you I was sure of him. But how thin he is! And I'm so changed! But he knew me. Nobody else says anything. I don't see why I do all the talking except that I'm feeling queer and happy. You can take her if you want to, Alden. See, I'd hold her like this—so! Robert does it beautifully now, but I thought he would never learn."

Alden surprised himself quite as much as the two before him by a sudden and violent burst of laughter. It was a boy's uncontrollable mirth, so hearty, so kindly, that Susie's broken and astonished little echo at last mingled with it, and even Robert's rigid muscles yielded. A lion in a cage would have stood still and looked pleasant when Alden Sumner laughed.

"O, I don't mean it, dear!" he exclaimed before he had half done, "don't mind me, Robert! Ha! ha! ha! But the last I heard of you, on the *Flight*—you see,—and now you 'know how,' so 'beautifully' — Ha, ha, ha! There, you'll forgive me. It's only that I'm so glad, and on this day of all days."

Alden shook hands with Robert over again, and the laughter had brought tears to his eyes, as laughter will, so that he had to reach out for the little sister to be sure she was still there. Then he raised his hat. "Thank God!" he said simply, "now we'll all go home."

The driver of a passing carriage hastening toward the group about the vessel, not expecting a fare on this distant corner of the wharf, drew up at Lieutenant Sumner's nod, and watched him give his hand to a little lady in a foreign dress, while the man beside her, who must be some noted athlete, handed in a very small baby to her after she was seated, and saying he would walk turned away.

Susie had paused with one foot on the carriage step. "Father," she whispered.

"Glad," Alden answered, "most glad of all." When they were moving over the stony pavement neither spoke. Alden had again taken the child. The covering fell back from the small bare head as he lifted it, and they both looked at the sleeping face. A family likeness at the moment could be

strongly traced in brother and sister,—a resemblance in structure evident perhaps for the first time since the disguise of the flesh had worn thin.

“We only heard three weeks ago,” Alden began gravely, “our messenger sails to-day.”

“Hasn't mammy come back? She must have told you everything,” answered Susie swiftly.

“She told us you——”

“Ran away from her? So I did. I couldn't go home then I had so much to do. O, you don't know that yet, do you? And you think I ought to have written, Alden, don't you? I see it in your face. But I disobeyed him and I thought he would rather think I was drowned, as the stone said. Tell me the truth, Alden. Would you all feel easier if we were—gone?”

“If you knew all your silence has cost us, little sister, you wouldn't ask that.”

“O, did you care? I was the odd one in the family. Did you *all* care? But we have suffered, too. O, we've suffered, Alden.” She shivered in the hot sun.

Alden had turned to speak, but he only looked a moment at the quivering little face, so thin and colorless as to be hardly recognizable, the eyes in it seeming to have grown in size and expression, while the rest had faded and the figure drooped. “I know, I know,” he said.

“I'm afraid!” she cried suddenly, leaning forward, her quick hand clutching at the window

ledge. "We're so near. There's the old square. I can't face him. I can't bear much scolding."

"Dear child ——"

"O, Alden, I can't! I can't!"

"There is nothing to fear, Susie, I give you my word. There, sit back—so. Now hold my hand—see, like this. He has suffered too, Susie, more than you know. You will find him much changed."

"Yes," she answered, grasping her brother's hand as he bade her. "His hair. Mammy said it was because—but I didn't believe her. I saw him when I was here ——"

"When you were here?" repeated Alden.

"Don't look at me so, as if I were light-headed! It was when Robert's father —— O, I can't go through it! I'm not strong enough, Alden. I wish we hadn't come. We ought to go west somewhere. Give her to me. Let me get out!"

"Susie!" said Alden firmly. She jerked at her hand in his strong grasp.

"Nobody wants us. We don't belong here. It's as if we'd walked out of our graves!"

"Susie," said Alden again, "listen to me, dear. For the sake of all the pain your going caused him, can't you face his pardon?" He bent forward, his beautiful, sane eyes upon her tense face. "You are young and will be strong again. For your share of all these mistakes of ours can't you take the penalty of forgiveness? See now. This is my wedding-day, Susie,—Barbara's and mine. Few brothers

have a wedding gift like mine. This afternoon, when we are all together — ”

But Susie had broken down in a tempestuous sobbing which shook her little body. Alden, upon whose arm the baby had begun to stir its arms and legs under the blanket, looked out to order the driver to walk his horses slowly up and down. Seeing she had no handkerchief Alden silently put his own into Susie's hand, and in its capacious whiteness she hid her face and cried until she was tired. Then she suddenly lifted her head and smiled down into its wet folds.

“He might like the baby,” she said, “its eyes are like mother's.”

The carriage stopped. Robert looked in at the window, puzzled at its erratic progress.

“We're all right in here,” Alden exclaimed, with hurried cheerfulness. In the face at the window, beneath its questionings of the wife's half-dried tears, he read clearly enough the intention of escape.

“I was thinking —” Robert began.

“So was I,” broke in Susie, to Alden's relief. “Take the baby, dear heart. Alden is going to get out so you can sit here with me. Black sheep aren't any more afraid than white ones. We came here of our own accord and we'll face it all. Come.”

She took the child from her brother's arm and held it toward its father. Gloomily, with hesitation, as one who after a glimpse of liberty goes



back into a cage, Robert bent his shoulders and stepped into the place which the other man had left.

"That's good," said Alden, who had for a moment felt that the situation was too much for him. "I'll be here again in an instant. It's all right—everything is all right."

He motioned the cabman to continue his slow pacing, and at his own best speed hastened to the house now close at hand, a terrible misgiving in his mind that even now they might slip away.

On his return he drew a breath of relief at seeing the carriage still creeping back and forth in the sun.

"He is at breakfast.—Come!" he said eagerly.

He did not feel quite sure of them until he limped behind them up the flagged walk beside which Susie's flowers were springing lean and stragglingly, made them pass before him in at the side door, and then taking the child from Robert motioned him reassuringly into a room at the end of the hall and sent Susie up to her old room. "Put on the blue dress," he whispered hastily, "it is where you left it."

"Blue dresses will not fill out my cheeks or make me young again," she whispered back, and went away up the stairs, groping for the baluster rail.

"When I call you, Robert, come like a good fellow, won't you?" Alden said to his caged brother-in-law, with a nod and a smile, as though nothing were out of the common there. Then he paused a

perceptible instant at the sitting-room door, opened it and went quietly in.

"Where the deuce have you been?" asked the old soldier, looking up, egg-shell in hand. "Shoving poetry under her door, I'll bet a continental. Where did you say you'd been?"

"Down to the wharf, father. Morning, Locker. I'm in no hurry. Stay here a minute, please. Father —"

"Well? Nothing knocks a man up worse than exercise on an empty stomach. Sit down."

"I never felt better in my life, inside. Father, Adams & Fales' *My Pretty Jane* is in."

"What on earth is that to us? We don't own her, nor anything else but some fresh eggs you're too love-sick to eat. What ails that dog, running all over my feet? He's shammed his rheumatics."

"No, father." The general looked up at something in the tone. "His senses are sharper than ours, that's all. Let him out, Locker."

The elder man rose to his feet. "What—what—" he said. His voice was thin and old.

"A soldier is always braced and ready for death," —Alden spoke slowly,— "but for life he has to be prepared. She has come back, father. They are here."

The general stared at him—blank, uncomprehending. A queer sound in his throat all at once announced that some meaning in the vivid face before him had entered his consciousness. As the

muscles in his face twitched he turned his back on his son.

"Where?" he asked weakly.

"In her room, waiting. Her husband is here."

There was a silence, then the old man half turned.

"Robert!" called Alden.

In the stillness a dog's hoarse, excited bark rang through the house.

The general wheeled about, erect, his one hand held behind his back. He looked the splendid, gloomy figure which filled the doorway straight in the eyes.

"Sir, have you escaped from justice?" he demanded sternly.

"General, I have been pardoned."

The soldier strode across the space between and held out his hand.

## XVIII

### THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW

THE simplicity of Barbara's wardrobe pained her mother. There was no time for all the dainty sewing she had meant to do for her in that distant day when she should go away, all the embroidery and the hemming in which pride was hidden with the stitches. The sight of the plain articles of dress needed for the rough conditions into which she was going, hurt her mother when she saw them lying ready, as though she had failed in her duty toward her only child. For years after she tried to make up for it by constantly sending delicate work which meant much, done with aging eyes. In a room upstairs Jacob Minns' wife and two other seamstresses had sewed day after day on Barbara's household linen, for to Mrs. Temple's mind there was a kind of disgrace in allowing sheets and pillow-cases to be hemmed outside of the house doors; reminiscent perhaps of that older day when a maiden's marriage clothes were spun in the sanctity of her home.

Now the white dress and veil were finished and the day had come. Four of Barbara's girl friends had risen early and driven out of town to the home of a fifth. There the long orchard of apple-trees stretched to the southern wall of the house itself.

The trees farther away had delayed their expected blossoming, but those close to the house had burst into a glory of pink and white, as if through proximity their sympathy had been won for human hearts. Bobolinks were calling in the meadows.

The late New England spring had come, but hints and repetitions of different seasons ran through its youth like traits of ancestry in a child. The delicate red of the distant trees, promise of green though it was, reflected the color of autumn when the leaves are old, and the wind flowers, crowded into little groups here and there upon the fields, looked like patches of the last snow. The pungent smell of burning brush was the same as that of waste fagots and corn-stalks in November, and the barrels of seedling potatoes standing ready for their beds might have been a harvest newly gathered.

The girls laughed and chattered as they cut the branches of blossoms all about their heads, and piled the carriage so high with them that when they drove away their faces looked out from amidst the bloom, pink and white like itself.

Barbara was a favorite among them. She had once gayly announced that she liked all women and some men. She had never been disloyal, heartless or dishonorable to any other girl, and women appreciate and understand what that means. At home she was occupied with such small acts as were considered fitting for her on a day like this, until it was time for her to dress. Her mother

busied herself with last things all the morning and looked pale as though she had not slept. Instinctively the two women spoke only of trifles.

In every familiar thing she touched that morning, Barbara recognized the tender dignity which is invariably the grace of a last time. She brought out and set up in place several half-forgotten things, for her mind was active with the past.

The girls were flitting about the room, busy with the apple-blossoms, when Barbara led her father there. He drew in his breath sharply and checked his steps; she felt a thrill pass through the arm on which her hand was resting.

"What is it, papa?" she said in quick anxiety.

The man's eyes had been fixed in a wide stare, but he dropped them when she spoke, muttered something she could not hear and snatched his arm from her touch. Barbara and two of the girls who had seen his face, stood watching him in a dull wonder as he left the room.

"Was it anything on the mantel?" one of them suggested. "He seemed to look that way."

Barbara crossed to the spot and took up an open daguerreotype, a picture of a four-year-old boy with tawny hair and rebellious eyes glowering in the restraint of a long sitting.

"How could I!" she said aloud.

"It's Robert, isn't it?" asked her friend gently.

"Yes. I liked to think they were all here——"  
She closed the case with its small hook and gath-

ered up the other daguerreotypes, among the rest a constrained little portrait of Susie. "It was selfish in me and nothing else," she went on indignantly, "not to have remembered that it might hurt him. Isn't it discouraging for a girl to find out as late as her wedding-day that she hasn't learned common thoughtfulness!"

Turning away toward the window as she spoke she was the first to recognize Alden leaving a carriage before the house. She did not need to see his face to be startled at sight of him, for New England etiquette did not admit a visit from bridegroom to bride on the marriage morning. She slipped into the hall, let him in before he could knock, and led the way to the vacant reception-room.

"Is anything wrong?" she breathlessly asked, her back against the closed door.

"No, no, dear. All is right," Alden whispered eagerly. "Come. Here. Now I can talk better. Where is your other hand? They're both cold, aren't they?"

"Yours are hot. O, what is it, Alden?"

She listened without a word, surprised, intent, awed, and after he had done still stood a moment without speaking while the bewilderment passed.

"Living?" she said slowly, "married? I heard you, Alden, didn't I?"

"Yes."

"Then we *shall* all be here." They looked at

each other till the man smiled. As her eyes and mouth relaxed in answer her words seemed loosed.

"How do they look? Well? Or are they changed in every way? And the baby? Is it boy or girl? How old? Tell me all the little things now; they will make it seem more true. Are they glad to be at home? Henrietta Cary has a white dress that will just fit Susie for this afternoon. Or is she thinner now, poor child? My clothes are all too big. What can we do for Robert? But perhaps they are in some native dress, hung about with ingots and pearls." She checked her excited speech to lean back against the door. "I seem flippant, don't I?" she said, the tears starting to her eyes, "but everything to-day is so strange—partings and meetings——"

"I know, dear. I laughed long and loud. Think of that! I suppose it is because we are such a strenuous race that our laughter is oftener from relief than mirth."

"Robert," she began again in a moment, "is he just the same?"

"In features and figure, yes, and yet there's 'a sea change' somewhere. He is different," Alden frowned, trying to put his impression into words. "His eyes have altered, I think. There is a human look in them."

"A human look," repeated Barbara.

"Yes, as if there were more variety to his



thoughts. I suppose a lion, for instance, always thinks along one groove."

"And I suppose you know just what you mean, dear, but I don't."

"Well, let us hope marriage will improve your swain as much, my girl."

"And me," sighed Barbara, "there's room for it. I opened all the old daguerreotypes upon the mantel this morning. So tactful, wasn't it? Papa turned ash color when he saw Robert's face. I never realized he cared so much but, oh, Alden, he must have been suffering all this time more than we guessed. I ought to go upstairs now. How shall I tell it?"

"You will know best, dear."

She closed again the door she had half opened and turned back. "What has Robert been doing all this time?" she said. "Papa might ask."

Alden's hesitation though evident was brief. "He had a ship—a *brig*, though, I think they said."

"O, I see, fishing for tunnies, or pearls, or sponges and coral. I know the Mediterranean. Not fishing?" she interrupted herself to say, interpreting his dissenting eyes. "Then it was rags or oil. He was what we call a trader. No? Then what was he?"

"He—was what some call a— a pirate, you know."

"Alden!"

"Yes, that was what was claimed out there."

"Do you mean to say," demanded Barbara, "that he boarded something? And flew a black flag?"

"He boarded something now and then. O, it's quite the commonplace of that region, I understand—boarding something. But in his case one of his men sold him to the authorities so that he was taken and tried. I didn't tell you that, did I?"

"I should think not."

"No. You see it would have gone rather hard with him on the whole, of course, things being as they were, though he's a splendid fellow, Barbara, under it all, and there's something primitive and big about him, and the boarding of that particular ship was a mistake as it happened."

"You're not very lucid, Alden."

"No, not very lucid. But now," and her soldier straightened his shoulders and smiled down at her like himself, "now I'll try to be more so. Little Susie, who was always afraid of her shadow, what do you suppose she did? Went alone, with only the baby, to the king!"

"The king?" echoed Barbara, "what king?"

"Of Sicily, of course. I don't know much about the ways of potentates, but I'm learning all the time. I gather that they are difficult to reach, but Susie finally crossed a large hall and kneeled down before a middle-aged man, with thick, pursed-up lips, and told him she was an American whose husband needed a pardon. He turned to a fellow in epaulets

and medals and said he had troubles enough with his own traitors and America should have her own rascals back to deal with herself, ransom or no ransom. I judge that to have been a form of royal graciousness, for he added to Susie, that she was too good-looking to cry her eyes out, and he signed the papers next day. Would you have believed that little Susie could have done it?"

"Yes," answered Barbara, after a pause, "for I could have done it for you, only my Italian would have been such that he would have been guessing still what I had wanted of him. It isn't like anything natural and real, is it? It's like a book. The general must be glad."

"Glad!"

"This is a greater day than ever, isn't it? We must try to deserve it, mustn't we?"

"Yes."

"Now I must go," Barbara whispered hurriedly, "I ought not to have delayed like this. Even mamma will be happy. She said something lately," and the girl turned to Alden at the door a face of honest, watery smiles and then was gone.

It seemed to the young officer a long time that he waited, conscious for the first time of severe pain in his abused knee, but as soon as he heard voices and movement above he hobbled into the hall.

Temple coming precipitately down the stairs in advance of the rest did not see the young man in his path. His face was unusually flushed. His

wife paler even than her wont, and his daughter with eyes wide open and anxious, followed him.

"What is it, papa?" said Barbara at his elbow. "What do you want to do?" For the man seemed all at once to have lost the clue to his intention, and stood rolling his eyes vaguely about the room.

"May I bring him, sir?" asked Alden, with the incisive promptness learned at West Point.

"No, no!" Temple started forward with the words, and fumbled the articles upon the settle before him. "No, no!" he repeated, even more sharply. "Where's my hat, child?"

"Here, papa, just here. You're not going away anywhere, papa, are you?"

"Now my gloves. No, I don't need my gloves."

"May he come?" Alden tried again. He is——"

"No, I say no!" shouted Temple vehemently, and was out at the door.

Alden hurriedly followed, limping in long strides down the walk.

"Let me drive you," he urged hastily. "Get in, sir."

Unhearing, unheeding, Temple bolted away down the street. Alden climbed into the cab, ordering the man to take the same direction. With eyes to the ground the merchant forged ahead, while the passers-by stood aside and looked after him. At the corner where two streets diverged Alden's anxiety quickened his breath. Any one who knew him would have been able from his

youth up to predict Phineas Temple's probable action in any affair of life. Suddenly no one could.

When he turned to the left Alden's misgivings did not lessen although his wonder increased. He had been convinced from his knowledge of the man's character that his constitutional tendency to avoid discomfort or annoyance, had risen on occasion into an eagerness and that he was bent upon hiding himself in his office, there to study out a way of escape from a scene which he felt himself for the present unable to face. But what could he be meaning to do now? Confront his son and denounce him for the injury done to his ship? Order him from the country? Threaten him with the law? Such bold defiance of a sea of troubles had never been Phineas Temple's way. Alden could only follow.

Temple pushed open General Sumner's door and went in. The owner, full in his path, stepped aside. Robert Temple was standing like a column in the centre of the hall when his father saw him.

Not a sound was in the house but the short, loud breathing of the tired man, trying to speak. He took two steps forward, holding out both hands.

"Dad!" exclaimed Robert, in a voice which shook the room. "Dad! It was for me to— Here! Brandy, Alden. He's faint, that's all."

Lifting him as easily as if he had been a child he carried him into the next room. The general, treading close behind, had some painful association with the act sweep over him as he saw the white

head against the great shoulder. "*Then I will fling you over this balcony.*" A shiver hurried through him like an evil ghost's leave-taking, and its icy passing left him warm.

In that mysterious way in which the atmosphere becomes quickly saturated with human change, so that he who runs breathes in the news, groups of people clinging together in eager speech, gathering recruits at every corner, slipped along, fascinated, after Phineas Temple as soon as he emerged to walk slowly his accustomed beat from General Sumner's house to his own, leaning upon the arm of his recovered son. At the house door the boldest, or kindest, of his neighbors impulsively sprang forward to grasp the hand of each.

When the hurly-burly of question, exclamation and emotion had passed, and the general and Alden were left alone, they went upstairs and stopped before a closed door. It opened cautiously and mammy's black eyes peered out at them.

"Asleep," she whispered with some importance, "bofe of 'em, bress de Lord," and the men tiptoed down the hall.

At Alden's door they stood again. Locker's tread as he moved about in the young officer's room was the only noise to be heard. Father and son looked at each other,—a look of complete understanding. They had been good friends.

"Call me when you're ready," the elder said in a hoarse whisper, and first strode, then tiptoed, away.

When Locker not long after appeared to summon him, the veteran met the eyes of his Cromwellian follower with a glance whimsical, pleased, boyishly young.

"Great doings, Locker," he said.

"Great doin's, sir," replied the other veteran, with augmented emphasis.

Neither of the men was a master in emotional expression.

"There's a rose for your coat, governor," said Alden.

"Stand back, you young martinet, and let's see if you'll do," replied the general.

Alden, with the aid of his cane obeyed. His face, thin though it had grown, had a faint flush in it, his eyes were bright and fine, his hair showed its auburn color in the sunlight. His blue regimentals, brilliant with gold buttons and epaulets, were the honored uniform of the engineer corps which only the three leading men of each class at West Point might enter.

"Well, Locker, what do you say? Speak up, man!" said the general gruffly after a head to foot scrutiny of his son.

Locker's hand went to his forehead in habitual salute. "I guess he'll do, sir," he answered.

Alden laughed and looked at his watch. "Time enough yet," he said. "Locker, you are going to finish my packing like a good fellow. Everything can go in now. Sit down, governor."

"It rained the day your mother and I were married, I recollect," said the general, slowly descending into the chair Locker had ready for him. "I never saw your grandfather in such spirits as he was that last day I was at home."

"You had been a trial, of course," remarked Alden.

"He thought so, he thought so," replied the general with a grim answering smile.

"You're pretty bobbish to-day yourself, governor, I've noticed."

"Nothing to him. He told a story that morning while we waited for your mother's great uncle, old Parson Alden, who was deaf and nearly blind and had forgotten all about marrying us. Your grandfather's story was about a young woman who came to him the night before her wedding and blubbered out that she couldn't marry the man because he was too old. Father reminded her that he couldn't have aged a great deal since the day before, but she said, 'I'm eighteen and he's thirty-six, twice as old. When I'm forty he'll be eighty. I never thought of it before and I can't stand it!'—I've told that before, have I? You didn't laugh naturally."

"I meant to."

"Look here, Alden!" exclaimed the general explosively, "if I'm a broken-winded old bore I want to know it now. I'm not going on in ignorance, I tell you! No, sir. How many times have I told you that story? Answer me that!"

"It's good for more ——"



"Tell me that!" demanded the general.

"Well, I only remember seven——"

"Seven times!" gasped the old man. "Seven times and a poor story at that! Thunder and Mars, how many times have I told some of my good ones! What do you mean, sir, by letting your father make a fool of himself and not stopping, collaring and choking him? Seven times!" ejaculated the general, who had risen and was walking the floor.

"I wouldn't have missed one of them," proceeded Alden. "The first time was when I was a boy and we had some great gun of the ministry to tea. Mother was afraid of him, and the recipe for cakes that Aunt Rachel had given her hadn't worked well. He ate three after you told that story; I remember counting. The next time was in town meeting when the selectmen were having that jolly row with old Balch just over the line, about the age of the hickory we claimed was the boundary. It's lucky for the town Balch had such a sense of humor for I always thought he was right."

"Right! He hadn't a foot to stand on!" interjected the general.

"Once it was on the morning when you were leaving us for the war,—you told a number of good things that morning,—another time it was to cheer up old——"

"That's enough!" groaned the general. "What a record of senility! You ought to be ashamed to keep tally on your father's dotage, sir!"

Alden laughed. "O, there are other good qualities to a story besides novelty, I can tell you. Governor, you're an old brick!"

According to the prevailing custom in New England, Barbara Temple was to be married in her father's house, and from several causes those who were bidden hastened to this wedding. Long before the hour of three the rooms were crowded. The air buzzed with curiosity and wild tales that often hit the rings but not the bull's-eye of the truth. Beside the interest in the rescued pair the claims of the bride herself had paled.

Susie had had a fitful sort of popularity as a girl,—the young secretly sympathizing with her attempts to choose her friends without heed to social distinctions, the old approving the triumph of discipline which had borne the fruit of a well-bred docility in such a soil. And yet after all she had married Robert Temple! Parents glanced apprehensively at their own offspring and spoke apart.

Such was her power of rebound still, that after her sleep Susie was able to take a childish pleasure in trying on Henrietta Cary's white dress which Henrietta herself brought in, and the two old schoolmates were closeted with little bursts of laughter, and small gurglings and brief cries from the baby, mingled with mammy's soft voice,—strange sounds indeed in that masculine household.

Even Robert, who it was expected would be a social snag, drifted with the stream, and did his

best to oblige every one, even his stepmother, when she joined in the assertion that he must make a grand entry with Susie.

Before he promised he sought out Alden and said abruptly, "That affair of Sharpe——"

"Yes, I know," Alden interrupted him, "I've heard all about it. You had no more to do with his taking off, I find, than I have. I looked into the matter since I came home this time, and somebody told me about Dave Sharpe's vendetta. Dave has been at the gold diggings these four months. As to that brute, Jim Sharpe—I have all the facts, so you don't need to go over it,—for the honor of the town I'd have thrashed him if you hadn't." To his own surprise Alden found he had laid a reassuring hand upon Robert Temple's shoulder. In the general overturn of conditions that morning the unusual only seemed natural.

"I've been a brute myself," said Robert, moving restlessly though without hostility under the touch. "I may be one again." He drew in a hard breath and squared his shoulders. "But I'll try it. I'll try it," he added with gloomy emphasis.

"Yes," replied Alden heartily, "but I wouldn't force the note just at first. The east agrees with some men's constitutions, but you need more room. Come out with us!" he exclaimed, with a suggestion of sympathy in his voice.

The look with which his companion met his eyes left the impression of a smile.

"Not yet," Temple answered, "I have something to do here first."

Alden wondered an instant what it could be as he watched the strange, imperative figure stride away.

The dreaded ordeal of entrance was over soon after and Robert Temple and Susan, his wife, had resumed their old places in society. Familiar faces smiled into theirs in wonder and in kindness. The general brought this and that neighbor to swell the crowd about his daughter, standing each time to peer again over the heads at the delicate, small lady in white, with pink flushed cheeks and the look like a frightened bird in the eyes, recognizable anew against the background of conventional humanity.

Corenzio, observing the pair with the rest, remarked upon this resemblance to young Adams, adding that she was picturesque but unlovable. "Her husband now," he went on, yawning daintily behind his long fingers, "is really impressive. He ought to be dressed in skins."

"By Jove, see the apple-blossoms!" commented Adams in answer. "Pretty idea, isn't it?"

"Yes. Economical," replied the musician, staring at the ceiling as he leaned his slim back against the wall. "But you see she is marrying a fellow for whom economy— O!" and the young man stood upright, realizing just in time that a taller than Adams had taken his place. Corenzio looked about

only to find his ally buttonholed by a Philistine, and so lifted his glance reluctantly again to the face above him.

The general's gaze swept the slender figure and delicate features before him with eyes whose consciousness seemed to be coming from a great distance toward some painful reminder. For the moment the two were alone at that end of the room. "Sir," said the soldier, before the other had thought what to do, "I think it my duty to tell you that my son's marriage will not alter the regularity of our present procedure."

"Ah!" replied Corenzio, the sensitive muscles in his face stirring once before he stiffened them.

"When the last payment is made," the general went on, in a lower key, "I shall ask your permission to say a word to you, sir."

"Say it now, pray," replied the younger man, recovering with a snatch the insolence which seemed slipping from him. "This is a festival, I believe. I like contrasts of color. You, too, are dramatic. Out with it, please." He seemed trying to drop his shoulders negligently against the wall as before, but halted half-way, constrained.

"Thank you, sir. It is this." The general moved nearer. "I shall believe in my soul, sir, until I die, that my father never wilfully defrauded yours. Don't go, sir! He lost the money certainly, through some carelessness no doubt. But character tells, sir, character tells. A poor business man, sir,

but no more a thief in the sight of Almighty God than you or me!"

He stalked past his companion, his vehemence carrying him to the centre of the room before he pulled himself up. Then he walked back.

"Sir," he said again, standing before the limp figure which, as if in an instinctive aversion, moved along the wall at his approach, "your pardon. I seemed perhaps to grudge you your just dues. Not so, sir, not so. There has been a mistake made in former years. I am proud to do my share to rectify it. But I knew my father, sir. *I knew him.* And when I think of this wrong which he cannot explain, I sometimes find a difficulty in keeping cool, sir, perfectly cool."

In the glow of his good-will he hardly noticed how the chill, reluctant fingers which met his outstretched palm dropped from it to rejoin the rest of the body which recoiled from him, for all at once the crowd swept backward upon the two men. Some one hurried the general away to his place. The ushers cleared a space to the door and all talk was suddenly hushed.

To the bride in the room above the voices of old friends, as if in presage of the distances to be, had mingled into one dim murmur, and now it was in this utter silence that she came out with her mother from her chamber, and stepped down the stairs in the amber light of the afternoon sun. In the continued stillness she went forward on her father's arm.

Her eyes and throat had ached with unshed tears all the morning, but at this moment a look that thrilled the most frivolous girl who saw it, had come into her face,—not of simple happiness, rather of wonder and fearless trust, to which love had lifted the nature above the level of mere experience. Old people whispered that she was like all her race just then, for glints of ancestral expression and feature came and went amid the young outlines of her face, or seemed to come and go, as they often do to the eyes of the beholders at vivid moments in another's life. Perhaps thus kind ghosts come back and mingle with our friends. All held their breath to see her,—all but one, who feeling ashes round his heart, shut his eyes close, and seemed to be alone there amidst the throng.

Onward Barbara went, lifting her head once to look at father, mother, brother, sister, about her like a guard. Then Alden took her hand, and they stood together before the old clergyman who had known them all their lives.

## XIX

### PALINGENESIS

IN and out of the hollows worn in the ledges beyond the wharves, the tide washed lazily, resting, as nearly as it ever did rest, at high water. Hundreds of jelly fish were swaying monotonously up and down as if by a mighty breathing, and the waves noisily swirling about the piers concealed their worm-eaten attenuation and the barnacles encrusting them to the flood-mark. The sky was streaked with faint gray lines and the sea was pale to the horizon. A coal schooner and a barque laden with lumber were the only craft lying at the wharves, and a fleet of fishing sloops was anchored at a little distance. Taking their daily exercise, Phineas Temple and General Sumner tramped back and forth, outlined against the sea.

At the wharf's edge a row of idle men sat smoking, their legs dangling, their eyes nearly closed against the light. Twelve years had passed since the wedding-day, and at every seaport along the coast men no longer young were sitting like this, in groups, on the rocks or wharves, their eyes behind moat and walls of crinkled brown skin, watching the little happenings on the water. Their slow



breaths came and went in unison with the rise and fall of the waves, the motions of their brains had taken the rhythm of the sea. In that pulsation dull images, snifting bubbles, drifted like seaweed. They hardly spoke more than the barnacles clinging to the piers below them. They would never do the world's work again. All that was sentient of them the sea had claimed.

The commerce of which they had been a part was dead. When the Civil War of four years was over it, too, was gone. The hammers were still in the shipyards and the old vessels were rotting like the wharves. Four years withdrawn from the race, unwise legislation and taxation, steam and iron usurping the place of oak and sails meanwhile, had thrown America's splendid opportunity into England's ready grasp. The inevitable chill and check to youth's hope had come, perhaps for the best, upon the buoyant republic. The Civil War had concentrated all energy in New England upon the union of States; wandering fancies came home and grew stern; the mirage of the Levant faded into air. Here and there a summerhouse in an old garden still discloses its pagoda form in the midst of neglected vines and shrubs; or a broken fan of sandalwood which children have handled, an ugly jar placed high beyond their reach, two great sea shells laid at either side of a modest house door, speak, like the pilgrim's scallop shell, of travels in the east. Strange to see the likeness of a hoary government

in the baby republic! Strange that the end to *anything* should have come to one so young!

In the financial crash which had preceded this silence, the old house of Temple & Son fell in the general ruin. Phineas and his wife, in their first bewilderment, had allowed themselves to be borne away to the western frontier to recover their tone in the cheerful company of Barbara and Alden; thence swept onward to complete their cure with Robert and Susie. Affection, sympathy, attention, met them everywhere, but they confessed to each other, once at home again in a quiet old house near the general, that they felt as if they had passed through a hurricane.

Alden was on duty, and the fort in which his wife was contentedly living seemed a place of barbarous fears to her mother, who hardly closed her eyes at night for apprehension; while the ranche which Robert was successfully extending left upon the minds of his visitors an impression of wild eyes and flying hoofs, pistol-shots, lassoos and savage confusion which was, if possible, worse. They were glad to creep back to the safe east, and be allowed to grow old in peace.

For two whole years after his return from the Mediterranean, Robert Temple worked as a ship's carpenter in the dockyards where his father's ships were built. No remonstrance moved him. Some crude sense of justice needed to be satisfied and could only be reckoned with in his own way.

Such wrongs as he had done of his own free will he seemed neither to repent nor remember, but the injury to the *Flight*, unpremeditated as it was, appeared to require full reparation. Many a time during that period of voluntary servitude, as he straightened his tall figure to watch a ship put out to sea, those near him were startled by the fierceness of unrest in his face, and never thought to see him bend his back again over the bolts and screws. He stayed, but when the time which he had set himself had ended, he and Susie and the children went into the west. He seemed to breathe with an eager joy out in those wilds, as if to make the most of a brief while, for he recognized that with his boys and girls he must again go back to civilized life. To the last he was akin to his Saxon forefathers who, when they had captured and pillaged a Romano-British city, hurried away from the place into the vast silences and reaches of grassy land, in dread of the evil spirits that haunted the streets of walled towns.

He and Alden drew nearer together than ever before through their experience,—the one as officer, the other as private soldier, in that most hideous of all crimes against progress—a civil war, bringing as it does the methods of savagery to bear upon the disagreements inevitable between independent and enlightened minds. Something of the boy in him passed into the man.

Susie and the children and the general helped one

another through the long anxiety of those years of bloodshed.

It would seem that in Robert and Susie the lingering remnants of the revolt against Puritanism left in the race of each, had gathered themselves together and banded into one for a last effort against the new order which, rising out of the crude young civilization, had reached its point of vantage. The attempt was hopeless, a desperate onslaught by powers doomed to defeat and extinction, but sure, from the nature of things, to come. If it had occurred solely on the battle-ground of the spirit it would have been none the less real or less tragic.

Alden realized that the heat, the uproar, the frightful bayonet charges roused in himself more than once not the patriot but the brute and the barbarian. Of his two friends one, knightly Montgomery, conscientiously offered his services to the southern state from which he came. The other, Ward, student and gentleman, rode at Alden's side, his face grimed with powder, his gentle eyes wide and bloodshot. Detached by Alden to *reconnoitre* with a small command, he was surprised by Colonel Montgomery's cavalry and obliged to retreat. One of his men reported that he fell mortally wounded from his horse but refused to let a man stop to help him. A comrade who only left him when the enemy were close upon him, turned and saw Ward lift himself to strike an impotent blow, cursing the trampling horsemen with his last breath.

Alden was a brave man. He had many times faced dangers that were natural and had never flinched. He braced himself to this war, but it was unnatural and therefore horrible to him. Something was jarred thereby in his well-strung organization, but he was young and strong and the old elasticity came back in time. They called him General like his father when the war was over but he returned to his profession as an engineer. He has never lost his eye for the first hints of spring, his ear for the first bird, the capacity of lift in his nature, his cheer or his quick sense of humor. His marriage had the promise of happiness in it and has fulfilled it. Freer by nature than his because less in danger from an inherent rigidity, Barbara's mind first accustomed itself to his higher plane and then reached far and wide in its intense enthusiasm for even the smallest details of this interesting life. They never merged their personal affection in the parental one as their four children made constantly new demands upon their hearts and brains, but called each other by the old names always. As long as she lived Mrs. Temple spent a part of every spring with the household. Added years perhaps, and the presence of the little grandchildren, cooled the restlessness in her blood.

All about Alden and Barbara live those who like them came out from the youth and strength of the east. Fierce party conflict, Indian fighting, held the place when first we met them, but these have swept

beyond them and all is calm there. It is a region from which one may look all ways, seeing the currents of thought throughout the states; child of the east, sympathetic with the west, not Puritan, nor French, not all conservatism, not all disorder, a place in which to weigh and judge, at the centre of a whirlpool where the waters are still. The mysterious Atlantic has become to them only a friendly reminder of youth. The occasional homesickness for the sea is often satisfied as they rise and fall with its waves and hear the hollow roar along the New England beaches when the shell of sleep is laid against their ears. Awake they are not restless from the broken cadence, the loss of unison, between the sea and them. A new rhythm, that of the modern world, has filled its place. Their sons and daughters have their pulses set to the new movement. Born of the inspiration of the east they owe to their environment an energy which may well come from soil and air into which has been poured such an infinity of hope.

Locker and his chief belonged more perfectly to each other every year, until the angles of the one had all fitted into the hollows and limitations of the other. We shall not need to think of them as separated.

A week before the Thanksgiving following the marriage of Alden and Barbara, Jacob appeared at the Sumner house one evening. Locker, who was fastening the doors and windows for the night,

was surprised by the sight of his friend running up the path to the rear door.

"Be ye sick, Jacob, or is yer house burnin' up?" he inquired from the window he was about to close.

Jacob at once fell into a walk and slouched with habitual deliberation up to the door.

"Nothin' of the kind that I *know* of," he drawled as usual. "I was atakin' of the air."

Locker left the window and unbarred the door.

"Come in and set down," he said suspiciously. "Folks don't lot no great on an . . . en o'clock at night."

"Why, ye ain't goin' to bed, be ye?" asked Jacob after he was inside. "It's the edge of the evenin'."

"I guess to play-actors it *is* the edge o' the evenin'. I've heerd some sech a yarn," admitted Locker. "But for folks in quiet walks o' life it's late. Set down."

"Wal, wal, I must be goin' along soon," and Jacob sank into a chair in the murky kitchen lighted only by the lamp in Locker's hand. "How's general?"

They discussed the price of several household commodities after Jacob had learned that the general was fair to middlin', but the talk was languid for Locker did not mean to encourage this untimely visiting and sat, lamp in hand, yawning visibly.

"Wal, I guess I better be goin'," Jacob remarked after a protracted interval of silence.

"Wal, good-night, Jacob," replied Locker.

"O, before I forget it," and the guest turned with his hand on the door, "Maria says jest now for me to ask ye, when I see ye, if ye won't come over an' take a bite o' Thanksgivin' with us. 'Twon't be no great of a dinner, I guess. Maria calculates to cook good, plain victuals, but that's all she doos calculate to do. Anyhow mebbe ye can make out a meal."

Locker stood where he was, his eyes widely staring at his friend above the lamp. His voice when he spoke sounded constrained.

"I don' know but I'd jest as soon," he said.

"Wal, I hope ye'll make out," replied Jacob, and hurried out of the door.

Locker continued to stand still a moment more, then he mechanically barred the door. No one had ever bidden him as an honored guest to a Thanksgiving dinner before. Maria Minns had felt a covert hostility toward herself in her husband's friend and had never hitherto been cordial to him, but her skill in cookery was famous far and wide.

When he left the door he walked to the stove, raised the lamp and looked up at the meerscham pipe. Next morning he looked at it again, and longer. When he was ready for the feast on the great day, his individuality somewhere lost in the unsympathetic grip of his new clothes, he went to



the kitchen, took down the pipe and dusted the case, wrapped it in a sheet of white paper and tied it up with a fresh string. It adorned Jacob Minns' parlor mantel, unsullied, till the day of his death.

During the year after he had stood with eyes closed to the pageant of tremulous joy at Barbara's wedding, Corenzio inherited a small fortune from an old man by whom he had been engaged to play an hour every day to ease the tedium of a wasting illness. His life had been creeping slowly, like a torpid November wasp, since that day when the end he had failed to hinder had come, and his sin seemed to him in vain. His thwarted revenge left him lonely when the greatest power in the world had overridden his poor snare, unseeing, unguessing it. An irritated scorn at the fate that was against him gave a desperate determination to match its spite with all the powers at his disposal, forcing everything out of life which it could show him.

As soon as possible after the legacy was in his hands he went abroad. The instalments came to him regularly from Alden Sumner until principal and interest were fully paid. Perhaps he found it easier to acknowledge them with leagues of sea between him and the sender. It was a sum barely exceeding ten thousand dollars in all. The investment in land which he had made yielded him a great increase over the original outlay when it was sold.

His unusual gifts never made his name famous

but a competence which provides the opportunity for idleness without the stimulation of a large fortune is often accountable for that result. He became a citizen of the world. He had acquaintances in every capital in Europe. Denationalized, he drifted with the tide of travel, north in the spring, south in the autumn, like a derelict. He made a collection of musical manuscripts and spent hours at a time over those brought to him for sale, passing his smooth fingers over the papers and holding them to the light, in search of fraud. His luminous skin became sallow and the brightness faded from his eyes, but his grace had become polish and his epigrams left a sting. He died at middle age, unmarried, in Vienna.

In his will he left ten thousand dollars as the nucleus for a public library in his native town, and grateful citizens gave his name to the building when completed, adding to the sum yearly with such enthusiasm as to produce healthful emulation in neighboring towns.

Many a hospital, asylum, school, mission, library, is the outward form of an inward remorse, of a baffled hope, of a revenge upon thwarted heirs, of a bitter disappointment, of an atonement for a fault buried deep in the heart. The stones cannot speak, but there are hungers and tragedies in them. The symbol, redeemed from its dark birth by its contact with human needs is a source of refreshment, health and joy, as the sewage water of a great city is

poured over successive beds of clay and comes out pure.

On the small Mediterranean island all hot human breath has cooled, loneliness and homesickness in the exile are assuaged, violence and treachery, jealousy, hatred, even love, are gone. The elves have it all their own way now for Lampedusa is uninhabited.

Before the leaves that were budding on the south slopes of Duntulloch when Robert Temple was captured had all blown from the trees the laird was riding at dusk across a moor heavy with autumn rains. A gunshot cracked from a copse at its eastern border and the horse made its way riderless home. The mystery was never explained but we know that Mother Graham was a wonderful shot at her age, especially at long range.

The barque *Maybird* was never certainly heard from. Depredations, perhaps committed by other ships, have been foisted upon her. She became a symbol of outlawry, gathering upon her decks, as the tales about her grew, the robbers and marauders of widely separated years, and, type of successful lawlessness, skimming unharmed about the borders of the last occasions for such prowess left in the world. Perhaps in reality she is peacefully trading; perhaps she has scattered the poisoned presence of her old crew to the four winds and is wrecked and rotting, like the system to which she belonged; perhaps she hovers about the last slave coasts, vigilant

for the opportunities of war; every year the range of her possibilities narrowed by the sweeping circles of two great friends, the spirit of science and the spirit of Christianity.

THE END

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