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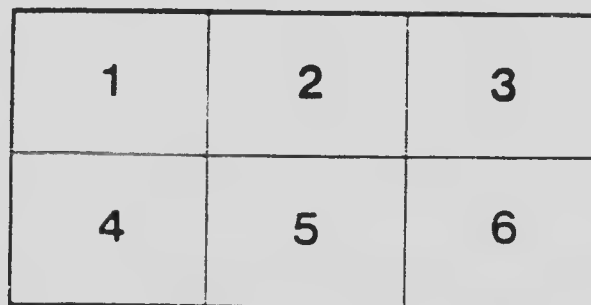
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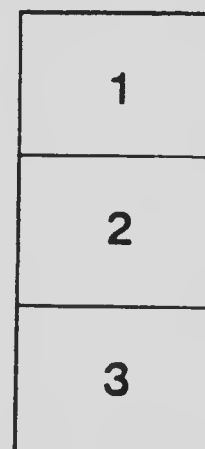
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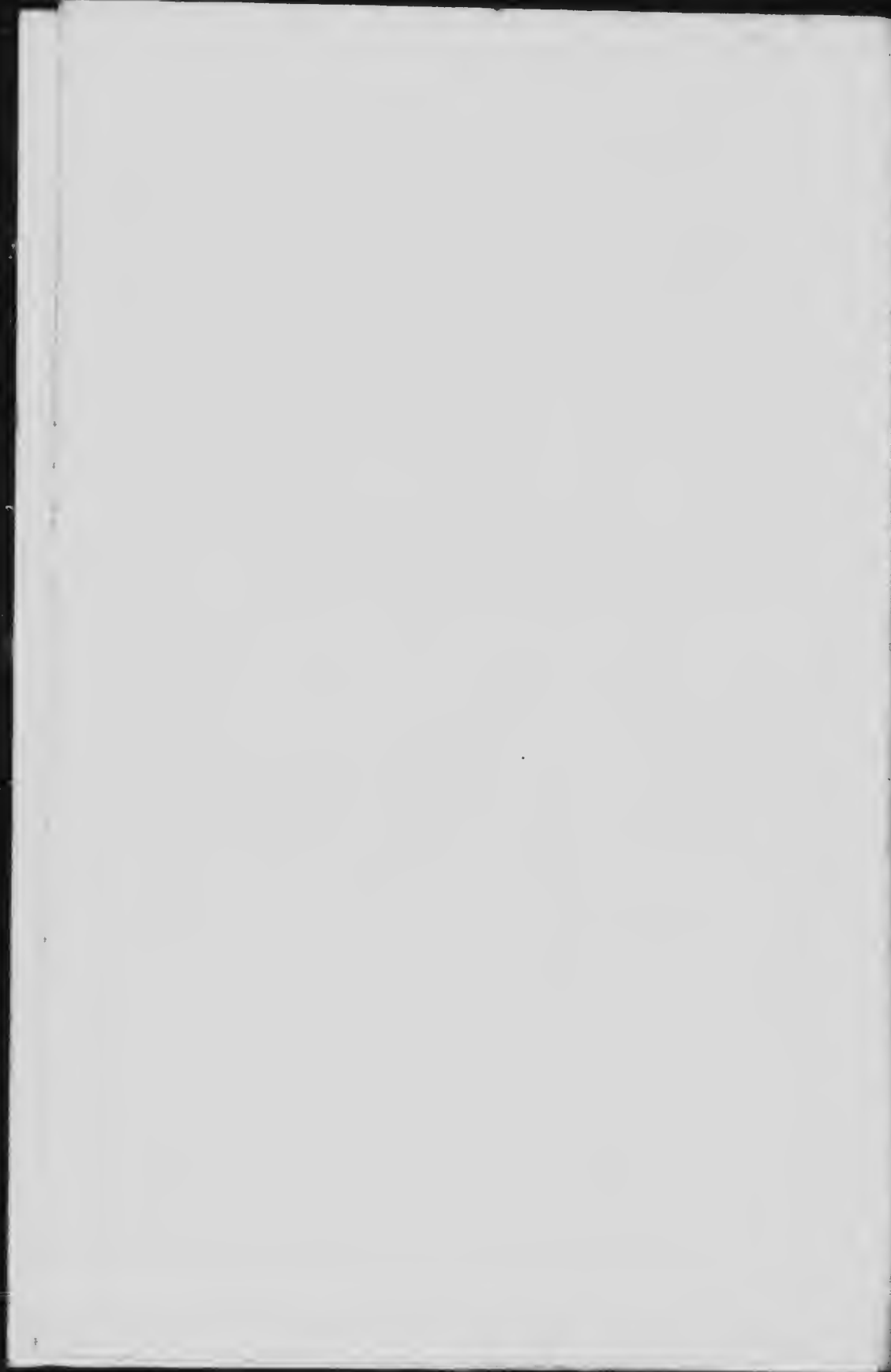
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UNDER NORTH STAR AND SOUTHERN CROSS

BY
FRANCIS SINCLAIR

AUTHOR OF "BALLADS AND POEMS FROM THE PACIFIC,"
"WHERE THE SUN SETS," ETC.



We come from waste of desert sands,
From dreary steppes of frozen lands;
From isles of palm in summer seas,
From mountain peaks that kiss the breeze.
From moonlit rivers, tropic bowers,
Where never fade the deathless flowers!




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AUTHOR'S NOTE

 *HE* generous reception given to my last book, "*Where the Sun Sets*," has induced me to recount some other adventures which came to my knowledge whilst wandering on many seas and lands.

The men and women introduced in these pages, and the incidents recorded, are not altogether fleeting shadows of the imagination; the people portrayed really existed, and the events took place almost exactly as they are set forth.

In this restless world of bustle and toil, we must have a little recreation sometimes if we would keep the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," for we can kill just as surely, and much more painfully, with an over amount of work

and worry, as with an over heavy club. I therefore trust that my stories may prove—in a quiet way—both entertaining and profitable; not merely helping to pass an idle hour, as the common phrase is, but affording some weary wayfarers a genuine rest here and there on life's journey, and a morsel of comfort and instruction at the same time.

F. S.

London, 1907.



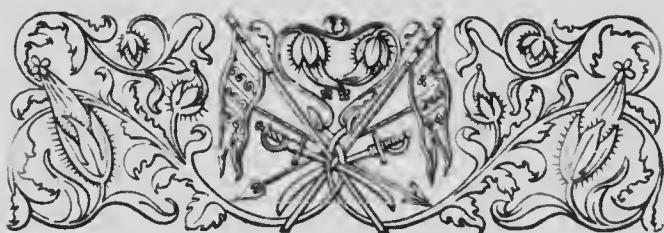


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THE HAUNTED SHIP



THE HAUNTED SHIP

CHAPTER I

LIKE other flotsam and jetsam I was drifting about the magic South Seas, east, west, north, or south, as the mood took me, or rather, I should say, as the current happened to set. On the occasion I refer to I was returning to Tahiti, on the schooner "Lapwing," after two months' cruising among the coral isles of the Low Archipelago and the beautiful Marquesas Islands.

The "Lapwing" was owned and commanded by a fellow countryman of mine, David Kinross by name, who had passed the last forty years of his life roving about the Pacific in the various capacities of common sailor, officer, master-mariner, and trader. He was one of that rather rare variety over whom the glamour

and witchery of the South Sea had never cast its magic spell—a spell which always dims, and *nearly* always obliterates, the energy, and even the desire to return to European life. David Kinross was not of that sort. He still spoke with tears in his voice of smoky old Glasgow, and the river Clyde, every spot of which he could recall with wonderful accuracy and intense affection. It was very touching to hear this gray-haired, elderly, and most common-sense man speak (in spite of the effacing effects of many years and adventures) with trembling pathos of events which took place, and of people who lived out their life drama long before I was born.

We were together six months on his schooner. It was the only time in my life when I enjoyed a *free-travel pass* on land or sea. All our companionship was most congenial, and at our parting the old man implored me to continue to make the schooner my home until he or the beautiful craft went under.

I was the only man, Kinross told me, with whom he had become thoroughly intimate in all his wandering life; so it was no wonder that he became very confidential, and gave me much and varied information about places and

events with which he had become familiar during his adventurous career.

I never forgot one weird adventure he told me as we lay helplessly becalmed in the calm streak on the lee side of Tahiti. We had made a good run from the Paumotus with a fine cargo of pearl-shell, and my friend was anxious to get into Papeiti as quickly as possible so that his cargo would be in time for a German ship which was in the harbour loading copra and shell for Europe.

Just as we were congratulating ourselves upon making an excellent land-fall, and expecting to make port in a few hours, we suddenly ran out of the stiff trade wind, as if we had turned the corner of a street on a windy day, and after forging ahead half a dozen lengths of herself, the schooner lay utterly motionless and utterly helpless for more than seventy hours within fifteen or twenty miles of Papeiti. The skipper fretted and fumed, and I fear muttered some rude words under his breath, but he was too good a sailor—as well as philosopher—not to accept the inevitable calmly, and after some futile attempts to tow the schooner back into the trade wind, which we could see swirling and foaming a few miles north of us, we

all settled down to our enforced idleness according to our various idiosyncrasies. The Kanaka crew accepted the situation with admirable complaisance, the captain with such patience as he could command, and I again became absorbed in that mine of knowledge and romance, Prescott's "Conquest of Mexico," one of the well-thumbed books in Kinross's little, curiously varied library. This store of intellectual food consisted of The Bible, "Robinson Crusoe," "Conquest of Mexico," Baxter's "Saints' Rest," Cook's "Voyages," Burns's Poems, "The Pilgrim's Progress," "Old Songs and Ballads of Scotland," the Waverley Novels, and a few others. Kinross told me that he had picked up these books in Sydney some years before, where he had gone with a cargo of shell, and having done very well out of the trip, he determined to give the esthetic part of his nature a feast after many years of short-commons, not to say starvation. It was very pathetic to note how the influence of early years had directed the hand and eye of the rough, world-worn sailor in selecting books of which he had probably never read a line since he pored over them in the thatched cottage on the hills above Clyde-bank.

In those days of idleness on the schooner I used to do my reading during the day; at night Kinross and I lay on our deck-chairs and talked of the old land "far ayont the sea," and of the world of waters by which we were surrounded, while the sharp pinnacled peaks of Tahiti glittered in the moonlight like some glorified cathedral, such as was never planned by mortal architect, or reared by human hands.

Perhaps it was owing to our nearing the end of our voyaging together (voyaging which had been thoroughly congenial to me, and which Kinross declared he felt very sorry was drawing to a close) that drew from the old Scotchman an extra portion of confidence, I might almost say tenderness. But whatever the cause, certainly during those three days of calm he told me more of his life history, past and present, than he had done during the whole six months I had been his daily, or rather hourly, companion.

On the second night of our enforced idleness, a night of full-moon tropical splendour, with the sea glittering like an endless expanse of molten gold, and the sharp peaks of the Island seeming so near, in that absolutely transparent atmosphere that it almost made one fear

we were actually drifting on the reef although we well knew that we were twenty odd miles off the land; on that night—a night which always comes flashing across my spiritual vision whenever I see moonlight on water in any quarter of the world—Kinross told me the following strange yarn, and so absorbed did he become in recalling the experiences of the long past, and I in listening to what he declared were simple facts, that the Eastern sky broke into all the gorgeous colours of the South Sea dawn ere we crept into our hammocks slung under the awning.

CHAPTER II

“THIRTY-FIVE years ago come May next,” said Kinross, “I shipped as first mate on the whaling barque ‘Flying Fox,’ of Hobart Town. I had been four voyages before that on the same craft, first as common seaman, then as boat-steerer, and two voyages as third and second mate. Even in those days, which must seem a long time past to you although it only seems as yesterday to me, the whaling business—which is now practically extinct—was almost played out, and where a hundred and more

full-rigged ships, barques, and brigs had carried on the profitable trade twenty-five years before, only the 'Flying Fox' and half a dozen other old stagers still kept up the game.

"The 'Flying Fox' was a barque of two hundred and forty tons register. We 'lowered' four boats, and carried a crew of thirty men all told besides four officers. On my previous voyages I had been very comfortable notwithstanding the fact that our skipper was one of the old school, who when he was at sea ruled his men with an iron hand, yet at the same time treated them fairly well so long as they behaved properly and moved lively at the word of command. But woe betide the shirker or growler! I have known half a dozen loafers headed up in as many tun-butts and fed on bread and water through the bunghole for a week at a time, or until such time as with tears and lamentations the most hardened rascals begged for forgiveness, and promised in abject terms to behave in future in the most exemplary manner. And, strange to say, those hardened old sinners (many of them jail-birds of the toughest kind) generally kept their word, and became models of good behaviour.

"It is a strange fact," said Kinross, "that

there are only very few men who have the courage, or strength of will, or whatever it is, to manage men in this way. No doubt it is an inherited characteristic. Men who have not the gift naturally always fail if they attempt, in a fit of passion, these high-handed measures. I sailed for five years with 'Bunghole Lewis' (as he was familiarly called among seamen) and I never knew him to part with his crew, at the end of a voyage, otherwise than on the pleasantest terms, and with mutual good wishes. Whereas had any one of a hundred ordinary skippers treated his men in half as rough a way, he would have cooled his shins in prison at the end of every voyage.

"To show you further what sort of a man Captain Lewis was, and how unlikely under any circumstances he was to be affected by nervousness, I will tell you of a little brush we had with a French whaler with whom we fell in near the French island of New Caledonia. The incident has no connection with the main point of my story, and I only mention it to show what a cool hand our skipper was, and how unlikely to be affected by trifles.

"We sailed from Hobart Town in June, and as the winter time in the south is the season for

sperm-whaling in the tropics, we turned the old craft's nose west by north to get round Cape Leeuwin, and so away to the nor'ard as fast as the light winds would take us. In the course of a month, and after picking up a couple of fair sized whales, we were feeling our way through that dangerous bit of water know as Torres Straits. We managed to secure a fine sperm whale in that intolerably hot sea, although, as a rule, whales are usually found a good deal farther east.

"Perhaps you know that sperm whales are much more ticklish creatures to handle than right whales. Not only have they awful teeth, with which they can crumple a boat as easily as a dog can chew a bit of biscuit, but the old sperm whale has a fierce heart, and when he is thoroughly roused will not only grind boats into matchwood, but has been known to send even stout ships to the bottom of the sea by a few blows of his tough old head and terrible flukes.

"We had run down through the Coral Sea, and were passing to the south of New Caledonia in company with a French whaler about our own size, and who was, of course, upon the same quest as ourselves. We had spoken the

Frenchman the evening before, and learned that he had been refitting in his own home-port of Noumea; and as our skipper thought this was a chance to get some late Sydney papers, he told me to lower away and take his compliments to the French captain with a polite request for any Colonial papers he could spare. As a rule, when sailors meet at sea, no matter whence they may hail, they always pass a friendly greeting to each other. Somehow the human heart grows tender towards our fellow wanderers upon the lonely world of waters, and even the most surly men will relax upon such a meeting, and, like the silent Arabs of the desert, at least wish each other God-speed.

"The French ship was only a couple of miles distant, and the sea was absolutely smooth with just the faintest rippling breeze on the water. With the exhilaration of again having the oars in their hands, the men made the light boat skim over the water at a pace that I know made the Frenchmen feel envious, for the Johnnies, with their short jerky stroke and heavier boats, can never touch the Colonials in speed, whatever they can do in politeness. But I am going to give you a bit on that subject also, which I think will convince you that in so-

called politeness, or in anything else, for that matter, the devil always manages to get in (as he did into Eden) and to play a strong hand all round.

"In a quarter of an hour or so we were alongside the French ship. Bidding my men remain in the boat, I sprang into the main-chains and scrambled on deck. I had been surprised when I got alongside that not a man had looked over the rail, or offered a rope's end. Now I was doubly confounded that not a man of them all looked at me, or seemed to be aware that I had boarded their old hooker. The decks presented the usual appearance of a French ship, the men laughing and pottering about at little jobs, jabbering to each other in that free-and-easy manner which always seems to English sailors so undisciplined. As I dropped on deck it struck me as very curious, and altogether unaccountable, that not a man jack of the happy family took the slightest notice of me; not a bit more than if I had been one of themselves coming down from a job in the rigging.

"It was rather disconcerting to a warm-hearted young fellow such as I was then. I wouldn't mind it much now; I've got over being troubled by trifles of that sort.

"I pulled myself together, and boldly proceeded aft, where an officer, whom I supposed to be the captain, was promenading, and paying no more attention to my intrusion than did his crew. I touched my cap sailor fashion—not taking it off, as I am thankful to remember to this day—and politely delivered my message. The fellow, without sign of salutation or vestige of greeting of any sort, looked me all over for a long minute, and then said in a slow, and what he meant to be an impressive tone, '*Mon leetle garçon, give your Capeeten my ver' bon damn, and I hope he and his canaille weel soon go to ze bottom of ze sea!*' It was one of the very worst knocks I ever had in my rather chequered life, but I held myself together by the skin of my teeth, as it were, and with a stiff bow said, '*Merci Monsieur! Bon jour!*' four of the few French words I know. I then skipped over the side, and so ended my visit to the French whaler '*Ile-de-France.*'

"When I gave the Frenchman's reply to our captain, a peculiar expression of satisfaction came over his hard, old face, which I don't know the meaning of to this day. Whether these two men had ever met before, or whether Captain Lewis was simply hoping for a chance

of paying the saucy Frenchman back with interest, I never knew. But if it were the latter, the opportunity came sooner than mortal man could have hoped for.

"That very afternoon our mast-head look-outs reported a school of whales four or five miles to the eastward of us. As the wind was so light that we hardly had steering way, the order was at once given to lower away two boats. To my surprise the captain jumped into his boat, and at once took the steer-oar. Our skipper was reported to have been a wonderful dare-devil at whaling in the days of his youth, but the days of his youth were now far past, and during all my voyaging with Captain Lewis, this was the first and only time he personally had taken command of a boat chasing whales. All our men noticed the 'old man's' new departure, and the whisper went round that there was going to be some fun; and sure enough there was.

"The man who 'headed' the captain's boat, that is, threw the first 'iron'—as whalers call the harpoon—at a whale, was a gigantic Maori named 'Tahana.' Tahana had been at the business all his life, and what he didn't know about a whale was not worth knowing.

In fact he was famous among Colonial whalers as the cleverest hand with the harpoon in all the South Seas. Of course there was always a scramble among whaling captains to secure Tahana, and the poor fellow was generally conveyed on board a ship at the last moment in a helpless state of inebriation, and only learned the name of his ship and captain when the craft was actually under way and out of sight of land.

"The captain's boat—with Tahana in high spirits at the bow-oar—got away a few minutes before I did, and as his boat was the fastest in our lot it was quite impossible, I knew, for me to reach the whales before him.

"By this time it was dead calm, and as the Frenchman lay directly between us and the whales, he had at least a couple of miles advantage of us. As we passed the Frenchman's stern I noticed that one of his boats had been lowered, and was now a good bit ahead of us, the men pulling their little, jerky strokes with all their might directly for a whale which our skipper had evidently singled out as his own prize, and which lay gambolling with its mate some two or three hundred fathoms on the near side of the main school.

"As we neared the pair of whales, the French boat was first, our captain's second, and mine third. Our long, steady, sweeping stroke had gained two to one on the Frenchmen, and we were not more than a hundred fathoms behind them as we neared the whales. Just then the French captain—by this time I had recognized him—apparently afraid of alarming the fish, ordered his men to take in their oars and take to their paddles. In this fashion they ranged quietly up, almost touching the whale in their anxiety to make sure of their prize, as they now considered him to be; but the Johnnies reckoned without their host, as the saying goes.

"By desperate pulling (I had taken the after oar myself, the youngster who was at it got pumped out in the fearful struggle) we had managed to get within a short distance of our captain's boat, and by the look of things I saw that something out of the common was going to happen, and I told my men to lay on their oars a bit and watch their chance.

"Our skipper never seemed to hesitate a single moment, but with a quick clear command, which we heard quite distinctly, he gave Tahana the order 'Stand up!' and then we knew there was going to be what sailors call 'ructions.'

"The French boat lay broadside on the whale, not a proper position for a boat to be in when attacking a whale, but the French skipper had no doubt taken this position to prevent our captain getting a chance to throw the first harpoon, and so establishing legal claim on the fish. But the Frenchman sadly misunderstood Captain Lewis if he thought any little game of that sort would interfere with his plans. When within a few feet of the French boat our 'old man' told his men to back water, and at the same moment ordered Tahana to dart, which the splendid fellow did with such precision and tremendous force that the harpoon went whizzing clean over the Frenchmen's heads (no doubt to their horror and amazement) and buried itself up to the hilt in the whale's shiny back. A moment of dazed, painful wonder, then the mighty monster dashed forward at lightning speed and 'sounded'—that is, betook himself to the bottom of the sea, or as far down as he might think necessary to free himself from his enemies.

When a whale is first struck it is customary to let the line, attached to the harpoon, run out to the tub where it is coiled, until the whale settles to his pace, then a turn is taken round

the logger-head, and the men stand by to haul up for a chance to kill the fish, or, if he should sound, to let the line run out handsomely; otherwise one of two things is sure to happen (unless the line is cut on the instant), either the harpoon will draw and the whale escape, or else the boat and all its contents will be dragged under water just as far and as long as the monster feels inclined.

"When Tahana's splendid cast took effect the whale darted ahead a length or two, and instantly sounded. Then there was one of two courses to pursue, either to pay out line, or to cut and let the prize go. But neither the captain nor Tahana was of that sort. 'Let the line run' was the order, and it *did* run with such velocity that Tahana stood watching the 'chocks' with a baler in hand to dash water on the wood whenever it began to smoke.

"In the few seconds after the whale was struck I was watching it so intently that I did not notice the tragedy taking place in the Frenchmen's boat; but a united yell of rage and fear soon drew my attention to the Johnnies' sore plight.

"When Tahana made his tremendous cast over the Frenchmen's heads and struck the whale,

the line fell square across their boat, and flew out at such a rate that—as I have already said—Tahana had to stand by with water to prevent the chocks of his boat taking fire from the friction of the flying line. This line, of course, was tearing across the poor Frenchmen's boat at the same terrific rate, and the foolish chaps had bundled forward and aft in their terror of the hissing rope. A stroke with a tomahawk, or a sheath-knife, would have cut the line in a moment and thereby solved the difficulty. But every man jack of them was calling some contradictory advice, and before the captain (who was the only *compos mentis* man in the lot) could find a knife and ng forward, the rushing line had actually c ir boat in two halves as clean as a pair of giants could have done the business with a cross-cut saw.

“The crew were left, some on the bow, some on the stern portions, howling, gesticulating, and jabbering, and trying to keep their respective parts afloat as they slowly drifted asunder. Just at this moment Tahana's line slackened, which showed that the whale was rising, and our captain ordered his men to ‘haul in line.’ As his boat shot ahead, old Lewis looked coolly at the French skipper, raised his

hat and waved it in the direction of the Frenchman's ship, as if advising him to get back there as quickly as possible. As things had turned out, I remember thinking at the moment that it was the most wonderful 'tit for tat' that had ever happened. And, severe as the adventure had turned out for the Frenchman, I thought then, and I think still, that it was nothing more than a just payment for his unprovoked insult of the morning. Of the cause of that strange insult—national, personal, or what not—I never got the slightest inkling. All the months we were together after the French episode Captain Lewis never referred to the matter in any way whatever.

"The whale rose within a few fathoms of our captain's boat, which gave Tahana a fine opportunity to finish his work by a shot from the bomb-gun, delivered just abaft the fin. The explosion of the bomb quickly ended poor Leviathan's earthly, or rather waterly, career. This exciting achievement being completed, I thought it would only be decent to proceed to pick up the unfortunate Frenchmen, who were by this time in a pitiable condition—the bow and stern of their wrecked boat having become completely submerged, and the men were only

keeping their heads above water by clinging to the oars, or to the keel of their demolished boat.

"I succeeded in rescuing the whole gang, their captain being the very last man hauled, in a very undignified manner, on board. I had essayed to pick him up first, but—whether from pride and anger, or from humanitarian motives I cannot say—he imperiously waved me off, and haughtily ordered me to '*Peck up mon pauvre mans!*'

"By the time I had got all the Frenchmen into my boat our captain had his whale in tow, and was laying a course for our ship. Considering the overcrowded state of my boat I thought the best plan would be to take the half-drowned Johnnies to their own vessel, and then to return to assist in towing the whale. But Captain Lewis had a simpler plan altogether. He ordered me to join the tow at once, and to dispose of the Frenchmen by making them double-bank the oars, which would not only assist our men, but, as Lewis smilingly observed, 'keep the Frenchmen warm after their unfortunate wetting.'

"Thus our very silent procession moved slowly along for nearly two mortal hours. It is a

wearisome process for a couple of boats to move a big sperm whale. It was a mercy for the poor Johnnies that we were in the tropics, for their long spell in the water made their teeth chatter even in that hot climate. However, the exercise seemed to do them good, and when the biscuit bag and grub box were produced, and our men shared their rations with the unfortunate chaps, they became quite lively, and even tried to crack some feeble little jokes. I civilly offered a portion of the tucker to the French captain, but he sternly refused the proffered refreshment, and kept his eyes gloomily fixed on his clumsy-looking old craft, and, I have no doubt, thinking out some mode of revenge for the scurvy way fate—in the shape of our skipper—had served him that day.

“We had to pass the French vessel on our course towards the ‘Flying Fox,’ and when we got within a mile of their ship Captain Lewis ordered me to cast off the tow-line and put the Frenchmen on board. This order I proceeded to execute, although I knew that it would be a ticklish job. When we got alongside, the Frenchmen scuttled up the chain-plates like a lot of monkeys, the captain being among the last to go up. The instant the last of the lot

were clear of the boat I ordered my men to shove off, and it was well that they obeyed the order in a *brace of shakes*, for at the same moment a big cannon ball was dropped over the ship's side which just shaved our bow, and would have smashed the boat like an eggshell if it had struck us. My men had their oars out in a jiffy, and we went off like a streak of greased lightning. I fully expected that the angry Frenchies would send a shot after us, but they didn't. Maybe we were beyond range before they got their old gun ready. But, whatever was the cause, they gave us no more trouble. A westerly breeze springing up, our ship soon ran down to us, and after making our fine whale secure alongside, we bore away to the sou'-east. When the wind struck the Frenchman he hauled close upon-a-wind, as if he intended to go back to Noumea. No doubt if he made that beautiful port, he would find some relief to his wounded feelings by rehearsing to his fellow countrymen the base conduct of '*perfidious Albion*.'

"That was the end of our little episode with the captain and crew of the 'Ile-de-France.' It all turned out excellent comedy for us, though at one time it looked uncommonly like turning

out tragedy. Of course it never ceased to be a favourite subject of conversation with our crew, but our captain never in my hearing referred to the matter, and I don't know to this day if he had ever had a feud with the Frenchman, or if the Frenchman's message by me was simply a gratuitous insult.

CHAPTER III

"AFTER trying-out our whale, and calling at one of the Fiji Islands for a supply of fresh tack, we cruised slowly in a south-easterly direction for a little over two months. But, as the sailors said, our luck seemed to have departed with the Frenchman, for during all that time we never saw hilt or hair of a sperm whale. At last Captain Lewis determined (as the summer was coming on) to give up looking for sperm whales in the tropics, and to try our luck for right whales far south, in fact well into the Antarctic Ocean. This determination of our skipper gave me the opportunity of seeing the most awful phenomenon, I think, that mortal eyes ever beheld. I have never mentioned the subject to human ears before (excepting to the owners of

the barque), but you and I have cruised so long together that I think we understand each other, and I can trust you not to laugh at me. Besides, you are one of the sort whom I have never met before—I mean the sort who seem to see and hear things which are not explainable by any means known to the *clever* man's logic or science. Therefore I shall tell you exactly what I *saw*, without the least fear that you will smile at an old sailor's yarn, and wonder how such queer fancies got into his brain. But this was not fancy at all. It was fact.

“As I said we braced sharp up to the south-east trades, and in a few days passed the Kermadecs, and held on south until we struck the westerly winds not far from the above lonely group. Then we squared away east-south-east, day by day edging a little more south, for our skipper had fully made up his mind to work his way to the solid ice-pack, if he did not fill the ship before he got so far.

“It was not until we reached seventy degrees south that we ran among large icebergs. I had never seen such great bergs before, and they, in their awful grandeur, fascinated me with a terrible fascination, not to say horror.

“On all my other voyages our skipper had

given the ice zone a wide berth, and I had only become acquainted with small bergs, and they rapidly melting as they drifted into the warm seas. But as we now pushed our way south we encountered a different kind of ice-island altogether. Great masses of ice, hundreds of feet in height, and miles in extent. Some clear as crystal, and penetrated by great caves and valleys of the most wonderful shapes and colours, others again glittering in the sunlight with the immaculate purity of newly-fallen snow.

"When we remember that an iceberg only shows about one-third of its actual size above water, some of the huge masses we sailed past must have been of immense proportions. Few of these great bergs drift clear of the frozen ocean; it is only the comparatively small masses of ice which reach the warm seas, and are encountered by ships making a voyage round the Horn. The immense bergs either ground or drift so slowly that the short Antarctic summer is past ere they find their way to the open sea.

"After many hard rubs among the ice, and many close calls of being crushed among the bergs, we reached seventy-two degrees south latitude, and one hundred and thirty-five west longitude, and here we found what we sup-

posed to be the everlasting, impenetrable ice-barrier that guards the regions of death and silence, regions, the mysteries of which the bravest and the strongest have failed to reveal.

"We found whales fairly plentiful in those desolate waters, especially about five or six degrees further north, and had done pretty well. But our skipper kept pushing south until we seemed to get beyond the range of all living things, and, as I say, ran up against the regions of eternal ice.

"During all our cruising in those strange, far south seas, the weather was wonderfully fine. For nearly two months the sea was absolutely calm with regard to motion. I suppose the many icebergs drifting to the north, and the great ice-barrier in the south, break the force of the Pacific rollers reaching those waters. The wind in the daytime was usually just sufficient to fill the sails, while for a few hours about midnight it generally dropped altogether.

"We had been drifting for several days along the towering ice-barrier, sometimes so near that we were compelled to lower all our boats to tow the ship clear of the awful cliffs which would have smashed our yards and boats if we had got within touching distance.

"Captain Lewis was loath to turn northwards, for he had a fixed notion that we were not yet in contact with the moveless pack which extends in a solid mass to the South Pole; and he hoped to find open water which would prove that what we had been coasting along for the last eight or ten days was only a gigantic iceberg, either aground or slowly drifting north.

"By noon on January the 25th, 1859 (I remember the date better than my own birthday) we found the shore—or rather ice-line—slightly trending to the south; and the skipper, no doubt thinking that he was going to find a southerly passage, in high glee ordered to trim the yards to the light easterly breeze, and change the ship's course half a point south. We slowly crept along, and gradually opened up what seemed like a strait, as the captain had hoped, but which, upon investigation, turned out to be only a bend in the unbroken coast-line.

"The sun was shining on the glittering ice-peaks, and sending strange, weird lights and shadows down the face of the perpendicular wall that rose sheer from the sea for hundreds of feet. Although we had become accustomed somewhat to the wonderful forms and colours of the world of ice in which we had been sailing

30 THE HAUNTED SHIP

during many weeks, yet each new day—if that expression is allowable—where there was no night—when the sun reached its zenith, it seemed that new forms of beauty and wonder developed.

“On the particular day to which I refer the sea was so calm, the sunlight so brilliant, and the play of colour upon the ice-cliffs so marvelously lovely, that it touched some long dormant feelings even in the rough hearts of our fellows, and all hands were lined along the rail staring, in awe-struck wonder, at the unutterable glory of it all. The air was so absolutely still that I could hear the little puffs—which a smoker emits—as the men pulled away at their after-dinner pipes, and occasionally eased their feelings with that little grunt which, in a way, expresses something that neither the heart nor the lips are able to express in words.

“As we were all gazing at the splendid sight—even stern old Lewis appearing spell-bound as he stood by the mizen rigging watching the lights and shadows on the ice-cliffs—a whisper passed from man to man, ‘*a ship!*’ and sure enough, as if moored to the ice-wall, a large ship lay silent and moveless as the wall itself.

“We soon made her out to be a whaler. Her

boats were all gone, but along her sides were the remains of broken davits, where boats had once been. Her three masts were snapped off near the deck. The top hamper (which is characteristic of whalers) had been swept clean away, together with most of the bulwarks, cook's galley, deckhouse, etc. The only unimpaired relics of the ship's old calling were the 'try-works'; they had been so firmly built, and so securely bolted to the solid woodwork, that neither storm nor time had been able to budge them.

* * * * *

"There did not seem to be any life whatever about the ship, and, although we hoisted a signal, it was more as a matter of form than with any expectation of a reply. We were about two miles from this strange sight, and as the weather was perfectly calm, the captain ordered me to lower away my boat and proceed to examine the wreck (as she appeared to be) so far as I safely could. It does not take a whaler much time to start a boat, and in five minutes we were clear of our ship and skimming along towards the stranger, feeling a sort of pleasurable excitement as to what we might discover.

"Of course, in steering, I was looking towards

the object we were approaching, while my crew, sitting at their oars, were looking back at our ship. As we got nearer and nearer to the wreck a strange sensation of something, very like fear, took possession of me, and I suppose the men must have noticed it, for they all stopped pulling and looked round. As they did so there was a sort of gasping shiver among them, and they instantly began to back water as if we were running on to some serious danger.

"The sight which staggered me and my crew is quite beyond my powers of description. To all appearance, leaning over the poop iron railing on the port side—which was the side we were approaching—were twenty or twenty-five men, of the usual whaling type, looking listlessly over the ship's side. This is what *appeared* to us at first glance; but what made my crew and me shiver and hesitate was the weird certainty borne into each of our minds that these were not living men; and, if not living men, then—*what?*

"My crew, with white, scared faces, and never uttering a word, began slowly to turn the boat's head towards our ship, and I realized that if I allowed their fear to grow into a panic I could never prevent them making a disgraceful bolt.

" 'Men,' I said, and I was ashamed to detect a quaver in my voice, as if I were coming out of an ague fit. 'Men! the captain sent us to investigate this strange ship, and if we turn tail and bolt without doing what we were commanded to do, we shall be a laughing stock to our shipmates, and you know what sort our "old man" is! He will most certainly punish every man jack of you. And a week or so in a cask, in this climate, will not be at all pleasant. Be men! pull alongside, and, at least, let us try to do what we were commanded.'

"I had always been judicious in the management of my men, and they had a good deal of confidence in me, and generally obeyed me implicitly, without any of those disagreeable growls which sailors so often indulge in, especially towards all officers under the rank of first mate. The first mate has too much power in his hands for a sailor to play tricks with.

"My words had the desired effect, oars dropped into stroke, and, with one or two furtive glances over their shoulders, we dashed alongside the silent, mysterious ship.

"I knew that my men made all the noise they reasonably could when I ordered the oars in. The extra rattle helped to keep their spirits up,

and did no harm, so I took no notice. The bow oarsman caught on to the main chains with the boat hook, and then looked at me for the next move.

"In the state we were all in I knew that if I hesitated a moment I might become the greatest coward of the lot, so without a moment's pause, and without daring to look up, I sprang into the tangle of wire rigging, all twisted in the rusted and broken chain plates, clambered on to the ship's rail, and stood there for a few moments looking fore and aft, with about the most uneasy feeling I ever experienced in my life. But I gathered my wits together, and in the gruffest voice I could muster I called to my boat-steerer (an experienced old hand, upon whom I thought I could rely) to come on deck with me, and ordered the rest of the crew to remain in the boat—which was quite a superfluous order, as all the power of the British navy would have failed to force the men on board the haunted ship.

"When the boat-steerer and I, standing pretty close together (for what reason I leave you to guess), took a survey of things, this is what we saw: The decks had been swept fore and aft of everything movable in some long-past catas-

trophe of wind, or sea, or crashing iceberg. That the ruin had happened at one fell sweep was proved by the evidence that no attempt had been made to rig jury masts, and that for the very good reason that nothing had been left to rig jury masts with. The boats had not been lowered, but torn away, as the old-fashioned davits were snapped off a foot or two above the rail.

"The ship was one of the old-fashioned models, of about five or six hundred tons burden, and with her wholesome breadth of beam, and beautifully clean run, she must have been a fine sea-boat and fast sailer.

"We noted all these details at a glance, and then we looked at each other with, I think, signs of terror in our eyes, for we edged nearer together without uttering a word. We knew, without words, what each one was thinking: 'Where are the men we saw a few minutes ago leaning over the rail?' Gone! Not a vestige of human kind, living or dead, could we see.

"Signing to my companion to follow me, I leaped to the deck, and walked slowly for'ard. All the hatches were closed, but a falling spar had knocked a hole in a corner of the fore hatch, through which we could see the casks of oil

jammed chock up to the combings, showing that the poor fellows, whoever they were, had filled their ship, probably after years of hardship and were dreaming of home when catastrophe and death overtook them.

"When we got on the fo'c'sle-head and looked over the bows we found both anchors down, and, to our astonishment, they were lying together, with a lot of loose chain, on a solid floor of ice, some twelve or fifteen feet below the surface. The sea was so clear that every little crack and chink on the anchors and chains were as discernible as though they lay at our feet on deck. The clearness of the water, and its peculiar colour, so like the hue of the ice, had prevented us discovering, as we came alongside, that the ship was resting, or rather frozen, on a solid bed of ice projecting from the great ice-barrier. This position of the ship accounted for her absolute motionlessness, which had puzzled us both before and since we had boarded her.

"We turned aft from the fo'c'sle, not caring to investigate that rather dark abode, although the door stood invitingly open. However, we knew afterwards (by what we found in the cabin) the sort of *things* we would have found there.

"So we continued exploring aft, looking at this and that as we went along, but never saying a word to each other; it seemed, somehow, that words would be out of place on that silent ship, and we held our peace as if we were at a funeral.

"As I said just now the ship was one of the old-fashioned sort, with top-gallant fo'c'sle and high poop, under which was a large roomy cabin—'saloon' they call it nowadays.

"The ship was so battered about, the paint so completely rubbed off everywhere, both outside and inside, that it was impossible to tell where she hailed from. But I think from her size and general appearance that she must have belonged to London, and I have no doubt she had been originally intended for a passenger ship. She was not only much larger than the usual run of whalers, but her general appearance gave me the impression that she had seen better days in her youth, and had lost caste and position as the newer and smarter class of ships came into fashion. Then after various attempts in other lines—always dropping lower and lower (like a man defeated in business by more pushing competitors)—she had dropped into the 'shell-back' fraternity and given up her old associ-

ates altogether, or rather they had given her up.

"When my boat-steerer and I reached the break of the poop we found the cabin door securely hooked *open* with heavy brass hooks at top and bottom. The long, though rather low cabin, was lighted by two skylights on the poop-deck. The glass of the skylights was of the old sort, immensely thick and heavy, and so well protected by iron bars that it had safely withstood the catastrophe which had ruined every other part of the ship.

"As we entered the cabin side by side (neither of us at all desiring the honour of precedence), and holding on to each other like scared children finding their way in the dark, we found the whole place almost as well lighted as the main deck outside, and we stood staring round the silent place without daring to go forward even a few feet.

"As we gradually mustered courage to advance as far as the fore end of the long, heavy table, and our eyes became accustomed to our surroundings, this was the sight which met our terrified gaze:

"At the after end of the table, which is usually occupied by the captain of a ship, there sat

something which we at first thought was a man, so straight and firm it sat in the securely fixed arm-chair. The hands, which we soon perceived were *skeleton hands*, were resting on what we guessed was the ship's log-book. The 'thing' was heavily clothed in a pilot cloth suit, and over that a sailor's yellow oil-skin coat, with what sailors call a sou'wester on the head.

"It was beyond all words terrible to see this ghostly captain sitting there, where he had sat certainly for months, probably for years, with the mouldering log-book under his hands, and surrounded by companions silent and grim as himself. Whether the skeleton had been kept in position by the stiffness of its clothing, the support of the table and chair, and the steadiness of the frozen ship, I do not pretend to know. I am only telling you of what I saw, not their causes, for that is quite beyond my power.

"The ship was fitted, as most of the old-fashioned ships were, with state rooms partitioned off from the cabin, each with a port-hole for light and air. These state rooms were of the smallest dimensions, but capable of accommodating two persons at a pinch. There were

four rooms to a side, and as the doors were all open we could look freely into each. There was a silent occupant in every room, some fully dressed, others muffled up in clothing and blankets, as if they had died fighting to the last with the dreadful cold and darkness of the awful polar night.

"After peeping carefully into each bunk to make certain that the occupant needed no more help, we came to a large room aft, extending the whole width of the ship, and with two stern windows flooding it with light. The room was comfortably, in fact luxuriously, furnished for those days. We judged that this must have been the captain's quarters, and a corroded brass plate which we discovered over the door, with the single word 'Captain,' proved this to be the case. This, like all the other rooms, had its ghastly occupant. On the bed lay the skeleton of a woman with the bones of a little child huddled up and held close in the fleshless arms to where her bosom once had been.

"After this last weird, sorrowful sight, and carefully avoiding touch with table, locker, or bulkhead, we made for the cabin door with the slow step and self-restraint of men in mortal terror, knowing well that if we for one instant

allowed our over-wrought feelings to get the mastery of us we should rush for our boat in a frenzy of fear, and disgrace ourselves in our comrades' estimation—a thing sailors are very careful to avoid doing.

"We slid down the ship's side into the boat, and I instantly ordered to cast off. I seized the steer-oar and with a vigorous sweep headed the boat for our ship. I did not need to tell the men to 'give way!' they did that right enough, and, under their powerful strokes, our light boat went spinning over the calm water. In twenty minutes we were alongside, and in a minute more hooked on to the falls and run up to the davits.

"'Well,' said the captain, 'what do you make her out to be? Any signs of life? What is her name?'

"The men had gone forward, while the captain and I had turned aft and were now by the companion-way.

"'If you please, sir,' said I, 'I would like a cup of coffee and a biscuit, for I feel a bit knocked up.' Then in a moment I felt the deck hit me as I went off into a dead faint, a thing I had never done in my life before. The captain quickly called the steward, and with

the aid of a stimulant from the medicine chest, and afterwards a cup of strong coffee, I was fit to crawl down the companion-ladder, and lay myself comfortably on a cabin locker. When I had eaten a biscuit and drank another cup of the hot, strong coffee, the captain said:

“‘Now you will do; your colour is coming back into your gills; but yet you look as if you had seen a ghost.’

“I nodded emphatically when he said this, and he told me afterwards that such a queer, scared expression came into my eyes, that he feared I had received some violent shock which had driven me insane.

“Throwing a heavy blanket over me, he very kindly advised me to have forty winks, which he said I required to set me all right again. Ordering the steward to keep an eye on me, Lewis took himself off, and I remember thinking, in a dazed sort of way, how very strange it was to find a streak of kindness, and even a sort of tenderness, in our hard old skipper. But I have found out, in the course of a rather hard, rough-and-tumble life, that it is unwise to suppose that we know all about another's very inmost character, for we don't! I think that is why our Lord says: ‘Judge not that ye be

not judged.' I was once saved from the sharks in the lagoon at Taupara, when I was knocked overboard by the main-boom in gybing. A twenty-foot monster would have made short work of me had not one of my darkies (whom I had rope's ended a month before) jumped after me, and fought the beast with a common sailor-knife, until we were both picked up. The poor fellow had his left hand snapped clean off in the fight, but he made precious little fuss about it, and laughed and danced about the deck when the shark turned belly-up, done to death by my man's well-directed thrusts. I could tell you a lot of things bearing on the subjects, 'Judge not that ye be not judged,' and 'The first shall be last, and the last first,' and things of that sort, but I must forbear, and proceed with my reminiscences of our voyage in the Antarctic.

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"I must have slept long and soundly, for I neither heard nor saw what was going on until the steward called me for supper at four bells. By this time the skipper, second, third, and fourth mates were doing full justice to a Hobart Town whaler's generous fare, in the usual business-like and silent fashion of sailors when they are at sea.

"I did not feel much of an appetite, but I took my place at table and began to feed. The three mates soon finished their meals, and took themselves off for the no less important part of the programme, a pipe of strong, negro-head tobacco.

"The captain and I being left alone, we proceeded more leisurely, but no less silently, until the skipper, having finished his last cup of black tea—almost as exhilarating as Jamaica rum—smacked his lips and said, as he rose from the table:

"'Don't bother yourself, Mr. Kinross, about your watch on deck to-night, turn in at once and have a good night's sleep. To-morrow I shall go with you and explore this "phantom ship," which seems to have given you and your boat-steerer "a bad turn," as the women say. But I don't think that ghosts will have much effect on Jack Lewis. If they do, it will be the first time, and I shall know the reason why!'

"I don't think that he ever did 'know the reason why,' but the effect was very tangible on him, poor man! and that in a fashion much more serious than either he or I dreamed of at the time.

"I turned in as the skipper advised, and slept like a dead man for twelve solid hours.

"When I turned out, drank a cup of coffee, and went on deck, I found it was one of the most splendid mornings I ever remember seeing. The sea was like glass, and the sunlight glittered over the intensely clear, greeny-blue water, as the sun can only glitter near great icebergs.

"Our barque lay in about the same position as the day before, only we had drifted a little more to the eastward, and so were a bit further from the mysterious ship, which lay, of course, in the same position as she did on the previous day.

"After breakfast Captain Lewis ordered me to lower away my boat, saying he wished to board the wreck and examine her himself. Why he wished to take my crew instead of his own, I cannot say. Perhaps it was to see if the scare, as he called it, which seemed to affect the boat-steerer and myself, extended to the crew. Whatever was the reason, the skipper soon had ocular demonstration that the infection was widespread, for not a man obeyed when I ordered them into the boat!

"With a fierce oath, and a promise to cure them all with the *cask treatment* as soon as he

returned, Lewis swung himself into the boat by the tackle-fall, and told me to cast off the painter, saying that he would scull to the wreck himself. This, of course, I could not permit, and at once followed him into the boat.

"As we pushed off and took to our oars, the skipper called to the row of terrified looking men leaning over the rail:

" 'I am heartily ashamed to be shipmates with a gang, not only of ruffians, but of cowards; I will attend to you, my lads, when I come back.'

"Favoured by the dead calm which prevailed, we soon covered half the distance which separated the ships. Here we rested a bit, then again took to our oars. When we got within a quarter of a mile, or rather less, of the stranger we lay on our oars as if by mutual consent to have another good look at her.

"There she lay steadfast, silent, grim, and ghost-like. And to my horror—I feel the shiver of it yet—the silent, motionless men were leaning over the rail looking at the cruel sea that had, long ago, smiled and mocked at their miserable fate.

"Neither I nor the skipper had a word to say. He muttered something under his breath, and

sluing the boat round broadside on to the ship, pulled out his field-glasses, and made a long careful examination of the strange craft and her ghastly crew.

"Without a word he put up his glasses, and we again started pulling towards the mystery. We adopted the position of standing up to our oars, and so keeping our eyes fixed on the apparitions, and determined to solve the mystery by marking how and where the ghostly men disappeared. When we got within about fifty fathoms of the ship the vision disappeared in one instant! So suddenly did this occur that we thought the delusion must be in our sight. We rubbed our eyes, and the captain whispered, 'Back water.' We slowly and noiselessly backed for, perhaps, three minutes, and instantly, as if a curtain were suddenly withdrawn, the silent, motionless forms were again revealed, clear and distinct as living men!

"The skipper's stern, weather-beaten countenance grew a bit pale as he said: 'Pull alongside, and let us investigate this trickery; I must find it out.'

"In a couple of minutes we were alongside, and taking the end of our boat-line with us so as to make our boat safely secure (we knew well

that no one would come to our rescue if our boat got adrift) we scrambled up the rusted chain-plates.

"Standing on the rail, holding on to the rotting main rigging, we looked fore and aft on the desolate scene, which had struck awe into my heart the day before.

"The usual creak of a spar or a bulkhead, the ripple of water under the bows or counter, the many sounds, more or less distinct, which are always heard on a ship, however completely deserted she may be, on this ship did not exist. I remember that the strange desolation of it all put me in mind of a text I learned when I was a young lad. It had just been settled, in family conclave, that I was to have my life's desire, viz., to go to sea, and I rushed to my grandmother to inform her of the great event. How well I remember the half-sad, half-quizzical look she gave me over the top of her spectacles, and said: 'Laddie, you had better stay on the good, firm earth, for "there is sorrow on the sea."' Dear soul! she had lost her husband and three sons on the sea, so she knew well what she was talking about.

"Here was the 'sorrow on the sea' with a vengeance! But it was the sorrow of utter

silence, the crying and the wailing were all past; only the sorrow and the silence remained.

"It seemed to have the same effect upon Captain Lewis as it had upon the boat-steerer and myself, but he bore himself more bravely than we did, and made no remarks. Slipping lightly to the deck, he motioned me to follow him, and I remember thinking it strange that he began to go exactly the same round as I had gone the day before. We climbed on to the to'gallant-fo'c'sle, looked at the anchors lying on the ice, examined the old-fashioned windlass, the stump of the bowsprit, and all such things as interest sailors and give them a clue to the character of a ship. Lewis even went into the dingy fo'c'sle. What he saw there I don't know. He came out again with a queer look, and breathing as if he had run up the main rigging from the deck to the to'gallant crosstrees without resting a second.

"When we reached the cabin door the skipper paused a moment, as if to make sure that I was with him, and not lingering behind as I had done at the fo'c'sle, then he went in with—I must say a much braver bearing than I had done when I dragged in my companion with me never caring a pin to hide my nervousness.

That shows you the difference between men when put to the test.

"But even Captain Lewis was staggered—strong-nerved man though he was—when he walked up to the table, and looked closely at the figure sitting there, silent, motionless, and grim! with the pen clutched in the fleshless fingers, and the sodden, faded log-book held tight under the awful hands. But though staggered a bit, our stern old skipper stood the ghastly sight bravely, never faltering, as I had done; and after trying to read a word on the rotten paper (which it was impossible to do) he went slowly round the state-rooms, looking boldly into each, where the silent occupants lay, either huddled up with cap, blankets, and clothing or staring with uncovered, sightless eyes, and grinning teeth—as if in mockery, or reproof—at the intruder.

"The captain's room, with its pathetic occupants, was the last Lewis entered. He stood quietly, looking long and intently at the woeful spectacle, and never saying a word. Then he did two strange things—strange things for him I mean. After taking off his hat he slowly and deliberately crossed himself twice—as if he were praying for each of the poor things before us

—then taking the faded bandana handkerchief from the crown of his hat he wiped heavy, distinct tears from his stern, hard old eyes!

“I mention this incident as one of the extraordinary events of that strange day, or rather ‘days,’ for there were two of them.

“You see, I could no more imagine Jack Lewis doing openly a distinctly religious action, and shedding, quite unreservedly, tears of tenderness and sympathy, than I could have imagined the figure-head of our old barque doing these things.

“Coming back to the table the captain whispered to me to lift the log-book while he released it from the skeleton’s hands. As I assayed to do this, I found that the hands and the book were so glued together with damp and *other* matter that the log began to fall to pieces in my hands like rotten wood. I drew away from the table with an exclamation of horror, and made the best of my way out of the dreadful place. The captain followed me, and without any more ado we dropped into our boat, seized the oars, and started with a good swinging stroke towards our own ship.

“It was a very curious feature in that and the previous day’s experience that neither I nor

my companion seemed inclined to say a word of any sort whatever. I think we were under such a spell of fear and wonder that we were completely tongue-tied.

"Of course, as we sat at our oars, pulling away from the doomed ship we were looking directly back at her. When we got fifty or sixty fathoms distant, in an instant—like the flash of a magic lantern on a white screen—the terrible scene of men appeared again, as the scene had been before, and as clear and distinct in the moonlight as any part of their lives.

"'Back water!' called Long, quite sharply, as he swept the boat round with a few powerful strokes, and we pulled a little aside. Only saying 'Stay in the boat, he's crawling up the ship's side and away,' he disappeared from my view. I know that he went aboard, for I heard the sound as his feet struck the deck.

"He was out of my sight perhaps five or six minutes when he came crawling himself into the boat again, like a man who had been running away from a dog.

"The ship was all right, and then flung himself down on the deck, and became deadly and violently seasick.

"Fortunately (warned by my experience of

the previous day) I had slipped a vial of brandy into my pocket before leaving the barque that morning. We carried no grog save a small supply in the medicine chest. As soon as the first paroxysm was over, I induced my poor skipper to swallow a little of the spirit. After sitting quite still for a bit, and as white as a sheet of paper, he slowly shipped an oar and began to pull, but with a very uncertain and weak stroke, altogether unlike his usual vigorous methods.

"We exchanged not a word during our slow pull towards our ship. Only once the skipper rested on his oar, as if he had been tired out by a long hard day's work, and held out his hand for the stimulant. At one small swig he finished the contents, threw the vial overboard, and again took to his oar without vouchsafing me a word, good or ill.

"The 'lying Fox' lay, as she had lain all day, utterly becalmed, topsails flat against the masts, courses and mizzen brailed up.

"When we got alongside it was a very melancholy and silent crew who hooked on the falls and ran our boat up to the davits. If they expected some vigorous treatment (as no doubt they did) they were agreeably, or *disagr*

disappointed, for I really think—hardened cases as most of them were—that the majority felt a pang of regret as they noticed how ill the skipper looked.

“Without a word to the men Lewis swung himself on to the deck, and at once went to his cabin. He did not appear at supper, so I sent the steward to ask if he wished anything, but he merely growled back that he only wished to be ‘left alone!’ a request that the poor steward very gladly obeyed, as he stood in mortal fear of the skipper.

“About eight bells next morning a light breeze sprang up from the north-east, just enough to half fill the topsails, and give the ship steering way. I went to the captain’s cabin to report, and to get orders what to do, and what course to steer. No one had seen him since he and I returned from our expedition, and the only communication with him had been when he ordered the steward to leave him alone.

“I found him in by no means a satisfactory state. He was lying full-length on a narrow sofa-locker, as if he had lain down to have a short nap; but apparently not a wink had come to soothe his preternaturally bright, glittering eyes.

"I saw at a glance that the poor skipper was going into, or rather was in, a bad fever. I told him of the breeze that was springing up, and asked what I should do. His order was clear and sharp.

"'Crowd on all sail you can, lay a course as near *north* as possible, and get away from this awful place as quickly as wind and current will take us.' Then after a bit he added: 'I don't think I will ever come on deck again until you put me overboard. You must make the best voyage you can, remember that you will be the only *man* in the ship, all the others are only lubberly stop-gaps. Do your best to fill the barque with oil, for that is the way to please everybody. The owners won't care a snap whether the 'Flying Fox' is commanded by Jack Lewis or Davy Kinross, so long as she comes into port a full ship.'

"I only said 'Yes sir!' to his orders, and pretended not to hear his rambling remarks. I knew well that the fever had got into his blood, and that he was going to have a bad time.

"I called the steward to help the skipper out of his clothes and into his bunk, while I mixed a dose of quinine and a cool drink of lime juice, which he drank with evident satis-

faction, but I could not induce him to touch a morsel of food of any kind.

"Having done what I could for Lewis, I proceeded to attend to the barque. When I got on deck I found that the breeze had freshened a bit, and the second mate had laid the main-topsail aback, until he should hear what orders I, or the captain, had to give.

"The wind was still light, and had veered nearly due north. According to our position, and the lay of the iceberg, I calculated that we could just clear the western point of the berg. This course, I knew, would take us within less than half a mile of the terrible ship, but, on the other hand, if I tried to clear the eastern end of the iceberg there was much danger that we would shave so near the stupendous wall that we might lose the light wind altogether, and run the risk of drifting on to the sheer cliff, and so not only have our boats smashed, but probably have the ship dismasted as well.

"Under these circumstances I decided to brace the yards sharp up and stand to the westward. We set all plain sails, and as the barque fetched good way I found that we would just manage to clear the western end of the ice if the breeze held on, but with nothing to spare.

"As we drew abreast of the 'haunted ship,' the wind, which was more or less baffling owing to the great ice-cliff, headed us off a couple of points, and, to my horror, brought us within less than a hundred fathoms of her stern. All our men were at their proper quarters ready to trim sails at a moment's notice. The second mate was on the fo'c'sle, the third mate in the waist, while I stood by the mizzen-rigging anxiously watching the sails as they filled or shivered in the uncertain wind. I had put two men at the wheel for safety, although a boy could steer the smart little barque, which obeyed her helm like a twenty-foot boat.

"Just then I noticed by the cabin clock that it was twelve noon, and thinking to appear as cool as possible to the men, I ordered the third mate to strike eight bells, an order I was presently very sorry I had given, for the echo of our bell came back so distinctly that, by the look of fear on the men's faces, I felt certain that they firmly believed a ghostly hand was also striking the hour on the *other* ship.

"Of course all hands were looking intently at the strange craft, and I was on the point of calling 'ready about,' as I began to think it was hopeless to attempt passing her, when, at that

instant, the horror of yesterday, and the day before, again appeared. Perhaps it was owing to watching the barque's course and the ice-wall so intently, but I remember thinking that the weird vision happened as we drew past a sharp angle in the ice-cliff. But however it was, or whatever caused it—natural or supernatural—I know not. But plain as ever I saw living creatures in my life, there stood the row of men leaning over the rail, motionless and silent, gazing into the cruel sea, and paying no attention whatever to us.

"At this moment the light breeze veered two or three points to the eastward, and the barque's head looked up to west-nor'-west, which, to my intense comfort, was a full point clear of everything. I had hardly time to heave a sigh of relief when I noticed the main-sail lifting, and I heard a quick rattle of canvas as the other sails began to shiver. With a glance aloft, and yelling to the men at the wheel 'to keep her full,' I jumped aft, and to my dismay found the two great strong fellows lying perfectly unconscious on each side of the wheel!

"A few turns of the spokes again filled the sails, and presently the pretty little craft was

walking along at the rate of five or six knots an hour. After I got the barque going properly, and had a spare moment to look at other things, a strange spectacle met my startled gaze. From the fo'c'sle-head to the taff-rail I was, apparently, the only man alive. That is to say, from the second mate, lying prostrate on the fo'c'sle-head, to myself standing at the wheel, not a man jack of all the crew showed a spark of life!

"The strange apparitions on the ghostly ship had been more than they could bear, and had knocked the senses out of the great, strong fellows, which shows what weak sort of stuff men are made of. I had often seen those men face death, in their dangerous calling, with a laughing joke, and now here they were struck down in helplessness of mind and body, like a lot of weak, silly girls fainting at a sheet stuck on a pole. But I must admit that there was a good deal of excuse for the poor, ignorant chaps, for even the skipper and myself, who, I can say without any self-flattery, were many dots above them in intellectual attainments, had found the strain of the last two days all we could bear, and on the skipper's part, poor fellow, even more.

"Very fortunately for us the steady breeze held, and by carefully watching the sails I managed to clear the 'haunted ship' by shaving the wind as near as possible without getting the sails aback, or losing steering way.

"It was a queer experience—the queerest, I think, I ever had in my life—steering and watching the barque with the most careful vigilance, and every now and then glancing at apparently dead men scattered along our decks. Once a horror seized me, even greater than the horror of the *haunted ship*, 'What if all the crew were really dead men, and the captain (as I feared) dying in his cabin?' I quickly shook off the terror, for I knew that if I allowed it to get firm hold of me I would let go the wheel, and rush at the men to shake them back into consciousness, if that were possible, and if not!—then, the sooner the barque smashed to pieces on the ice cliff and foundered the better for me.

"In half an hour or so I was greatly relieved to see the second mate sit up, and with a dazed look alow and aloft, with his legs dangling over the combings of the fo'c'sle, he seemed to realize what had happened, and after a sheepish look aft at me, but never a glance at the cause

of his fainting fit, he betook himself to the water-cask and took a long drink from the dipper. The cool water seemed to brace him up, and after leaning against the try-works for a minute to steady himself, he proceeded to admonish the crew in true sailor fashion, viz., by a gentle kick in the ribs, and the order, 'Rouse up! you lazy lubbers you!'

"After a little while, rubbing their eyes with a dazed sort of wonder on their faces as to what had really happened to them, they all staggered to the water-cask and each one took a long drink, just as men do after living for a week on cheese, crackers, and whisky, as I have often known them to do, and call it a high old time, poor fools!

"The second mate ordered two men to the wheel, and as they came slouching along the quarter-deck they looked so exactly like men recovering from a drunken bout, that it was hard for me to realize that it was simply impossible for them to have tasted grog for more than six months.

"In a couple of hours we cleared the iceberg, and during all that time not one man looked back towards the ghostly ship, and, if in the course of duty they had to look aft, they

carefully avoided looking beyond our own ship. I remember thinking, as I noticed the poor fellows, that they must have felt as I had done during a miserable episode in my childhood days.

"Through some domestic arrangement or other—I forget what, I only remember the very melancholy circumstance—I was staying with an aunt whom I regarded with a certain amount of respectful affection, but, unfortunately, with much awe. Why I should have entertained this feeling towards her I do not know, for, as I grew into boyhood and manhood I came to love her as one of the tenderest of women, with a heart open to every appeal of the weak and the unfortunate. Where the fault lay I don't know. Perhaps it was in my own little soul full of bitterness at being cast into such untoward conditions, and pining for the love of hearts far away. Or, perhaps, good woman though she was, my aunt had not the subtle insight which can read the childish heart like an open book, and so in those weary days and terrible nights she never dreamed of the tragedy going on in the great, old-fashioned room upstairs.

'At night when my aunt had heard me say my prayers, and had tucked me nicely in the

blankets, she invariably said 'Good night, David! Go to sleep at once like a good boy!' Then, taking the candle, she would depart, closing the door with a firm, decisive snap of the latch that sent a hopeless shiver to my heart.

"If I was lucky enough to be thoroughly worn out with the adventures of the day, I would fall into blessed, dreamless slumbers, as my aunt admonished me to do. But if not, then woe, dire and terrible, befell me.

"There was a window opposite my bed. By the side of this window, and partly facing me, there stood a tall, quaint mirror which somehow reflected things in a most unaccountable way on moonlight, or starlight, nights. I used to start determinedly to lie on my right side (which my aunt told me was the proper and healthy way to sleep), and which had the additional advantage of shutting out the window and mirror from my sleepless eyes. But gradually the agitation of thinking what was taking place behind me overcame my strength of will, and a power I could not resist forced me to turn round and begin my terrible ordeal of watching the reflected moonlight and starlight, in all sorts of ghostly and fantastic shapes,

slowly creeping inch by inch across the floor until the *thing* reached my bed and lay upon the snowy counterpane, and on my wildly oppressed little heart, until I fell asleep through sheer spiritual exhaustion.

"When I reflect upon the past, and recall those terrible nights when I did not (or rather could not) obey my dear aunt, and 'go to sleep at once, like a good boy,' I think I often swooned in my paroxysms of terror, just as my crew had done when they saw the row of men leaning on the rail, and which they knew perfectly well—from my boat-steerer's report—were not tangible men at all, only ghostly shadows.

CHAPTER IV

"THAT afternoon we got clear of the great iceberg, and squared the yards before a good, steady south-east ten-knot breeze. We were not troubled with much more ice, and in three days ran into perfectly clear water.

"During all this time Captain Lewis had remained in his bunk, apparently not suffering in body, but with a strange restless expression in his eyes, as if he momentarily expected to see

something, or some *person*, and yet sorely dreading the constantly expected presence. I suppose he must have slept sometimes, or he could not have lived so long. But no matter how quietly I entered his state-room by day or night, I never once found him asleep.

"My boat-steerer was in the same restless, unsatisfactory condition, and, of course, they both grew weaker and weaker day by day in spite of all the nursing and care which the steward and I could give them. I think it was my anxiety for these two shipmates in their strange trouble, and the increased duties which devolved upon me at this time, which saved me from having a nervous breakdown myself.

"For some days before he died I saw that the captain was nearing the end of his voyaging in this world, and I remained near him as much as possible to do what I could for the poor fellow, and to be at hand in case he wished to say anything about his affairs. During the whole of his illness the skipper hardly ever spoke, only now and then asking for a drink of water or a cup of tea. In those queer, sad, silent days (the whole ship fore and aft seemed strangely silent) I fished out my Bible from the *bottom* of my sea-chest (the place where a sailor

usually keeps his Bible), and read a good many chapters aloud. During all my readings I was never quite sure whether the skipper listened or not, but a few hours before he died I happened to read the account of the crucifixion, and when I came to that part where our Lord said to the thief at His side, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise!' Lewis looked at me with a more tender expression (or perhaps I should say the only tender expression I had ever seen on his stern face) and said, 'Thank you, Kinross! I think you had better stop there; you cannot improve upon that.'

"Those were the last words he ever spoke, and that same evening, as the setting sun was sending a kind of glory down the cabin skylight, Captain Jack Lewis, with a calm relieved look on his weary face, passed on the road which, I think, by the expression on the faces of those who go forward, must be a wonderfully light road, but is so dark to those who are left behind.

"His death occurred on the fifteenth day after our expedition to the mysterious ship, and my boat-steerer died a few hours later.

"It was a very sad day for all hands when we gave our captain and the boat-steerer the

usual sailors' funerals, for, although there was not much love lost between the crew and the skipper yet there was in its place a certain amount of respect which seamen always feel for a competent commander, even if they suffer unjustly, as they often think, from too much discipline.

"I was now in command of our ship, and after carefully reviewing our case, and considering all the adventures and misfortunes from which we had suffered, I concluded that the wisest course would be to make the best of our way to our home-port. If we fell in with whales on the way, of course we would try to take them, but I concluded not to spend time in cruising about hunting for them.

"After the captain's funeral I called the crew aft, telling them that I was now their lawful commander; and after saying a few words in that fashion, of respect to the memory of our late captain, I communicated to them my plans for the future. The men endorsed my views heartily, and promised solemnly to obey orders promptly like good men and true seamen.

"When we got into the latitude of the Chathams, and about three hundred miles to the

eastward of the islands, we fell in with many whales.

"The weather was splendid, as autumn weather generally is in those latitudes, and we were soon in the midst of the lively work of cutting in whales and trying out blubber.

"In this exciting and exhilarating work our spirits seemed to get back into the normal sailor condition, and for this change I think that I was the most thankful man in the ship. You see, the more a man's mind is refined by thought and reading, and some—not too much—of the jargon of the schools, the more apt is he to suffer from spiritual depression. Besides, I was the only one left who had gone through the awful ordeal of boarding the 'haunted ship,' and it is a terrible thing to carry a ghastly memory in the mind without a single soul to share the burden. I think that criminals often give themselves up to justice, and confess their crimes, simply for the relief of sharing their unbearable thoughts with others. I once tried to ease my mind by speaking to the second mate on the subject, but he bolted forward without a word, pretending he had some urgent duty on hand!

"So you can understand how I plunged into

the dangerous excitement of whaling with great zest, and I feel certain that it saved me from a breakdown, and perhaps a fatal illness.

"The weather continued perfect for the next two months, and in that time we filled every cask and container with oil, and jammed every spare hole and corner of the old barque with splendid whalebone. I doubt not that when we finally battened down the hatches and squared away for home, that the 'Flying Fox' had the most valuable cargo it had ever been her good luck to carry.

"By this time we were rather short of both provisions and water. But upon laying the matter before the crew they unanimously voted to make the best of our way to Hobart Town, even if we had to be sparing of grub and go a bit short for the last week or two.

"We reached port without further incident. I delivered up the ship with her fine cargo of oil and bone, and gave the owners a full account of the whole voyage.

"It is a deplorable fact, which I have noticed frequently in the course of my life, that as a rule it is the things which affect men materially which affect them most, or, I may say, affect them at all.

"On my lonely voyage I had spent most of my days, and a good many of my nights as well, thinking of the profound sensation my report of what I had seen in the frozen south sea would produce upon the owners of the 'Flying Fox.' What then were my feelings of surprise, not to say amazement, when I showed them the log-book, and read to them my own private account of the ice-bound ship, its awful appearance and dreadful contents, to find that all these gentlemen had to say was, 'How very curious!' And the next moment they proceeded, 'Now look here, Kinross, we wish you to take command of the barque, and just go where you like, and we shall hope to see you back in a year or so with the same splendid luck as this time.'

"Of course, in paying off the men and settling up accounts, I saw much of the owners of the barque, and always found them not only kindly disposed men of business, but also thoughtful, generous, and intelligent gentlemen. But it was a most astonishing thing to me then, and is an astonishing fact to me yet, even after thirty-five years more experience of men, how circumscribed is the daily range of man's mind, how narrow is the limit of each human being's

horizon, beyond which he takes no more interest than he does in the sayings and doings, joys and sorrows of the inhabitants of Mars.

* * * * *

"The owners of the barque behaved very generously. They allowed me not only my own 'lay' (share) as mate, but, as not a single heir of the late captain could be found, they gave me his 'lay' also, reckoning from the time of his death. The reason they gave for this action was that I had performed the duties of both mate and captain. In this way I had a very neat sum handed to me, nearly two thousand pounds.

"Before we finally parted, my friends again pressed me to take command for another voyage, but I would not have gone if they had even given me the barque as a present; and the worst of it was that this feeling of dread did not evaporate with time, but rather grew stronger, until at last I shuddered to go on board even for an hour—although, certainly, the poor old barque was in no wise to blame. In fact, the good little craft had brought us away from the sad horror as fast as her clean heels could do it.

"With my money in good bank bills, I bade farewell to my friends, Messrs. Drummond, Richards and Co., and went up to Sydney, my plan being to purchase a nice handy schooner of seventy or eighty tons, fill her up with island trade stuff, and try my luck in the genial eastern Pacific climate, and among its no less genial inhabitants.

"I had hardly been in Sydney a week when I found this very craft we are now on for sale. She was built somewhere in India of teak, a wood which is practically indestructible; besides, the little craft was handsomely fitted, as you see, being intended for some Government service or other, but just as she was finished it was found that a steamer would be more suitable for the business, so the pretty 'Lapwing' was sent to Sydney for sale in the nick of time for me.

"I shipped a good steady crew, every one of whom remained with me for several years, and as they dropped off I replaced them by smart, handy Kanakas, who, as you know, make excellent sailors, and who have the invaluable quality of never getting into drunken scrapes in port, or making trouble at sea, as white men so often do.

"When I was making up my crew in Sydney I shipped, as second mate, a fine, strong, old Norwegian. When I say 'old,' I mean that Karl Olsen was past the bloom of youth, and you know, after that, everybody is *old* with sailors. Olsen sailed with me for six years, and then shipped in one of Godfroy's ships bound for Hamburg. The wise old fellow had saved up his wages carefully until he had enough to keep him comfortably the rest of his days. He told me that it had always been his dream to settle at last among his own people in beautiful old Bergen, where he could see the ships come and go, quietly enjoy the balance of his life in ease and comfort, and be buried at last amid his own kindred.

"During our voyaging together I had become quite attached to Karl Olsen, not only on account of his thorough honesty and steadiness of character, but also for a certain vein of thoughtfulness and reflection which made him a most entertaining shipmate. I had promoted him to be first mate, a position he was well qualified to fill. The mate whom I had shipped in Sydney, and who sailed with me for two years (a very good man, I may remark), wishing to return to the Colonies on some private

business of his own, left the chief mateship open for the second mate to step into.

"After this change Olsen and I were naturally thrown much together in our lonely voyaging all over the Pacific, and many were our hairbreadth escapes and queer adventures, in all of which Karl Olsen proved a brave comrade, a first-rate officer, and a true friend.

"Besides adventures, of course, we had many a quiet time, drifting about for days and nights together in dead calms, or slipping along with just enough wind to give the craft steering way. At such times many were the entertaining yarns which the old Norwegian sailor would unfold from his well-stocked memory.

"One adventure of his young days which, of course, interested me tremendously, seeing that I had all the weird experiences of my last whaling voyage fresh in my mind, was the following:

CHAPTER V

"'For several years,' said Olsen, 'when I was a young lad, I went whaling in the Arctic Sea. We used to winter in Tromso, and start

out about the middle of May, work our way north as far as possible, always taking care not to get caught in the ice, and so crushed to death, as many a good ship and crew have been.

“ ‘ One voyage we found so much open water, and whales so plentiful, all of them working their way north, which we thought was a sign that there was plenty of open sea (whales not liking completely frozen water), that we kept following them up, taking one as soon as we disposed of the fish we had on hand.

“ ‘ In this way we were making a splendid voyage, and all hands were in great spirits, the young chaps talking of marrying their sweethearts, and the married men reckoning to get some little luxuries which they and their wives had been scraping and saving all their lives to buy.

“ ‘ In following the whales we had worked our way farther north than we had ever reached upon any former voyage. Besides being highly pleased, and very busy, with our whaling luck, the skipper was much occupied and interested in astronomical and terrestrial observations. Captain Larsen (that was our skipper's name) was quite a learned man, but I don't think that the world was ever much the wiser for all

his learning and discoveries. He was one of the quiet sort who never come to the front—it takes lots of brass and cheek, as a rule, to do that—and our good old skipper was not one of that sort. He was some kind of a second or third cousin of my father's (in Norway we are all cousins of some sort), and so took a good deal of interest in my welfare. He taught me navigation, and all manner of seamanship, besides giving me the proper sort of books to enlighten and form a young man's mind.

“I mention these slight hints of Captain Larsen's character because of the very singular, or rather startling, phenomenon which we encountered on that voyage, and the curious theory upon which the captain explained it.

“At midnight on 29th July, 1846 (I have forgotten many things in my life, but I will never forget that date), we were in latitude 76° , and about half way between Greenland and Spitzbergen. The sun was still high above the horizon, and shining in all its glory and power.

“We were sailing close to a great iceberg which had been in sight for ten or twelve hours. The wind was very light, and the sea as smooth as glass. We had just finished cutting in a whale, and all hands were merrily washing

decks, thinking and talking of home, for a few more such fish would make us a full ship; then, with pockets full of money, hey for Norway and friends, winter, and high jinks!

“It was my trick at the wheel, and the captain was standing by the binnacle taking the bearings of the berg, and examining its sea-line with his glass. I saw him start suddenly, and in a little while he called the mate, and they both looked long and intently at the great ice island we were approaching. Presently the skipper turned to me and, laying his hand on a spoke to steady the wheel, told me to take his glass and tell him what I saw about the middle of the berg on the sea-line.

“After a bit of focussing and investigation, I made out quite distinctly a dismasted vessel of some sort, jammed so closely to the ice that her bows seemed to be actually frozen in the solid wall.

“I told the captain what I thought I saw, and all he said was ‘Yes! that’s what it is, and I think it is the barque ‘Tromso’ which went north four years ago and never came back.’”

“We were slowly drawing towards the dismasted ship, and every one could soon make her out with the naked eye. When we came

within half a mile, or less, of her, the captain ordered out a boat and crew, as he intended examining the ship himself. He took me with him; I don't know why, unless he, in his kindness, thought to give me some sort of recreation and change from the dull monotony of sea life. If so, I certainly got more recreation than I wished, and if the captain had asked me to go again I feel sure that I should have begged off with the sailor's usual excuse of a lame back, or other painful trouble.

“When we got close to the ship we found she was really frozen solid into the ice as far as the windlass; and from the clearer green colour of the water near the iceberg, it seemed that the ice projected several fathoms under water, and so the ship was resting hard and fast on a solid bed of ice.

“As we were eagerly looking at the strange position of the ship, with the awful wall of the iceberg towering overhead, there suddenly appeared something else more awe-inspiring still.

“As we brought our boat to a certain angle of the glittering ice-wall, there instantly flashed into sight, over the starboard quarter rail, the heads and shoulders of more than a score of men of the usual whaling type. The skipper ordered

the crew to back water so as to keep our boat in exactly the same position with regard to the iceberg and the ship; then, pulling out his glasses, he looked long and steadily at the motionless line of men, who seemed to be staring at the sea, and never taking the slightest notice of us.

“ ‘When he had finished his investigation, he told the crew to give way and bring the boat alongside the ship on the larboard quarter; that, of course, was the opposite side from where we saw her crew, or the apparition of her crew, leaning over the rail.

“ ‘Telling the men to keep the boat alongside, the captain went up the ship's side, ordering me to follow him, which, I must say, I did very reluctantly.

“ ‘On reaching the deck we found the wreckage of all the masts and yards so blocking our way that it was somewhat difficult to move about. We soon confirmed the truth of our captain's supposition that she was the unfortunate whaler ‘Tromso’ by finding her name still readable, although much faded, upon various articles.

“ ‘We made our way all over the frozen ship—into the fo'c'sle and cabin, into the deck-house and galley—but we found no trace of living man



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or other creature. We could not find the log-book, sextant, or chronometer, and there was not much clothing left lying about. From these indications we concluded that the ship's crew had deliberately taken to the boats and abandoned the ship.

“ ‘Having made all the investigations we possibly could, we prepared to leave the ill-fated craft; but before doing so the captain asked me if I had any objection to stay a bit on board while he went in the boat to the spot where we had seen, or, rather, *thought* we had seen, men leaning over the rail. Of course I said I would stay, although I felt it one of the toughest jobs I ever tackled in my life, but I was a high-spirited young chap, and my pride, *not true courage*, prevented me showing the white feather before the skipper. However, I can truly say that I never had such a disagreeable task to perform either before or since.

“ ‘The captain's directions were that I was to stand by the rail and when he reached a certain point, and made a signal with the boat's flag I must walk fore and aft with his white handkerchief on the end of the boathook, waving it over and *along* the rail where we saw the likeness of men.

“The boat was in position in a few minutes, and the skipper made the signal agreed upon. I responded by walking fore and aft, waving my flag over the rail as I passed to and fro. When this performance had been carried on for some time to the captain's entire satisfaction, the boat returned for me; and bidding the desolate wreck farewell, we pulled back to our own ship, hoisted in the boat, and squared away south before a light northerly wind which freshened to a nice, steady, whole-sail breeze that carried us clear of the dangerous icy seas in four days. After another month's cruising, during which time we took three more whales, we anchored in Tromso harbour, much to my relief, and I think to the relief and comfort of all hands.

* * * * *

“‘That was my last whaling voyage,’ said Olsen, stretching himself with a kind of shiver as if he were cold in spite of the warm, tropical night. ‘I never went north again, and I have never even seen an iceberg since then, and certainly I never wish to see one again, beautiful as the awful things are.

“‘On the home voyage Captain Larsen gave me his explanation of the weird appearance of

the lost crew whose *shadows* or, I might say, *photographs* we had seen. He said that he had formed his opinion when the apparition first appeared as we approached the *frozen ship*, and his original impression, or rather theory, was confirmed when he distinctly saw me *through* the images; for when I came between him and them they became invisible, just as a picture cannot be seen if any object comes between our vision and it.

“I have told you that our skipper, in his own quiet way, was a very scientific sort of man, and I know that he was a member of several learned societies both in Norway and elsewhere.

“Like most scientific men he had a pretty hard head, but *unlike* most scientific men he could always clearly and logically explain things as they appeared to him. In many quiet talks, or rather learned discourses, he gave me his views concerning what we had seen on the frozen ship. Of course, I cannot give you his solution of the mystery in his own learned lingo, but the central meaning of it all was that through the intense clearness and *constancy* of the summer sunlight in the polar regions *living objects*, under certain conditions of atmospheric refraction,

tion (caused by the iceberg), could be *retained*, and sometimes *reproduced* by rays of light, whenever those rays of light returned to the exact place, angle, power, and intensity, which they had when they absorbed the image. Of course, it is very seldom that these exact conditions recur, but when they do the *celestial photograph*, if I may use the expression, is reproduced, somewhat as a magic lantern picture is thrown upon a sheet.

“ ‘ This, in a rough, short form, is how Captain Larsen described, in many long and very beautiful talks, the process which enabled us to see the vision of the lost crew. I say “vision,” but the skipper did not call it that. He said it was only one of the numberless beautiful mysteries of Nature, mysteries which God would allow men to discover (to their great comfort and delight) if they would only live nearer to the heart of Nature, and learn her divine secrets.

“ ‘ The captain said he thought that the ship had been frozen-in during her first winter north. Then, after the long dreary spell of darkness, and as the blessed sun appeared above the horizon, rising higher and higher every day, the poor fellows would often be looking over the

rail, examining the state of the ice, and that *then* it was their images had been absorbed by the rays of light.

“‘Captain Larsen was so deeply interested in the subject, that he told me that if he could get together a small party of the right sort of men to go with him he would give up whaling for a year or two, and go north for the sole purpose of investigation, and thereby proving his queer theory.

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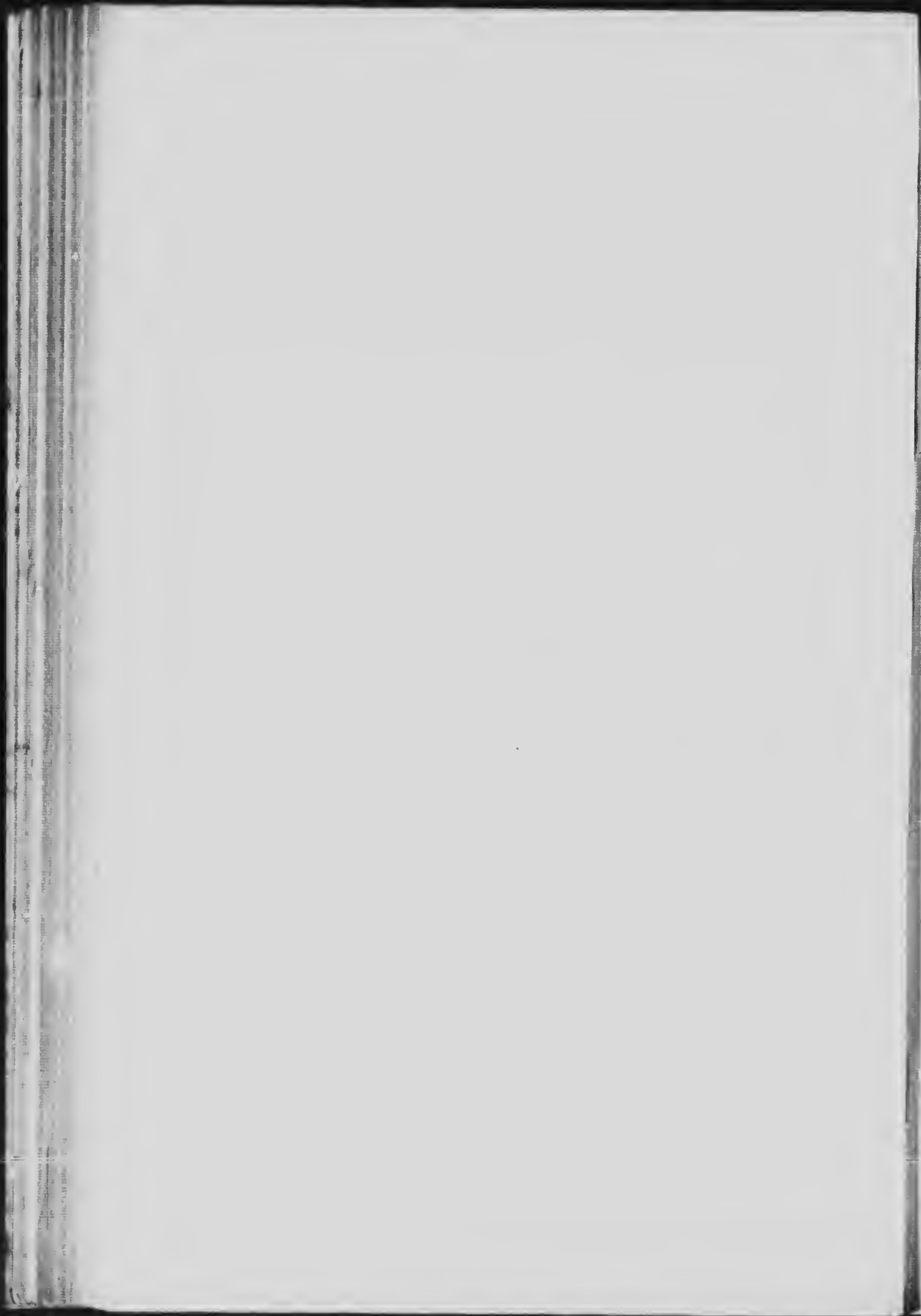
“‘Whether he ever went or not I don't know, for I betook myself to the Pacific, and I have never seen the old land since then, and only heard scraps of news at odd times. That is why I am anxious to quit roving and get back while there are probably a few years left me to hunt up old landmarks, ere I lay my bones by the old *Kirkegaard*, where all my kindred are sleeping.’

“This was Karl Olsen's yarn, and, as it coincided so strangely with my own experience in the Antarctic, of course it deeply interested me.

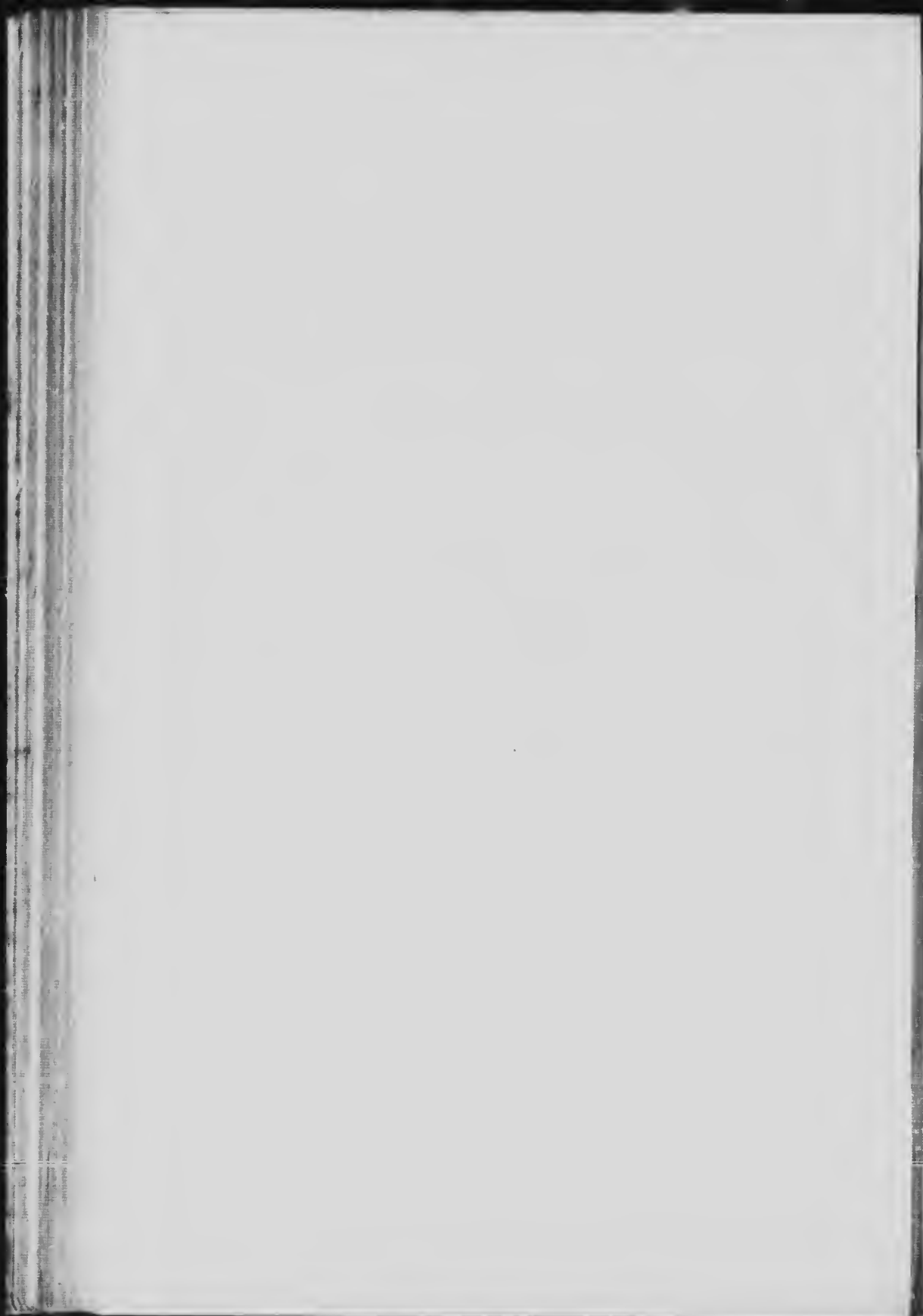
“That Olsen was an honest, plain sailor-man, I had the proof of several years' intimate as-

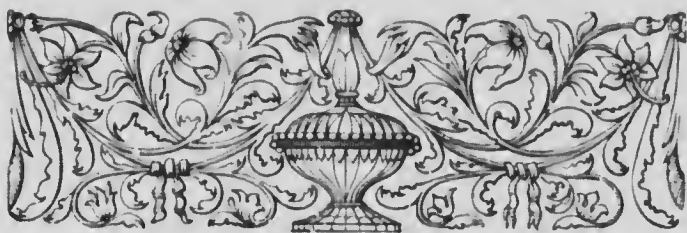
sociation to convince me. And, as I had never mentioned one word of what I had seen in the south (it was too painful a subject even to think of, let alone speak of) it would have been absurd to suppose that he was playing upon my imagination under the belief that I was interested in the subject."






THE MAROONED MAIDEN'S
SECRET





THE MAROONED MAIDEN'S SECRET

CHAPTER I

NE morning, a couple of years ago, as I was dawdling down George Street, Sydney, staring, along with other idlers, into shop windows, and at any other attraction which caught my attention for the moment, I was rather startled by a firm, strong hand on my shoulder, and the pleasant voice of my old friend, David Kinross, hailing me with "Well met, shipmate!" Then another slap, and "What cheer? all good I hope?"

It was indeed delightful to hear his friendly voice once more. Five years had slipped past since we had parted in Tahiti, with, I can truly say, much regret on both sides. After a good look at each other, noting the bills of lading

that relentless *Time* had written on our faces, we shook hands heartily (if we had been Frenchmen we would have embraced), and then Kinross, slipping his arm through mine, drew me into one of the quiet streets which lead into the beautiful domain. We strolled along, brimful of talk, and so, after much questioning and information on both sides, I gathered that my friend's schooner was lying in Woolloomooloo Cove, ready for sea; in fact, he was then preparing to sail the next morning. A month before our meeting he had come up from the South Sea with a good consignment of pearl shell and some fine pearls, all of which he had disposed of to good advantage, and had bought in return a well-selected cargo for island trade.

It was really delicious to lie on the dry, warm grass, under the fine old Norfolk Island pines, and listen to David yarning away, telling me his plans for the future, and I telling him mine, in the free, easy way of bygone years.

At length, with the old, kindly, impulsive warmth of a sailor's heart, but which I knew was as solid and enduring as his granite Scotch character, Kinross slapped my knee and invited me to another free cruise, of any length I might desire, among the beautiful islands and

coral atolls of the South Seas. This was too tempting an offer for a lonely wanderer to refuse, and I accepted the generous invitation in the same free spirit in which it was given.

Our plans being settled, I was going to rush off with a boyish delight—instead of the sober judgement of middle age—to pack my traps, and get ready to embark, when Kinross said:

“Wait a bit! there’s no great hurry! I promise not to sail until you are quite ready. Just now, when I had the great luck to run across you, I was on my way to pay a farewell visit before sailing to an institution of which I am one of three trustees. It is an institution in which I have not only a very tender, but a very romantic interest as well. It is a private Foundling Hospital for girls. When I say *private*, I mean that it is supported entirely by private means, and so the State has no control over the management, excepting, of course, the right to know that it is well conducted. The fact is that the State is only too glad to find itself happily relieved of a great many poor waifs and strays who, instead of being left to the tender mercies of a pauper’s asylum, are brought up by ladies whose wide experience in the dark regions of sorrow make them eminently fitted to be wise

and tender foster-mothers to the poor little broken-winged birds who have fallen from their nests in the miserable storms of life."

This was the most poetical speech I had ever heard from my friend, and it naturally arrested my attention at once; then he clenched the matter by saying:

"Come along with me now and see for yourself *The Waifs and Strays Home of St. Dorothea*; and if it does not soften your heart—then you are a harder case than I ever took you to be!"

Fronting a quiet street on the south side of the city, we came to a high iron gate, entering which we found ourselves in spacious grounds with fine green lawns, beautiful flower-beds, and many splendid shade trees. In the midst stood a handsome stone building with these immortal words over the entrance: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me."

Entering the door, which stood invitingly open, Kinross saluted a Sister of Mercy who came forward to meet us, and introduced me as a friend whom he had brought to see "Our Home of the Marooned Maiden." This was another and strange name for the Home, the meaning of which my friend told me later.

After a few words of kindly greeting, Kinross explained to the Lady Superior that the present would be his last visit for some time, as he was on the point of sailing for the South Seas, and for a year or more his two colleagues would have to attend to the business of the Home. There were, as Kinross had told me, three permanent trustees, and how he had become one of them is the story I shall shortly have to tell, or rather the story which my friend told to me on the lonely Atoll, with no sounds to distract our attention save the monotone of the breakers on the reef, and now and then a wandering sea-bird's cry.

Kinross and the Lady Superior showed me all over the Home, and it seemed a splendidly managed institution. It sheltered tenderly and efficiently upwards of five hundred girls of all ages, and I remember thinking at the time that the dire misfortunes of poverty, crime, and death had doubtless been blessings in disguise to all the happy little creatures I saw that day under the tender care of those kindly, efficient foster-mothers, in every sense of the words "Sisters of Mercy."

That evening I took possession of my old quarters on the schooner "Lapwing," and when

we sailed out of Sydney Heads next morning I felt as if I had never been away from the beautiful little craft.

In talking over matters with Kinross, I found that ever since I had parted with him—as for many years before I was lucky enough to foregather with him—he had been engaged in the profitable trade of collecting pearl oyster shell, and the still more profitable trade of collecting pearls. But, like all old hands in the Pacific, Kinross would often hark back, with tears in his voice, to the state of the South Sea when he first sailed among its fairy islands and coral reefs, and its present mongrel condition.

“The fact is,” he would affirm, sententiously, “it takes *white* men to withstand the audacious chicanery and aggressiveness of *white* men! The poor simple brown man is no match for the persistent selfishness, greed, and devilish subtlety of the white race. Look at any of the islands now (excepting a few far off the beaten track), and compare them with what they were half a century ago! Then you found a splendid, healthy race, honest and trustworthy, now a few mongrel, lazy, cheating swabs! trying, poor beggars, to live by their wits, instead of by happy, healthy work, as in the old days.”

It was of no use hinting that we were ourselves of the obnoxious race, Kinross would only laugh, and say that "exceptions prove the rule," and we were the exceptions, of course!

After some baffling winds in passing New Zealand we struck the fine, fresh westerlies—those splendid winds for the eastward-bound voyager—and in nine or ten days we reached the latitude of the Paumotus. Then bracing sharp up to the trades, we went merrily northward into the balmy tropical regions.

We spent nearly three months among the dangerous, but most interesting Paumotu Islands, and secured forty tons of excellent shell, besides a few scores of pearls, among them many really splendid gems. We worked the islands from south to north, and when we got clear of the group we braced sharp up to the south-east trades, and shaped a course about north-east, thus leaving the Marquesas well on our lee beam, and plunging into that vast, lonely quarter of the Pacific which lies south-west of the Galapagos, west of Ecuador and Peru, and eastward of all the important groups in the middle of the great South Sea.

Kinross told me that he was going to pick up a dozen Kanakas whom he had left a year be-

fore on a lonely sand-spit, some ten or eleven hundred miles north-east of the Marquesas Islands. He said that he had been one of the discoverers—or rather re-discoverers—of the lonely sand-dune in question, when he was a lad on a voyage in a Sydney ship more than forty-five years before. And thereby hangs a tale. But I must first give you a brief outline of the sand-spit as it appeared to me, before I rehearse the strange, romantic incident connected with "Lady Island" as Kinross called this one solid spot of land amidst the vast world of waters by which it is surrounded.

After veering about for a day or two, as we were passing the Marquesas, the trades settled down into their usual steady, business-like methods, sending the little "Lapwing" dancing merrily along from three to eight knots an hour, according to the breeze, dipping her pretty head into the laughing, tropical waves, and then shaking herself in high glee as the flying spray went spattering on the snowy sails, and refreshing all hands on deck with a douche of the deliciously cool, sparkling water.

After a week of this fairy sailing (the trades at night generally dropping into a mere whisper) we found ourselves in the vicinity of "Lady

Island"; and on the tenth morning after our last far glimpse of the Marquesas peaks, as the sun leapt out of the ocean, sending a shaft of golden light that glittered on the water, and on our weather-beam, as if the schooner was on fire, the look-out reported "Land-O! three points on the lee bow."

We certainly had made a splendid "landfall" after more than a thousand miles across that lonely sea, with never a glimpse of reef, seaweed, or even wandering sea-bird, to give us a hint of rock or land. I have done the same thing hundreds of times, wandering "from island into island at the gateways of the day," but to make such a landfall never ceases to excite my wonder and admiration. We struck this lonely, low sand-dune (some twenty or thirty acres in extent) as true and fair as if our steersman had seen it all the way as plainly as he saw the compass, and had kept the schooner's figure-head pointing to the spot he wished to strike in the midst of that trackless waste of waters. To make one's way over unknown mountainous country is a very difficult job. To cross a sandy desert devoid of prominent landmarks, and reach the oasis we wish, is a dangerous undertaking; but to find one's way over hun-

dreds of miles of the desolate sea, and pick up a spot only visible a few miles distant, is nothing less than marvellous! I am quite aware of the great scientific achievements of navigation. I can even do a little lunar observation myself, but I have no use for the dry-as-dust philosopher, learned or ignorant, who never dreams of the inner mystery of the achievement, and who thinks it is simply the commonplace fact that twice two make four! But to show that it is not always done by simple rule of thumb, it is a well authenticated fact that the Hawaiians could, and frequently did, navigate, without chart or compass, from their islands in the north to Tahiti in the south—a distance of some two thousand miles—and seldom made a mistake! But that was in the old days before civilization had taken the manhood and genius out of the race.

Half an hour brought us under lee of the weird, desolate little spot, and as we shaved along the coral reef we could see the poor fellows, who had been marooned for more than a year, rushing along the white sandy beach, dancing and gesticulating wildly, as they recognized the ship they had wearied and hoped for so many slow moons. Then as we opened

the passage through the reef, and luffing sharp up shot into the placid waters of the lagoon, and sent the anchor rattling down safe and sound, there broke from the excited pearl-fishers such a shout of joy and welcome as stirred even the sternly repressed Scotch soul of Kinross himself, and, jumping into the main-rigging, he led three hearty cheers from our side.

As the whole width of the lagoon did not exceed four or five times the length of the schooner, it did not take the amphibious pearl-fishers five minutes to scramble on board; and amid a wild clatter of greetings, laughter, and actual tears of joy, all hands expressed their exuberant happiness according to their individual character and bringing-up: Kinross and I with the self-restraint and coolness of what we are pleased to term civilized men, our crew with the slightly subdued manners they had partially acquired by years of shipboard discipline, and the pearl-fishing gang with the wild freedom of unsophisticated children of nature! The latter fell upon their fellow countrymen first (blood is always thicker than water) and after much rubbing of noses, as we improperly term the graceful salutation—for there is no “rubbing” in the case, only an endearing touch—they approached

Kinross with the quiet demeanour of humble yet loving vassals, to pay their respects and make their report upon the result of the year's operations.

They declared that they had thoroughly explored every nook and cranny of the lagoon and reefs, and had secured every marketable shell. Of course "baby shells" are never taken, as that would simply be a profitless killing of the "goose which lays the golden egg," and, as Kinross remarked, "it takes our rascally trawling companies on the British coasts to do that evil work, while the Lords and Commons are too busy settling whether *Tweedledum* or *Tweedledee* should rule the country, to make useful laws, and see to it that these laws are enforced." Then with a dry smile he would add, "this is your beautiful civilization, my boy!"

The head man of the pearl-fishers, a fine looking fellow of forty-five or fifty years of age, did all the talking, his satellites only putting in a word occasionally to emphasize some queer adventure with sleeping sharks in dark, deep caves, or weird encounters with the still more dreaded octopus.

After giving an account of the number of good shells secured (a knot on a string for every

hundred, I forget how many hundreds there were, but I know they ran far into the thousands) *Kupuna* wound up his account of the year's adventures by slowly and impressively unwinding from his neck what seemed only a securely fastened, old cotton neckerchief, which indeed it was, but it was also much more, for it contained the real wealth of the dangerous, lonely year's adventures. All hands crept as near as possible at this exciting part of the performance, and it was really worth while, for *Kupuna* was an admirable performer. Before beginning the show he asked for the black silk handkerchief which Kinross wore, sailor fashion, round his neck. This he spread smoothly and carefully on the deck, then he unrolled his own dirty bit of neck-gear and extracted therefrom, slowly and tenderly, one by one, eighty-six beautiful pearls of various sizes, from a big pin's head to that of a good large pea. The gems looked splendid on the black silk! Indeed, the show was so satisfactory that it drew from the excited ship's crew exclamations of pleasure and admiration. And even the phlegmatic skipper could not altogether control his feelings (a very important matter, as all good merchants know), and seizing *Kupuna's* hand, he

shook it warmly, declaring that he and his men had done well!

My friend Kinross, as I have remarked before, was a canny Scot, and that means a good deal, but the untutored son of the Pacific was decidedly his superior in stage effect. After calmly, not to say *dignifiedly* acknowledging the skipper's tribute of appreciation, *Kupuna* suddenly produced from a knot in his waist-cloth something which shone and glittered in the sunlight almost like a diamond, and placed it carefully by itself on a corner of the handkerchief where the beautiful collection of pearls were sparkling in glorious array.

There was a subdued mutter of astonished admiration from the Kanakas, while Kinross and I gazed at the thing with bated breath and never a word. Then the skipper took it up tenderly, and examined it carefully in various positions until he was fully convinced that the beautiful thing was an enormous pearl of the first water, and worth, from its splendid size and shape, three times the value of all the other gems which *Kupuna* had first displayed.

Kinross told me, when I met him in Sydney some years later, that he had sold this great pearl to a French trader for fifteen thousand

pounds, and that eventually it found its way into the hands of the Sultan of Turkey (at a great profit, no doubt), and is now worn in His Sublime Highness's turban, and is most appropriately named the "Peri of the West."

After this satisfactory meeting with his pearl-fishers, Kinross ordered his Chinese cook to prepare a sumptuous feast for all hands, an order which was vociferously applauded by the simple islanders, who had been reduced to rather short commons for the last month or two.

Business and domestic matters being thus satisfactorily arranged, the skipper proposed that he and I should take a stroll on shore, and explore the little territory which, I found out afterwards, had been the scene of more romance than the finding of the "Peri of the West."

As I have already said, the little island did not contain more than twenty or thirty acres of dry standing room. On the weather side, that is on the side facing the trade winds, there was a straight line of coral reef, over which the great Pacific rollers kept up their ceaseless moaning and inexplicable story of "There is sorrow on the sea, it cannot be quiet." On the lee side, facing westward, there was the still water of the

little lagoon, bounded by the white coral sandy beach of the island on the inside, and on the outside protected by the reef, mostly under water, but here and there a-wash.

Scattered over the sandy soil of the island there were little clumps of scrubby vegetation, and, nearly abreast of where the schooner was anchored, there grew a dense little grove of cocoa-nuts. The outside line of trees, that is, those exposed to the ceaseless sweep of the trade wind, sloped at an angle of forty or fifty degrees westward, but those which were protected by the first line grew straight and fair. In this grove the pearl-fishers had made their camp, and, as there was a curious high bank of something which I did not at first glance comprehend, but which was good shelter from the trades, it was a very snug camp indeed, far more comfortable than one could have supposed possible on that dreary dot of sand amid hundreds of miles of islandless sea.

That night, after the jolly Chinese cook had regaled all hands with a feast fit for Mandarins, silence and sleep calmed our excited minds, and soothed our wearied bodies after the unusual events of this, for us, memorable day. It was a rule with Kinross not to carry grog in his ship,

so it was a perfectly sober and fresh lot of men who turned out next morning, ready for work or frolic.

Before proceeding to the important business of packing and shipping the fine heaps of shell which the fishers had collected, Kinross decided to give the schooner's crew a day's liberty, a decision hailed with much delight, for nothing pleases those amphibious creatures more than exploring reefs, fishing, and making a general examination of seaweed, crabs, squid, and what not; in short, what always seems to a disinterested onlooker a childish sort of stupid dawdling. But although there may not appear to us very much in this simple recreation, yet I have seen strong men burst into tears as they recalled, in some far-off land, what was to them the delicious sport of the coral reefs!

While our crew were enjoying their day of liberty, with their friends the pearl-fishers as hosts, and "John," the cook, with the calm and philosophic mind of his race, was left in sole possession of the schooner, Kinross and I betook ourselves to the little cocoa-nut grove, and so I have at last overtaken (or nearly overtaken) the story which I have been so stupidly trying for some time to reach.

When we got to the camp, and clambered to the top of the *bank*, I was perfectly astounded to discover that the foundation of the little hill was the ruin of a great ship, full to the deck of sand. All vestiges of the masts, rigging, and such like were gone, having probably been carried away in some catastrophe before the ship drifted on the reef. On the weather side, which was of course the side next the eastern shore of the island, the breakers came within ten or fifteen yards of the ship. On the leeward side (the ship was lying north and south) the eddy, caused by the obstruction of the trades, had gradually allowed the sand and debris to accumulate until there was a sloping plateau of thirty or forty fathoms, and all over this extent cocoa-nuts were growing strong and vigorously. Of course on this limited area there were not many; I counted them, and found there were only fifty-seven trees altogether, including two growing out of the ship's main hatchway, and one in the fo'c'sle, the scuttle having been carried away. The ship's bulwarks were all gone, and most of the lighter top works had been taken by the Kanakas for rigging up their tents and shelters, but the good oak plank-ing and timbers were as sound as on the day

they were put together; so sound, indeed, that when Kinross struck a great solid beam with a tomahawk he was carrying, it turned the edge as if he had struck a rock.

After pottering around for a while, the skipper suggested that we should go on board the schooner for dinner, and if I wished to hear more about the unknown ship we might return in the afternoon, and he would then relate her history as far as he knew it. This proposition suited me down to the ground, and we promptly carried it unanimously.

Comfortably ensconced on the soft dry sands, facing the long rollers as they broke with ever varying tones on the reef, and sheltered from the afternoon sun by the half-buried hull of the great ship at our back, Kinross gave me the promised history. It ran, so far as I remember, as follows, and a very interesting bit of history it seemed to me. But perhaps it was the surroundings amid which it was related, and the way the old sailor told it, which gave the story its chief charm.

CHAPTER II

"It is a good many years ago," he said in his calm reflective way, "and a lot of things both good and bad have happened since I sailed out of Sydney harbour as cabin-boy on the clipper brig 'Queen Mary,' bound for an unknown island somewhere in the vast South Sea. I was *only*, as sailors would say, a cabin-boy, but I was a pretty smart lad even then. It was my second voyage, and although I was just turned fifteen, and rather a thin slip of a chap, I was healthy and spry and could take a man's place at reefing or stowing sails day or night, and stand my trick at the wheel like a sailor-man. The captain of the brig—John Muir by name—was an old crony of my father's, and looked as sharply after me physically, morally, and mentally, as if I were his own son. But, although he drilled me strictly, according to old-fashioned rules, yet I had all the advantages of learning first-class seamanship and navigation, besides reading many splendid books, for Captain Muir had a fine, if limited library of standard works, with none of the trashy stuff that people destroy their minds with nowadays.

“John Muir had (what was more common in those days than now, because I suppose men were more to be depended upon then) a roving commission from the owners of the brig in Glasgow. They knew that a craft of her size—a hundred and fifty tons—would make more, with a judicious skipper, in the South Sea than at home, and cost less in wear and tear. In the early days there were many opportunities of good charters in the Pacific from men who could afford to pay handsomely. North, south, east or west it made no difference to Muir. So long as there was a good surplus over working expenses, and it had been made quite clear in the charter that he was not liable for the *visitations of God* (as lawyers' jargon has it), he would have taken a charter for the North Pole.

“On the voyage to which I refer the brig had been chartered by an old Sydney firm—Barry, Townsend and Co.—to convey a Doctor Marrant and his wife to a certain small island some ten or twelve hundred miles north-east of the Marquesas, almost under the Equator, and a few hundreds to leeward of the Galapagos. That was about all the sailing directions which the charterers gave Captain Muir. But, as the Doctor was, or rather had been (for he was now

on the retired list) a Royal Navy surgeon and understood navigation, he could hunt for the island himself, giving sailing directions as we went along. It was quite immaterial to Muir how long we wandered about the sea; his charter was by the month, not by the trip, so it would not trouble his mind in the least if it took us a year to find the island. We had plenty of sound provisions for two years at least, and the brig was well found in all ship's gear and requisites.

"I, in the capacity of cabin-boy, and general rouse-about lad, saw much of Doctor Marrant and his beautiful wife. I soon became, what I may term, intimate with them, or, I should rather say that I became intimate with the Doctor, and only got on a sort of saluting acquaintance with the lady; although she was most affable, and charming in her manner always, and I may at once confess, inspired my young heart with the same sort of Platonic, romantic passion which I have always felt for our beautiful Mary, Queen of Scots. You can guess how beautiful she was from the portrait you saw in the 'Home.' But her charm was altogether beyond and superior to personal beauty. I think it must be some subtile spiritual loveliness in

the soul, which finds expression in the face and form of those who, in some indefinable, indescribable way, fascinate the beholder with a spell which never fades from the memory. That was the way with the lady. I saw much of her from first to last, but I never could define wherein her charm lay. It was as if in her presence one were in the presence of a being of a higher order than ordinary mortals, which after all was probably true enough. She never said much, but what she did say was always kind and gentle, and even when she spoke of commonplace things she invested them with a sort of mystical beauty. When we got into the tropics, she would lie for hours in her deck chair looking at the stars, and talking softly to herself. One night when we were becalmed, and the brig was moving about as small craft do, the lady told me to watch the mastheads, and to note what wonderful things they were *writing* on the sky. Of course I could see nothing but the trucks swaying about hither and thither. But Mrs. Marrant said they were writing legends among the stars of things past, and things to come, some of which she could read, but others were unknowable! Most of them, she said, were beautiful and encouraging, but

some were dark and terrifying, as if the blue sky were a sea of blackness, and the stars were islands of blood!

"When she talked in that way it made me shiver, and I would douse my cap as if I were in church; and sometimes I would actually find myself on my knees, staring in the lady's face, as if I were a poor little Roman sinner praying to a saint.

"The doctor was devoted to his fragile wife, and would read to her by the hour, adjusting her chair and pillows, and arranging the awning according to the sun. Being of the sea himself, he knew all about things on shipboard.

"So matters went jogging pleasantly along. Captain Muir seemed perfectly satisfied with his charter, the doctor and his lady showed a happy contentment with every arrangement, and never a growl was heard from the crew—sturdy old Scotch hands, who didn't mind how long the voyage lasted, as it was an exceedingly pleasant, fair-weather cruise, with wages piling up, and no temptations to waste good money. Three months of this *dolce niente* sailing brought us into the vicinity of the island which was the object of our voyage.

"The doctor and Captain Muir were day

after day—and even sometimes at night—taking observations, and frequently changing the ship's course when they saw, or fancied they saw, a change in the colour of the sea. One morning at sunrise we ran into a great fleet of the pretty little medusae, with their blue sails set, which sailors call 'Portuguese men-o'-war.' This put my lady into much excitement; she actually had tears in her eyes as the sailors, at her request, brought up a bucket of water with the gallant little crafts sailing gaily on the surface. I did not know then, but I learned afterwards, that the beautiful little argonauts, with their flaunting blue banners, were in a dim way bringing back to the pale lady visions of a childhood, which in some unaccountable way had become dreams of celestial glory.

"Sure enough, the medusae were harbingers of land after all, as the doctor's wife declared they were, for next day we sighted this island, with its little cocoa-nut grove and secure lagoon anchorage.

"Captain Muir wished at first to anchor outside, but that was impossible, for we found no bottom with a hundred-fathom line. So, upon Doctor Marrant's assurance that there were no obstructions whatever in the passage through

the reef, the skipper determined to do with the brig what I did yesterday with the schooner, viz., come round the south point of the island at a good swinging rate with the trades a-beam, and, luffing sharp up into the passage, trust to the ship carrying steering way through the reef. The manœuvre was carried out quite successfully, and the anchor dropped safe and sound, just where the 'Lapwing' is lying now.

"I was so deeply interested in watching the cleverly executed bit of seamanship, and looking over the side at the wonderful colours of the coral reef which went sloping down so near that it seemed we must inevitably strike, that I never noticed the lady had fainted, and lay back on the deck chair, her face as white as her white gown. The doctor whipped a bottle of scent from his pocket, and I rushed for water. After a bit of awful anxiety to me, and still more, without doubt, to Doctor Marrant (but he, with his professional training, was an adept at concealing his emotions), Mrs. Marrant, with a heavy sigh, and a sort of shudder, as if she had seen a ghost, which maybe she had, grasped the doctor's hands, like a terrified child who had been shut in some dark room in an agony of terror. Then Doctor Marrant's cool, profes-

sional manner completely gave way, and I heard the strong man sob, as he laid his hands on his wife's beautiful head, in the sort of endearing way we comfort a child in trouble, and said softly, 'Dorothea, darling! we should not have come, the task is too great for you! Let us return—I cannot bear that you should suffer!'

"His wife smiled like a child, happy and contented, while she nestled herself into his arms, saying, 'No! No! Fergus, love! We must complete our work! Think of the poor, lost children—such as I was—who through our work—if done well—may become happy—Nay, blessed as I have become! I must—I must fulfil my task!'

"Neither the doctor nor his wife took the slightest notice of my presence, while the captain and crew were too busy with the ship to notice anything else.

"When the brig was made secure a boat was got out and Doctor and Mrs. Marrant, the captain, and I, went on shore. The lady had quite recovered: indeed, she was brighter and more active than I had ever thought it possible for her to be. When our boat touched the beach, she leaped on to the white sand without a moment's

hesitation, and at once led the way to the spot where we are now sitting, as if she were perfectly familiar with the island. And I soon learned, to my profound wonderment, that such was really the case. The lady went round this side of the wreck, laying her hands on the smooth weather-worn ship as if it were an old friend. Then she wandered among the coconut trees, touching and half-embracing them, and seeming to listen as if the swaying fronds were whispering mysterious greetings she alone could understand.

"That evening the doctor told me that he and his wife intended to remain on the island for a year, and he had asked Captain Muir to allow me to stay with them as a sort of help and general rouse-about boy.

"He said that my wages would go on at the present rate, and added that he would supplement the monthly wage with half as much more in compensation for the enforced loneliness of the life.

"I was a romantic, healthy youngster in those days, and the proposed adventure suited me splendidly. I not only saw visions of a real Robinson Crusoe life, but I had much affection for the quiet, kind doctor, and, as I told

you, a platonic love for the mystical, beautiful lady who exercised a strange, spiritual power over my young life.

"Matters were soon arranged. Captain Muir said he was quite willing to lend me to the doctor and his wife, the fact being, I think, that the kind-hearted skipper felt a sort of qualm of conscience at the idea of sailing away and leaving those two lonely beings to their fate, even although that fate was of their own choosing. At that time I had no notion what could possibly induce two such people voluntarily to cast themselves away on that little, solitary sand-dune, knowing certainly that it would be for a year at least, and maybe for the rest of their lives.

"However, at fifteen the solving of idiosyncrasies of character, and the motives which influence the human mind, do not trouble the boyish soul very much. It was enough for me that here was real romance, facts, not dreams: an unknown island, a lagoon like a polished mirror, enclosed by a wonderful coral reef stored with the endless treasures of the tropic seas! And withal, the companionship of two people, who had shown me more affection than I had found since I left the old mother on Clyde-bank. So,

when the proposition was made, I accepted the situation with the greatest alacrity.

* * * * *

"The day after our arrival the business of arranging a dwelling-place and landing all manner of stores was begun. We had brought a quantity of timber, and a lot of old sails for covering roofs, etc. So, with the help of the ship's carpenter and the seamen, who all enjoyed the change of occupation and the novel surroundings, we soon had comfortable quarters arranged, besides ample storage room for our numerous effects. The doctor was well posted in the difficult job of preserving food in the tropics, and had superintended the packing of all our supplies in hermetically sealed tin cases before leaving Sydney. With regard to the vital question of fresh water (there was plenty of salt and to spare), I have not yet showed you, but I will presently, a curious little spring of pure, sweet water, always cool and delicious, bubbling up through the sand about fifty yards south of the cocoa-nut grove. It is very uncommon to find absolutely sweet water on a little sandy island like this; but there it is as you shall see for yourself, and if it had not been so, there

would neither have been beginning nor ending to the history which I am now telling you.

"It took eight or ten days to fix everything properly. I had a snug little hut all to myself, of which I was exceedingly proud, it being the first private dwelling which I could call absolutely my own, for a bunk in a fo'c'sle can hardly be called a private dwelling.

"The doctor and his wife had two really nice sleeping apartments, besides a comfortable sitting room, and a large, airy dining room. The kitchen, or rather the galley, as we called it (being at sea as it were), was simply a covered shed, with all cooking requisites hung and laid about handy. One comfort was that we did not require locks or even doors, there was no danger to be apprehended from burglars in our peaceful country!

"At last all arrangements were completed, everything landed, and all letters written, including one wonderful epistle from myself to my poor mother, which she received about a year after it was written, and which, sad to say, threw the dear old lady into a state of intense confusion and anguish, she being most firmly convinced that I had been captured by pirates and then imprisoned on a desert island.

"When every item of work was done, and done properly, Captain Muir and all the crew came on shore to bid us farewell and God-speed! I must confess that I got a bit shaky as the good old skipper gave me some sound advice, hoping that I would quit myself like a brave, honest lad, and never bring disgrace on my father's ancient honourable name. So, with talking and laughing, and much hand-shaking, the parting was over, the ship's boat was hoisted in, the anchor was quickly a-trip, and next moment run up to the cat-head. Then, as the brig paid off, and the jib and topsails filled, the stately old craft went slowly through the passage in the reef as if she knew the way; anyhow, the skipper, who was steering, did, so it was all right. In ten minutes the 'Queen Mary' was clear of the island, and, catching the full force of the trades, went gaily skimming away southwest, like a great white albatross, with outspread, motionless wings. Three dips of the ensign, one boom from the rusty old cannon on the fo'c'slehead was the last we heard or saw that day, and for many a long day after, of the good old craft.

* * * * *

"The remainder of that day, and I may say many of the following days, were by no means

merry days for me. In fact, I must admit that several times, when my feelings overcame my national stoicism and pride, I would betake myself to the privacy of my own abode, and relieve my over-charged heart with a copious flood of tears.

"Our lonely and desolate position did not seem to affect the doctor and Mrs. Morratt in the least. Indeed, the lady appeared to me livelier and in better spirits than she had been on the voyage. She was always finding some occupation to engage her attention. One endless subject of interest to her was making maps of our little territory. She had provided herself with a block of drawing paper, such as artists use for sketching, and with various coloured pencils she would spend hours every day making wonderful little picture-maps of the island. Amongst many scientific instruments and other *clamsjams*, as we say, the doctor had brought along a theodolite and surveyor's chain; with these things we three would spend many hours every other day, taking the most accurate measurements and bearings of every spot of our sandy domain, including the coral reef. The doctor had brought a nice handy boat from Sydney, and it was an endless re-

source paddling about the lagoon, looking for fresh points of observation. When some new line of survey would strike the doctor and his wife, something which they had not noted before, they would land on the reef, set up the theodolite, and begin with much enthusiasm to plot, take sights, and make notes, while I would find more congenial employment in hunting for wonderful shells, and poking in holes for squid, etc.

"As I have remarked before, lads of fifteen or sixteen have no very profound methods of thought, unless they have the misfortune to be lads of *genius*—which, I am thankful to say, I was not—therefore I never troubled my head to find out why these two people were so deeply interested in measurements and map-making, and confined my powers of mind to the science of cookery, occasionally supplementing the larder with a lucky catch of fish, squid, crabs, or other delicacies from the reef.

"Thus eight months slipped past, and when I look backward, it seems wonderful how contented, nay, happy, that old time appears to me now. I have often read of men being cast away on desert islands, and, as a rule, with the miserable result of quarrelling so bitterly that

they at last lived utterly alone, as far apart as possible, and if they happened to meet at odd times, they would throw stones at each other. I say I have read of this, but my experience has been quite the reverse, and I am happy to bear testimony to the fact for the sake of our common human nature. I think that for real downright wickedness, growling, and slandering, people have to live in fashionable circles and society cliques. I could give you some strange experiences of mine on this subject, for I have seen a great deal of high and low life in my wandering career, but I forbear at present.

"Doctor Marrant and his wife treated me with the freedom and kindness of friends and equals, and although ostensibly I continued to be their cabin-boy, they insisted that I should sit with them at table. This seemed a bit awkward at first, but I soon became quite comfortable, and I know that their society and kindness did a raw lad like me heaps of good.

"The doctor had a large supply of books. He often read aloud, which was a delightful entertainment for me. After a while he asked me to read, and although I was slow and shy at the beginning, I soon gained confidence,

and, as the kind doctor declared, 'developed a distinct talent for public reading.' However that may be, reading has always remained a source of pleasure to me ever since those far back days.

"It seems unaccountable to me now, why I was not more exercised over the causes which led these two superior, and evidently well-off people, to cross the wide Pacific, and take up their abode on a desolate sand-spit, with, apparently, no other object in view than making funny little maps, like two children playing at surveying. But, as I said, the boyish mind is not much given to analysis, and when I thought about the matter at all, the thought would be quickly obliterated by some attraction more entertaining to the youthful mind, such as a shoal of flying fish in the lagoon, strange birds on the reef, or an expedition in our little boat. But I was soon to learn the reason of our living month after month, like three castaways, with hardly standing room in the midst of the vast Pacific Ocean.

"It happened in our ninth month of island-life. The moon was at the full, and the shimmering of her golden light on the tropic sea was, as it ever is, marvellous to behold. One

calm night we three were sitting, where you and I are at this moment, watching the moon rise on the night of her full. As the east began to lighten with the first rays of the coming glory, the doctor's wife shuddered as if she were cold, and said to her husband, 'Let us go into the tent, dear, I am cold and sleepy.' The doctor slipped his arm round her, and they at once went into their rooms. The lady seemed exceedingly tired, and as we had been out on the reef all the afternoon, I was not at all surprised that she felt fatigued, and so thought little of it. Having all my *chores* for the night done, I simply sat still, to watch the moon rise in all her glory. There was not a cloud in the sky, not a single speck to mar the splendour of the queen of night; the very stars began to fade as the greater glory rose out of the golden sea. Even I, an unimaginative, ordinary sailor-boy, was spellbound by the wonderful glory of it all—a marvel which, I knew, had been repeated month after month ever since, as my Bible told me, God had set that miracle of beauty 'to rule the night.' And in all the countless centuries it has never lost an atom of its wonder and mysterious attraction for human eyes.

"About an hour after the moon rose above

the sea, I started round the cocoa-nut grove to watch the effect of the moonlight on the smooth water of the lagoon, a thing I had done scores of times before without ever becoming tired of the sight. As I went quickly along, thinking of nothing in particular excepting the golden glitter on the lagoon, and wondering if I should see a shoal of flying fish, and trifles of that sort, I suddenly staggered back, with a low cry of terror, as I saw straight before me, about half-way between the wrecked ship and the lagoon, and exactly at the end of the shadow cast by the ship's taffrail, a tall, unearthly figure, clad in snow-white raiment from throat to feet! With one hand it pointed to our tents, and with the other to the sand at its feet. The face was turned full towards the moon, and it was of the exquisite loveliness of wonderfully chiselled marble, but it struck a great terror to my young heart for, ignorant as I was, I knew I was looking upon the awfulness of death.

* * * * *

"I did *not* faint, and now I know I never shall! but in a great horror and with a wild cry I rushed to the doctor's tent. I met him at the door, rubbing his eyes and evidently just awakened out of sleep. With a white, scared

face, and totally unable to utter a single word, I pointed to the apparition! Without an instant's pause the doctor dashed past me, and in a moment had his wife in his strong arms, and was carrying her back to the tent. I understood it all then, poor young fool that I was!

"The lady was chilled to the bone in her thin nightdress—you soon chill in the night air in the tropics—and what I had taken for the pallor of a spirit was the pallor of death! By the time the doctor laid his wife on her bed, I had lit the lamp, and hot water was ready in a jiffy. But it was all over in a few moments. I heard the lady say, with many words of endearment, 'That is the exact spot, Fergus! The end of the shadow of the ship, when the *moon is at the full!* and at the moment when her lowest rim is one hour clear of the sea.' Then she sighed, as if she were very weary, and I heard her say, almost in a whisper, 'Don't mourn, Fergus, love! You will come to me as soon as *our* work is completed; remember, darling, I can never be quite happy until my little sister-waifs are provided for, and I shall be very near to you always until our—task—is—finished!—and—then—you—will—come—to me!' With a low-breathed, happy little sigh, like a contented

child falling asleep, and only whispering the one word, '*Light!*' the beautiful spirit floated away into the realms of *perfect Light*, and we were left in the *shadow*.

"The doctor told me that when he threw himself on his cot-bed that night, he had at once fallen into a profound sleep, and not until he heard my cry did he know that his wife had left the tent. Then he told me, what I had never discovered, even after living so intimately with them during all those months, that his wife was a sleep-walker; and although the strange power had given him much anxiety, yet through this mysterious gift she had that night discovered the *Secret* which had lain like a nightmare on her heart ever since she was a little child, and which must have been impressed on her baby-mind by witnessing some awful event which she was utterly unable to recall. But she knew that it was her destiny to unravel the mystery, and by that means bring comfort and blessing out of some dark past of suffering and evil! And, continued the doctor, when her pure spirit realized that the task was accomplished, the *Secret* so closely hidden revealed, her soul knew that her earthly work was finished, and so went back to the angels in Paradise!

"Even then I did not know what Doctor Marrant meant by the *Secret*, merely thinking it was some understanding between himself and his wife. The beautiful creature lay as if only sleeping, but it was the sleep from which the sleeper never wakes in this world.

"Next day I induced the poor doctor to take food, and refresh himself for what was yet to be done. I began to realize, for the first time in my young life, that in the awful tragedy of death the beloved one is taken to the land of light, but the frail tenement in which our beloved abode is left utterly helpless to our breaking hearts and trembling hands. Thus we are compelled by the inexorable laws of nature, which cannot be broken, to the second, and more dreadful parting: 'Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust'!

"Doctor Marrant sat beside *his Dead*, hardly taking notice of me at all, excepting to eat a little of the food which I brought to him from time to time. At last I became a bit desperate, and although I was in much grief myself—that is, boyish grief, which is quite another ailment from *man's* grief—I determined to ask the doctor where I should make the grave. The poor man looked at me awhile, as if he had not

heard properly, and then said, quite in his usual voice:

“Thank you, David! I will tell you in the morning; now, go away, and don't disturb *us* again to-night!’

“I don't know why it went to my heart with such a sharp pang when he said ‘us,’ but I went away into my tent feeling lonelier than I ever did in my life before, and cried myself to sleep.

“When I peeped into *their* tent next morning, the doctor was lying full length on the or beside his wife's bed, with his right hand laid on her crossed hands. I have seen much of the pathos and sorrow of death since then, but that was the most pitiful sight I ever witnessed; and I slipped away to my own quarters not at all the same boy, David Kinross, that I was the day before, but a lad many years older, looking at the world, life, and death, from quite a different standpoint, with altogether a wiser, and therefore, alas! a sadder heart.

“That afternoon the doctor prepared the most wonderful obsequies for my lady which I ever saw or heard of in all my wandering life. He and I brought the boat opposite our camp, and spread a heavy shawl over the thwarts:

then we reverently and carefully bore the body of the lady, just as she lay sleeping on her little cot-bed, and laid her in the boat.

"The mast was stepped chock forward, so by bringing most of the ballast aft, and only setting a small bit of a square sail, the boat would perforce go straight before the wind without any steering at all. During these preparations I did not in the least comprehend the doctor's intentions. I thought that he might wish to convey his wife's body to the north end of the island, where the sand was firmer and did not drift so much during strong trades. But when these arrangements were completed, he did not seem to wish to do any more that day, but sat on the sand, leaning against the boat, which lay on the beach half in and half out of the water.

"At sunset I brought him food and water, also some heavy rugs, and tried to induce him to eat, and to wrap up from the chill night air, but he never moved, only patted my hand, saying, 'Thank you, lad! She always said that you were the right sort, and whatever she said was always true! for she did not belong to this world at all, but to that other world where everything is pure and *true*! She was only

sent here on a mission, and when that object was fulfilled she went back to her glory; but she will never forget *you* and *me* before the Throne of God!

"I wrapped myself up in my blankets, and lay down on the warm sand, a little distance from the doctor, but within easy call if he should want me. I think that I dropped to sleep in a few moments, for I was very weary both in mind and body.

"I must have slept two or three hours, as I judged by the height of the moon, when the doctor touched me, and called me by name. I jumped to my feet, wide awake in a moment.

"The moon was in the zenith, lighting the island, reef, and sea with that peculiar clearness which in the tropics often enables one to see objects more distinctly by moonlight than by sunlight, owing to the moonlight not being obscured by the heated haze which is more or less present by day.

"The doctor motioned me to come to the boat, and he at once began setting the small square sail. He made the halyards and sheets secure, so that the sail would stand square to the wind as long as the boat went due before it.

"When his arrangements were completed to

what seemed his satisfaction, the doctor leant over the boat and kissed the beautiful white face, and I heard him say quite distinctly: 'My own beloved! All shall be done exactly as you wish, God helping me! And, beloved, when I have fulfilled my task, as you have fulfilled your task, then pray that I be permitted to come where thou art! For Christ's sake!'

"When we lifted our hands from the boat, it slid softly from the coral sand. The trade wind had dropped to a gentle, steady breeze, as it usually does at night under the line; and when the sail filled, the boat went steady and straight through the passage in the reef, out and away in a silver pathway of moonlight glory more splendid than all man's commonplace pageants. And thus, with its silent, yet—in spite of the awful destroyer Death—still beautiful freight, the little boat sailed slowly and majestically out on the great ocean, away on its mysterious voyage, with God, not man, for pilot.

CHAPTER III

"I FEARED that after the great strain and sorrow which Doctor Marrant had undergone he would collapse, and fall into illness of mind and body. But his grief was not of that common order which is prostrated for a time and then healed by other interests. It was a steady, enduring companion which did not evaporate at all, but seemed to strengthen and ennoble the man.

"He again took up the work of studying and arranging the notes and plans which he and his wife had made, while, in a general way, our lives fell back into the daily routine of the time before his wife's death.

"One evening he told me about the extraordinary finding of the little child who afterwards shaped his whole life.

"We were sitting just as you and I are now, looking out on the tumbling breakers on the reef, and listening to their music, when without preface or prelude the doctor told me the following incidents of his past life.

* * * * *

“Dorothea! The meaning of that name, David, as perhaps you know, is “The gift of God,” and I shall tell you how I found this wonderful “Gift of God” on this little island just twenty years ago this very month. At that time I was a surgeon on “H.M.S. Reindeer,” on a voyage from Panama to Sydney. We were keeping a bit south instead of steering a direct course, in hopes of finding steadier and stronger trades than we would further north. We were out from the Isthmus nearly six weeks, a good deal of the time lying becalmed off the Galapagos Islands. But at last we got well away from the calm influence of the South American coast, and picked up the true steady trades.

“One morning we were tearing along with royals set and stunsails out alow and aloft, when the look-outs on the fo’c’sle-head reported “Land ahead!” There was an instant rush of men and officers on deck, sharp orders, and quick work of reducing sail; the light sails were all taken in with man-o’-war celerity, and the ship’s course changed so as to clear the land safely.

“By that time we were within three or four miles of the island, which we could make out

quite distinctly with our glasses. It looked then very much as it does now, the only difference being that the hull of the wrecked ship is more covered up with sand, and there are several additional cocoa-nut trees growing in and around the ship.

"Our commander, Captain Stokes, was considerably surprised and rather disconcerted at his discovery. He thought he was hundreds of miles out of the way of coral islands or reefs. And, if it had been a dark night, and the lookout a bit drowsy, he shuddered to think that the stout old "Reindeer" might have piled up alongside of the ship, which lay high and dry on the beach, silent, grim, and lifeless. Yes, grim enough, certainly; but not quite *lifeless*, as we presently found out.

"Running round the south point yonder, we luffed up under lee of the reef, and laying the main topsail aback, lowered a boat for a party to land and explore the little territory. There did not seem much to explore excepting the wreck. But there *was* more! and of a sort which staggered us, strong men though we were. A surgeon in the navy is always a bit of a botanist, and is expected to make collections of interesting plants, especially of those

found in out of the way spots. So I generally went with the first landing party. We soon found the passage through the reef, and pulling across the lagoon, landed just below where our tents now stand. As we looked from end to end of the island, it was only too sadly evident that the little sand-dune was uninhabited, and without vestige of man, save the lonely wreck which told of some bygone catastrophe.

“Of course, when we landed, our first thoughts were of the stranded ship. The officer in charge ordered the crew to remain by the boat, while he and I went to examine the wreck. After walking round the weather side of the hull, and finding no name or other mark of identification, we made our way through the cocoa-nut grove to the lee side of the ship, where the sand had, even then, so accumulated in the eddy of the ceaseless trade wind, that one could easily walk on to the ship's deck.

“As the lieutenant and I stepped on board about where the fore rigging *had* been, we saw something which sent our hearts beating like steam-hammers, and made us instinctively grasp each other and point aft. I know we both thought at the moment that we saw a spirit, for by the companion-way there stood a little

creature, so ethereal in its white samite and long flaxen hair, that it was impossible to think the vision was a human child. But it *was!* and as we plucked up courage and went aft, the little thing dived down the companion ladder and disappeared altogether.

“Even as long ago as the time I am speaking of the sand had filled the fore and main holds, but the cabin was quite free, and apparently in exactly the same condition as when the ship was afloat. When we descended the cabin stairs, which, of course, we did at once in search of our fairy child, but feeling, I know, not quite so brave as we tried to look, we found everything shipshape and in good order.

“It was an old-fashioned cabin, with no state-rooms at all, only one large room, a long table in the centre, and bunks arranged on each side in the old style. Everything was in good shape, the beds made up, and the table set in fair order, although there was no tablecloth; but, indeed, that luxury was seldom found in the rough-and-tumble, old-fashioned ships. The lazareet hatch was open, and the place seemed well stocked with all the necessities and many of the luxuries of sea life. We found no vestige of writing or reading matter of any kind, no

chronometer or sextant, only an old-fashioned barometer fastened on the fore combing of the skylight.

“We made these discoveries while trying to find the spiritual or earthly child we had seen, or thought we had seen, on deck. When we had almost given up the hunt, and were feeling exceedingly eerie, we actually tried to persuade ourselves that it was all an optical delusion, and were about to quit the cabin when, in giving a last look round, and my eyes becoming more accustomed to the gloom of the place, I caught the gleam of two wonderful eyes in the furthest corner of the cabin-transom. After a few minutes of silent inspection, we tried to draw forth the owner of the glittering eyes, but there was no response whatever; not a single change or motion. Then, not knowing what better to do, we sat down to wait patiently until the little spirit would condescend to come forth. Half an hour, one hour, but never a movement or change in the gleaming eyes in the dark corner.

“We knew that we were over-staying our shore leave, and, sure enough, presently we heard a gun fired to recall us. Now it was necessary to act; but what were we to do? It would be a very ticklish thing to crawl into the

dark where the strange little creature was at bay. The deck and transom came so near together that there were not more than three feet clear space between, and if we crept in, perhaps the thing might become mad with terror, and—what then?

“The lieutenant counselled retreat and a report to the captain. But a spiritual message to my heart forbade me leaving this little spirit alone, who might, in its agony of terror, vanish and never be seen again. Telling my friend to be ready to help in case of need, I crawled slowly along the transom towards the gleaming eyes, which watched my every movement, but made no effort to escape. Indeed, there was no way of escape, as *it* was chock up against the side of the ship, and there was no way out save past me. I was soon within touching distance, and saying some words, meant to be of encouragement, I laid my hand gently on the little hands that were stretched forward, as if in supplication. With a moan like the cry of a wild thing snared hopelessly in a death trap, the poor little creature fell forward on my arm in a deadly swoon.

“It was no spirit after all, but a little girl of eight or nine, but so ethereal that she was

almost a spirit, as we had at first thought. I brought her out into the fresh air as quickly as possible, and with a glass of cool water from the spring, the little lady soon returned to consciousness. When her senses came back, the wild, scared look in her eyes was gone. She lay quite peacefully in my arms, and in a few minutes fell fast asleep.

“‘ I whispered to the lieutenant to go ahead and get the boat ready, while I followed slowly with our prize. The little fairy was a very easy burden to carry, only about half the weight an ordinary child of her height should have been.

“‘ To say that the boat's crew were dumb-founded when they saw what I carried, only faintly expresses their amazement. When we got alongside, and the boat was run up to the davits, and all hands crowded round to get a peep at the strange wild bird I had caught, it was only the extraordinary circumstances of the case which prevented Captain Stokes from taking prompt measures for the correction of such breaches of discipline.

“‘ When I stepped on deck, and the captain saw the pale, lovely, spiritual creature lying in my arms, as still as if her soul had gone back to

God, our stern old commander, who had been through much rough sea life, and was by no means sentimental, made a motion as if he were going to take his hat off, and only just saved himself in time.

"I hurried below, leaving the officer to explain our adventure. I laid my charge on the sofa in a room which we called the surgery, and which communicated with my quarters. When I laid her down she did not wake, only murmured in her sleep, and held fast to my arm as if the gentle little spirit knew she was safe at last.

"That afternoon Captain Stokes went on shore himself, together with the lieutenant and the purser, and made a thorough investigation of the castaway ship, taking an inventory of everything they could find. But they did not discover any clue to the ship's origin, or what had become of the crew. The only written word found was the name "London" and the date "1810" on the old-fashioned barometer. There was abundance of various kinds of provisions in the lazareet, of course in a more or less mouldy condition, but still fit enough for food, as the child's healthy state proved.

"After another day spent in exploring

every hole and corner of the island, and again examining the wreck high and low, we bade farewell to the lonely sand-spit and squared away for Sydney.

“My little foundling sea bird soon became reconciled to her new surroundings. With the help of our purser, who was himself a family man, I soon had quite a nice wardrobe for the little lady; and it was a perfect study in feminine character to see how quickly she learned to adjust any article of ornament or use to the very best advantage. It was also marvellous to note how delightfully pretty she was in all her conduct, which, as I am a believer in heredity, proved to my satisfaction that she must have come from refined ancestors. I never once saw her impatient or angry, as untutored children are so apt to be, and from the first to the last of her earthly life she always seemed one of the angelic creatures who do come to our world at rare intervals, and who are sent to fulfil some especial purpose.

“I soon made the strange and startling discovery that the little maid could not utter a single word! She could express joy and gratitude by smiling sweetly, not laughing outright as others do; and she expressed sorrow or pain

by weeping softly, not by any violent paroxysm of passion, as most children are so ready to do. It was a terrible disappointment to me when I found that she had not the power of speech. For several days I continued to hope that it was the new surroundings, and shock of the change from utter solitude to the busy life of the ship, which deprived her of her wish or rather power to speak. But after many endeavours to induce her to say the most simple words in English, French, or Spanish, I became sadly convinced that she had never learned the art of speech, or, if she had ever spoken, then in the silence of her *marooned* life she had totally forgotten how to articulate the simplest words. The latter, I think, must have been the case, for I perceived that she seemed to have a dim knowledge of the meaning of a word, although she could by no means pronounce it. For instance, if I said "sleep" she learned the meaning of the word long before she could say it, and would obediently climb into her little bunk and close her eyes.

"As there was no probability of me requiring the surgery, I took the instruments and other things into my own cabin, and devoted the room entirely to her use. And it was

astonishing how quickly the little lady learned to keep the place in good order. She and I became the best of comrades from the very first. Before we were a fortnight at sea she could say "Guardy"—an abbreviation of "Guardian," which I had been trying to teach her.

"I was highly delighted at this evidence of her power of speech, for I had begun to fear that long disuse had silenced the vocal organs for ever. In the course of a month or so my little lady Dorothea—"the gift of God"—as I had named her, had so far overcome her fear and shyness as to be able to go on deck with me, and it was delightful to watch her pleasure and interest in her new surroundings. She greeted the sea as an old familiar friend, smiling and waving her hands as the fresh trade wind sent the spray flying over the weather bulwarks, and spattering in a merry shower on the lower sails. She never had the slightest fear of the sea, even in its wildest moods, and all her life loved it with a strange mystical tenderness, as if it were a friend who understood and whispered answers to the unspoken longings in her own heart. "Let my mortal body rest in the beautiful sea when my soul goes back

to God!" was her constant wish always. And, at last, her prayer has been fulfilled.

"We were two months crossing the Pacific. We called at Levuka, and that lengthened our voyage a bit, but it was one of the most interesting voyages I ever made; for every day I was watching the dawning, or rather the awakening of a mind which had been sleeping, like the princess in the fairy story, until the right one came.

"My lady Dorothea learned several words on the voyage, and by the time we reached Sydney she had advanced so far that, when I placed the letters of the alphabet before her, she could pronounce their names quite fluently, besides having learned many whole words.

"The little maid's gentle ways and sweet manners were an unfailing source of astonishment to all hands and never a man from captain to the cook, but saluted her, as she ought to be saluted, when first meeting her in the morning. Early in the voyage, at the invitation of the wardroom officers, I brought the little lady to the table and it was simply astounding how perfectly she conducted herself. It became a regular custom after dinner for every man to stand up at the signal from the

first lieutenant. 'Gentleman! the health of the princess!' Then a bow to the lady and empty his glass, while the little dame sat calm and dignified, smiling sweetly upon them all. Looking back upon that strange experience, it is very difficult to remember that the tone and manner of the toast were much improved after the lively manner of Dorothea.

The first friends when leaving the ship. Sybil was a very sad affair. Captain and all his officers were mustered on the quarter deck, and the sailors in the fore-cabin, to bid her good-bye. Every man, Jan, doffed his hat as, like a true princess, she shook hands with every one. "Goo'ny! Goo'py!" while the tears in her beautiful, loving eyes; and hers were the only tears which stained the happy deck of the good old "Reindeer" that day!

I made arrangements with the Sisters of the convent of Saint Martha to take charge of the princess. All I could do out of my pay was to provide her with a good outfit of clothing, etc. I had some funds in England coming to me when certain complicated law proceedings were settled, but that was a matter of the future.

In the meantime there was no other course for me to pursue except to depend upon the good Sisters being mothers and sisters to my little maid.

“ ‘ It was a hard parting for both of us when I finally had to say farewell. Her winning ways had so endeared her to me, and I had become so accustomed to her daily companionship, that I felt as though I were parting from a comrade of half a lifetime, and the dearest companion I ever had, which, indeed, was the case. On her part, poor child, she was losing the one who was her only earthly friend, protector, and loving companion.

* * * * *

“ ‘ I was absent from Sydney nearly ten years. Trouble in Egypt had come on our Government, and I was assigned a position in Cairo, and could not get away until I was relieved. By that time I could retire upon half pay, which I very promptly did. Then I settled my affairs at *home* (as Britishers always call the old land); but in reality I had no home, for all whom I loved, and all who loved me, were either dead or scattered to the four winds.

“ ‘ Through all those years my one dream in life had been Sydney and my little princess. I

had corresponded with the Mother Superior of the convent, and had reports of my little maid from time to time, so when I found myself a free man I quickly packed my traps and took flight once more across the world.

“The day after my arrival in Sydney, it was with strange feelings and some trepidation that I betook myself to the Convent of St. Martha.

“I knew that ten years must have changed the child into the woman, and the momentous question for me was, Would the little lovable creature be changed for good or ill? Had the sweet childish dignity become the commonplace frivolity of the modern girl, with a quizzical smile and half-patronizing greeting for her gray-haired guardian?

“The moment I met her I felt a tremor of shame for allowing such mean thoughts to enter my mind. I was now to learn that her nature was of the steadfast, true sort which never changes, let circumstances or life change as they may. She met me with the old, sweet, simple confidence and trust. Of course, she had grown from a child into a stately, beautiful woman, but I knew withal that in heart she was my own gentle, loving little maid still.

“ ‘The good sisters had taken such loving and judicious care of her education, that her sweet old-fashioned ways were wisely retained, while the quiet daily life and teaching had developed her latent powers of mind, which, under other methods, might have remained in darkness. She had become a good musician, and, indeed, what the Mother Superior called a good all-round scholar, showing no trace of her early deprivation of speech. In fact, the sisters said that it seemed as though the energy of her mind had been strengthened by her long silence, as land grows richer year by year when lying fallow.

“ ‘Another charming and, under the circumstances, wonderful gift was her beautiful choice of words and exquisite modulation of voice, which always afforded pleasure and delight to all who ever heard her speak. Perhaps it was the harmony and rhythm of the breakers on the coral reefs which had sank into her pure soul year after year, and had taught her some of their secrets, which we commonplace mortals never understand. Look at those wonderful breakers towering in their resistless might, and crashing on the reef in apparently wild confusion of sound and form, but which is not con-

fusion at all, only the blending of the most perfect harmony of music and colour, if mortals had the eyes to see, the ears to hear, and the souls to understand. All these senses my princess had in perfection.

* * * * *

“‘I need hardly tell you of my great happiness with her who has gone back to God. It has always been a mystery to me that I, a rough sailor doctor, ever won the love of a woman as like an angel from heaven as it is possible for a mortal to be.

“‘A year after my return we were married, but before we had plighted our troth, my darling told me a strange thing. Ever since I had placed her with the sisters, and gone out of her daily life, she had regularly dreamed of the island and of me. This dream invariably occurred at the full of the moon. And, in the vision, she always saw a cave with a great treasure of gold, which I was bringing forth and laying at her feet.

“‘The vision took such firm hold of her mind, that at last she could find no rest. Finally I decided to charter a vessel to bring us here. I did so more for the purpose of soothing her mind than with any expectation of finding the

treasure of her dreams. But now I feel certain that we shall find it, and, God helping me, I shall devote every dollar, be it great or small, to the merciful cause which she designed. May be I shall discover some clue to my lady's origin when I find the treasure! But if not, I know that she came from God, and went back to God after teaching a world-worn man that of all the treasures in heaven or on earth, love is the greatest! And it is the greatest because it is the only treasure which is like God—*everlasting!*'

CHAPTER IV

"EXACTLY at the full of the next moon, when the great silver, white orb was one hour clear of the sea, the doctor marked the place where the shadow of the ship's taffrail extended, which was the exact spot where his wife stood the night she died. Having prepared spades, picks, and shovels beforehand, and taken our supper, so that we should waste no time after finding the spot, we proceeded at once to the work of excavation.

"After working hard all night, at dawn we came upon an upright wall of heavy teak plank-

ing, some seven or eight feet high. Upon clearing away the sand, it was a stiff bit of work moving the boarding. At last we managed with our picks and crowbars to wrench away one of the planks, and after that it was comparatively easy to knock down several others. Then we found ourselves in a dark cavern, which we judged to be twenty or thirty feet square, and eight or ten feet high.

"As we entered and began exploring around the weird place, we had to feel our way by the wall, as it was quite dark excepting for the dim ray of light which was admitted by the way we entered. While we went carefully and slowly through the queer place, we stumbled over some things which seemed to entrap our feet in a strange manner, and presently the doctor's practised touch knew what it was, and he sent me to the tent for a couple of flares (sailors' torches, you know) to light the cave properly. When we lit up the place with a blaze of light, it gave me a shudder to see *what* had entangled our feet. Arranged in a half circle, facing the back of the cave, were twenty skeletons of men lying side by side. Each ghastly figure lay flat on its back with its arms by its side, and its head resting on a stone for a pillow.

"Still further emphasizing the gruesome and startling display, each skeleton's right hand firmly grasped an old-fashioned, heavy cutlass. Rusted and corroded through and through as the useless weapons were, yet they added to the fierce horror of a scene that would have staggered a bolder heart than mine.

"All the fleshless faces seemed to be watching the back part of the cave as if they had been placed there to guard something, which no doubt they were. And a very effective guard they would have proved if they had had only to deal with such lads as myself; for, had it not been for the doctor's restraining presence, I would have bolted and never again faced that ghastly crew. No! not for all the wealth of Golconda.

"But Doctor Marrant was made of different metal altogether, or, perhaps, it was the ghastly training which medicos have to go through which made the difference. I do not mean to say that he treated the silent company with the slightest disrespect or levity, but he walked among them with no more of the nervous shivering such as I had, than if he were passing so much drift-weed on the shore of the lagoon.

"Carefully passing the *guards*, we proceeded

to examine *what* they guarded. Piled neatly against the back of the cave we found a lot of stout kegs, such as the Spaniards use for exporting their best wines abroad. We rested : at this discovery, the doctor looking sad and disappointed. Then we went digging here and there to try for more important things than wine kegs.

"In digging about rather energetically I happened to strike my pickaxe into a keg, and the hoops being all corroded with the salt damp of the cave, the whole thing collapsed and the contents poured out at our feet—not a stream of wine as we expected, but a great, glittering heap of Spanish gold. It was the most gorgeous display of golden treasure I ever beheld, or am at all likely ever to see again.

"At this strange discovery Doctor Marrant stood quite still for a while, and I think he was quietly weeping. Then he said: 'Would to God she had seen this realization of her dreams! But she knows—she knows! and will watch over me in the work I have to do before I go to her.'

"Thoroughly worn out by our hard night's work, we decided to have breakfast, take a well-earned rest, and after that begin work again. It took no rocking to send us to sleep, and we

slept the sleep of those who are tired out in mind and body. In fact, we did not again take up our work until the following morning.

* * * * *

"After a good deal of hard work, and careful management so as not to disturb the grim guard, we got all the kegs to the surface, and found there were fifty-seven in all. By knocking in a stave or head of each, we discovered that some were full of Spanish doubloons, others of gold bars, such as the Spaniards used to ship home from Peru in the brave old days. The treasure was wrapped up in equal portions, in pieces of canvas, and jammed tightly in the kegs so that there was no rattling to indicate the contents.

"When we were thoroughly satisfied that we had taken everything from the ghostly chamber excepting the terrible sleepers and their weapons, we carefully refilled the entrance of the cave with the planks and sand we had removed, again making the place level with the surrounding surface. There the silent guard sleep, and I have no doubt will sleep until the Day of Judgement.

"Our next care was to prepare this vast wealth ready for shipment when the brig re-

turned. Doctor Marrant did not wish to excite the crew with the sight of this wonderful store of gold. He only intended to let the skipper into the secret, and to allow the crew to suppose that we had been collecting various kinds of stones, iron-sand, and other geological specimens such as doctors love and sailors designate 'trash.'

"We had a quantity of stout inch boards, which we had brought from Sydney in case of having use for them in our marooned life. We had also a good selection of carpenter's tools, nails and such like. So we set to work making a number of handy boxes, a couple of feet long by eighteen inches broad, and the same deep. We used the canvas of two tents, which we did not now require, to line these boxes. We put what we guessed to be about fifty pounds' weight of gold in each box, well wrapped up in several layers of canvas, and before we nailed down the lid we jammed every crevice tight with the dry, soft fibrous stuff one always finds lying about plentifully in cocoa-nut groves, so there was nothing about the package to excite suspicion.

"Both Doctor Marrant and I were handy with tools. He told me that he had picked up the knack during his much voyaging. So well did

he like the work, he told me, that during wearisome spells of idleness on long cruises his chief enjoyment was working with the ship's carpenter at whatever job was on hand. As for myself, I had inherited a natural aptitude for ail sorts of mechanical work, and was always happy when the skipper ordered me to help 'Chips' at some job or other.

"We were six weeks repacking the treasure, and when all was carefully done, we had a pile of one hundred and seventy boxes of what purported to be geological specimens dear to the doctor's heart, which, indeed, in one sense was true enough.

"The brig returned promptly at the appointed time, and it was well she did so. If we had had a long spell of idle waiting after all we had gone through, I fear it would have been very hard upon poor Doctor Marrant. Indeed, I, boy though I was, felt the couple of weeks' idleness after our work was completed about the dreariest time I can remember in all my life.

"Our boxes did not excite the least suspicion among the ship's company. As for Captain Muir, the doctor told him the history of the treasure, as far as he knew it himself, and also of the strange conviction, which never left his wife's

mind, that this great treasure was on the island, and that somehow she would find it, which she really did. *We* only uncovered it.

"When everything was shipped, and the brig ready for sea, Doctor Marrant said that he would spend the last night on shore *alone*, and would signal for a boat when he wished to come on board in the morning.

"What the doctor saw and heard that night on the lonely sand-dune, no man will ever know. But from that night to the day of his death, more than twenty-seven years afterwards, he was never quite the same man. He was always the same kindly, high-mannered gentleman, but there had come into his eyes and on his face, and even into his voice, something which made one know that he had been with those who are higher than mortals, and had become imbued with thoughts, and knowledge, and memories, which are not of this world.

"We had a quick and uneventful run to Sydney. When we reached Port Jackson, Doctor Marrant again asked the 'loan' of me from the captain for a short time, which he readily granted. We at once engaged a couple of waggon to take our boxes of 'specimens' to the Bank of New South Wales. If the wharf loafers had guessed

what nice geological specimens our rough-looking boxes contained, it would have been absolutely necessary to have had a big squad of police marching alongside, instead of the doctor sitting quite unconcernedly on one waggon, and I on the other, as if the whole consignment was not worth five pounds. But we rather astonished the staid old manager of the bank when we deposited the grand display of treasure in his strong room.

“‘Why, Marrant!’ gasped the old chap, ‘have you been playing the pirate in the Spanish main, like another Drake, or Hawkins? God bless my soul! it seems as if I ought to call a policeman and have you and this young man locked safely up.’ Then shaking the doctor heartily by the hand, he went on: ‘Really, my dear fellow, joking apart, I do most heartily congratulate you upon this great find. Now you will be able to realize your old dream of living the life of a country gentleman, doing good to all your tenants, besides keeping a real slap-up yacht, not a pettifogging little tug of a thing like mine, but a fine big one, fit to go all round the world! However, it is really very sad, for it will end in you becoming so confoundedly proud and stuck-up that you will take no more

notice of such small fry as myself for instance!' So the jolly, good-natured old gentleman rattled on, half in jest and half in earnest.

"I learned afterwards that he and Doctor Marrant were old friends, or rather old chums. They had known each other all their lives, had been at the Edinburgh University together, and had never lost sight of each other in the hurry and bustle of life, as many poor mortals do lose sight of their early chums, to their mutual great sorrow and loss.

"The banker had known of Marrant and his wife sailing on a romantic voyage of discovery, but never dreamed that more would come of it than had come of his own adventure which he had known to start for search of pirates' hidden gold, and such wild projects.

"The careful old financier at once decided that the treasure should be sent to the Mint, appraised, and coined into sovereigns. This was accordingly done. There was very little alloy found in the doubloons, and the bars were absolutely pure gold. When all the coining was completed, there were returned to the bank five hundred and twenty thousand shining, brand-new sovereigns, as pretty a sight in the way of actual money as one could behold.

"Then Doctor Marrant began what was his life-work thereafter. He purchased four acres of land where stands the 'St. Dorothea Waifs and Strays Home' to-day, and proceeded to build the beautifully arranged structure which you saw. When the whole was completed to his satisfaction, he put the management into the hands of a Mother Superior and ten Sisters of Mercy of the Order of 'My Lady Saint Dorothea of the Sea,' a name which he quickly induced the church to adopt, the doctor being a Catholic himself, besides being a man of position and influence.

"The ground and buildings cost one hundred thousand pounds, and various expenses absorbed twenty thousand more, leaving four hundred thousand pounds. This money Doctor Marrant invested in government securities which yield twelve thousand pounds per annum for the support of the institution. The doctor was determined to put the home on as broad and safe a footing as it was possible for law and foresight to make it, leaving nothing to the chances or changes of fashions or times. After he got everything in good working order, he appointed three trustees, providing that if one died or resigned, the remaining two should

elect another in his place. Of the first three, Doctor Marrant was of course one; his friend, the banker, was the second, and, marvel of marvels, I (a rouse-about sailor-boy) was the third! When the doctor told me, I protested vigorously, but he stuck to his purpose, telling me that I need not trouble my mind, as he and his friend would relieve me of any trouble or anxiety, and all I had to do was to keep my fellow trustees informed from time to time of my whereabouts in case of the death of either of them, when it would be necessary to forward my vote for the selection of another trustee.

"Both my friends have passed over to the great majority, and, strange to say, considering my wandering life, I have happened to be in Sydney when these gentlemen died, although their deaths occurred at widely separate periods.

"I was with my friend Doctor Marrant during his last illness, if that can be called illness, which he very much seemed to enjoy! His death occurred a few months after you and I parted in Tahiti a little over four years ago. When you left me there, and took steamer for Auckland, I was endeavouring to sell my cargo of pearl shell to the Godfroy Company's agent,

but the Germans would only offer me about half its value (thinking I was in a fix) so I up anchor and ran over to Sydney, made an excellent sale, besides having the pleasure of meeting my friends. Our old banker friend had died some years before this, and his successor in the bank, being also a lifelong friend of the doctor's, had been elected to fill the vacancy in our trusteeship.

"When I reached Sydney of course I went at once to see the doctor, and I was deeply touched to find him much changed. Not that he seemed in actual bad health, or depressed in mind. On the contrary he appeared to be more cheerful, and even happier than in times past. But the soul's knowledge is always written on a man's face, if you have the skill to read the story. Wanderers, like myself, who have studied all sorts of men good and bad, 'from China to Peru' as the saying goes, learn sometimes to read writing which the so-called learned can't always decipher. And I knew that my old friend was nearing his port the moment I looked in his bright cheerful eyes. Of course he knew it better than I did, but his strong kind voice was as clear as of old when he greeted me and explained what good and noble work *our* home

was doing. This was his absorbing subject of talk, until later, when he got on to his own personal matters.

“‘My dear David,’ said he, ‘I am most thankful to God that you have come at this time. I wrote to you only last week, and sent the letter by one of Godfroy’s ships bound for Tahiti. I wrote to tell you what now you know, that you and I must part company for a little while, until you also shall reach *port* after the stormy voyage of this broken life.

“‘I wished to have you with me at the last of my earthly life, and also that you should be on the spot to choose a trustee after me. So, when you have done all your own business, I wish you to lay up the schooner and stay with me a bit. It will only be a little while that I shall detain you!’ Then he added with a smile, ‘You see, my lad, I am just ordering you about as I used to do in the dear old days on the island!’

“As I said, I disposed of my cargo to good advantage, and, when I had discharged the shell at Circular Quay, I anchored the schooner in Woolloomooloo Cove, and left the mate and Kanaka crew to overhaul the rigging, scrape down the masts, and give the woodwork a coat of paint high and low, fore and aft.

"After arranging my own affairs I took up my quarters with the doctor, as he desired. He lived in a little bungalow sort of cottage at the north shore. It stands on one of the many beautiful points which jut into the splendid estuary of Port Jackson.

"At that time Doctor Marrant's simple domestic affairs were managed by an old woman whose husband attended to the garden, and did any odd jobs or messages, etc. It was a very pleasant, quiet, unpretentious life at 'Illawarra,' as the cottage was called. We rarely had visitors, and, when we had, they were by no means of the 'smart set,' as the abominable phrase is nowadays. The doctor's friends were quiet gentlemen of the old Colonial days, men who had lived good eventful lives, and made history in many walks of life—statesmen, squatters, and explorers in the far interior of the Bush; bishops, clergymen, and laymen of all sorts and conditions who had lived strenuous noble lives, and served their day and generation well, but who were too often hustled aside by blatant upstarts who were not worthy to blacken their boots!

"Shortly after I had taken up my abode with the doctor I began to see that he was much

nearer the end of the earthly portion of man's immortal life than I had at first realized. He was quite active and cheerful, in spite of his growing weakness, and we spent many days in visiting the Home, and making me thoroughly familiar with all its arrangements—from the important duties of the Mother Superior, to the management of the last little wanderer from the 'Land of Light,' who had been found, with draggled wings, lost in the wilderness of this life.

"I had been nearly six weeks with the doctor, when one glorious moonlit night he called me into his bedroom, and, in a strangely happy voice, told me that his release had come.

" 'You know,' said he, 'that I was never quite the same man again after the last night I passed on the island—*alone*, as you thought, but I was *not* alone! I have never spoken one word of it to mortal creature, but I must tell you, because (lad as you were then, and gray-haired man as you are getting to be now) I know, and *she* knows, that you have the rare gift of seeing and hearing what is beyond the ken of the ordinary, grubbing, worldly-wise.

" 'That night on the island my Dorothea came back to me as clearly as I see you at this moment, and, with many wonderful, loving

words, she told me exactly what my life and work would be until its earthly close! Every iota has been fulfilled to the letter! There is only *this*! She promised to come once more ere we meet in Paradise—and,' here the doctor whispered—' I am waiting for her now! '

" He was lying in bed, and I was sitting by his bedside, ready to do whatever he might wish. A full autumn moon was sending a glittering line of golden glory on the water from the ' Heads ' far away up the Paramatta, like a heavenly pathway to entice the angels to revisit this poor death-stricken earth. Not a breath of air was stirring. The night was so absolutely still that I could hear, faintly, voices and town noises coming over the calm water from the Sydney side.

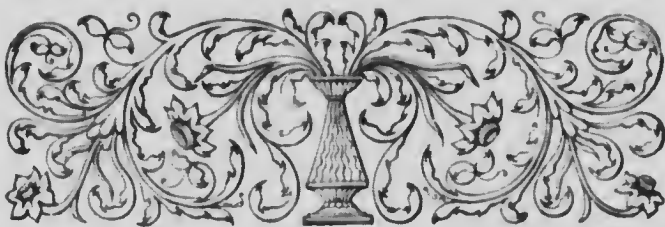
" There was no light in the room save the moonlight, as the doctor said he wished to enjoy the full glory of that light. And I think he also knew that the message he expected would be more easily heard in the soft moonlight than in the glare of a lamp.

" The bedroom had once been the drawing-room in the days when the cottage belonged to the governor's private secretary, but Marrant adopted it for his bedroom, as well as his work-room, on account of its commodiousness, and for

the splendid views obtained from the spacious windows.

"For a couple of hours after our frugal supper the doctor kept me reading chapter after chapter from the Old and New Testaments, which described in gorgeous language the wondrous glory of heaven, and the felicity of those who attained thereto. Then there was a long silence, and, thinking that he was asleep, I was about to roll myself in a rug and have a nap on the sofa, as I usually did about midnight, when the doctor suddenly caught my arm with a strong, nervous grasp, and sat erect in bed, a thing he had not been able to do for upwards of a week. I was so agitated by his change (he for the first time in his life paying no heed to my hurried, loving questions) that I did not notice for some little time that the room was flooded with a strange, lustrous glory, altogether beyond the pale white light of the moon! And, in the midst of that *glory*!—I can call it nothing else—I saw my lady of the island, beautiful beyond all description in words, stretching her hands towards Doctor Morrant, who at that moment fell back into my arms dead. No!—not dead!—I know full well he was not *dead*, but *alive* for evermore!"

MARGARITA OF GRIZZLY CANYON



MARGARITA OF GRIZZLY CANYON

IN July of the year 189-, I was stranded in San Francisco; I mean "stranded" in the sense that I was in that once gay city without any settled plans for the future. I had just come across the Pacific from Japan, and so had had an over dose of sea life. And, although it is hardly possible to have too much of a good thing like the sea, yet when you are cooped up day after day for three weeks with a crowd of the ordinary run of tourists, and not one soul you care to speak to in the whole lot, then "a home on the rolling deep" becomes monotonous, and you long—at least I do—"Oh, for a dwelling in a desert place, with *one* fair spirit for my minister, that I might all forget the human race, and, hating no one, love but only her!"

So after having "done" Kearny Street, the



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Cliff House, and my friends the sea lions, the restaurant on top of the Call Building, etc., etc., and thereby recalling many vanished years and lost voices, I determined to take a trip into the far mountains, and brace my flaccid nerves with the aroma of the pine woods, and soothe my wearied ears with the music of falling waters, and thereby endeavour to free my troubled soul of a surfeit of my fellow creatures.

I took train and coach for "classical" Angels, and after wandering about for a few days renewing old memories, I bought a nice, clever little bronco pony, with saddle, bridle, and lariat, for the reasonable sum of two hundred dollars.

Broncos are the wild descendants of the splendid Barbary horses brought to America by the Spanish more than three hundred years ago. On that vast continent many of these horses escaped from bondage, and they, and their progeny after them, lived the life of the free and the brave. They have roamed the prairies in a wild and semi-wild state for so many generations, and been exposed to so many dangers from man, beast, and terrible blizzards, that they have developed an acuteness of intellect and powers of mind and body

far superior to that of the domesticated horse. I am proud to say that I have owned, and been intimately acquainted with, broncos whose powers of brave endurance and intelligence never failed to arouse my deepest feelings of admiration and respect.

But alas! you must also remember that (as in the human race) there are broncos *and* broncos! Some are so depraved and ugly (read ugly in the American sense) that kindness is simply wasted on them. They are the incarnation of evil and wickedness from the toe of the hoof to the tip of the ear. But the good ones are as near perfection as it is possible for a creature to be upon this sinful earth.

I lingered for a couple of days in the vicinity of Angels and Table Mountain—the whilom residence of the immortal “Truthful James”—and then strapping my few belongings behind my Mexican saddle, I took my journey up the roughish road which leads to the Maraposa big trees, and after that winds farther and farther into the wild mountain regions eastward.

I need not detain you over that interesting journey. Suffice it to say that after nearly a month of most delightful exploration, and a rather exciting episode with a gentlemanly

"road agent," I found myself, late one lovely afternoon, riding into a narrow, dark canyon, through which, I was told, a trail went over the range to the Tuolome river, whence I could either turn southward to the Yosemite, or north towards Sacramento.

At a mountain ranch where I had stayed over night a couple of days before. I was warned that I should "strike" (local for find) no one in Grizzly Canyon save a very old miner, who supported himself by "fossicking" among the old, washed-out tailings, and who had lived utterly alone ever since the canyon, as a goldfield, had been abandoned as played out more than thirty years back.

Grizzly Canyon is one of those weird ravines which are numerous in the mountainous regions of California. A clear, rushing stream goes tumbling and swirling down its rocky bed, until it emerges from the steep, narrow gorge, and then goes slowly sprawling across a sterile plain for several miles until it is absorbed by one of the rivers leading into the Sacramento.

The canyon is some six or seven miles long, and in no part more than half a mile wide, and generally not more than a quarter. On each side the perpendicular walls of rock rise sheer

to a height of three or four thousand feet, with streams leaping from top to bottom without a break, excepting as they are swayed hither and thither by the wind. A curious and beautiful effect is produced by the sunlight, and often by the moonlight, striking the falling water at certain angles by day or night, and creating the most wonderfully beautiful rainbows.

The mines had been developed from end to end of the canyon, wherever a likely spot was located. The workings had practically disappeared, the only memento of former activity being the heaps of reddish-brown earth and stones which had been laboriously taken from the mines; the richest part to be washed carefully and anxiously by men dreaming of homes and faces that not one in a hundred would ever look upon again.

My bronco and I were both tired, and as we entered the silent, sombre gorge, we mutually agreed to proceed leisurely, not only for our ease and comfort, but also for the safety of our lives, as we were frequently brought to a standstill by a yawning pit, so hidden by chaparral, that neither of us saw the danger until "Bronco" saved himself and me by a sudden pause and

an angry snort, which I knew meant an imprecation upon the silly men who made dangerous holes in the good, solid earth.

Thus Bronco and I carefully plodded our way up Grizzly Canyon until the shades of evening made further progress too risky over the honeycombed ground, and I determined to camp upon the next bit of clear land we struck. At that moment Bronco uttered the peculiar little half snort, half neigh, which always sounds to me like a note of interrogation, and the next instant I was thankful to see a light glittering a few yards ahead.

Venturing forward in the "licht," like 'I an o' Shanter, I saw not an "unco sicht" (as Tam did), but still a sight that gave both Bronco and me pause.

In a courtyard fronting a 'ittle ranch an old woman, clad in a Mexican *poncho*, was squatting before a fire, attending to a pot set thereon. A dog sat on the other side of the fire, carefully and interestedly watching the process, whom the woman seemed to be admonishing, and occasionally forking over a bit out of the pot on the end of a sharp-pointed stick.

The light night air was drawing down the canyon, which accounted for the dog not having

winded us as we approached; and not until I furbished up my meagre stock of Spanish, and saluted, did he give tongue.

The old woman hardly deigned to look in my direction, and not until the dog's fierce barking seemed to annoy her acoustic sensibilities, did she attend to him by a sharp prod with the pot-stick, which quickly changed his lively music to a dismal howl—just as I have often seen a mother in Spain dash out of a cottage, and, with a well-directed application, change the merry laughter of her erring offspring from exuberant mirth to woeful sadness.

After the dog's loud lamentations had subsided to an occasional expressive whine, I inquired, in the politest language I could muster, if there was any dwelling near where a forlorn wayfarer could obtain shelter for the night.

Never for a moment ceasing from her occupation, indeed seeming to become more absorbed in her operations, and apparently oblivious of my existence, she merely pointed for an instant up the canyon with the before-mentioned stick, and, still utterly ignoring my presence, again turned her attention to the pot and the dog.

I may as well confess that I rather pride my-

self upon my ability to get along amicably with the fair sex, but here I felt myself completely nonplussed by this silent lady of Grizzly Canyon. So concluding that discretion was decidedly the better part of valour under the circumstances, I intimated to Bronco that he had better, like poor Joe, move on. Taking bits of cheering philosophy to Bronco, such as "A merry heart goes all the way, a sad heart tires in a mile-a!" and "It's a long lane that has no turning" etc., I allowed him to thread his way, with a slack rein, slowly and cautiously up the darkening canyon.

In the course of an hour or so of this slow, uncertain, and unsatisfactory progress, and when we were both becoming thoroughly confused by the increasing darkness, Bronco stood stock still, and looking round at me, said (not in English, of course, but in his own sensible lingo), "Well! here we are! what are you going to do now?"

Reaching ahead (it was not far over Bronco's short neck) to feel what had stopped him, I found it was a stout, rough fence, as high as myself, and utterly impossible for us to surmount.

Finding that Bronco was quite averse to

move either to the right hand or the left, I concluded that the wisest course would be to camp exactly where we stood, and make the best of it until daylight revealed our position. But before quite giving the case up as hopeless of finding human habitation, I gave forth a sonorous Australian *Coo-ee*, which echoed weirdly two or three times from cliff to cliff, and gave Bronco a sudden shiver of horrified surprise, the poor fellow knowing by instinct that it was some savage war-hoop, although it was quite beyond the repertory of his American vocabulary. Then, wonder of wonders, out of the silence and darkness came a clear, answering *Coo-ee*, which startled us both thoroughly, and made Bronco start back with that peculiarly suggestive start

will give (quite different from a shy), without lifting a foot from the ground, only throwing up his head, and lowering his body backward.

Presently there was a call, and a man came to the fence asking who was there, and what was wanted. I replied that I was simply a lonely wanderer without a friend or companion, save my steed, and that if he could put us in a comfortable and safe way of passing the night, we would be deeply indebted to him. I stated that

we had nearly lost our lives several times since nightfall by stumbling into one of the numerous shafts with which the canyon appeared to be riddled, therefore it would be a doubly welcome charity if he could help us.

Without more ado, the man took down some slip rails just in front of us, and invited me to enter. Having done so, he replaced the rails, and bidding us follow him, he went silently along what was evidently a path, we—that is, Bronco and I—following closely at his heels, fearing that we might lose our guide in the darkness. In a few minutes, five or six at the most, the man stopped before a little ranch, inviting me to alight and partake of such humble hospitality as he could afford.

Having gladly accepted his proffered kindness, and after seeing poor, tired Bronco comfortably ensconced in a little shed, with a nice supper of barley, and conversing amicably with a humble little *burro* (donkey), I thankfully followed my new-found friend into his abode.

It was simply one of the ordinary sort of rough country ranches which are found scattered here and there all over the sparsely settled districts of California. It consisted of but a single room. At one end there was a great fireplace,

at the other a wide, rough settle, which was a handy place to deposit odds-and-ends by day, besides affording ample sleeping accommodation at night. This simple and useful arrangement was built by driving the supports into the ground; so there could never be any bother or question about re-arranging the furniture, that fruitful source of small worry in households of greater pretensions.

The fire was burning brightly as we entered, and I saw by its clear light that mine host was a man arrived at, if not past, the Psalmist's human limit, but still hale and active as the ordinary man of forty.

Merely bidding me welcome, and wasting no time upon preliminaries, the rancher soon set before me a substantial meal, of the plainest kind of food it is true, but Oh, didn't it taste good! and didn't I do justice to it! Then, after a pipe and a little disjointed talk of myself and himself, I rolled my weary limbs in my *poncho*, and before my head touched my knapsack pillow, I was falling into the delicious sleep of the wilderness, repeating Wordsworth's appropriate lines:

"Love had he found in huts where poor men lie,
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,

The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills."

* * * * *

At his own invitation I stayed two months with my new-found friend, and very enjoyable and interesting months they were. I not only had some excellent duck shooting, but I was lucky enough to bag many fine, fat deer. I also had the great triumph of killing a full-grown grizzly, greatly to the rancher's satisfaction, for the savage beast had given him much anxiety, and with the usual cunning of his tribe, had escaped every design upon his evil life, and on more than one occasion had nearly made a supper of my friend's poor little burro.

At the time of my visit Timothy Oakley (that was my friend's name, but he told me that he much preferred to be addressed simply as "Tim," it sounded more manly, he said, besides recalling old, pleasant memories) was harvesting his crops of beans, corn, and onions, etc. So I was left pretty much to my own resources and devices, merely depending upon my general knowledge of hunting, with hints and directions from Tim regarding locations, distances, and so forth.

During those delightful months Bronco had

a very nice time of it. Indeed, every time I went to give him a feed or a drink, see to his general comfort, and have a talk with him, he always pleasantly intimated that he quite approved of the general arrangements and conditions. Now a commonplace horse would have complained of something or other, and made himself and me miserable. Either it would have been the food that was unfit to eat, or else the water was unfit to drink, or that the shed was only fit for a pig, etc.

But Bronco knew the world! He had studied life, he was a philosopher, and knew when he was well off, and never cried for the moon as so many foolish horses and people do, never learning the simple lesson that if they got the moon they would not be one whit less miserable, and may-be more miserable because *another dream* of life had vanished. No! no! Bronco was of another kind altogether. I have often heard him repeating quietly to himself the following wise maxim:

"No longer forward nor behind,
I look with hope or fear,
But, grateful, take the good I find,
The best of *now* and *here!*"

Another thing which contributed, no doubt,

to his contentment, was the fact that he had quite captivated Tim Oakley's humble little burro, who looked upon Bronco as a being of a superior order (much as I have seen a country yokel regard a well-got-up-town-bred gentleman), and she would meekly allow him to have the first pick of everything which Tim would chuck from time to time into the corral.

Of course, in the rough climbing and scrambling about the canyon it was impossible to utilize Bronco, hence one reason of his contented and happy state of mind. Then with regard to his larder, even about the smallest ranch there are always lots of nice pickings at harvest time, and Bronco had his choice of all that was going.

It was really very amusing for one like myself, who understands the ways of *our poor relations*, to study Bronco's behaviour towards Tim's little burro. For instance, when the little creature would come staggering home with a heavy load of stuff from the field—corn, hay, or what not—Bronco (who was sure to be sunning himself in a pleasant corner of the corral) would prick up his ears, put his head over the rail, and say in a sympathetic, but at the same time altogether superior tone of voice

(which sometimes really made me angry; although I could not help laughing), "Come along, my poor little friend, I sympathize with you very, *very* much! But we all have our allotted stations in life, and although there is such a great gulf between you and me I am not in the least proud. I will associate with you on perfectly equal terms, and comfort you all I can."

Then, as Tim unloaded the little creature, and threw down a nice feed of tit-bits, the little fool would stand calmly and admiringly by until Bronco had eaten the choicest part, and only left a few scattered scraps for her. And she would merely say, as she slowly recovered her exhausted breath: "It is really very nice of you, Bronco, and I am so thankful for your kindness, and I cannot express in my rude language (so different from your lovely voice) the admiration that is in my ignorant and foolish heart."

To all of which lordly Bronco would reply in disjointed murmurs, as he munched away, "True, true, my poor little dear! But *kismet* has inexorably fixed our positions in this world, and no doubt everything is for the best!"

It was all very amusing, and, I may add, very satisfactory to Bronco and me. So we made

no hasty plans for departure, both of us realizing the truth of the adage, "Time was made for slaves," especially as Tim was about as complaisant to me as sad-voiced little Burro was to Bronco.

In my hunting prowls about the canyon I found that the silent old Mexican woman, whom I had encountered on the evening of my arrival, lived about a mile below Tim Oakley's ranch. And I learned, rather to my amazement, that she and Tim had been the only inhabitants of Grizzly for a great many years. I also discovered that they were neighbours of an extraordinary sort.

What first roused my curiosity was a simple enough incident in itself, but when coupled with Tim's evident desire to avoid any reference to the old woman, I came to the conclusion that there was something uncanny about her, or else there was some genuine romance. No! that is not the word. I should rather say tragedy, for romance is more or less an airy fiction, whereas tragedy is only too sadly *real*, as we all know. However, in Margarita's case (Margarita was the woman's name) I soon diagnosed the trouble as both tragedy and romance with a vengeance.

One day Tim and I went upon a fishing expedition several miles down the canyon. We were very successful, filling a couple of good-sized baskets with splendid mountain trout. We were returning, Tim riding ahead on Burro, and I following on Bronco. The Mexican woman's domicile stood on the left-hand side of the trail, without fence or protection of any kind. As we rode up to the door the old woman was preparing a fire—to cook her frugal supper I suppose.

There was a rough bench made of bush sticks near where she stood, and as Tim rode up alongside of it he stopped, and, without dismounting, quietly laid a dozen fine fish thereon. It did not take him more than a minute, and neither he nor the woman spoke a word, or made any sign of recognition. As we passed on I asked Tim if the poor woman was dumb, and recounted my experience with her on the evening of my arrival. "No," said Tim in a dry sort of way, "she isn't dumb, but she don't speak." And as that appeared to be all the enlightenment he was inclined to vouchsafe, and although my curiosity was considerably whetted, I forbore pressing my inquiries farther at the moment, but determined

to return to the subject whenever I caught Tim a little less taciturn than was his usual habit.

* * * * *

Most of the old deserted diggings like Grizzly Canyon, which have become too worthless to tempt white men to remain, have been taken possession of by Chinamen, who manage to make good wages by careful and diligent manipulation of the tailings, *i.e.*, earth which has been gone over by former gold seekers. But for some reason "John" has not taken a liking to Grizzly, although Tim proves that the tailings are quite rich by making a good living simply cradling over again the stuff which was laboriously worked more than forty years before.

I often assisted Tim at the cradle, and it was most exciting to see the little glittering heap at the bottom of the trough after a week's washing. Tim used to take the dust down to "Jackson's Crossing," where Wells Fargo had an agent who bought gold, and distributed such supplies as miners require.

During the two months I passed in the canyon I accompanied Tim twice when he went down to deposit his gold and get supplies. On these occasions I was glad to find that he had

a substantial balance with Wells Fargo & Co.—quite enough to keep him in comfort for the rest of his days. Each time that we returned from Jackson's Crossing with our cargo of supplies, I noticed—although I pretended that I did not—that Tim always left several parcels on the bench at Margarita's door. This he did whether the old woman was visible or not, and always without the slightest recognition of her, or she of him.

It was really very curious, at least so it seemed to me. But perhaps it was owing to the lonely life affording little to gratify the childish passion of curiosity inherent in human nature.

At last I determined to dig the mystery out of Tim by hook or by crook, unless I found that the revelation gave him too much pain in recalling what I now began dimly to suspect was some love tragedy of the long past years. And so it turned out to be. But not of the simple, ordinary sort which I had conjured up in my mind. And, ever since Tim quietly told me the tragedy of fifty years ago, while the blood-red autumn sunset of California blazed in the west, and glorified the sombre landscape with a weird unearthly splendour—yea, ever

since that gloaming in Grizzly Canyon, whenever I behold a fiery sunset in any part of the world, I also see four young lives laid waste, and two old lives "dreeing their weird" in the dark canyon, until they also shall be called to their account.

It was during a couple of days of the first rains of the season (after California's rainless summer), and while we were confined pretty closely indoors, that I gradually drew Tim to talk more freely about the past, until slowly and almost unconsciously he told me, bit by bit, the following sad tragedy which was hidden in two lonely hearts and resolutely silent lips.

My friend's language was a curious admixture of refinement and frontierism, which was most entertaining to hear, but which I find myself quite unable to reproduce. I will therefore give the history as I noted it down that night, which I carefully did, fearing lest if I slept and depended upon memory, I should be unable to recall the peculiar pathos of the story from beginning to end. Ah, no, the end is not quite yet!

Said Tim: "In March, 1850, I sailed, as an apprentice, on the ship "Star of the South" from Liverpool bound to San Francisco. The ship

carried a general cargo and half a dozen passengers. They were just the ordinary sort of young Britishers, always in high spirits, playing games all day long, reading, walking the deck for hours, and doing a lot of sleep when we got into the tropics. Whatever became of five of these gay young lads I do not know. Most likely they are lying in unmarked graves somewhere in this land, where so many high hopes are buried. But I know exactly what happened to the sixth—Owen Forsythe—for he and I were mates and came to Grizzly Canyon with the first rush.

“Owen was a gentleman’s son, and I was the son of a farmer on his father’s estate. He and I were of an age, and we had been sort of companions all our lives. On shooting days he always wanted me to carry his birds, and his fish when he went fishing.

“So when I insisted upon going to sea, Owen grew restless also, and proposed to his father that he should go out to California and make a fortune, a scheme which sounded pleasant to the old gentleman, as money was badly wanted. What with low prices for crops, generous living, and one thing and another, the old place was mortgaged up to the hilt, as the saying goes.

"Thus it came about that we both started for the land of gold, as it was called, on the same ship, Owen in the cabin, of course, and I in the forecastle. We had many confabs on the voyage in the quiet tropical nights when no one noticed us, and made many plans of what we should do when we reached San Francisco.

"I fully made up my mind to leave the 'Star of the South,' and go mates with my friend when we reached port. But I feared (with the old-fashioned English respect and dread of the law) that I would have great difficulty in getting away from the ship. My father had taken the precaution to indenture me for seven years, as the good old custom was. And if the fashion was a wearisome one for a lad, yet it worked well, and, as a rule, turned out smart sailors. I say 'as a rule,' because it did not make a sailor of me; but that was not the rule's fault—it was mine.

"When we arrived at San Francisco, we found all convenient holes and corners of that vast inland sea, such as Sausalito, etc., filled with deserted vessels of all rigs and sizes; from smart topsail schooners and brigs, hailing from the British colonies, to the splendid full-rigged ships from all parts of the world, and of all

nationalities. It was the general custom in those days, when a ship came through the Golden Gate and was safely moored, for all hands, from the skipper to the cook, to pack up their traps, walk bravely on shore, and strike for the goldfields without a word of apology to any soul. Then the agent (if there happened to be one) would get hold of some old sea-dog, who was too lame to travel to the diggings, and put him on the deserted ship at enormous wages, just to loaf about the deck keeping watch, while living all the time on slap-up cabin fare.

"Scores and scores of splendid vessels were sold in those gay days for a mere song, often just enough to pay the watchman's wages. And many a fine craft was repainted, renamed, and sailed out of the Golden Gate (no one knowing or caring whither) without even the formality of a sale.

"Things being in this state when we reached San Francisco, I found no difficulty in taking 'leg-bail,' as sailors say; in fact it seemed to be the proper thing, and the thing I was expected to do.

"Owen and I soon cleared out of the 'City,' as it was called even in those days, although there was not much city about it then. Three

or four dozen drinking and gambling saloons, a row of uneven rickety buildings along California Street, a score of storage sheds extending southwards along the water-front from Megg's wharf, scattered shacks here and there on the sand hills, constituted San Francisco in the early fifties.

"We made our way to Sacramento by steamboat, and from there worked our way to Grizzly Canyon on foot. I say 'worked our way,' for that was exactly how we got along: picking up a job here and there, for a few days at a time.

"In the boarding-house where we stayed in Sacramento, Owen had done some little kindness to a poor, sick miner, who died while we were there. He told us that we should make our way to Grizzly Canyon, as it was the best place (and he had tried many) for inexperienced men; it was not over-rushed, and the gold was near the surface. At many diggings, the stuff lay all the way from thirty to fifty feet deep, and after you 'bottomed' the shaft, you might find it a duffer, with not enough in it to pay your grub bill. Many and many a poor cove has worked like a galley-slave for months and months, and when he struck bed-rock, never found even the *colour*!"

Then Tim moralized a bit like this: "I tell you that of all the heart-breaking ways which men have invented of hunting the cursed stuff, none have filled graves so freely as digging it single-handed from the earth. When I go down to Jackson's they tell me that now it is mostly worked by great companies, with men at regular wages, and so you see fewer broken-hearted men. But perhaps you only see fewer owing to the changed fashions, and the broken-hearted men and women who toil and scrape to buy a few shares die like rats in their holes when the long hoped-for dividends never come, and the rich men quietly add another million to their fat hoards and smile! Now, Sir," Tim continued, with a gleam in his old, but clear eyes, "can you tell me why men have made all this fuss and pother about gold? They tell me down at Jackson's that it is because gold endures better than any other metal! But it don't seem to endure very well when a Chinaman can rub thirty dollars worth of gold-dust from five hundred dollars of coin in a canvas bag, and you never notice a scrap of difference in the money.

"Men talk about a gold standard, and a silver standard, but they never agree which is

really the proper thing. The Fijian standard is a Cowrie shell, the New Zealander's standard is a Green-stone, the Indian standard is Wampam, while the Pale-faces have adopted gold. And, for ages, men have killed, and been killed, have gone mad, have become pirates, and have become financiers, have broken their hearts, and broken other people's hearts, for this miserable stuff, and when they get a great lot they have to buy a sword and stand guard over it day and night, or some other fool, at the risk of his life, will steal it."

Having confessed my total inability to explain why gold has always been king of this world, Tim quietly smiled, as one having advanced a poser, lighted his corn-cob (manufactured by himself, and actually filled with tobacco which he had grown and cured upon the ranch), and then, as I well knew, his thoughts went away wandering back into the far past!—once again seeing the long-lost scenes of his youth, and hearing voices that had been silent for many a year.

With men of Tim Oakley's stamp it is not wise to disturb the even flow of their thoughts by extraneous remarks or questions. So I continued watching the gorgeous sunset, dreamily

wondering at the glory and mystery of it all, and patiently awaiting Tim's convenience.

Presently he knocked the "dottle" out of his pipe, laid it carefully on the broad slab of red wood which he had fixed as a mantel-shelf and which was a handy receptacle for most of the movable articles in the hut, and then he went on with his (to me) intensely interesting reminiscences.

"Owen and I reached the canyon in the summer of '51, and at once staked out two claims, knocked up a brush shack—such as everybody else had—and set to work. We did not find any big lumps, but we did fairly well, that is, we made about seventy-five dollars a day between us. After working a while we decided to build something substantial to live in, as we knew it would be an actual necessity when the rainy season came on. We measured our claims very carefully and started to build a nice little cottage on the rim of our land, so as not to waste ground.

"Owen was very particular about the shape and size of that cottage. He spent a lot of his spare time drawing plans with a sharp stick on the smooth ground before our door. It wasn't as if he had been a fellow who was fond of his

comforts, and wanted a lot of luxury and all that. That was not his way at all! He could rough it like any old tramp, and keep his good temper all the time. So I was a bit astonished when he was most careful to plan out a nice little sitting-room, with a view over the creek and away down the canyon which, as you may have noticed, is the best outlook we have from here. When Owen would point out these plans to me, I would only laugh and say that it was gold we came to Grizzly for, not views. But all my life I had been accustomed to do as he advised, so I planted the posts where he directed, and thought no more about it. But there was more about it—a great deal more! and, although that cottage was burned to the ground in a fire that swept through the chaparral forty odd years ago, I can see the neat, snug little house now as plainly as I did on the day it was finished, and what is more, I can see Owen's proud, happy look.

"I was handier with tools than Owen was, and he engaged a Norwegian carpenter chap, who was out of luck, to work at the cottage with me, while he himself pitched into the claim, making enough, and even a little more than enough, to pay the man's wages and all our grub bills besides.

"Well! things went on swimmingly, and what with Owen's plans, my work, and the Norwegian's bit of carving and artistic touches here and there, before winter set in we had as nice a four-roomed cottage as a man could wish to see—or a woman either for that matter.

"I did not know then, but I learned before long, why Owen wanted such a slap-up stylish place. He even fenced in a bit of our precious ground round the house, spaded it nice and soft, more like a professional gardener than a careless young man. All this would he do in the moonlight, after his hard day's work; and when I remonstrated with him on doing such foolish things, he would only laugh and blush a bit, and say: 'Never mind, Tim, my lad! You will see that even a lovely English flower can flourish on this poor soil.' He would send to Sacramento by the carrier and get seeds of lots of the old-fashioned things that grow like weeds in the beautiful old land. And I'll be hanged if he didn't have a show in the spring that brought the 'boys' Sunday after Sunday lounging and sniffing around, and making tough old chaps wipe their eyes and say tender kind of things which, spoken by such coves, were enough to make a horse laugh.

"Winter passed. Spring came. And, what with the beautiful cottage, the flowers, and a nice little pile of dust besides, we felt that we had done well. And, as Owen expressed it (he often gave me a bit of Scripture, did Owen): 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.'

"At that time there were about five or six hundred men in the canyon, and not more than three or four dozen women among the lot. These were mostly Irish and Mexican women, wives or daughters of men who had drifted from all quarters, gold hunting like the rest of us; and although they were nearly all Papists, and prayed away to their little silver and china saints, I must say that they were an uncommonly quiet and inoffensive lot. There was not then, and never has been since, a saloon nearer than Jackson's Crossing. The miners themselves made this prohibitory law, and vigorously enforced it. They knew, poor chaps, by sad experience that their only safety was prohibition pure and simple! If a fellow was determined to get drunk he had to tramp down to Jackson's Crossing, but that was looked upon as bad form, and not many went.

"To show you how very strict the 'boys'

were about the whisky question, I may mention the first and only time that the law had to be enforced. It happened just after Owen and I arrived in Grizzly, and we, being new to the ways of the country, and with a lot of old-fashioned notions in our heads, the occurrence naturally impressed us a good deal, and, as Owen said, 'gave us pause.' I knew what he meant, although I didn't know that way of saying it.

"An Irishman, by name of Macsheatan, came over from Sacramento with a burro-load of whisky, and set up a drinking bar just above here. When the 'boys' heard of it, a deputation of them came down and smashed his bottles and kegs (but some of the poor chaps got drunk in the process) which made all hands madder than ever at the Irishman; and in a solemn manner he was told that if ever he brought any more 'fire-water' into the canyon he would be sent where he could do no sort of harm in the future. But, in spite of all this (and it just shows how perverse some fools are) he did come back, and brought in grog, and sold it on the sly, while pretending only to sell fancy woollen shirts, handkerchiefs, and such truck. Some drunken chaps gave the man away. He was seized, tried,

and with short shrift and shorter prayers (although some of his fellow religionists brought their little silver saints to help him in his last journey), he was hanged upon the oak that stands on the trail this side Jackson's Crossing.

"There the body was left hanging until there was nothing of it but the bones. And it was, as Owen used to call it, 'an object lesson' when one passed it on a windy night and heard the thing rattle. Anyhow, never another whisky-seller came to Grizzly, and a very quiet place it has always been, with none of those disgraceful rows which are so common in mining camps—rows in which the women invariably become mixed up, and as a rule get the worst of it.

* * * * *

"At the time I speak of Margarita lived with her father and mother in the same little shanty in which she lives now. The family were quiet people and very good neighbours to us. Margarita devoted her energies to supplying us with berries of various kinds in their season, and trout at such times as we were too busy to go fishing ourselves. Her mother attended to our washing business, and the father was always willing to supply venison to any one in want of

that delicacy. Margarita did all the business part of our transactions, for she could speak English quite nicely, although in a childish sort of way, which made Owen laugh and chuck her under the chin as he paid the bills and gave her a couple of dollars extra.

"In this free and easy way Margarita was a good deal about our ranch. Sometimes, if Owen and I were extra busy, she would cook our dinner, and fix up things in the kitchen. She was wonderfully smart at anything she took in hand, and so we found her very useful; but it was bad blundering on our part, very stupid blundering, as we all found to our cost.

"She was then not more than thirteen or fourteen, and, of course, we looked upon her as a mere child, and so she was in a sense. But those folk from the South ripen soon, and although Margarita looked and acted like a sweet, pretty child, she was a grown woman with all the fierce and loving passions of her southern race.

"In Grizzly Canyon, like everywhere else in California in those days, all men, and most women, carried a revolver, and sometimes two. Margarita was no exception to this dangerous custom, and could shoot better than most of the

men. At a shooting spree which the 'boys' got up one Fourth of July, she carried off second prize against the whole field, the prize consisting of a nice, chunky little bag of *dust*!

"In the spring of '53, Owen told me that he was going down to San Francisco to meet a friend who was coming from England. And before he started he impressed strongly upon me to attend carefully to his flowers, and to keep the place looking smart, as he expected that his friend would return with him. I didn't much like the prospect of a new chum coming into our domestic arrangements, and if I had suspected what sort of a new chum it was, I would have been still more disturbed in my mind.

"Owen had been gone a month, when one day I got a note from him written at Sacramento, saying that he and his friend were having a splendid time, and expected to reach Jackson's that day week, and hoped next day to be *home*! He wrote 'home' in big letters, and made a score under it. Even then I did not suspect anything extra—thick-head that I was!—and began to prepare a proper reception for Owen and his friend, just to keep up the dignity of the ranch. I shot half a dozen wild ducks which

were in fine condition, got a splendid haunch of venison from Pedro Cararra (Margarita's father); and I had Margarita herself collecting berries for two days beforehand, and afterwards helping me to make tarts, and regularly to help at the cooking when the important day arrived. I never understood until then the anxiety of mind which ladies must endure when they give a slap-up dinner party, in case the cook gets sick or tipsy or spoils the roast just to pay off some old score of ill nature.

"It was one of those wonderful evenings of blazing red, like to-night, when Owen and his friend came riding up to the door, laughing and joking, and calling me by name. I rushed out and came tumbling down the front steps in my usual clumsy way, with my sleeves rolled up and my hair sticking in all directions like a grizzly in winter-time; for I was giving the finishing touches to the supper, intending to 'fix myself' when I saw everything ready for serving. But they arrived a full hour sooner than I expected them, and when I heard Owen's voice I forgot everything else and just rushed out with a wild shout of welcome, neither caring nor remembering how I looked, in the glad satisfaction of having him back again. But I

soon fell into profound silence when I saw Owen's friend. I never was so completely dumbfounded in all my life before that moment. I have been since, but never before.

"Sitting in her saddle with an easy grace, with merry eyes and smiling lips, and that sort of a face that you always want to look at again, sat Owen's friend. And when she said, soft and low, and with a sweet little pout, 'Won't you say "Good evening!" and help me down, Tim?' I was so 'rattled,' that I only scratched my head with my floury hands, and that set her and Owen into a fit of laughing, in which I could not help joining—although I tried hard not to; but somehow their merriment was what is called 'contagious,' you know.

"Then Owen introduced 'Nora' *his wife!* to whom he had been engaged two years before he left England, she bravely promising to come to California whenever he had a hut to shelter her in. He had promptly informed her of the cottage being built, and she at once took passage to the new land.

"Owen had kept all this very quiet, but that is the way with young people. I suppose it makes them happier when they have a beautiful secret like that. He had calculated wonderfully

well when his *friend* would arrive in San Francisco, for he only had to wait two days for the ship, and they were married and left for the mountains within a week.

"All that history Owen told me when we were at supper, he and his wife laughing and correcting each other while they described their *beautiful journey* (as they called their rough ride from the city to Grizzly Canyon), and disputing where it was that they saw the most gorgeous sunset, until at last they concluded that *every* sunset was more gorgeous than the before, and that this one in Grizzly was the *beautifullest* of them all.

"While Owen led his wife up the rough, solid steps to the front door of the cottage, all the time laughing and showing her the flowerbeds on each side, I quickly whipped the saddles off the horses, turned them into the corral, and hurried back to our little kitchen, as I was now doubly anxious to make everything work first-rate and go smoothly and comfortably for Owen's sake.

"All of a sudden I had become a little afraid how Margarita would shape under the new state of affairs, and I badly needed her cheerful and clever assistance that night. Besides that, ir.

my long musings during my rather solitary life I have come to the conclusion that one can pretty well tell what a man will do under certain circumstances, but can never in any case tell what a woman will do. They are so *volatile* (I think that's the word, but I'm not quite sure) and yet as stubborn as a granite boulder.

"Just to show you how queer they are I will tell you a thing I saw myself.

"In the early days, shortly after we came to Grizzly, there was a pretty little woman in the canyon, the wife of a big, handsome Cornish miner. But he was a perfect brute when he got into a rage, bad enough with men, but simply a devil to his little wife. He would pound her black and blue with a stick, and then chuck her outside to lie half dead in the cold all night. And it wasn't as if he had the excuse of being drunk, that excuse which we hope the good God will take into account at the Judgment Day. I say he hadn't that excuse, for there wasn't a drop of drink in the canyon.

"Well, after a very bad case, when the poor little woman was found lying outside the door not able to move, the 'boys' had the husband up before a jury, and sentenced him to twenty strokes of the birch, just to let him know some-

thing about the feeling of it. They had the man tied up, and were proceeding to carry out the sentence, when out comes the little fool (as we would say) with a revolver in her hand and said quite quietly, but in a way we knew she meant it, that she would shoot the first man who struck her husband, and, furthermore, that she would kill any man who tried to take the pistol from her.

"The 'boys' all looked sheepish, and went straggling off; but the funny part of it was that her man thrashed her again that very night, and chucked her out as usual."

Then Tim looked at me, with an inquiry in his eyes, and said: "What are you going to think of that?" and of course I had to reply, as Christian did when he fell into the slough of despond, "Truly, I do not know." So we both gave up the undecipherable problem, and after a bit of thinking, Tim proceeded:

"In my young days I never had much experience of women. There were only four boys of us in our family, and all I knew of female ways was mostly learned from my mother, and she was the gentlest woman I ever knew. But somehow even I got the fixed impression in my young mind that it is risky to suddenly bring

another woman into a circle where *one* has hitherto been supreme.

"Of course I did not think for a moment of anything serious happening in our happy little household arrangements, but I feared that Margarita might kick a bit at this sudden invasion of a beautiful young woman into our domestic territory, where Owen and I had hitherto foolishly allowed the child to manage things in her pretty and useful way, and only laughed if she assumed the authority of putting our higgledy-piggledy kitchen in order.

"When I had fixed the horses for the night, and returned to the house, I found that Margarita had taken herself off. I thought for a bit that she had gone to fix her hair and rig up, but as I could not see or hear her anywhere about, I concluded that she had gone home in a tantrum, and I felt sorry and disappointed, for I had determined in my mind to make everything and everybody jolly that night. But there was no help for it, so I at once began, single-handed, to arrange the supper table. Of course I did it all just as a man always does such a job, that is, taking twice as much trouble as there was any necessity for, rushing back and forth with every single article, whereas a woman would

have carried half a dozen things at one go. However, I got everything fixed shipshape at last. I even had wits enough about me to put a bunch of violets at Owen's and his wife's plates.

"When all was completed I called them to come to supper. They had been in their rooms washing and 'fixing' themselves for the *feast*, as they called it. And as Owen handed his wife to her seat, it passed through my mind that she was the most beautiful creature that had ever appeared in Grizzly Canyon up to that moment, or was ever likely to appear again.

"When the lady looked over my arrangements she laughed and clapped her hands like a happy little kid, kissed her husband, shook hands with me, and looked round to salute Margarita. But, as I said, she had disappeared, and so, rather disappointed (for Owen had told me to include Margarita in the entertainment), we three sat down to what the lady called 'the most sumptuous repast she had ever seen.'

"Many and many a time since that night I have grieved that Margarita disappeared, for I have thought that if the beautiful lady had kissed her, perhaps what happened might not have happened. But there is no telling. The

merciful Lord only knows what is in a woman's heart, and it is just as well. For if we all knew, I reckon there would even be more sad bungling in the world than there is at present. And that's a pretty strong assertion.

"So we went on with our supper, those two laughing and chatting, I very silent, for my gifts do not lie in the talking line. Besides, I was naturally more or less anxious about the supper; all the more so since Margarita had given me the slip. Two or three times during the meal I thought I heard a footstep at the door, and once I looked out, hoping that Margarita had togged herself up a bit, and was coming in, but there was no one to be seen.

"Of course during supper I had to jump up from the table every now and then to fetch something I had forgotten, and every time I did so it only added to the fun of the two happy young people. At last, when our supper was finished, and I was bringing in a pot of coffee that I had carefully made as a handsome wind-up to the feast, which the lady declared—greatly to my delight—was the very best she had ever eaten, the front door was quietly opened, and a ghastly, haggard face, with wild eyes (which

were, and yet were *not* Margarita's), stared at Owen's wife. The next instant a shot, true and fair from a revolver, laid the beautiful young creature stone dead at her husband's feet.

"Owen was kneeling beside her in a moment, bathing her face, and trying to staunch the flow of blood from the deadly wound, but nothing could save her, and the lovely spirit had fled, without one parting word, ere we realized the terrible truth.

"After the dreadful deed Margarita came into the room and stood quietly looking at her deadly work, outwardly perfectly calm, though no doubt with the fires of hell raging in her soul.

"When Owen rose up with a dazed look on his face she held out the pistol to him, and, pointing to her breast, said quite quietly but in a voice that I did not recognize as hers at all, 'Yo—tambien—Señor!' Then the grief-stricken man, covering his face with his hands, cried in his agony: 'Begone! miserable murderess! I will never speak to you, nor look upon you again.' The poor wild creature staggered back as if she had been struck a heavy blow, and clutching at the table to save herself

from falling, she said in low, firm tones, but quite in her natural voice: 'And I, Señor, will never again speak save to the Mother of God, and her blessed Son!'

"And, to my certain knowledge, she has kept her vow for more than forty years! Even the good old Father Bertram (who died a year or two ago) told me that Margarita always remained absolutely silent when he called at the Cararra ranch, which he did on his yearly rounds. And he said that the only thing he could do was to accept her silent confession, and grant absolution in the name of Him who lived on this earth (and knows all the sorrows of the human heart), and trust to His mercy that all will be well.

"Thus ended Owen's home-coming, which began so merrily. My friend fell into brain fever, and although I got a miner to gallop all the way to Jackson's for Dr. Jasper, who was a very skilful man when you caught him sober, which we were lucky enough to do that time, yet we could not save Owen, and he died on the fourth day. He did not recover from delirium until a little while before he went beyond my reach, but before he went he told me what to write home. Then, as he was slipping away

into the unknown land, he drew my head down and whispered. 'Don't punish her, Tim. We are all fools in this life, and God will arrange everything better on the other side. If you can help it, don't let her suffer any more sorrow than the sorrow in her own heart, and Christ will heal that some day, and forgive us all.'

"After it was over, and the 'boys' had respectfully attended the double funeral, there was a general demand for a trial of the guilty party. I would much rather have let everything rest, but the leaders of public opinion in the canyon said it would not be respectful to the dead to do that, and we must have a proper *legal court* and a *just* verdict.

* * * * *

"There was a properly constituted court arranged, according to the rules and customs of those days in the mountains. The same judge who sat on the Macshean case, with the same jury, held court in the very room where the tragedy took place. The Mexican family—father, mother, and daughter—were brought into the room. I was then sworn, upon that old Bible on the shelf yonder, to tell what I had seen of the death of the lady, which I did very much against my will, for I had a horror upon

me as to what would be the outcome of the decision of those stern men, who were in the most deadly earnest—even although to an outsider the whole proceedings might have appeared merely grotesque and ridiculous.

"After I had given my evidence, Margarita was called before the judge. When so directed, she kissed the Book without the least reluctance, and when the judge asked if she were guilty, she looked him straight in the face without fear or shyness, only a great sadness in her beautiful eyes, and, never speaking a word, bowed her assent.

"Then the judge, a bit puzzled as to his next proceeding, called up Margarita's father and asked him why his daughter did not speak. The poor man, much embarrassed, and in broken English, said: 'Margarita make *uno voto*, never speak no more!' I explained what the unfortunate girl had said to Owen after the shooting. That ended the evidence against the prisoner, and the judge, in a short charge to the jury, left the case in their hands while he went out to smoke a pipe to relieve his feelings—something we all wished to do, but of course that wouldn't have been proper.

"The Mexican family sat perfectly silent,

and apparently taking no interest in what conclusion the jury might come to, although they knew perfectly well that the power of life and death lay absolutely in their hands. But those sort of people never give themselves away in any great distress, it is only in little matters that they rage and weep. When they do, or suffer, terrible things, it is always in silence.

"After debating for half an hour in low tones, and as calmly and properly as any jury could do, the foreman asked me to call the judge.

"Upon the judge taking his seat, and asking the jury if they had come to a unanimous verdict, the foreman said they had, and proceeded not only to state their verdict, but to give their reasons for arriving at that verdict.

"The foreman of the jury was a man whom we all knew had seen better days. His only name that I ever heard was 'Doctor,' but whether he was really and truly a qualified physician, or had merely been dubbed Doctor because he was cook in one of the mining camps, I never knew. However that might be, he was in some sort an educated man, and could talk in very pretty language by the hour upon all subjects under the sun, and beyond the sun, too, for that matter. Whenever there was a dispute in the

canyon upon any subject too learned for the ordinary intellect, the matter was laid before the Doctor, and his decision was always taken as final.

"When the foreman began his speech to the judge there was absolute silence in the room, and more respectful attention than there is in most court rooms, if they are true reports which I read in the papers when I stay overnight at Jackson's Crossing. After carefully looking at his notes (written on a bit of brown paper), and deeply impressing both the judge and jury by the calm way he did it, the Doctor said:

"May it please your honour, we have come to a unanimous verdict, and as that verdict is founded upon what appears to us indisputable facts, I will proceed to lay before your honour a succinct synopsis of those facts.

"Firstly, a girl never hits anything she aims at, as we were all made painfully aware when we were children. In fact, we always found that the only safe spot in a scrimmage in which girls were engaged was exactly in front of them, and the most dangerous position directly in their rear, where, in some unaccountable way, all their missiles flew with disastrous results to any of us who had taken refuge in that position.

“ ‘ But in regard to the present very deplorable case, we all know (by ocular demonstration on happier occasions) that when the prisoner is in a normal condition she is an exceptionally splendid shot. But on the night when this ever-to-be-regretted tragedy took place, we find that the prisoner was *not* in a normal condition at all, but was labouring under what the learned medical faculty term “mental aberration.” Therefore the jury have concluded that, her accuracy of shooting being an acquired accomplishment, it was liable to be lost, together with all other acquirements of head or hand. And, for the moment, we think that she relapsed into undeveloped girl-nature, and in this state did the shooting.

“ ‘ We suppose that she saw one of those troublesome coyotes (which are very plentiful this year) passing the door, and not realizing that her accustomed accuracy of aim had vanished for the moment, she aimed as she supposed at the coyote outside, with the lamentable, but quite to be expected result we all so deeply deplore.

“ ‘ Secondly, in looking up authorities, we find, in the *Book* upon which we have all taken oath to render a true and just verdict, a com-

mand which we think applies most appropriately to the present case. I will read the passage, and your honour must correct us if we have misunderstood it. "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of *one* witness he shall *not* be put to death."

"Then the foreman quickly proceeded: 'Of course, we all know that Timothy Oakley is an honest and true man, but we have taken oath upon the Bible—"So help us God!"—and upon His command we must find our verdict. So we cannot convict upon *one* witness's evidence only, however unimpeachable that evidence may be.

"Thirdly, and lastly, and, as the jury think, most convincingly justifying their verdict, is the fact that the prisoner has taken upon herself the vow of perpetual silence—a vow which all the married members of the jury unanimously declare is a heavier punishment to a woman than any punishment the law can inflict!'

"Here the foreman turned to the jury and said: 'Will the married members of the jury stand up and tell his honour their opinion?' Five big fellows arose slowly to their feet, and

looking solemnly at the judge said: 'That's so, your honour.' And without another word (for they were men accustomed to deeds, not words) they solemnly resumed their seats.

"The trial had attracted most of the women in the canyon, so the little room was pretty full of the fair sex. After the men had expressed the above opinion, I looked at their wives, thinking that they would not take their husbands' opinion kindly, but I was glad to note many a smile and a good many tears, but never a frown."

Tim took a little rest at this point of his story, and had a draw at his pipe. So, being interested in psychology, I asked him what sort of women they were to whom he referred so kindly. "Oh! just the ordinary, hard-working, common sort," said Tim, "more accustomed to kicks than ha'pence, like the coster's donkey." Then he went on quietly smoking, while I indulged in a bit of moral reflection. Here was a lesson in the unsolved wonder of womanhood. Their rough and tumble life had not quenched, in those much tried hearts, the divine spark of human sympathy, which, thank God, never quite dies out of the feminine heart, even when all dreams and hopes and loves perish in the cruel storms of life.

I had got thus far when Tim struck into my cogitations with: "The Doctor, like a wise man, wound up when he felt that he had made a good impression on both judge and jury.

" 'That is all I have to say, your honour. On these three counts we find the prisoner *not guilty*.'

" Jake Wragg, our judge that day, looked at the jury as if he was going to say something to them. He seemed a bit surprised at their verdict of complete acquittal, and I thought he was going to make some remarks, but he didn't. Then he turned to the Mexican family, and told the prisoner to stand up. Father, mother, and daughter stood up together, and the judge proceeded: 'Prisoner at the bar! You have had a patient and careful trial, and it is my duty to inform you of the result of that trial. What my own private opinion may be is of no consequence whatever now. But if I were your father, I would keep all shooting irons out of your way. *You are free!*'

" The poor old pair went out together, holding each other's hands, and quietly weeping. But there was a fire in Margarita's heart that burned up all tears ere they reached her gleaming eyes.

* * * * *

"All that happened forty-seven years ago this last spring. And the girl of that time is old Margarita of to-day. Her father and mother have been dead more than thirty years, but in all those many years I have never heard Margarita utter a single word. Her father told me, when he was dying, that she had never spoken since that fatal day. And the old man implored me, as I hoped for mercy from God, to help her when he and her mother were gone.

"This I have done in my poor way. But Margarita never says one word good or bad. Indeed, she never seems to hear or see me when I take her a bit of something now and then. She just looks and acts as you saw her the other day when I left the fish.

"I would have cleared out with the last of the 'boys' when they left Grizzly twenty-five years ago, for the canyon was played out even then. But, of course, I could not leave Margarita after what Owen said, and it was impossible to take her with me.

"Twentyodd years ago I made the journey all the way to Monterey to try if I could find any of her relations. After much hunting I did find a brother of her father's. He had lost all trace of his brother, and supposed that the entire

family had died in the hard life of the mountains, or else had drifted south again into Mexico, a land that Mexicans always dream of returning to some day. When I told him of Margarita's miserable, lonely condition, he at once came back with me to see what he could do for her.

"These Mexican people are, as a rule, much attached to each other, and Pablo Cararra did what he could for his niece, but it was all to no purpose. After talking lovingly to her for hours he would come over to me, with tears in his eyes, and tell me the hopelessness of it all. Margarita would not speak, or even take the slightest notice of him, but behaved exactly as she has done to me ever since that hapless night!—that is, gently and with a quiet dignity, but never answering a word, and never appearing even to hear a word.

"So her uncle went sorrowfully away, and Margarita and I have been the only people in Grizzly Canyon all those many lonely years, excepting for a chance traveller like yourself, once in a great while, and old Father Bertram's yearly visits. And I am sure that if it were all put together, I have not spoken as much in all those years as I have to you this night. Now

I think we had better turn in, for I guess by the look of the moon that it is past midnight."

I bade farewell to Tim and Grizzly Canyon next morning. He convoyed me as far as Margarita's ranch, and although he did not say so, I knew that the bundle he was carrying was a parcel of tea and sugar and a few other delicacies for her. The previous day we had received a supply of various things from Jackson's Crossing, and it was always his custom to divide his supplies with the woman who had ruined his life. But, *quién sabe?* perhaps it was God's way of preparing Tim for the Life Immortal.



FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH:

AN ADVENTURE IN THE FAR NORTH



FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH:

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CHAPTER I

I AM one of that fraternity which do business (and a fairly good business it is, generally speaking), simply trading upon the credulity and ignorance of the great mass of mankind and womankind—particularly the latter. I beg to say that we are by no means wickedder or more rapacious than the rest of our fellow mortals; in fact, I firmly believe that in the great majority of cases we are less so. But what are we to do? A fellow must make a living! and if a doctor is careful and only administers good bread-pills, and a little highly-diluted *rumand-water*, I don't think that he will do more harm in his daily rounds than any other honest business man.

It is not sufficiently taken into consideration that we, as an ancient and honourable brotherhood, suffer more acutely from old and venerable traditions than do the ordinary men of business, among whom there is a nice easy sort of go-as-you-please-so-long-as-you-don't-run-up-against-the-constable code of morals, which is not only simple in application, but easy of acquirement.

The noble science of therapeutics has no such simple and satisfactory lines to proceed upon. We are bound and fettered to such an extent by forms and traditions and by a most rigid code of *esprit de corps*, that some rascals even dare to hint that we kill more than we cure, and that the splendid old fraternity ought to be swept off the face of the earth, and that mankind should return to the simple pharmaceutics of our great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers, especially our *great-grandmothers*. But we all know that there are wicked people who are always harbouring evil thoughts.

By the foregoing remarks the reader may fear that I am trying to prepare his mind for a learned discourse on Æsculapius and his disciples, but let me hasten to disabuse him of any such fear. I am merely going to state that

having conscientiously administered drugs to paying, and, alas! to non-paying patients, for two years without a single break in the monotony excepting the sad death now and then of a rich and friendly patient, I decided that I deserved a holiday, and at once proceeded to hand over my beloved patients to the tender mercies of my next door neighbour (walk up Harley Street and read the rows of brass plates, and you will know what I mean), and take a four months' vacation out in the wilds of Canada.

Some years previously I had explored the country north of Quebec; in fact, I had spent a wonderfully interesting summer and autumn in that region with my friend Jack Ogilvie of the 62nd. But that vacation ended so tragically that I did not care to recall the past too vividly by again going to Lake St. John, although the splendid sport which the game *owinenishi* gave us was still fresh in my memory. So I determined to go further afield this time. Armed with fishing-rod and gun, mackintosh and leggings, water-tight boots of the everlasting variety, and—most important of all—a letter of credit concocted on the most economical lines (my patients had been keeping in wonderful

health of late, and the *increase* of the nation seemed to have come to an unaccountable abbreviation), I started from Liverpool on the 10th of June, 18—, with a safe return ticket to North Bend (or rather the *canyon* as old-timers used to call it), situated on the Fraser River, British Columbia.

I find, in looking over my note-book, that I have not any particulars to recount of the sea voyage, or land journey either. Of course, as the old land receded from view, there were the usual number of sad-faced, oldish men and women who kept up a silent, sad watch on the shores which they knew they would never see again, excepting in dreams. There were the younger lot of people looking forward (not backward like the others) with hope of good fortune and happier days to come. Lastly, there were the children. Hoards of them! Where they all come from God only knows! But there they are—laughing, crying, playing, quarrelling—with never a thought for the days to come, the days which these childrens' parents were eagerly looking forward to with anxious hopes and fears, days that would certainly bring joys and sorrows, life and death, as all days do sooner or later.

After a short sojourn in Quebec, the fairest, the quaintest, the most beautifully situated city on the American Continent, north or south, I boarded the Canadian Pacific Railway, and in four days was delivered, bag and baggage, at the wildly romantic station of North Bend aforesaid.

There is a comfortable hostelry here, built by the enterprising C. P. R. for the accommodation of sojourners, like myself, in search of health, sport, or simply recreation and amusement.

It is conveniently situated for fishing, shooting, or mountaineering. When I got there I found I had fully four months at my disposal, so, as I was rather soft in condition, not only from the effects of my lazy steamer and railway life, but also from several years of pretty close London grind, I concluded to begin my outing at the calmly contemplative pleasure beloved of the immortal "Izaak." But, I may say, *en passant*, that on the Fraser it is by no means the calm affair to which the gentle philosopher was accustomed. A wildly-rushing river, cliffs with scarce a foot-hold, and a great fish on your hook such as Izaak never dreamed of in his highest flights of fancy, make a position start-

lingly different from what he so delightfully describes.

I engaged a half-breed Indian loafer as guide and general *major-domo*. I could have had one of the so-called imported Swiss guides, but I preferred the native article; firstly, because I think it is only fair to encourage the home production, and secondly, because the Indian—and even the half-breed, although in a much lesser degree, of course—has *inherited* more practical knowledge of his native land, and all it contains *naturally*, than the imported man can learn in one short life, not to say a few years, or perhaps months. An Indian will know, by a seemingly sleepy glance up or down a stream he was never on before, the exact best spot to try a cast of the line. Or, in scrambling round some ticklish bluff he will warn you not to depend on a shrub which he has not touched, but which he knows by intuitive instinct will give way, although a little while before he advised you to hang all your weight on a bush of the very same variety, and which did not look half as secure as the one he counsels you to avoid. Again, at times when you in your vanity have taken the lead along some sun-burned, dusty path, which seems as safe as crossing Hyde

Park by a short cut, your silent chap, stolidly plodding behind, apparently oblivious to all mundane affairs, will suddenly clutch your belt, bringing you to a dead halt in an instant! And when you, in the pride of your dominant race, indignantly demand an explanation, the son of Hiawatha calmly points to a little brown-black coil which you, if you noticed it at all, thought was nothing more than a crooked stick, but which you now perceive another step and that awful *thing* would have been your bodily, as it was poor Eve's spiritual, death!

Then you—well! You quietly take a back place and thereafter admit that in *some* things the infallible white man may possibly be wise to take advice from the poor ignorant redskin. "Not moral advice! Oh, certainly not! Just physical advice, you know! which the ignorant beggars do really know a good deal about." So we bolster up our pride, and the devil smiles.

One day, after I had been located at North Bend for over a month, and had enjoyed much fine sport, I and Kamloops, my half-breed boy, started with a light camping outfit, intending to remain out a few weeks fishing and shooting farther afield than we had hitherto been. We

took the old Cariboo trail for ten or twelve miles, and then struck up a canyon which led us, after two most arduous days' travelling, or rather scrambling, just as the sun was setting, on to a delightful little flat bit of ground, some ten or twelve acres in extent, and so hemmed in by great cliffs that ingress or egress seemed impossible excepting by the wild, toilsome way we had come.

It was not only, or even principally, for sport that I had undertaken the expedition, the real fact of the case being that my imagination had been whetted by several disjointed bits of information, which Kamloops had at sundry times given me, regarding two white men whom the old fathers of his tribe said had dwelt in these inaccessible wildernesses for many years, and with whom the said old fathers often foregathered in years gone by, but latterly had lost sight of, owing to the burden of increasing years compelling them to forgo the pleasures of the chase, and to keep more and more closely to the shelter and comfort of the wigwam. And also (so the old fellows asserted) to the fashion of the rising generation to loaf about the fringe of the new order of civilization, as the present topsy-turvy state of things is called, and in a

general way go to the devil through laziness, and other evil habits, instead of keeping up the healthful, happy, and useful old life. All this and much more would Kamloops impart to me with a smile, and a hurt-in-my-feelings look, exactly as I have seen an undergraduate express his wounded feelings after getting a mild wiggling from his father about extravagance and sport, etc. "As if the Governor knew what is expected of a young man nowadays! Really it is too disgusting, and very hard for a fellow to stand! The days of porridge and marmalade are past! and the Governor ought to know it. But he never will look at life as it is, and never, I believe, thinks of a mortal thing excepting day-books and ledgers, and the paltry bit of money he grudgingly sends to me."

As Kamloops and I emerged into the little clearing (which we did in the order I have written, and which I had long ago learned the wisdom of doing) we became aware of a neat little log cabin, and, marvel of marvels! a smoothly-clipped little lawn in front, and, could I believe my eyes! a flower-plot in the centre, brilliant in all the delicious glory of old-fashioned flowers -- sweet-william, marigolds, pansies, daisies, etc.

In the spacious rough porch which sheltered the door of the cabin, there stood a tall, handsome man considerably past middle life. He was well bronzed, as men in the mountains usually are by long exposure to summer suns and winter storms, but a glance sufficed to show us that he was a white man. He was clad in the usual garb of the wilderness, that is, partly Indian and partly European clothes, such as long practice has proved to be the most suitable for the wear and tear of the mountains.

After a little quiet examination Kamloops, by a masterly, unnoticeable movement, gave me the lead and then calmly awaited events. The man in the porch had evidently discovered us before we had seen him, but he never changed his position, only stood quietly and carefully watching us and awaiting developments, not knowing—as he afterwards told me—whether we were friends or foes, few or many. As I advanced, which I did at once, I noticed that a breech-loading rifle was on a rack within easy reach of the man's hand, a fact which no doubt contributed not a little to his calm bearing. But perhaps I should not exactly say this, for I afterwards found that Hugh Fraser was a man whom physical danger never seemed to di-

turb in the slightest degree. "Good evening, friend!" I saluted as I came within speaking distance. "I am only a wandering Britisher on a hunting expedition. This Indian lad (or boy, absolutely correct, he is a half-lad) is my servant, and I will guarantee that neither he nor I have any evil intentions. If you will courteously allow us to stay for one night on your beautiful island, I shall be most grateful, and I shall depart on the morrow morn peacefully and to the joy of as honest wayfarers as I." He smiled.

I made this speech with the mean feeling that I was looking a bit of fun at a simple fisherman, who would probably reply, if he deigned to answer at all, in the gruff manner of his kind. But that was my surprise, not to say confusion, when the man stepped forward with a graceful motion of welcome, and, speaking in soft modulated tones that belonged to aristocracies, and still farther off circumstances, said:

"Sir Hunter, to my modest kingdom, or, more correctly, *our* oligarchy, for this estate is managed jointly by my friend and myself. I, therefore, bid you welcome in our joint names to our humble abode, and to our

still more humble hospitality. And, for the sake of that wonderful little island 'far ayont the sea,' and for the honour of our common humanity—especially in presence of this heathen youth, your servitor—may our intercourse be both ethically and aesthetically profitable." He gave me his hand with a peculiarly winning grace and kindly smile that put me quite at my ease, and smoothed the shade of sarcasm which his words betrayed.

In a moment I forgot the incongruous surroundings and circumstances, and only felt the soothing fact "here is a gentleman." And to this day, whenever I think of that meeting with Hugh Fraser, I feel a warm glow in my heart, such as I cannot recall having ever felt before or since in meeting a complete stranger. This must be natural affinity, don't you think, and I am proud to believe it is.

I followed this *gentleman* of the wilderness into the log cabin, and found it by no means the higgledy-piggledy conglomeration of the usual womanless domicile, whether in town or country, but a neatly arranged, comfortable abode, and not at all the slovenly concern which is the invariable result of man's attempt at doing that which his Creator evidently never intended him to do.

After inviting me to a seat (a very comfortable one, by the way, covered with a great, finely cured bear-skin), he proceeded to stir up the fire in the wide bush fireplace, doing it all in a simple, natural manner, as if it were the easiest thing in the world. In a few minutes he set before me a tin pot of tea, delicious brown bread, and a venison steak done to a turn; a repast which I fell upon with much satisfaction, not having broken my fast since early morning. During all this interesting process my new-found friend entertained me with much information about the locality. From what he told me I learned that the region for many miles around was practically a wild, worthless waste. The mountains are cut up into steep, almost inaccessible ridges, divided by dark ravines torn and scarred by rushing streams which are generally unfordable. My host said that he and his friend had explored the country for a whole summer, and could not find an acre of level land, or even land fit for camping on, within a radius of twenty miles from their present domicile.

"This freedom from the danger of neighbours," said mine host, "exactly suited us, so we homesteaded sixty acres each; but, as a

matter of fact, there are only twenty-five acres in the whole lot fit for cultivation. However, that extent was quite sufficient for us. Here we built our *castle*, and have lived in much peace and comfort for a long time—we don't count the years, that's what makes people grow old before their time. And," he added with a smile, "in all that time only three white men have disturbed our peace. Our first visitor was a Government surveyor, who was making a report on the district, and I rather think that his report would stagger the comfortable fellows down at Victoria. However that may be, none of his tribe ever came back. The second was a miner who got lost in the mountains and went insane, and the third is yourself. In years gone by we frequently had visits from our friends the Indians, very pleasant and instructive visits always, but for a long time they seem to have given us up. I suppose they have grown lazy and fallen into the shiftless habits which all coloured folk slide into whenever our race comes along.

"We had a hard time with the mad miner. He hardly ever slept, and continually kept on day and night, beseeching us to take him away from the mountains, which he declared were

going to fall on him, and pathetically imploring us, with tears streaming down his face, to take him to Dartmoor in Devon, where God was! We did all we could for the poor fellow, but we could not take him to Devon, so he died, and God Himself took the sadly bewildered miner to a better place than even Dartmoor, I have no doubt."

Presently my host's partner came in with a basket of fine trout. Like my friend, he also had the unmistakable hall-mark of a gentleman, that strange something which no dictionary has ever properly defined, simply because it is undefinable—a quality which a prince of the land may lack, and a savage of the wilderness generally possesses—until he is vulgarized by contact with so-called *civilized* men.

My host introduced his partner as "Jack Maitland." He was younger than Fraser, but he too had certainly passed the half-way milestone on the journey of life; still he was hale and hearty, and, like his partner, he was ready and free of manner, so presently we were the more of friends, talking and laughing as if we had known each other all our lives. Even Kamloops, incorrigible loafer as he was, rose to the occasion, with good-natured alacrity, and took

upon himself the duties of under-cook and general factotum.

I found that these two supported themselves almost entirely from the products of their bit of cultivatable land and the spoils of the chase. They raised many splendid vegetables, but their chief reliance was upon their field of wheat, which grew luxuriantly, and yielded an immense crop. This they carefully stored and ground into wholesome whole-wheat flour in a little hand-mill which they had laboriously brought all the way from North Bend, and most ingeniously rigged to be driven by water power. Sugar, tea, clothing, ammunition, and other necessities or luxuries, they packed on their backs from the nearest railway station, as need occurred and inclination prompted.

I sojourned with these two men for more than three months, and I am bound to say that their mode of life suited me down to the ground. Those months are registered in my mental note-book as among the most interesting, and I may even say the happiest of my life. I suppose it was a combination of things, or rather circumstances, which contributed to this enviable state. Firstly, I soon learned that I was thoroughly welcome; secondly, what with

the simple fare, splendid exercise, and glorious mountain air, I found myself in such brilliant health as a town-chained man cannot hope to attain; thirdly, and perhaps most conducive of all to my happy condition, was the spirit of good comradeship, which gave me that happy feeling of contentment we seldom overtake after we pass for ever from under our childhood's roof-tree.

Of course, in all that time of close intercourse with these two men, hunting, fishing, and working at whatever job was on hand (for I assisted to the best of my abilities at the occupation of the day), I learned much of their mode of life in the wilderness, all of which was intensely interesting to a born nomad like myself. For, although it has been my untoward fate to be pent up in cities most of my life, I am really and truly a son of the desert, and the instinct comes to the surface whenever it gets a chance.

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Often in the long glorious twilights, after the work of the day was done, we would sit in the porch while the sun went down, and the moon rose, and talk and yarn by the hour together. Many and many were the wild tales my friends could tell of adventures in the far North, where

they had seen much and suffered more than falls to the lot of most men. They spoke freely and frankly of all their Canadian life, but of their youth, or the life in the old land, they were profoundly reticent. However, before we parted they gave me their complete confidence, and freely told me the tragedy of their lives, with full permission, upon certain events taking place, to use the knowledge as I thought fit. Those events having taken place, I am at liberty to explain why two highly-cultivated men of the world, in the best sense of that phrase, chose expatriation and a solitary life in the wilderness. As I say, being now at liberty to do so, I shall explain, in a few words at the end of this article, the life tragedy of Hugh Fraser and Jack Maitland. But in the meantime I will rehearse one of their many experiences in the far North, before they took to the solitary life as a permanent arrangement.

CHAPTER II

It was Hugh Fraser who told me the following adventure, with Jack Maitland reminding him of something here and there.

"Jack and I were in Calgary, in some trouble which I cannot explain at present, and we were eager to get away as far from our old life as we conveniently, or *inconveniently*, could. The Hudson Bay Company's agent at Calgary was an old friend of my father's, and was very willing to help Jack and me in the serious trouble I have hinted at. Neither of us had any experience which could make us prospectively useful subjects for the Company, but we were young strong Scotchmen, bred on the heather hills, and *that* is the sort of stuff which made the Hudson Bay Company a world power.

"After casting over the matter in his mind for a few days, while he kept us quietly out of sight, for certain reasons, my good friend concluded to send us as cadets to a station known as Fort Awanaiska, situated on the head waters of the river of that name. The fort is within the Arctic Circle, and one of the loneliest and least accessible of all the Company's posts. You may judge of its inaccessibility by the fact that furs are only sent to Calgary once in two years, and once in two years supplies are sent to the fort. That was the rule at the period I refer to, but I believe the fort has long been

abandoned as too inaccessible and too dangerous to keep up.

"The most reliable Indians or half-breeds are selected for the important business of sledging, for not only is the safety of thousands of pounds' worth of skins in the hands of these *voyageurs*, but also the *lives* of men waiting and wearying at the lonely post not only for food to sustain life but for the still more ardently longed-for letters which will tell if life is yet a thing to be desired.

"Dog-sledges cannot start on that awful journey until the rough wilderness is made comparatively smooth by fall upon fall of snow, and until the frost king covers the snow with a pavement like glass. Then, and only then, dare the hardy *voyageur* venture forth on his life-and-death journey.

"Six French half-breeds managed the half-dozen teams of eight dogs each, with which we started from Calgary. Considering that the sledges were loaded with sufficient supplies to carry the post over two years, it was a wonderment to me how easily and even cheerfully the poor dogs fulfilled their daily tramp of twelve or fourteen hours. Of course, this was when we first started. I soon thought no more of the intelligent patient brutes than people think of the

cab-horse on Oxford Street that is risking his life to get them through the awful bustle in time for the *up* or *down* train, as the case may be.

"I have noticed in life that mankind is prone to become accustomed to most things and conditions, and, after a bit, forgets to notice what at first excited surprise, fear, or perhaps horror, and then simply takes things as matters of course. But there is one thing which the ordinary man never gets used to, and never thinks of, even in his dreams, without a shiver of fresh horror, and that is the deadly, hateful, frozen North. Snow is beautiful! Frost is still more beautiful! But when those two terrible things get on your nerves by their constant presence and awful power, you hate and fear them with a great and terrible hate and fear, such as nothing else on earth can excite. At least, that is my experience, and I never wonder at the poor Esquimaux's *Hell* being dark dungeons of everlasting snow and ice!

"After nearly three months of constant travelling towards the North Star, our *voyageurs* told us that four more stages would bring us to the fort. Oh! how we watched and longed for the first glimpse of human habitation and the first sound of our familiar native speech after that long

silence, a silence only broken at rare intervals by half-understood questions and answers between ourselves and the by no means conversational *voyageurs*, who, as a rule, are much given to silence when on the tramp, and only burst into song and talk during jollifications on pay-day in camp or town.

"The grim silence of the awful white world through which we plodded day after day impressed us with a strange, eerie hallucination that somehow we had slipped over the rim of our familiar Earth, and were wandering aimlessly on some lifeless planet in the unknown regions of space.

"You see, Jack and I were then new to the life of the wilderness, and it staggered us much more than it would now. But even now, with all our experience of what we shall call for the sake of politeness *retired life*, neither of us could be induced to tackle again the dreadful, frozen North.

"'Awanaiska!—Ah! merci!—Mon Dieu!' cried our *voyageurs* with a joyful shout that even our weary dogs caught the meaning of, and without any other urging broke into a lively trot that brought us to the post in a short half-hour.

"Fort Awanaiska was, at the time I speak of, under the charge of Archie Douglas, a Scotchman, of course, a man of sterling worth and much experience. The only other white man on the place was the store-keeper, Alexander McQueen, a Canadian.

"The arrival of our sledges was a great event at the lonely post. For a week there was nothing done save reading letters and newspapers, which were anything but *new*; also there was the business of taking stock of all the imports which we, or rather the poor dogs, had brought. The factor and his assistant were too old hands to show much excitement. I say 'show,' for after the dreadful North has *educated* a man he seldom either laughs or weeps, unless he goes mad and babbles of green fields and heather hills, things which he seemed quite to have forgotten when he was sane! But I suppose they were sticking about his memory somewhere, although he had long ceased to speak of them.

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"I will now pass briefly over five years. During that time Jack and I had been learning the lore of the wilderness, such as valuing peltries of all sorts, doing a little mild trap-

ping, learning to manage dog-teams, and hunting and fishing as opportunity occurred. The latter sport was a queer, and rather ghastly operation and was performed in this wise: On the west side of the fort there was a lake of several miles in extent. For nine months of the year no mortal would ever guess that such a lake existed. But, in late summer, during some rarely mild seasons, the ice would break up and go crashing hither and thither, showing clear water here and there. As a rule it was too dangerous to approach the lake at such times. Our fishing was all done in the depth of winter. We would select a spot where we judged the ice to be thinnest, and then with crowbars we would drill holes through it, and let our lines into the lake. Generally fish were plentiful—a sort of salmon trout: and a very fine fish they were, or rather are, for I have no doubt there are plenty there yet, although I will never again pull the poor things up from the comparatively warm water to be instantly *frozen stiff* in the fiercely freezing air! When we threw them on the ice, and even before we got the hook out (unless we were very sharp about it), the fish were frozen as hard as bits of stick, and lay there stark and stiff exactly in the form of their last wriggle.

We did not require salt to preserve our catch. We simply piled them up like a cord of firewood, and when we prepared them for the pot we chopped them in pieces with an axe.

"As I say five years had slipped past. The factor had promoted me to be his second in command, and Maitland (who had developed into a first-class trapper and all-round frontiersman) was general manager outside the fort. Very little had changed at Awanaiska excepting that we were all five years older, and the fact that the most valuable furs had become considerably scarcer. There were from thirty to forty trappers always in the employ of the fort. That is, they were supplied with provisions, clothing, ammunition, etc., on a year's credit, and they received a fair valuation for their peltries when settling day arrived. The system worked smoothly and well with the Hudson Bay Company all over the great northwest, and any unpleasantness between trappers and the company was very exceptional. However, difficulties did occur sometimes, and it was our fate to be involved in a very tragic and sad affair of that sort.

"It all happened in this way. We had been five years, or to put it quite correctly, five years

and a half at the fort, when hard times overtook the trappers. Whether it was owing to over-hunting, as some alleged, or to the fact that the furry inhabitants had betaken themselves elsewhere, or again, that the trappers had become lazy and self-indulgent, it was impossible to decide. But whatever the cause, the result was disagreeably apparent in the crowd of angry men clamouring, not only for necessities, but for luxuries as well. They were all in debt to the post with scores much longer than what was proper; but like all their class, they took no thought of debt so long as they could get what they wanted at the moment.

“Our chief, Douglas, was a disciplinarian of the old sort. The tradition was that he had once killed an Indian with a single blow of his fist for an insulting remark which the redskin had defiantly made. However that may have been, Archie Douglas and I got along pleasantly enough until the last sad calamity overtook us. He was never unpleasant to men, and treated all with consideration, and even I may say urbanity. But once he made up his mind that a certain line of conduct was the proper line to follow, he was as inflexible as the North Star, and you might as well talk to the one as the

other. Thus matters had come to a serious deadlock—the trappers sullen and disobedient, the factor obdurate and determined only to grant the barest necessities, and only in limited quantities, the trappers determined to obtain by fair means or foul, not only necessities for the daily business of their lives, but the usual supply of luxuries for their annual high jinks and jollification.

“I warned Douglas that the crowd had ‘bad hearts,’ as Indians very appropriately call it when they mean mischief. But he was not one to take warning, and so the catastrophe came at last in the shape of a general rebellion, and an attack upon us four white men by Indians and half-breeds alike.

“The trouble happened in autumn, just at the time when the men should have been attending to their business. But things had gone badly wrong, and the fellows had become thoroughly demoralized, lounging about the post, grumbling, threatening, and begging by turns; thus letting the short precious season slip idly past when, with a little self-control, they might have been retrieving their fortunes.

“At last the storm broke. By some means (the devil only knows how) the men got a

bottle of rum from the medicine chest. After an unusually quiet hour while they were, no doubt, concocting their plans and discussing the bottle of rum as well, they made a rush upon the room where all the stores were kept, the door of which was always heavily bolted and locked. Of course it was quite useless to attempt resistance; the odds against us were too great to give even a chance of success. We were well armed, but so were the rebels, and, to say the least, they were certainly equal to us, man for man, at shooting.

"When the crowd made a rush for the door McQueen, the storekeeper (who made up our fourth white man), sprang forward, and placing his back to the door, faced the men with such a dauntless bearing that it really cowed the rascals for a moment. But the gang were in too deadly earnest to stand upon trifles. McQueen was ordered away, and when he replied by drawing his revolver, a shot from a rifle laid the brave fellow dead on the spot. Then seizing the key the boldest spirits soon had the door open, and the whole crowd poured into the store-room.

"Jack and I picked up McQueen, but he was beyond all earthly help, the bullet having gone

through his head and buried itself in the heavy door. The factor, Jack and I, held a whispered council of war, while the crowd in the store-room divided the spoil. A cry of joyful triumph, and presently a wild *voyageur* song, revealed the fact that they had found the dozen or so of rum, which was all that remained of medical comforts.

"We three men realized clearly enough that we were in a dreadful fix. The trappers knew well that they were now murderers, and what is just as bad in the ethics of the wilderness, they were also thieves. And they knew by years of experience the inflexible character of the factor, and, doubtless, they fully realized that if he lived to testify of that day's crimes, their lives would not be worth an hour's purchase.

"The chief was always quick of resolve and firm of action, and, of course, it was our duty to obey. We loaded our full stand of arms—five rifles of the newest type, and two revolvers apiece. Thus prepared, we locked the store-room door and waited several hours until the trappers seemed to get over their feasting and carousal, and then a sobering sleep. When we heard them again moving about, Douglas un-

locked the door of the store-room and drew a heavy chain across it, which kept the door so that only one man could squeeze through at a time, a plan which we adopted when we had many trappers to pay off.

"Douglas then called up a man—*François Batiste*—whom he knew had some influence over the lot, and had a talk with him in French patois, while Jack and I stood close behind the chief with a rifle apiece, and revolvers in our belts, ready for action at a moment's notice.

"The fellow said little, and answered rather sulkily, but he seemed inclined to accept the chief's terms, which were liberal enough, heaven knows! But the rascals were confident that in their overwhelming numbers they could exact any terms they pleased.

"The chief's terms, which he submitted to Batiste, were short and clear. The whole gang might go free—all excepting the man who murdered McQueen. He must be there and then shot by one of their own number; after that each man could take a fifty-pound bag of flour and ten pounds of pemmican, and depart whithersoever he pleased, but not to return to Awanaiska Post under pain of death.

"The men gathered in a group around

Batiste to discuss the terms, and we soon learned that, like all rogues, they were having a bitter dispute. Some were urging to accept the chief's offer, strike for one of the northern branches of the Yukon, and so make their way to a Russian post and thus escape all further danger for their misdeeds. This was by no means an impossible programme, and could have been carried out by men thoroughly versed in all the lore of the wilderness, as those men were. But they lacked the very first necessity of such desperate undertakings, viz., a leader capable of planning a long, dangerous campaign and enforcing prompt obedience—no easy matter with such a crew.

"Presently there was a great uproar, a shot was fired, then another, and another. We hastily dragged the heavy door to, locked and bolted it, and left the rogues to their own evil devices. With the store-room door shut, we were absolutely safe from stray bullets; nothing less than a cannon-shot could penetrate seriously our closely-fitted log-walls. The only danger was fire, and for their own sakes even the reckless trappers would see to that.

"The riot went on for several hours, and then ensued a complete silence until we again

heard François Batiste calling humbly upon Douglas to open the door, as his terms were accepted. We again arranged the chain across the door, and forth came Batiste with the bag of flour and the pemmican packed Indian fashion on his back, with his gun unstocked and slung over his shoulder as an indication of peace—a method which our chief had commanded them to observe if his terms were accepted. Only twenty-five men came out where forty had gone in. And Batiste, after solemnly crossing himself, swore a great oath by the Blessed Virgin that all the others were stone dead, and among them the man who had killed poor McQueen. We had no means of verifying this statement, but the chief thought it wise to accept it as truth, especially as, he said, they were all rogues alike, and one dead trapper was as good as another.

“Of course, it was a very risky thing to allow twenty-five desperate men with rifles in their hands to go free, but it was the only course for us to follow. To have turned them adrift in that wilderness without guns would simply have meant certain death; and experienced old trappers as they were, they would have preferred to hold the store-room and

trust to wearing us out rather than face the wilderness without their chief means of support.

"Before permitting the gang to depart, Douglas made them stack their arms, over which Jack and I kept close guard, and ordered them to carry forth their dead companions and bury them. This the trappers did in perfect silence, and as expeditiously as possible. They then, at the chief's command, shouldered their packs and rifles, and, with a silent salute, departed, the Lord only knows whither, for we saw no more of them.

"We buried poor Alexander McQueen on a little slope facing the south, the only spot near us, in that miserable northern waste, where a few stunted, hardy flowers showed through the soft summer snow. After that sad duty towards our departed friend, and verily, I believe, thinking that he had the best of it, we sat ourselves down to our long wait for the sledges from the outer world.

"We knew that it would be fully two months before the snow would be fit for travel in the south, and it would take three months more for the sledges to reach us. We had taken an inventory of our stores, and we reckoned that we had sufficient to last us and our two faithful

dogs for six months. So we felt confident (or we tried to feel confident) that the sledges would arrive within that time; if they did *not*—well, we tried not to think of that possibility! However, as time went on, we were thankful to find that we had under-estimated the extent of our food supplies, and when the sledges did arrive, we still had two months' rations on hand, and with careful management we might make it keep us and the two dogs alive for a month longer. I am careful to mention these seemingly trifling details, as subsequent events made them of life and death importance to us.

"But now I must tell you of the most woeful trouble of all that year of trouble. I never saw a case like it before, and God grant I never may again. One day (it was always a long day or a long night in those miserable regions), about three months after the *trappers' rebellion*, the chief awoke with a cry which I will never forget to my dying day. Jack and I sprang out of our furs and rushed to our friend, thinking that he had been stricken with some sudden illness, which, indeed, he had been, but to our intense horror, it was his mind, which had given way under the strain of the great excitement and the subsequent long weary waiting.

"He spoke to us with a terrible, subdued concentration, which was far more appalling than an outburst of demented excitement would have been. Moreover, he spoke in what *seemed* his natural calm voice, but it was *not* his natural voice at all, and there was the horror of it. It was a voice that had a ring of evil in it, which Archie Douglas's voice never had before. Controlling himself with apparent great effort, the poor fellow told us where, in a certain chest in the store-room, we would find handcuffs, which we must put on his wrists, and then slip the stout door-chain through the rings and fasten the chain to the great beam which stood upright in the centre of our dwelling-room, supporting the enormously heavy roof of the building.

"We did exactly as he told us to do, locking the chain with a strong padlock. We had hardly completed these dismal arrangements when a wild paroxysm of madness fell upon our poor chief with a terrible and great agony. No man, unless he has seen such things, can imagine the horror of those spells of a week or ten days when our chief, the self-contained, clever, intellectual Archie Douglas, became a terrible fiend, who, with his superhuman strength, would

have torn us to pieces like a wild beast if he could have got at us.

"Then for a week or two he would be his old pleasant self again, discussing matters, taking stock of our provisions, and writing up his journal, always disregarding, however, the blank since his last writing. 'Another week of illness,' or 'Too busy to write since foregoing date,' he would note.

"Thus the dreary weeks and months went slowly past, until, at last, oh! blessed event! the sledges arrived with news from the outside world, and some hope of an end to our horrible probation. With our new supplies we were completely relieved of all anxiety on the question of food. But we had to decide, and that promptly, upon one of two courses of action. Either we had to strike for the settlements at once, for there was hardly time to get through before the melting snow in the south would make travelling by sledge impossible; or we could dispatch the sledges back with urgent letters, telling the agent in Calgary of our miserable plight, and imploring assistance as quickly as possible.

"After Jack and I had read and studied the poor chief's letters—for, of course, we had to

read them under the miserable circumstances, and we had none of *our own* to read, for reasons which we may explain to you later—we thought we would consult the *voyageurs* on the subject, and went out to find them. In the excitement of reading the chief's letters we had not taken notice of a rather ominous quietness, which we remembered only too well afterwards. When we called the men there was no response, and thinking they had taken the dogs to their quarters we went there. But neither men nor dogs were to be seen anywhere, and then it dawned slowly upon our bewildered brains that men, dogs, and sledges were gone, and that we were abandoned to our miserable and almost hopeless fate.

"For several hours we tried to persuade ourselves that the fellows had gone back on their tracks for something they had dropped; but it was a very slender hope, for in such a case they would have unloaded, and started back with light sleds. Men in such a bad fix as we were grasp at every straw of hope. However, as the hours went past, and we never heard a shot or a cry, we were forced to admit the dismal fact that we were really abandoned to our fate.



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CHAPTER III

"WHY the men deserted us we never found out, for the very good reason that we never saw hilt nor hair of them again. Whether it was from terror of our poor chief's condition, or whether they had foregathered with some of the rebels who may have been sneaking about the post unknown to us, and had concocted some devilish plot to starve us out of the fort, and so take what loot was left—as I say we never learned, and soon gave up speculating about, giving our whole attention to our own desperate condition.

"It was now imperative to make a bold strike for the south at *once*, or to abandon all hope of rescue for twelve weary months. With the most careful management our provisions would not carry us through more than four or five months, even with the help of fish; and the fish supply was a very precarious reliance, for some seasons ice was so tremendously thick that it was impossible to drill a hole through it at all. Then also, under our miserable circumstances, we dreaded the inactive life and horror of waiting all the slow going weary months.

"Finally we decided to make a break for the settlements, and if we perished we should at least die in action.

"There were a couple of very light sleds at the post which were kept for any desperate occasion like the present. We had two dogs, which Douglas kept more as pets than for usefulness; but they were splendid fellows, and really saved our lives, that is those of us who pulled through. These noble, faithful creatures behaved in the most remarkable manner when their master was stricken with his trouble. Whenever he fell into a paroxysm of fierce madness, and would have torn any creature to pieces which came within his grasp, the faithful dogs would keep just beyond his reach, looking lovingly, and with a pathetic yearning, in the poor man's face, and when he fell exhausted into sleep they would cautiously creep forward to lick his hands and face, as if they knew all about it, and sympathized with him in his terrible affliction. And maybe they did, for mankind and dogkind are the only creatures peculiarly liable to the awful visitation.

"It only took a few days to arrange for our departure. Providentially one of our chief's lucid spells came on just as we were ready to

start, and when I explained the case to him he fully approved of our decision, but at the same time advised us to leave him at the post as he would only be a useless burden. The suggestion was most affecting, and showed the generosity of the man's heart under the stern surface, and touched us very deeply.

"The sleds were small, made for light weight and swift running. We loaded one with our food, and in the other we put our sleeping furs and odds and ends, leaving sufficient room for one person when necessity should arise, which, alas, we knew it would. At the start we harnessed the dogs to the heavier sled, hooking the other and lighter one behind. The dogs started willingly and cheerfully, which was a great relief to me, as I had secretly feared trouble with them, although I said nothing about my fears to Jack or the chief. But the good creatures had been so long out of active service, and had been so much indulged by their master, that I feared rebellion when we put them to actual hard work. And any one who has seen the usually patient, humble sledge-dog go into rebellion for some real, or fancied, wrong, will understand my relief when 'Pole' and 'Star' responded with a wag of the tail

and a *smile* when their master called 'forward, dogs! forward and away!' (the chief had brought them up to understand English instead of the usual French patois) and it was delightful to see how quickly they understood, and how cheerfully they obeyed.

"Thus we started on our dismal tramp of more than twelve hundred miles through trackless wilderness. Jack and I—and the chief, too, when he could—assisted the brave dogs to pull the sleds; which was a much less fatiguing method than packing loads on our backs over those frozen regions. When the chief's bad spells came on we had to fasten him in the sled, and then keep the dogs well in hand, or he would have urged them beyond our utmost walking speed, and so would have come to a more miserable fate than he did with us.

"Thus we plodded on our terrible way for over three months. In that time we had accomplished some nine or ten hundred miles. No one, save God, will ever know the mental and physical suffering of that awful journey. I believe now that we were all more or less demented, and had close companionship with ghosts and visions. The cruel, silent, white world through which we were apparently doomed

to plod our weary way to death, so permeated our souls and bodies that we had only one clear, unchangeable purpose left, and that was, to set our faces directly away from the North Star as if we were fleeing from an implacable foe, which indeed was only too true.

"As we toiled on southward the snow became rather soft and slushy here and there on the slopes facing southerly, and in spite of our most desperate efforts, we were making slower and slower progress. Jack and I had reduced ourselves to two biscuits and a morsel of pemmican per day, so as to afford our afflicted chief a little better fare. We had curtailed the allowance to the dogs until the poor, faithful fellows were merely skin and bone, but at a word from their master they would cheer up and respond with such brave energy, that it has given me great respect for the whole canine race ever since.

"One day, or more correctly, the period of time which we called a day in that flat end of the world, and after a longer and more miserable stage than usual, if that were possible, the chief asked us to camp for rest and sleep. He had been strapped into his sled for several hours, being in one of his violent conditions. He spoke in a strangely subdued manner, and

said that this was the end of *his* journey, for he was dying and would give us no farther trouble. Withal he looked so bright, and so like his old self, that we had no hesitation about undoing the straps we used to keep him safe in the sled. We had not seen the poor fellow look so well since we started on our dismal journey, and we congratulated him upon his improved appearance. He smiled in his old, quiet way, and stretched himself saying how good it was to be free of the straps, and better still to be going into the perfect freedom.

"We sat down to our miserable little supper, but determined to make the best of it as the chief was looking so bright and cheerful. We made a tin-pot of tea, using our very last sugar for the occasion. Jack also fished out from our nearly empty sack of provisions a bit of mouldy old cheese, and, wonder and delight, a box of sardines, which the fellow had been carefully hoarding for some such jollification as the present; and I am thankful to this day that we managed to have such a glorious supper with our chief before he left us. Of course we shared our scanty fare with the faithful dogs, who, whenever they were unharnessed, always sat or lay one on each side of their master.

"After supper we had a little cheerful talk. I say cheerful, for so it was, although upon the solemn subjects of life and death. The chief spoke quite happily and certainly of his great content and comfort in leaving the distraught body, which is always subject to so much trouble, and going into the spiritual world. He seemed to have no doubt or fear whatever, but, on the contrary, very much contentment and peace. Maybe, as the Arabs assert, our chief had learned mysteries in his madness which are not attainable by those who deem sane.

"After our talk we rolled ourselves in our furs and fell into the instant sleep of deadly weariness; at least I know I did, and dreamed a beautiful dream of sleeping on the grassy grave of a school-mate whom I had seen buried more than twenty years before, and whom I had wept bitterly for at the time, but had not thought much about since. I must have slept for several hours when I was suddenly awakened by the dogs giving tongue to a low, moaning howl. In all the years I had known those dogs I had never heard them howl. They would often bark when in high spirits, or yelp when chasing game, but this was the first time I ever

heard them break into that long, low, ghostly, moaning cry.

"Ever since we started from the fort, the chief (whom the dogs obeyed like good children) had taught them to sleep one on each side of him for the sake of warmth, and, I think, also for companionship.

"When camping we all lay near together; Jack and I actually jammed back to back, trying to keep out some of the dreadful, cursed cold.

"I jumped up into a sitting posture when the dogs gave their dismal wail, and in doing so I awoke my companion. We waited a minute or two without speaking, peering hither and thither, trying to discover the cause of the dogs' unusual behaviour. But there was nothing uncommon to be seen, only the dreary, familiar aspect of endless stretches of snow, dotted here and there with a sombre dwarf pine. In those awful, silent northern wastes, there is a deathly stillness in Nature which also gradually takes possession of men, if they are long in those ghostly regions, until they speak in subdued tones and whispers, as if in the strange silence there were evil listeners. So when Jack and I awoke, we quite naturally first spoke in

whispers, wondering what had set the dogs off into their strange behaviour. Then I spoke out clearly, but getting no reply from Douglas, I called louder, asking him what ailed the dogs. But there was no answer save a low moan from the dogs themselves. Becoming thoroughly alarmed, I crept over to the chief's feet, and found them cold as ice. I reached for his hand, and that told the truth in a moment. Archie Douglas had indeed gone, as he said he was going, into 'The Land of Freedom.'

"It was evident that he had died without pain or struggle. His features were perfectly calm, with a beautiful placidity such as we generally see—for our great comfort, thank God!—upon the faces of the dead who die naturally. A happy, shadowy, parting smile, left by the released spirit upon its whilom earthly abode.

"The chief's faithful, loving dogs never budged an inch from his side. They were quite friendly to us, but when we had, with much labour in our weak condition, managed to make a shallow grave and came to move the body, they quickly showed by unmistakable demonstrations that they would not allow their master to be meddled with. And when we tried, first

by coaxing and bribing with food, then by force, to get them away from the body, the poor things became actually dangerous, and we had at last to leave them to their loving, but hopeless task, of trying to awaken their sleeping master.

"We wasted many precious hours over our fruitless endeavours, but at last had to abandon the attempt to bury our chief, and at once prepare for our own departure.

"As it was impossible to get the dogs away, much less to harness them, we decided to leave the heavy sled, with all the chief's belongings, and only take the light sled with our rifles, sleeping furs, and the scanty stock of food still left. Even that most precious stock of food, upon which our lives depended, Jack coolly proposed to divide with the faithful dogs! I objected strongly to what I called his 'sentimental proposal,' but at the last moment I gave in, and we left nearly a third of our precious biscuit and pemmican with the chief's brave guards. When we laid the food beside the starving creatures, they would not touch it, but whimpered, and licked their master's hands and face, trying to awaken him from his strange, mournful silence.

"Then we departed. And the last we saw of Archie Douglas, he was lying wrapped in his fur robes (like a Highland chief lying in state) watched by two such faithful servitors as are given to few men to guard their last sleep; and I am under the impression that they lay there until they died.

* * * * *

"That sad adventure happened more than twenty years ago. But even yet, when I waken in the night, I often think of those two loving *souls*, or must I only say *creatures*, dying by inches beside their dead friend. And I cannot comfortably get to sleep again until I remember our Lord's words, 'Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God.' Then I go off into the land of dreams, knowing that all is well—or *will be* well some day—for His immortal and most blessed words assure me that in spite of sorrow and weeping, pain and death, madness and darkness,

Somewhere! Somehow! I cannot tell!

God's perfect Light will dawn at last,

And we shall cry, 'Dear Lord! 'twas well

We wept our tears in that dark past!'

"Maitland and I had a desperate fight with

death, but we did win through at last. We were so crippled by frost-bite, starvation, and downright misery, that it was months before we were fit for anything. My father's good friend at Calgary took the greatest care of us, and would have given us situations at a less isolated post, but we had no liking ever to go again into the frozen North. So with the wages generously allowed us by the Company, and a bit of money we had deposited with the agent before we went north, we struck out west and located here. But that is another bit of history, and so good night."

CHAPTER IV

THE tragedy which changed the lives of these two men, cutting them off from all their associations of culture and intercourse with their fellow men, and leading to a life of utter isolation in this almost inaccessible wilderness, filled my heart with a great sympathy for them when I first heard their story, a sympathy which has never changed, although many years have come and gone since then.

Both my friends are dead. Their once cosy

log cabin is only an unrecognizable ruin overgrown by vine and chaparral, so that if the wandering fisher or hunter should chance that way, he would not guess that two cultured men once dwelt contentedly there for half a lifetime (never losing the instincts and habits of Christian gentlemen), and then passed, well content, into the *beyond*.

It was Jack Maitland who told me briefly the story of their lives, as we three sat quietly by the fire, while Kamloops slept the solid sleep of the tired Indian, with head as well as body wrapped snugly up in his thick blanket—a universal Indian fashion of sleeping that would smother a white man in ten minutes, or fifteen at the most.

* * * * *

"It was just twenty-six years ago last spring," began Maitland, in a quiet voice, "that the fate overtook us which decided our lives. You know, 'There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will,' and this is how it shaped ours.

"I need not tell you of our parentage. In fact, I think it better that you know nothing of our forebears. It could do us no earthly good, and certainly could be of no use or advantage

to any soul now. I will only say that the names we adopted when we left England are our mothers' maiden names. The change you will observe, as I proceed, was absolutely necessary, or rather, I should say, that the dropping of our own names was necessary; and as we could not bear to cut ourselves off from all the old ties (of those we loved and those who loved us in the vanished years), we clung to the dear, familiar names of those who were sleeping in our native glen, happily unconscious of the fate which had overtaken their sons. I will only say further that you must clearly understand that what I am going to tell you must remain strictly private until after our death. If you outlive us (which no doubt you will, barring accidents), you are at liberty to make what use you please of it.

"My friend and I are Scotchmen, as you know already. Hugh is ten years older than I——"

"Only nine years and nine months," interposed Fraser, with that most peculiar pertinacity which Scotchmen have of sticking to the last iota of fact, which is a very commendable characteristic, but very funny all the same.

"All right," said Maitland; "I take back

the three months. You see I was not present at the interesting event when Hugh stepped upon the stage of life, so I have to take his word for the date. I know that he was a big strapping lad when I was a wee shaver, liable to all manner of tyranny when Hughy was absent, but safe and brave as a lion when he was present.

"I will pass hastily over Fraser's college career and military studies. Those years were dreary enough for me, pent up in the glen, getting Latin and other classical rubbish flogged into my very unresponsive brains by old Dominie McDougal, who was exceedingly proud of having performed the same office for Tom Carlyle. After every severe application of his medicine he would give the school a little homily explaining what wonderful good his method had done for the immortal 'Tom,' and then wind up with a text from Scripture, such as, 'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him'—an aphorism much more satisfactory to the Dominie's own mind than to the squirming body of his scholar. Those years, as I say, were dreary enough for me, but my friend would come to the glen during holidays, and

their memory, and anticipation of others to follow, kept me going. But I was utterly cast down when Hugh got his commission in the 42nd and went off to India and so out of my orbit altogether for a long, deadly, sorrowful season. Of course there were letters, but letters are small consolation to a boy who is longing for the lost one's companionship; and writing letters, even to those he loves, is, alas, anathema!

"Thus six dreary years passed. I had gone to college and had done very little good there, I am ashamed to say. I was in that unhappy, unsettled, bad state for a youth to be in, viz., casting about for something or other to take up as a career, when, to my unspeakable joy, Captain Hugh Fraser came home on sick leave. It did not matter to me why or how he came, so long as he came.

"We had a glorious idle summer together. Hugh soon grew well on the heather braes and the gorse-scented air of his native hills. But the summer slid past. Misfortune and untimely death overtook my father's house, and severed all my home ties for ever. I had to go out into a world of which I practically knew nothing, and where the old Dominie's flogged-in scraps of Latin did not avail me one whit.

"At this juncture Hugh had to go up to London to join his regiment, which had come home, and he advised me to go with him and make a try for a start in life. I was only too willing to stick to Hugh so long as he would have me, and I went forth and made my try. I may say I made several tries, but each and all were miserable failures. I think I must have been born a ne'er-do-weel, so what could you expect?"

"Not a ne'er-do-weel at all," interrupted Fraser, "only your horoscope was a bit unlucky, but no man can help that; all any man can do is to fight his life's battles bravely, in spite of his unlucky stars, and you have done that."

"That 's always the way with Hugh. He has a wonderful talent for finding 'Books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.' But I must tell my little miserable story, and then you'll wonder where the *good* comes in.

"After drifting from pillar to post for a long time, and after every failure coming back upon Hugh's hands, even he saw that I was a born fool; and concluding that I was only fit to become food for powder, he advised me to enter the ranks as a common soldier, which I did, and

a very *common* soldier I was. Perhaps if a great war had broken out at that time, things might have turned out differently with me. But it was after the Crimean war and the Indian mutiny; the country had had enough of fighting for a while, and wished for a breathing spell.

"So there was nothing to do but drill and loaf, and I don't know anything worse for a young fool, such as I was then, and maybe little better even yet.

"One unlucky day General W—— ordered a great review in Hyde Park. Our regiment, of course, was there. The 42nd is a crack regiment, you know, and has been in more engagements in every corner of the world (if I mistake not) than any other in the army, and officers and men were (and are still, I hope) always careful to look their best.

"It all happened in a moment, as momentous events which change our lives generally do happen. There was a young subaltern on duty that day who had lately joined, and, on the principle that 'new brooms sweep clean,' he was very minute in his inspection of our appearance as he walked slowly down the line. This officer had rather unnecessarily (as I thought) found fault with me on several occasions, and

on the day I refer to he called my attention with the flat of his sword to a spot or two of mud on the breast of my uniform, asking me in a supercilious tone why I did not brush my clothes. I replied, rather insolently I suppose, that I had been splashed by himself as we came up Oxford Street, but I would scrape it off if he would lend me his side combs. I knew (by telepathy, I suppose, for I did not turn my head) that there were grins on each side of me, and the young fellow, being nettled, called me an opprobrious name and ordered me under arrest. If I had had the common sense to quietly submit, little harm would have come of it. But instead of doing the wise thing, as most men would have done, I allowed the devil to get into me, and I felled my young gentleman with such a ringing blow that he lay on the grass insensible.

"Then there was an arrest in earnest, and I was marched off to the guard-house under a strong escort. I knew that it was a very serious offence which I had committed. Not only would it probably end my military career, but the punishment would be severe and disgraceful. So, as usual with me, I chewed the bitter cud of reflection when too late.

"That night Hugh came to see me, and being a sensible man, which, of course, I am not, he was much more cut up by the incident than I was. After giving me a stiff lecture as my superior officer, he consoled me with kind words, just as he has always done after every scrape I ever fell into; and they have been—alas!—many.

"For some days nothing further happened, and I began to hope that the unfortunate incident was blowing over, when, to my dismay, the poor young sub. died of brain fever, accelerated, it was said, by the blow.

"I was now in a dreadful predicament, from which I knew that even my friend, generous as he had always been, could not extricate me. But he did, and by the only means possible—sacrificing himself!

"Being my commanding officer, he of course could go and come as he pleased. The day after the sub.'s death Hugh brought me the dreadful intelligence. He said that feeling was dead against me for the disgrace I had brought upon the regiment, and the verdict would be the extreme limit of the law. Therefore, at all hazards I must escape and get out of the country.

"Hugh arranged to come that night at change of guard, and advised that we should make a quick run for the open gate, and once outside trust to the intricate streets towards the river to baffle our pursuers. After we reached the water we would try either to get to the opposite bank, or to scramble on board any kind of passing craft going down stream. We knew that men are usually in sympathy with fugitives, and would rather see us escape than caught. We were both splendid swimmers, an accomplishment acquired in Loch Fyne on many a summer's day.

"It all turned out as Hugh predicted. When we passed quickly through the gate there was a challenge, a shot, and hurried orders here and there. But we got off scathless; and I have no doubt we had reached the river before a pursuing squad was properly started.

"We tore off all our top clothing, hats, and boots, hid them under the wharf, and slipping into the water, paddled quietly for the other side.

"As we progressed we found that the tide was running strongly ebb, and Hugh whispered to strike slowly and drift with the current. It was in the month of August, the water

felt almost warm, and it was quite possible for strong swimmers, such as we were, to keep going for hours unless we fell into some mishap. So we kept on, past Westminster Bridge, past Waterloo, and away past London Bridge; sometimes with the lights glaring horribly in our faces, and once the police-boat so near that the blades of their oars almost struck us, but we had seen them in time, and slid under water as quietly as ducks. At last we got among the big shipping and drifted against a great black hull which, like ourselves, was slowly creeping down the river.

"We soon made out that it was a large steamer, evidently outward bound. This was exactly the sort of craft to suit us. Hunting around her for some means of getting on board, and trusting to our lucky star afterwards, we reached the bow and found the anchor hanging level with the water, left so no doubt in case it became necessary to drop it again. Clambering on to the anchor we had a most welcome rest. It was beautifully incased with odorous Thames mud, but we were by no means fastidious at the moment, and were most thankful for the rest even although our seat was rather slippery. When we got on to our greasy perch I actually

remember thinking of a yarn I once heard (such trifles will come into the mind even in life's great crises) of butter being made from Thames mud, and the mud was so exceedingly *greasy* that at the moment I thought the scheme quite feasible. Whether there is any truth in the gruesome tradition I don't know, but Hugh and I sometimes think of Thames mud to this day, and always with a smile and a shudder.

"As I said we were thankful for our temporary resting place, but it was too conspicuous a position for us, and we decided at all hazards to make our way up the chain to the deck—a feat easy enough for active fellows to perform. When we reached the deck we found everything very quiet. The mate and two men were keeping a look-out ahead, and reporting to the captain and pilot on the bridge. As we came over the rail the men saw us at once, and the shrewd old mate knew at a glance that we were would-be stowaways, making our escape from some mischief or other; but that did not trouble his mind in the least, and being short-handed, as tramp steamers usually are, he had no objection to a couple of active fellows (as we had proved ourselves to be by our method of coming on board) working their passage, especially

as the only expense would be a bit of extra grub. So the old fellow looked rather sternly at us, and said, 'If you coves will work your passage willingly to Montreal, and give *me* no trouble, slide below and keep quiet until the pilot goes. If you can't or won't work, then over you go quicker than you shinned aboard.'

"We did 'slide below' with very grateful hearts, and hid ourselves quietly in a corner of the fo'c'sle until the pilot took his departure. Then the mate, good old chap that he was, hauled us before the skipper, as if he had just discovered us, and suggested that we be thrown overboard. Of course the captain knew that two strong men would be no drawback to his undermanned ship, and after swearing at us a bit, just to keep up appearances, he ordered the mate to turn us to work, and if we skulked, to shove us into the forepeak with a biscuit a day and a pannikin of water until we came to our senses.

"The skipper's rough talk was merely to show a proper sense of duty, and I am bound to say that we had a very comfortable time of it on the good old tramp 'St. George.' And as there were no sails to set or take in, and

consequently, as all work was on deck, or shovelling coal into the furnaces, we acquitted ourselves to the entire satisfaction of both the captain and the mate. So much so, that when we reached Montreai, the skipper offered to take us on at full wages; and when we declined with thanks, saying that we wished to settle on the land, the kindly old chap wished us God-speed, and gave us a sovereign apiece; and I may say that it was the first sovereign I had really earned in all my life. Even then, without Hugh I would have been hopelessly stranded. I depended implicitly upon him to originate plans, as I had depended all my life. And his were always good plans, it was only my own dense stupidity which invariably rendered them abortive. If I had been alone in a strange land, penniless (excepting for the skipper's sovereign), my only course would have been to gladly ship on the shaky old tramp steamer 'St. George,' and so disappear into the dark during some friendly storm in mid-Atlantic, for we had learned enough of the old tub to know that such would be her fate sooner or later; and no doubt her owners were sincerely hoping for that result every time the poor old craft went down the Thames.

"But no such despairing thoughts entered my mind. I was as brave as in the old days in the glen when I had my doughty knight along to fight my battles; and depending on him for our future, I simply washed my hands of all anxiety.

"Hugh had never told me that he had safely carried in a waterproof belt one thousand pounds in Bank of England notes. Of course he had sacrificed his commission and all his future career for my worthless sake; or, I should rather say, for the sake of *one* he promised—*one who died!*"

"That is enough, Jack!" interposed Fraser, quietly. "Say we came to Calgary."

"So," continued Maitland, "we came to Calgary, and found the Hudson Bay Company's agent, who was an old friend of Hugh's father. He arranged for us the northern adventure, where we disappeared honourably and usefully for six years. That story my friend has told you graphically and connectedly. My synopsis of our former life is only a hurried glance at the past, which explains why we *spend*, and will *end*, our lives in the wilderness. The old land is no more for us. We may only revisit the glen and the bonnie heather hills in our dreams.

294 FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

We shall never sleep in the auld kirkyard with our forebears and those we loved and those who loved us. And it is well, for it is meet that we have no tombstones on our graves with records that are better forgotten."

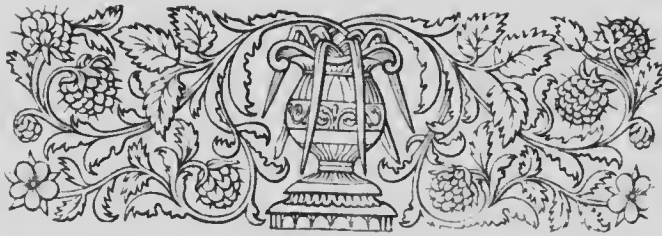


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IRENE MIDDLETON:

A STUDY IN PSYCHOLOGY






IRENE MIDDLETON:

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CHAPTER I

 FEW years ago I spent some very pleasant weeks on the shores and waters of beautiful Gairloch. I had never been there before, and the place took my fancy greatly. The roads afford splendid facilities for walking, and the loch is most suitable for boating. I took up my quarters at the little village inn, and although the accommodation was of the most limited kind, the people were very obliging, and did all in their power to make my sojourn pleasant and comfortable. So with my cosmopolitan habits and world-wide experience of the wisdom of adapting one's desires to the position of the moment, I soon settled down to the life, and was most comfortable.

During the first week or two, I devoted my attention to land expeditions and a little mild trout fishing, for which I had carefully gone through all the necessary forms of obtaining leave and license. This is a very important point in my dear native land; for of all the obstinate, inflexible, impregnable gamekeepers it has ever been my misfortune to untowardly encounter, the pure Scottish variety is the "dourest," not to say the most implacable. He may have passed the time of day with you a quarter of an hour before, and half emptied your flask in the exuberance of your "brither-Scot-feeling" of hospitality, but only let him find you trying a *wee* cast in some dark secluded pool, and you may as well tell the granite rocks that you were *not* fishing, but only trying if your reel was in working order, as try to impress that fact upon him.

After a week or ten days of land explorations, I began to cast longing eyes on the water. When I consulted my landlady on the subject of boat and boatman, she strongly advised me to secure, if possible, the services of Captain Pendarell, who was in the boat business on the south side of the "toun." as she always termed the little hamlet of half a dozen cot-

tages. When I remarked that the captain's name did not sound of the heather, she told me that he was a native of Cornwall, but had lived in the village for the last ten or twelve years. Then she added, in a sort of parenthesis, "He has boarded a' thae years wi' the two Misses Middleton, puir bodies! an' a hard battle they maun hae for they never hae ony ither lodger, save the captain, an' I fear he canna pay muckle for his bite an' sup, puir man!"

By my landlady's direction I made my way to a small but comfortable looking house, situated a little way out of the village, and quite near the water. "Gairloch Cottage" (the name by which it was known) was a very modest, square built brick house, standing in a wood and garden a couple of acres or so in extent. The grounds were enclosed on three sides by a high moss-covered wall, and the fourth side was bounded by the waters of the loch. There was a certain weird loneliness and silence about the place, but there was also an air of dignity and repose in the great iron gates and wide drive that swept up to the house, telling of a time and of a fashion long since departed.

I entered the grounds by a little side gate

(the great iron gates were almost as immovable with rust and long disuse as the stone wall itself), and proceeded to the house. After knocking twice—there was no bell, only a great old-fashioned brass knocker—a lady opened the door, and I was a little taken aback by the calm, silent, and rather stern expression with which she waited for me to state my case. A position of this sort is always a little embarrassing to me. However, I pulled myself together, doffed my cap, and inquired if she could kindly direct me where I would find Captain Pendarell. As I spoke a faint flush on the pale, withered cheeks, and a strange softening of the stern gray eyes, changed in a remarkable manner the lady's appearance; and by a wonderful metamorphosis the cold face which had repelled me a moment before, now strangely attracted me. In the sweet, clear accent of the refined Scottish tongue, she directed me to a boat-shed hidden among trees at the loch side. While speaking she came out to show me a path, a near cut to the boat-shed. Then she continued leading the way through a wilderness of old gnarled apple trees and hawthorn, still white with their delicious bloom in our late northern clime.

As we approached the shed, the lady called the captain, telling him he was wanted. A fine, straight, sailor-looking man, in shirt sleeves and straw hat, emerged from the shed. He seemed anywhere between fifty and sixty years of age, but with the smart, agile body of many fewer years, a clean shaven, clever-looking face, and honest, clear blue eyes. I noticed these traits as the captain came forward and greeted me with the calm ease of manner which showed he had learned the lessons of the world in many and divers schools of life. As I say, I noticed these points in the captain's appearance at a glance; but what was really absorbing my wondering attention was the strange change of the lady as she spoke to the captain. When she answered my knock at the door ten minutes before, she was a thin, tall, withered woman of fifty or fifty-five at least. Now she stood before me a dazzlingly beautiful creature in face and figure of half that age!

As I stepped forward to greet the captain, the lady smiled sweetly upon us both, and, with a graceful motion of adieu, left us alone. I think that I must have stood in a kind of bewildered way before the captain, for presently he said, with a dry sort of manner, that he was

at my service. Muttering some feeble excuse for my seemingly rather rude stare, both at the lady and himself, I proceeded to say that I intended to spend a few weeks in the neighbourhood, and as I was fond of boating, I had taken the liberty of calling upon him, at my landlady's suggestion, to consult him upon the subject of hiring a boat. The captain's rather grim expression softened as I explained the purport of my visit, which at first, I think, he misconstrued and resented—why, I did not in the least know then, but I learned all about it afterwards.

I found that Captain Pendarell had two boats, one a smart, good-sized cutter-rigged sailing-boat, the other a nice, handy rowing-boat. As the weather was perfect for sailing, I decided at once to engage the cutter by the week, the captain to provide an experienced man as sailor, pilot, and jack-of-all-trades; man and boat to be at my disposal at all hours. As I was wearying for the water, I arranged for my first sail that afternoon; and so, having settled the business to our mutual satisfaction, I bade the captain a hasty good morning, and hurried off to the inn to have a light snack, and get an extra wrap in case of feeling chilly on the water.

There was a nice, steady, four or five knot

breeze blowing up the loch, and the cutter soon appeared round the point, and in a few minutes swept gallantly alongside the little pier as gracefully as a sea-gull, without over-shooting the mark, or losing way too soon; a sort of achievement which can only be performed with certainty by those to the manner born, and which I have never seen perfectly done even by the best amateur yachtsman. It must be bred in the bone, I think.

I found that the captain had come himself, for the reason, as he explained, that he could not find a suitable hand on such short notice. But I shrewdly guessed that his real object was to prove, by personal observation, what sort of a commander I was likely to prove for his beloved little craft; whether I could sail a boat properly, or would more than probably come to grief. I was standing on the pier as the captain glided neatly alongside. It was low tide, and the boat was considerably below where I stood. As she slowly passed I seized the forestay and slid easily down to the deck. This mild feat seemed to impress the captain very favourably, for he said, with a laugh, "I wish everybody could get on board in that fashion, it would save a lot of trouble." In a moment

we caught the breeze on the larboard bow and were off from the pier before the boat had lost way, a mode of shipping a passenger which Captain Pendarell declared "was uncommonly rare."

It was a perfect afternoon; not a cloud in the sky, and just sufficient wind to send the cutter along pleasantly at four or five miles an hour. We crossed the loch, and in four tacks almost got down to Helensburgh; then we squared away before the light breeze and ran up the loch, reaching my pier in the lovely gloaming at eight p.m.

For several days the captain and I explored every nook and cranny of the Gairloch, sometimes running down to the Clyde, then turning up Loch Long, or coasting along the lovely shores past Dunoon, and away towards fair Bute.

Much to my satisfaction, Captain Pendarell gave up the idea of engaging a man to go with me. I think that he, poor fellow, found my companionship so congenial (a congeniality which grew out of many similar tastes, and much common knowledge of foreign lands and wild life in far-away parts) that he was loath to lose the opportunity of the change in his mono-

tonous life which my society afforded him. On my part, I found his companionship most pleasant and full of a peculiar interest. He had the plain, honest, hearty manner of the true British sailor, which is always so refreshing in this age of artificiality and of men and women aping manners and acquirements which they do not really possess, and which they only put on and off as they do their Sunday hats, a result, alas! of our spurious education. But in the meantime that is a wide subject which we must leave to the tender mercies of the learned doctrinaires, although I must say that they only seem to make confusion worse confounded.

One afternoon, as we were returning from a cruise, the breeze failed us just opposite the captain's boat-shed and Gairloch Cottage. Much to my surprise, for he had been conspicuously reticent with regard to the ladies, Pendarell proposed that we should pull alongside his little pier and have afternoon tea with the Misses Middleton. I agreed with great alacrity, not only because I was wearying for my afternoon cup, but also because I wished much to see more of the lady who had interested me so deeply when she introduced me to the captain. I had often tried in a mild way to draw Pen-

darell a bit on the subject, but the silence by which he ignored any reference to the cottage or its inmates had made me think that he either took no interest in their affairs, or that the usual little differences between lodger and landlady made him disinclined to discuss the ladies in any form whatever. After coming to this conclusion I carefully avoided the subject.

We soon had the cutter safe at her moorings, and after a wash and brush-up in a snug little room which the captain had partitioned off in one corner of his spacious boat-shed, we walked up to the cottage. Pendarell knocked at the front door, and we were soon admitted by a tall, stately lady, with the pleasant, yet formal, old-fashioned manners of a day that is past. She was not the lady I had met before, so the captain introduced me, and I found this one was Miss Middleton, the lady I had previously met being her younger sister, Miss Irene Middleton.

We were shown into a pleasant room with many shelves full of books, which is always a good sign, I think. On one side, against the wall (not planked down in the middle of the room, and in everybody's way, as is the style nowadays) there was an old-shaped Collard

and Collard piano, some heavy mahogany furniture, and many paintings and engravings on the walls, mostly scenes from poor Prince Charlie's short but brilliant career, and pictures of the Peninsula war. The windows were open, and the perfume from the roses, which hung heavy on the bush near the low window-sill, was wafted into the room on the warm summer air. I noticed all these pleasant accessories to the comfortable room in a sort of intuitive way, while the captain introduced me to the lady of the house, and smilingly said that he had made bold to promise me a cup of tea, as we had had a long day, and the wind gave us the slip so near the cottage. Miss Middleton gracefully expressed herself delighted, and laughingly said that it was very kind of the wind to give her the pleasure of our company. So it turned out very pleasantly after all, although I must admit I was a bit nervous at first. Presently a trim little maid set quite an elaborate tea, with all its solid accompaniments, as was the hospitable fashion of the old days in Scotland.

While Miss Middleton was preparing tea, her sister entered, apparently unconscious of the room being occupied. As upon my first visit to the cottage, I again noticed that there

was something strange and undefinable in the manners of this lady. When she came into the room she was exactly the woman who met me at the door on my first arrival—stern, cold, unapproachable. As the captain and I rose, and he handed her a chair, in a moment she seemed to realize our presence, and as if by the touch of the hidden elixir of eld, the ravages of time and sorrow were gone, and youth, beauty, and joy restored. The elder sister and the captain must have seen my look of blank amazement, but they made no sign, and in a little while I recovered enough manners to withdraw my stupid stare from the lady's face. But I fear I was a very silent and inattentive guest during the hour or so that Pendarell and I enjoyed the kind and graceful hospitality of the Misses Middleton. On our departure they, with sweet old-fashioned Scottish clannishness, pressed us to come to tea whenever it suited our voyaging to do so. I thus became a frequent guest at Gairloch Cottage. Sometimes I went alone, and sometimes with the captain; in the latter case I never failed to notice, with feelings akin to fear, as if I had seen a ghost, the strange spiritual and bodily metamorphosis of Irene Middleton.

One day I called alone, as the captain had some official duty to discharge in the village. I enjoyed my tea with the Lilies, as usual; that is, rather silently I fear. As a sort of diversion I asked Miss Middleton if she was fond of music. "Oh yes," she said, "very fond indeed," and at once sitting down to the piano played some of the lovely old Scotch tunes, with exquisite taste and pathos. When she rose her sister took her place, and after a little rippling over the keys, she sang the following ballad with such feeling and tenderness, such sadness of memory for the lost past, that it touched me far more deeply than the simple words and music had ever done before.

A SONG OF LOCH ABER

It was only a song, an old song of Loch Aber;
A song of the land far across the wide sea;
A song of the glens, and the hills, and the heather,
A song of the days that are over for me!
A simple old song, but it set the tears flowing
From a heart that I deemed was as hard as a stone;
Oh for to think of it! Oh for to dream of it!
Oh for the days that are vanished and gone!

The Bothie still stands in the bonnie brown heather,
The hawthorn still blooms by the tenantless door—
But the hearth-stone is cold, and the feet that came hither—
The true hearts, the kind hearts, shall come never more!

The night winds, like ghosts, moan in through the casements,

The cold moonlight streams where the warm firelight shone!

Oh for to think of it! Oh for to dream of it!

Oh for the days that are vanished and gone!

The lintie still sings in the hush of the gloaming,

The cry of the corncrake still rings in the glen,

But the sweet human voices that long since went roaming,

Will never be heard in Loch Aber again.

The light feet are tired, and bright eyes dim with weeping;

Some sleep in the desert, some wander alone.

Oh for to think of it! Oh for to dream of it!

Oh for the days that are vanished and gone!

But though never again shall the hearth-stone be lighted,

And though the tired feet shall return never more,

Yet I know there are nights when the old love is plighted

By the wraiths that slip in at the tenantless door—

Some footsore and tired from the sands of the Desert,

Some bright with the Light where the sun never shone.

Oh for to think of it! Oh for to dream of it!

Oh for the days that are vanished and gone!

Irene left the piano in one of her brilliant moods, notwithstanding the sadness of her song, and began conversing quite cheerfully on the ordinary events of the day. Presently she gaily asked me what had become of the captain; "You and he have become such inseparable companions," she said smilingly, "that I can hardly imagine you apart." I explained that he had

been called to the village on business, and on that account I had made bold to come alone. "Oh certainly my sister and I are always happy to see any of Captain Pendarell's friends. You see," she continued, "the captain's friends must be our friends, for he is a very old and dear friend indeed." Then, as if recalling some memory of the far past, "Let me see! it must be ten or perhaps fifteen years since the captain came home, and we met him for the first time. And he has been a kind friend to my sister and me ever since, besides having been a brave and true loving brother to one very dear to us, who died in far-off parts, long, long ago."

As she said the last words the beautiful eyes faded, the halo of youth vanished, and she was again the withered old woman I had met on my first arrival. When she ceased speaking, she rose with the uncertain slow movement of old age, and almost in a whisper wished me good day, and said to her sister that she would lie down for an hour or two as she felt her usual weary headache coming on.

After poor Irene left the room I turned to Miss Middleton, saying that I feared that through thoughtlessness I had tired both her

and her sister, and took up my hat and stick, but the lady begged me to remain, as she wished to explain some things which she said must seem at present inexplicable to me. So at her request, and by no means unwillingly, I resumed my comfortable position in the deep old arm-chair; and Miss Middleton, after arranging herself so that her face was shaded from the light by the window curtains, began her story without further preliminary.

CHAPTER II

"OF course the sad little history of my sister and myself can be of small interest to you, and I would not have presumed to speak of it unless my poor sister had spoken on the subject herself, and also that her strange changes of manner and expression must often have seemed to you unaccountable and even terrible.

"Irene and I were the only children of our parents. My father was a director of the Glasgow Bank. He lived as most gentlemen of wealth live. We had a great town house, and as my father was fond of the sea he kept a yacht, quite a large steam vessel, in which he took

long cruises in summer, and in winter she was laid up here in the Gairloch. My father bought this land and built the cottage, settling the place upon my mother; more as a joke, I think, than from any prudent motive, but it was most providential for us when misfortunes came.

"My sister and I were brought up in the usual luxury, and with the usual so-called accomplishments of the class into which we were born. Winter we spent in town, late summer and autumn the family either cruised on the yacht, or had a happy time at Gairloch, a place we all loved in those long past days.

"When my sister and I were not at school, my father provided tutors at home so that we could pursue our studies without loss of time. Thus the happy years of our early girlhood passed without a care or a shadow of the sorrow which awaited us.

"When Irene was twenty-two, and I three years older, the storm of misfortune burst upon my father like a thunderbolt out of the cloudless summer sky. The great wealthy City of Glasgow Bank, an institution synonymous with honour and stability, closed its doors, and a shock of dazed horror thrilled Scotland from the Solway to John-o'-Groats, such as had not

been felt in the stolid old land for more than a hundred years. It was not only the loss and misery caused by the failure, but the dismay at the trusted, honourable names that went down in the ruin.

"My father bore himself with brave front to the awful storm, but I am sure he knew in his heart that it was ruin dire and hopeless; for he at once shut up our great town house, and hurried us all down here, where he knew the law, with prying eyes, could not touch his loved ones. I need not linger over that sad time. Everything my father owned, from priceless pictures and many other works of art, down to the last tea-spoon, was swept into the auction room, and if my mother had not owned the cottage, we should have been houseless, as well as nearly penniless. Fortunately my mother had a small sum which her father had settled upon her when she married. It was only fifty pounds a year, but in our dire necessity we were more thankful for it than we had been for as many thousands in the days of our prosperity.

"Although my father bore up bravely at first, I know that the blow broke his heart. When the excitement of the shock passed he collapsed and took to his bed. There was no

particular ailment; he just withered before the blast of the hurricane, and when the officers came to summon him before the court of inquiry, he smiled faintly, and told them that he was going to answer the charge before *a higher court*; which he did in a few days, and we three women were left alone in the world.

"I must now go back a little in our sad family history to a time about two years previous to my father's death. Of course in those days we were in much society. My father came of one of the old noble families who were ruined in the Prince Charlie catastrophe. But, in spite of financial ruin, the family had always held an honourable position in society; and while still a young man he had met, wooed, and won my mother, the daughter of the Earl of C——, a family, like that of my father, only rich in a splendid pedigree. But youth, health, energy, and courage soon enabled my father to win a high position in the financial world, and by the time my sister and I were of an age to enter society, our parents were moving in that sphere of life to which they were entitled by birth.

"Of course my sister and I enjoyed to the full all the change, gaiety, and excitement of society life. An aunt of my mother's presented

us at Court, and in the London whirl we dreamed our dreams, and lived our romances as other girls have done, are now doing, and will do, until this dispensation is past.

"At the time I refer to there was a gentleman much in our family circle, and to whom our father extended much hospitality and attention. Lord Allardice was one of the old school who still adhered to the stately and ceremonious style and manners which, even in our youth, were almost obsolete.

"He was well into middle life, and my sister and I, with the thoughtless arrogance of youth, always regarded him as an old gentleman, and were, no doubt, although unintentionally, rather abrupt in cutting short his elaborate attentions. Under these circumstances you can hardly imagine our state of consternation when our father informed my poor sister that Lord Allardice had asked to be allowed to pay his addresses to her with the view of winning her heart and hand. This, my father was careful to add, was a high honour from a great nobleman to a simple banker's daughter. Irene was so dumbfounded that I think my father took her silence and confusion as a favourable symptom; and with a light word, a kiss, and

a laugh, the tragedy of my sister's life had begun.

"What my father thought or felt, I do not know. He was a good man, as the world goes, tender and kind to us all, and I never knew him to be harsh or cruel even to a dog. But I am under the impression that men never truly understand women. Even those who are nearest and dearest to us make such egregious errors, and commit such brutal cruelty, that they must either be utterly obtuse with regard to our sex, or the great majority are in heart as selfishly savage as the bushman father who sells his daughter for a dozen kangaroo skins to a lover who pays the price, then clubs and carries off his prize.

"However that may be, the usual stupid and cruel methods of our modern social life drifted on, and after a few feeble and ineffectual attempts to expostulate with our father, Irene found herself in the meshes of an engagement not only without love, but utterly repugnant to her in every way.

"Matters being in this state, time went drifting on as time always does. The wedding-day was fixed, the splendid trousseau completed (it is in five trunks upstairs in the lumber

room), when the bank ruin fell upon us. Irene took the catastrophe very calmly, for she saw in it a hope of escape. But Lord Allardice acted in the most honourable way, as the blind stupid world says, and insisted upon the marriage taking place at once. This, in spite of my sister's repeated declaration to him that she did not love him, and never could.

"I must now tell you something of our friend Captain Luke Pendarell, and of his relation with my father and ourselves.

"Of course my father's beautiful yacht 'Seagull' was taken by the liquidators, along with his other assets, and the captain and crew turned adrift with nearly six months' wages due. But to their honour, they came to my father to express their sympathy, and instead of asking for their pay, never so much as alluded to the subject, a circumstance which touched my poor father very deeply.

"Our old friend, whom you know, Captain Luke Pendarell, was master of the yacht. He comes of generations of brave sailor stock. His father was commander of one of the packet brigs sailing out of Falmouth some eighty years ago; smart crafts which not only had a fine record for profitable voyages, but on more than

one occasion had made a splendid reputation by capturing French ships more than double their equipment both in men and guns.

"Luke Pendarell had come to my father with a letter of introduction from some South of England friends, who recommended the handsome young sailor as fit for any service afloat. It happened that my father had the 'Seagull' under offer at that time, and was only hesitating about buying her for fear he would not get a captain of the smart reliable sort to whom he could make over all the management of a yacht with comfort and safety. My father engaged the young man on the spot, put him in command of the 'Seagull,' and never had cause to regret his choice.

"In our many cruises we naturally saw much of our young captain. His manners are unexceptionable, as you know, and my father's confidence in his skilful seamanship and discreet general management, soon became a settled belief. My father fell into the habit of leaving all matters connected with the yacht in the captain's hands, and I have reason to believe that his confidence in the young man's integrity and judgement frequently induced my father to consult him upon many other matters also.

"Under these friendly conditions, we girls saw much of 'our sailor boy,' as we called him between ourselves. Not only did we freely associate on the yacht, but he was often our guest at the cottage, and even in our great Glasgow establishment, although there, I must say, it was hard to make him feel quite happy, and after a very brief stay he would always remember that there was some imperative business awaiting him on the 'Seagull.'

"Things were in this happy, easy condition, when the crisis of our life overtook us, and the sun went out of our sky, as far as this world is concerned. I have said that Lord Allardice insisted upon the marriage taking place, in spite of our utterly changed circumstances. My father was much touched by his lordship's generosity, as my father expressed it, but where the extreme generosity came in I never quite clearly understood.

"My sister was, at that time, the most beautiful, the most accomplished, and the sweetest girl that even Lord Allardice, with all his wide experience, admitted he had ever met. This candid opinion, you must remember, was not expressed by one in the glamour of youthful bewitchment, but in the calm, critical judge-

ment of late middle life. Moreover, as Lord Allardice was a very wealthy man he did not require a fortune with his wife. In fact, I have often noticed that men of wealth prefer their wives to be poor, as in that case the wife is more helpless, which, no doubt, is very gratifying to the masterful masculine nature.

"Immediately after my father's sudden death Lord Allardice (generously, I must admit) suggested to my mother that the marriage should take place at once, which would place him in such a position with the family that he could invite her and myself to go with him and his wife to his villa at Mentone, and there quietly pass the winter. A truly idyllic programme, but which was never to be fulfilled because it was marred by the breaking of a sacred law which God has implanted in all pure human hearts, and a law which can never be broken with impunity.

"Thus in the unaccountable way that we all drift to our fate in this world, the day of Irene's dreaded marriage arrived. It had been arranged that the ceremony should take place in the cottage, with only my mother and myself as witnesses. So, when the hour arrived there were only Lord Allardice, the minister, my mother

and myself in this very room, awaiting my sister, who had quietly asked me to leave her alone for a few minutes.

"We were all getting a little nervous (as people will on such occasions), when Irene entered, and going at once to Lord Allardice, said, in a strange, metallic tone that I did not recognize as her own voice at all, 'Lord Allardice! I must make a statement to you ere I become your wife. I love Luke Pendarell! I have loved him for years! A few minutes ago I parted with him for ever! And—I—am—mad! Now marry me if you wish!' Before any one could help her, she staggered a little, and then with a wild cry fell at his feet in a deadly swoon, from which she only recovered a raving maniac, so unmanageable that we had to put her in the asylum at once. And thus ended that very terrible day.

* * * * *

"This, of course, closed our acquaintance with Lord Allardice, for, brave as he was, he was hardly brave enough to marry a mad woman. My mother died within a month from shock and grief, and I was left totally alone in the world, and I lived my solitary life in the cottage for more than ten years, when

some strange things happened which again changed and, thank God, brightened my dark existence. My mother left me the cottage and the fifty pounds yearly income which she had in her own right. Upon this slender income I lived a very secluded and quiet life. I never spoke to any one excepting the few tradespeople who brought me what I ordered for my very economical housekeeping. At the beginning of my solitary life I used to go to the village church, but the diffusely kind, or rather inquisitive sympathy of my neighbours was more than I could bear, and so I reluctantly gave up this small variety in my monotonous life. Even my daily walk on the most secluded roads I had to abandon for the same reason, and for more than ten years I did not once pass beyond my own grounds.

"For several months after my sister was taken to the asylum I went regularly once a week to see her, trying by all means to soothe her darkened mind. But instead of doing her any good, the superintendent told me that my visits only made her more violent, my presence apparently bringing back with renewed vividness the fear and sorrow which had wrecked her mind. Therefore I had to give up the sad

pleasure of seeing my dear Irene for many years although she was so near, and I thinking of her every hour of my lonely life.

"Now I must tell you about our friend Captain Luke Pendarell, and how he again came into our lives. From the sad day of my sister's illness I did not hear anything of our friend for ten years. Then I received a letter from him nearly a year after it was written at Calcutta. The letter was addressed to a shipping agency in Glasgow, requesting them to deliver it if I were still to be found. It gave a short, simple synopsis of the writer's adventures since leaving Scotland, and as there is nothing whatever private in it I will read the letter just as it is written; not only because it will tell you better than I can the story of our friend's adventures, but because he has asked me to explain to you our mutual positions and peculiarly tender friendship. He and we have learned to like you (few indeed have come into our lonely lives of whom we can say that), and he wishes you to know our story. Pendarell, poor fellow, cannot tell it himself, the sorrow is too deeply hidden in his soul.

"As you will notice, the letter is the simple, unstudied writing of a sailor, hastily thrown

together, and giving, in a few pages, a short, crude record of strange adventures which might more than fill a volume of the modern novel.

CHAPTER III

“‘CALCUTTA,

“‘November 10th, 1882.

“‘MY DEAR MISS MIDDLETON,

“‘Yesterday completed the fourth year since I sailed down the Clyde, past the bonnie Gairloch, and bade, what I intended to be, a farewell to Scotland for ever. In all these years of sorrow, adventure, and hardship, I have never once thought of writing home—*home*, as the wandering Briton always calls the “Old Land.” But yesterday, upon the recurrence of an anniversary that will never fade from my memory while life endures, a great longing came to my heart for a word, or even a whisper, from the beautiful years that God, in his mercy, gave to such a worthless fellow as I while in the service of your family.

“‘I know not if ever you will read this, or even if you will care to do so. I am com-

muning, as it were, with my own heart, and dreaming of hopes that perished long, long ago.

“ I left Scotland with my twin brother William, who had always been very dear to me, but from whom I had for several years drifted apart. I found him in command of a fine ship bound for Calcutta. When I ran across him he was on the point of sailing, but unfortunately, or rather fortunately for me, his chief mate had fallen ill of that dire disease, small-pox, just as the ship was ready for sea. My brother at once pressed me to accept the billet, and, in fact, I did not need much pressing, for I was eager to get away and put thousands of miles between me and my sorrow, not knowing in my vain young heart that neither distance nor time can heal such sorrows.

“ The “ Akbar ” was a fine full-rigged ship of eight hundred tons. Half the crew consisted of Lascars, the other half of various nationalities; but, although we were rather a mixed lot, captain, officers, and crew were on first-rate terms. We were four months on the voyage out, and reached Calcutta without any unusual incident. After discharging our cargo, and transacting what business there was to be done—repairing

rigging, painting, etc.—we began to look about for another charter.

“ ‘The agents at first proposed to send us to Manilla to load sugar and rice for Sydney, and then to complete the round voyage by taking a cargo of wool home. But, unfortunately for us, this plan was given up, and it was decided to put on board such things as are suitable for trade in the Malay islands, and send us down Sumatra way to pick up a cargo of spice, camphor, silk, precious stones, gold, and other products of the rich eastern islands.

“ ‘The business part of the voyage was put under the direction of a gentleman who understood eastern trade, and who spoke the various Malay lingoes. Mr. John Noel, the gentleman in question, was a Eurasian by birth, but had been so long a confidential member of the firm of Brown, Sanders and Co., both in England and the east, that most people took him for what he seemed—a plain business-like Englishman. My brother and I were not versed enough in the outward Eurasian characteristics (little peculiar modes, and tricks of speech and manner) to place Mr. Noel's nationality, or, rather, no nationality, at first. But we had ample opportunity to do so afterwards. It is said, by cynics,

that every man has his price. However harsh this judgement may be of mankind in general, those who have studied the strange subject closely say that it applies, almost without exception, to that mysterious combination of western and eastern minds found in the Eurasian character. After much delay the "Akbar" was at last loaded, and, everything being in due order, the captain received his final instructions from the agents. These instructions simply were to make the best of his way to the river Indragiri on the west coast of Sumatra, and there dispose of the cargo as profitably as might be in exchange for the valuable products of the country. Except the actual management of the ship, all business was to be subject to the absolute control of the agent's delegate, Mr. John Noel, the captain only noting each transaction as a sort of double entry.

"The run down the Bay of Bengal was quickly accomplished, and after a call at Atcheen for a native pilot, the voyage was soon over, and the business of trading, for which the expedition was undertaken, commenced.

"Trade with the Malays opened briskly, and was carried on by all parties with much apparent satisfaction and goodwill. Quantities

of spice, camphor, gold, precious stones, and many other things were exchanged by the Malays for European products; some useful, some only ornamental, and some absolutely deleterious; the deleterious consisting mostly of Dutch gin of a very inferior quality, which not only intoxicated its victims, but often afflicted them with that peculiar madness which makes the fierce Malay "see red," and forces him upon that terrible and utterly needless, and worse than useless death, for himself and others, "running amok."

"'After four months' trading our European goods were disposed of, and a very valuable cargo secured in return. Mr. Noel had certainly proved himself an expert trader, and although my brother and I had never liked him, nor even had much confidence in his probity, yet we were obliged to admit that he had made a very successful business of the voyage so far. But now another side of the picture was about to appear.

"'The very day our return voyage was to begin, a quarrel arose between the European portion of the crew and our hitherto quiet Lascars. The disturbance would not have been serious had not the Malays from the shore

taken sides with their brown-skinned brothers, in such great numbers that before the officers could get their pistols and interfere effectively, the European portion of the crew were overwhelmed and the Lascars in possession of the ship. It was all over in a few minutes. Every white sailor was killed. My brother and I only saved our lives by rushing to the cabin, at the same time calling to Mr. Noel to flee with us to the comparative safety of the saloon, where all the arms were kept, and where we could (by barricading the door) defend ourselves until we formed some plan of escaping, or, at least, selling our lives as dearly as possible. But the Eurasian paid no heed to our call; he had formed his own plans long before, and remained a cool spectator of the massacre.

“‘Fortunately for us the “Akbar’s” cabin was a very safe stronghold. It could only be entered by a rather narrow, heavy door under the poop-deck. Besides, the possession of the cabin gave us, to a certain extent, the power of arranging terms with the mutineers. Not only were we in possession of all the fire-arms, while the Lascars (with the usual shortsightedness of criminals) only had their knives, but we had also the immense advantage of being in posses-

sion of the only access to the lazareet where most of the provisions were kept, and more important than that, where the gunpowder was stored. There was enough powder to blow ten ships into matchwood. The crew knew this, as they themselves had carefully stowed the powder under my direction, and I noticed at the time how carefully the Lascar sailors handled the casks, for they have a great horror of being blown to dust, as that not only ends the body, but annihilates the soul as well, according to their primitive creed.

“‘My brother and I knowing these facts felt sure that we held a trump card in being in command of the magazine; and future events proved our supposition correct. We held a council of war, and decided to defend ourselves at all costs, and rather than yield, to put a match to the powder-magazine. We knew that we could not withstand a vigorous assault, but we also knew that it was not probable the Lascars would attack before trying treacherous methods, especially if the clever Eurasian was their leader, as we now felt pretty certain he was.

“‘The mutineers soon opened negotiations, employing Mr. Noel as their spokesman. The Eurasian represented himself as in dire straits,

and in momentary expectation of death. And the only hope of safety for himself and us was to get the Lascars to land us somewhere, and let them quietly have the ship and cargo. To this specious advice, my brother replied that we had decided to remain peaceably in the cabin if we were not molested. And he proceeded to say that there were plenty of provisions in the lazareet, as Mr. Noel well knew, also two tanks of water, and lastly, but most important of all, forty casks of powder, the heads of which we had already knocked in, and the moment we were attacked we would put a match to the magazine, and Mr. Noel could explain to the Lascars what would be the result.

“At the same time my brother offered to admit Noel to the cabin, if he were afraid of his life among the mutineers. To this the wily Eurasian replied that he thought he could do more by remaining outside; and no doubt the rascal was right, from his point of view.

“Matters remained in this state for a few days. By the constant bustle on deck, and by the noise of boats alongside, we concluded that the mutineers were working the ship towards the open sea, and in a day or two more we

found this to be the case, as we began to feel a perceptible motion; then we knew that we were no longer in the smooth water of the river, but actually on the open sea.

“After a silence of over a week, Noel again approached us. When he had inquired about our health, in a soft, friendly voice, he proceeded to inform us that the mutineers had determined to run down to the north coast of Australia, and when the land was in sight, but too far off for the ship to be visible from the shore, to scuttle her, and then take to the boats. They had already made an equal division of the gold and precious stones, intending to abandon all the rest of the cargo, it being altogether too burdensome. Upon reaching land they would represent themselves as shipwrecked men, and trust to *kismet* after that. John Noel proceeded to say that he had pleaded hard for our lives, and the best terms which he could secure were that we should be landed, with enough food and water to last a few weeks, on one of the little islets north of Timor, which, although usually uninhabited, were frequently visited by *beche-le-mer* fishers. Upon my brother asking Noel if *he* would also be landed, he replied that he had no such luck, as the mutineers

required him to navigate the ship; a plausible sort of story, but to us obviously a lie, as the boatswain (also a Eurasian) was a good navigator. This young man had received an excellent education at the University of Calcutta, with an extra course in navigation as the boy seemed exceedingly bright, which he no doubt was, but unfortunately, Eurasian brightness usually runs into mischief.

“This bright youth had been shipped, at the suggestion of Mr. John Noel, in place of our good old Scotch boatswain, who had suddenly died of cholera just before we sailed from Calcutta. I had my suspicions aroused at the time, not only by the boatswain's very sudden death—even by that swift disease—but also through some whispered words of his about “poison”; however, they were too vague for any action to be taken. Thus Robert King, graduate of the University of Calcutta and polished rascal, walked gallantly on board the “Akbar” as if the ship belonged to him, which I have no doubt he had planned in his fertile brain she would in due time.

“Noel proceeded to say that one of the small islands was now in sight, and the crew intended to run close in shore, and land us as

soon as it was dark. They were afraid, he said, to approach the shore in daylight in case there happened to be some fishing parties about. Leaving us to ponder over this plan, he departed, promising to return when all was ready. It was almost midnight when he came to say that we were within three or four miles of the island, that the boat was ready for us, and well stored with provisions and water; for all of which, he said, we were to be thankful, as we were entirely dependent on ourselves, and on the careful management of the captain. He added that it was advisable for us to depart as the Lascars were becoming very impatient and anxious to get rid of us, and it was hard work for him to keep them from proceeding to violent measures. Therefore further delay would be extremely dangerous to us all.

Mr. [Name] and I had felt all along that John [Name] was at the bottom of the whole villainy, and we could have told him so, but we refrained from doing that till a more convenient season.

These negotiations we felt convinced that the [Name] was working a scheme for our destruction by enticing us from the protec-

tion of the cabin and the tremendous advantage of being able at any moment to blow up the ship. However, we pretended to take his proposal in good faith, saying that we would deliberate over the matter, and give our final answer in a couple of hours. This being all we would consent to at the moment, Noel had—although reluctantly—to be satisfied.

“The ‘Akbar’s’ cabin was of the old-fashioned type, that is, small, dark, and, what would be called in comparison with the great steamers’ saloons, rather dingy. There was no skylight, the only light or air was admitted by the door and two small round ports, one on each side of the door, looking forward. These ports usually afforded a good view of the whole deck, but since the mutiny the Lascars had hung a heavy sail over the break of the poop so as to prevent us from seeing what might be going on; and also, no doubt, to prevent us, if we became desperate, from making an assault on them, a thing we could have done with considerable prospect of success, with our four dozen stand of arms all loaded, and ready to our hands, while they had not a single firearm of any sort. We would certainly have taken this course if we had not had the sure and certain

resource of the powder magazine to fall back upon.

“In the extreme after part of the cabin, in the stern of the ship, were two large ports which, while at sea, were always securely fastened and caulked water-tight; but while in harbour were opened, and glass windows substituted. Although very securely fastened, my brother and I knew exactly how it was done, and the idea came to us that if we could open one of the ports we could soon prove whether the Eurasian's story was true, or, as we strongly suspected, a parcel of rascally lies. If the boat was ready to put us on shore it would not, on such a calm night, be hoisted on board again, but passed astern in the usual way, not kept alongside, as the ship was rolling a bit, and would grind against the boat, and might even sink her. The opening of the tightly caulked port was no easy matter, especially as we had to use great caution, for if the sharp-eared Lascars heard the slightest noise they would instantly surmise what we were about.

“After much careful work with some iron tools we found in the lazareet, we got the port open and found that the boat had really been put into the water as Noel reported, and my

brother whispered in my ear, "Maybe the rogue's story is true after all!" Fortunately the night was absolutely calm, but overcast, which suited our purpose well. Although there was no wind, there was, as I said, a long, slow swell which gave the ship a lazy sort of swing, and at each successive roll the sails slapped, and the reef-points rattled like little crackles of musketry. This was most favourable for us, as we felt comparatively safe even if we did make a slight noise now and then. After we got the port open it was an easy matter to slide into the boat and examine her contents, or rather non-contents, for not a vestige of food or water was on board. Even the keg of water which was carefully kept in the boat for any emergency had been removed. This showed that if the mutineers did not intend to murder us at once, as soon as we were clear of the protection of the cabin, they intended to cast us adrift utterly helpless, without food, water, or even oars.

"A whispered consultation, and with the swift decision of men in extremity, our plans were made almost without words. We began cautiously and quickly to put some food and water in the boat. There were several handy-

sized kegs of wine in the lazareet, some of which we emptied and filled with water; these, with five bags of biscuits, and some tins of preserved meat, we passed into the boat. Very strangely, and most providentially for us, we discovered a couple of oars, together with an old lug sail, slung against the forward bulkhead where they had evidently been put on some former voyage and completely forgotten. We also secured the cabin compass, together with the ship's charts, chronometer, and sextant, knowing that it would be of vital importance to us to have the power of navigation if we found ourselves out of sight of land, as we now strongly suspected we were. If Noel's story was true, viz., that the mutineers were making for the north of Australia, then it was probable that we were somewhere in the neighbourhood of Timor; but as they had been sailing by dead-reckoning, and a make-shift sort of finding their position with a sextant (which we knew the boatswain had), and keeping time by Noel's watch, which was a really fine article, we did not believe they knew their position by a matter of one or two hundred miles or so. However, a few hundreds of miles or there never bothers the Malay mind;

all the race have an intuitive instinct whereby they can cross the pathless ocean, as the Arab can find his way through the uncharted, drifting sands of the desert.

“ ‘When we got everything into the boat, and were ready to slip in ourselves, we whispered a word to each other, and in the dim light saw the same resolve in each other’s eyes. Three pieces of candle (we would not trust to one) which would burn for about a quarter of an hour, were set in the powder which lay in a great heap on the lazareet floor, for we had knocked in the heads of most of the casks shortly after the mutiny so as to be ready for emergencies. Then at my brother’s silent motion of command I slid into the boat, cast off the painter and made it fast to the rudder ring-bolt in case some one should haul upon the rope on deck. At such times one has to think and act at the same moment, and I have noticed that those who do so, as a rule, win.

“ ‘It was a ticklish thing lighting the candles with a match within less than an inch of three tons of powder; but it was quickly and successfully done, and then my brother slid into the boat beside me, and with bits of boards for paddles (we dared not use the oars for fear of

noise) we crawled silently away, each in his heart commending his soul to God, and thinking of some one he loved truest in all the world.

“Slowly, slowly we crept through the darkness. We could dimly see the man at the wheel by the light of the binnacle lamp. There did not seem to be a sound or motion on the ship, save the slapping of the sails, and the rattle of the reef-points as the great ship rolled slowly in the long ground swell. Then these sounds grew fainter and fainter as we drew further and further away, until we could only dimly see the outline of the masts and sails against the eastern horizon where the first glimmer of the rising moon was casting spears of silvery light. It was an awful thing to see the beautiful ship, which had been our home for nearly two years, towering calm and majestic, with all her sails gallantly set, knowing, as we did, the terrible catastrophe that would overtake her in a few minutes. We spoke of it afterwards, and found that each had had the same feeling of pain and regret for the good old *ship*, but hardly a thought of sympathy for the living creatures who were so near their doom.

“We got away without being discovered.

We were about a quarter of a mile, as near as we could guess, from the ship, when it seemed to us as if a mighty volcano burst under the sea, lighting the dim night with a radiance brighter than the sun at noonday, and heaving the great ship, like a plaything, high into the air, where every spar, sail, and rope shone clear and distinct with a fiery gleam of unearthly distinctness, like a vision seen by some seer of old. The awful spectacle lasted but a few moments, then there was a crash of ruin, intense darkness, and dead silence.

“‘Utterly worn out in mind and body, we both fell asleep, too exhausted to think of keeping watch. When we awoke it was bright day. The sun was blazing down with the fierce heat of the Indian tropics. The ocean was as smooth as a sea of glass. Wreckage from the ship was floating everywhere, and for some time we were much alarmed lest some wounded wretch should be clinging to spar or plank, and who might cry to us for that succour which we knew we dare not give if we valued our own lives. But after a while we were relieved by discovering no signs of life, only the evidence of death and destruction everywhere; and, as great ugly sharks were gathering in hoards, we took to

our oars to get away as quickly as possible from the gruesome spot.

“In pushing our way through the floating *débris* of the wreck, we had to slue from side to side to avoid heavy spars and broken pieces of the ship. In passing what had been a part of the deck, we touched the body of a man strangely intact from disfigurement after all it had suffered. The face was a little above the water, and placidly calm as if asleep. A second look at the features and we both whispered “John Noel!” The body floated alongside of the wreckage, supported by some projection under the surface, which prevented it sinking. By common consent we both ceased rowing, gazing with a mysterious awe upon this *thing* that a few hours ago had been the clever, subtle, highly educated John Noel—and now?

“What made the body strangely weird to us (besides our late intercourse with the *spirit* now gone to its place) was the calm, handsome face, and the motion of the right hand which rose and fell with the heave of the sea, being buoyed, we noticed, by one of those curious, ingenious little Eastern jewel caskets, made in various shapes and sizes, and so well fitted in every part that they are absolutely air and

water proof. This had evidently been carried concealed in the loose sleeve of the Malay coat, and strapped to the arm with a leathern thong. By an impulse, which seemed to move us both, we cut the thong, and secured the box, both of us thinking at the moment that here might be revealed further light on the strange conduct of the Eurasian.

“‘The slight disturbance of removing the box displaced whatever was supporting the body, and slowly assuming an upright position in the water, as the feet sank first, John Noel went down where he would do no more mischief in this world.

“‘We put the thing we had found in a safe place, and again took to our oars and rowed all that afternoon in a northerly direction. There was no vestige of land to be seen anywhere, and when we got the sun next day, and worked up our reckoning, we found ourselves three hundred miles south-west of Java, and not a speck of land within a hundred miles and more. So we proved beyond doubt that the Eurasian had been lying, simply to get us away from the dangerous protection of the powder magazine.

“‘What followed during the next month was simply the too familiar story of suffering at sea.

As long as our scant stock of food and water lasted we did fairly well, although suffering much from the burning Indian sun. We kept at the oars as much as our strength would allow, and at last got to within fifty miles of the south coast of Java; when, one clear moonlight night, my brother died. I was totally unprepared for this calamity, and gave up all wish to live, which is a very bad thing for a man to do, as in that way half the battle is lost, and, generally, the surrender of the other half is only a question of a very feeble struggle.

“As I say, I was totally unprepared for this calamity. My brother had always been the more hopeful and the stronger of us two. When he realized that the end was drawing near he calmly spoke of death, and had a firm, simple, sailor's faith in the hereafter. In his wise, loving thought for me, he carefully instructed me how to act if ever I reached land. Although I did not realize it then, my brother saw the possibility of our report being questioned, in which case we might find ourselves in a very serious position. My brother had seen much more of the world, and life, the frequent miscarriage of justice and other tragedies, than I had seen. So during the last hour of his life he strongly

impressed upon me the imperative importance of making my way to the Calcutta agents as quickly as possible, and giving them a clear statement of the whole case, and then insisting upon them opening the Eurasian's casket in presence of a magistrate, first taking an oath that it had never been tampered with since we had mysteriously *received* it from the dead man.

“ ‘I will not linger over the miserable day or two following my brother's death. I made no effort to get landward, or to find our position on the chart. I gave up hope or wish to live, and only longed for the end. My brother had always been the leader, I never questioning his judgement. And I had been so long under his wise command, so accustomed to act according to his instructions, that I felt dazed and desolate, like a child lost in the night vainly seeking for the accustomed guiding hand.

“ ‘I must have lain in a sort of stupor for a day or two. I was recalled to my senses by human voices hailing me, and I awoke to find my boat alongside a great ship with a crowd of Dutchmen leaning over the rail, all talking and gesticulating, as is the foreigner's wont, which always seems so queer to our more disciplined sailors. It was almost dead calm, and

the Dutch captain thinking at first sight that my boat was merely a derelict, had not intended to do more than to run alongside and find out what the boat contained. Then seeing that there were two men, one of whom was certainly yet living, a sailor was ordered down with a rope's end to take our boat in tow. Tackles were rigged, and in a very short time, for Dutchmen, our boat with its contents was hoisted on deck.

“The good ship “Merwede” of Rotterdam, after discharging a cargo at Sydney, was now bound to Batavia for a homeward cargo of coffee and other tropical produce. The worthy Dutch captain, Jan Jansen, treated me most tenderly, and, with all due respect and proper rites, gave my brother a sailor's burial at sea.

“With kind and careful treatment I soon picked up, and on arrival at Batavia I reported myself to the British Consul, who provided me a passage on a barque bound for the Hoogly. On arriving at Calcutta I went at once to the agents and gave them a clear statement of events from the outbreak of the mutiny to the final tragedy, our escape in the boat, and my brother's death. Then I presented the little casket taken from the dead Eurasian's hand.

I explained to them the request my brother made just before his death, viz., that I should—before the casket was opened—take a duly official oath that the casket had not been out of my possession, or tampered with in any way since it came from the dead man's hand.

“After this ceremony was completed, a craftsman, skilled in such things, had to be procured to open the curious little thing, so complicated were its fastenings. It was found to be absolutely air and water proof, not a drop of moisture had in the least stained the contents. We found the casket quarter full of precious stones, and, what was of much more importance to me, it contained a closely folded written statement, in John Noel's own handwriting, of the division of the spoil. It was a strange document, and seemed as if it had been kept for future reference, in case of disputes among the mutineers. All the gold had been divided equally among the Lascars, they preferring the treasure which they understood, to the dimly appreciated, yet much more valuable, though rough looking, precious stones. The jewels had been taken by Noel and his friend King, the boatswain, share and share alike.

“It was strange that such a clever hand as

John Noel should have preserved such a self-condemnatory document, but how often rascals do give themselves away by mere trifles, records of crime in all ages testify.

“The agents, in their cool business method, as is the way with men when they have been long enough in money grubbing to become ‘dry-as-dusts,’ formally expressed their sympathy for me, and gave me a cheque for a thousand pounds. They sealed up the casket, paper, and gems in my presence, to be sent to the Glasgow firm, owners of the ill-fated ‘Akbar,’ together with a full statement of the whole affair, to which I had sworn and subscribed. These gentlemen, as a mark of esteem and confidence which I in my lonely and miserable state of mind much appreciated, offered to send me home on full pay, to deliver the casket in person, and with what they were pleased to call ‘a record of my gallant conduct,’ and a patent that I should be promoted to as good a command as the owners had at their disposal. But, my dear lady, as you can well understand, I have no wish to return to Scotland. A wandering life, and a grave in some far-off corner of the earth, or, better still, in the beautiful sea, where my brother sleeps, is all that is left for me. I

am very much run down in health, as you may imagine, and I shall now go to the hills for some months, and try, under changed scenes and other conditions of life, to allay the ceaseless, profitless dreaming of joys and sorrows of the past, which haunt me day and night.

“ ‘If you ever receive, and have patience to read this record of the dreary time since I sailed down the Clyde, perhaps you will, in the kindness of your heart, send me a line for the sake of the beautiful “auld lang syne.”

“ ‘C/o Messrs. Brown, Sanders and Co., Calcutta, will find me for the next two years, if I am still in this life.’ ”

CHAPTER IV

MISS MIDDLETON carefully folded her friend's strange letter, and in a little while went quietly on with her family history. “It was a year after being written that I received our friend's letter. I replied at once, but through some miscarriage, he never received my letter. And so we lost all knowledge of each other for more than ten years. Then he came to me, a gray-haired man, showing signs of age; not so much

from the effect of years, as from sorrow and the hardships of many strange and wild adventures by sea and land, through which he had passed, while I had become almost an old woman, never stirring beyond my garden walls, and never having an adventure greater than *shooing* the blackbirds from the cherry trees, and dreaming my dreams of the past. Such are the different conditions of the fate of men and women, and I think that *we* have the hardest part to bear.

"Now I come back to the strange tragedy of my sister's life. When Luke Pendarell returned after all these many years I found, much to my grief, that he had never heard of my sister's illness and long incarceration in the asylum. He had supposed her married, and that I also had married, and that both of us had drifted away from the old landmarks, and forgotten the past, or only remembered it in a hazy manner, after the usual fashion of human-kind.

"Our friend was utterly dazed, and it was only after many questions and explanations that he began to take up the tangled threads of our sad story. Slowly the old kind look came back to his handsome face, and the light

of love into his eyes—eyes that had grown stern with the loss of the prize of life, and the harsh career that had been his.

“After many long quiet talks, I was much grieved when he told me that he had made up his mind to see my sister. He became possessed with a firm belief that his presence would be beneficial to her. I tried to dissuade him from this step, as I knew that the meeting would be extremely painful, and even shocking to him, and, perhaps, fatally hurtful to my poor sister.

“At that time I very rarely saw my sister, and then only for brief periods, and always in presence of two strong female nurses. At these meetings she never spoke, and when I addressed her in the old familiar way, and with the old endearing words, she only looked at me with a cold, quizzical stare, as if in neither subject nor person she had the slightest interest. You can hardly understand what a heart-break this was to me, and after a visit—I cannot even call it an interview, as my sister never spoke—it took days of my calm life to restore me to my usual state of mind. And although that state of mind was what most people would have called melancholy enough, yet to me it was

happiness in comparison to my sufferings for many days after one of these sad attempts to reach my lost sister's heart.

"Notwithstanding all I told him of my sister's sad condition, Luke Pendarell determined to go to the asylum and see her. Thinking that I could perhaps do some good when the inevitable shock came, as come I knew it would when he saw her, I determined to accompany him, though I well knew how painful our visit was sure to be.

"Knowing the superintendent, I had no difficulty in arranging for my friend to see Irene. The superintendent told us that she was generally quite calm now, but there was always a danger of violence. 'For instance, the other day,' he said, 'she had fallen into a dreadful fit of passion, and it required several strong nurses to restrain her from doing injury to herself and others. The paroxysm was brought on owing to her having mislaid a trumpery little ring which she always wore, and which she had taken off—a thing she had never been known to do before—while washing her hands.' As the cool, business-like gentlemanly superintendent said this in a low sympathetic tone of voice, I saw a look in Pendarell's eyes—

a look as if he saw a spirit from the dead—and I knew full well that he and I remembered the history of that poor 'trumpety little ring.'

"When the superintendent went with us into the reception room, my sister came forward to meet us in a calm, quiet manner, as if we were merely acquaintances making an afternoon call. My poor friend was even more shocked than I had expected him to be, and it was several minutes before he recovered his self-possession. After our formal, constrained greeting Pendarell took a seat a little way from my sister, and began to speak to her in a low, level tone of voice, as if he were reading a story of disaster from a newspaper, a story in which he had no personal concern. The superintendent and a nurse were standing by a window at the other end of the room, and pretended to be engaged in conversation, but were, I knew, carefully watching us, and especially my poor sister.

" 'Irene,' said Pendarell, 'I have had a hard and stormy life. I thought that you were married, and life had no more interest for me. I sailed with my brother William for India on the day that you and I parted. After many strange adventures, and the loss of our ship, my brother and I escaped in a boat, and drifted for many

days on the tropic seas, with the fierce Indian sun beating the life out of us. My brother had always been the stronger of us two, both in body and mind. But now, to my sorrow and consternation, he could not bear the sufferings of our miserable lot as well as I did, and day after day grew weaker. I saved the remnants of food and water for him, and shielded him as best I could from the awful, pitiless sun with a wretched little rag of a sail which we had. But in spite of all I could do to keep him, he was taken to his rest, praying calmly and sweetly to the end for me and for *some one* in the *Old Land*, whose name he never revealed, though I always knew he had a secret sorrow in his heart, as we all have.'

"Here our friend paused a little, overcome by emotion. And then a strange thing happened. My sister, who had been sitting quite still, and intently watching his face, sprang forward, with the old beautiful expression of perfect intelligence in her eyes, clasped his hands and cried with her sweet, musical voice—while her face shone with that strange radiance of the soul, which you have often noticed—'Oh how good of you to come so far to tell me of *his* happy death! I dreamed it all

long, long ago! but dreams are so sadly confusing sometimes. Now I know they were facts not dreams!

"After a little while she said, still holding his hands, 'I can never repay you for your kindness to your brother whom I loved and shall love for ever!' She said this in such a calm, earnest voice, while her face lighted up with such a marvellous expression of beauty and youth, and her manner was so completely changed, that even the cool-headed superintendent was staggered, and could only stare silently like the rest of us. My sister quietly took matters into her own hands. Going over to the superintendent, in her old, easy, graceful way, and addressing him with a calm, happy smile, 'Mr. Mackenzie,' she said, 'what you have just seen and heard must appear very strange to you, and perhaps, with your professional turn of mind, you may think that my condition at this moment is only another phase of madness. But I assure you it is not so. The cloud has passed from my brain. I am absolutely restored to health, and I am going home to the dear old cottage with my sister and Captain *William* Pendarell. And I shall endeavour to prove to him in my humble fashion, and as a loving sister should

—so long as God shall spare my life—my great gratitude for his tender carefulness and solicitude for my lost love in his last extremity!’

“The superintendent said never a word, and presently went out, as I knew, to consult the doctor in this strange case which had been thrust upon him, and which presented altogether too much mysterious sentiment for his level-headed Scotch brain to solve. When he and the doctor returned, the latter, after a little general conversation on quite extraneous subjects, said that he considered my sister’s decision was a very sensible one, and that he now thought she was quite restored to her normal health. But according to the rules of the institution a patient could not leave until certain formalities were arranged. He, therefore, begged my sister to give notice of her intention to leave, and remain for another week. I am fully convinced that he did not in the least believe she was in any proper sense sane, and only said this to get her quietly into safe keeping, and us out of the way.

“I think the old doctor was agreeably as well as greatly surprised when my sister calmly acquiesced—on the condition, however, that

William Pendarell and I should be permitted to spend an hour or two with her every day for a week, and at the end of that time she should be allowed to go free without any restrictions whatever. This, perforce, both doctor and superintendent had to agree to, and so with this understanding we took our leave, my sister looking absolutely beautiful with that wonderful radiance in her face and bearing, which you have so often seen. At parting that day, she put her arms lovingly around me and kissed me in her old sweet way, a thing she had not done since that fatal marriage morning more than fifteen years before.

"To the complete confusion of medical science and professional acumen, my sister remained exactly in the same calm mind during the week of probation, and, what is more wonderful, has remained exactly the same sweet, sensible creature ever since, and that is ten long years. The old doctor continued to be our firm friend, not only, I think, on account of his regard for us, but also for the sake of studying a case such as had never come under his notice in all his professional career. He always came to see us once a month, until the day of his death two years ago. My

sister enjoyed meeting him, and never betrayed the slightest embarrassment in his company, and always spoke quite freely to him of the past.

"Of course the doctor, with his professional habits of thought, was anxious to find the dividing line in her mind where dreams and facts diverged. But he was reluctantly obliged to confess to me that, with all his professional and psychological knowledge (and he had studied hard all his life, giving up all other prizes of this world for the ruling passion of science), he was as helpless as a child to discover the parting of the ways between reason and hallucination. And at last even his logical Scotch soul had to admit that the elusively delicate structure of the human mind cannot be understood, let alone 'tuned, save by the Maker of the instrument.'

"Irene has never in the least changed in her manner towards her true lover Luke Pendarell. She treats him somewhat as a tender woman treats a beloved brother. And, whenever she is in his presence, the beautiful radiance in her soul glorifies her face with that mystical tenderness which is altogether higher than earthly love—the tenderness, I think, that we shall

feel for our beloved when we meet them in the Paradise of God."

* * * * *

Here Miss Middleton paused. She had told her story well—very much better than I have repeated it. Not only was it much more touching in the simple, strong words used, but of course it had the additional interest of sweet, pathetic voice and magnetic manner, which alas! cold printed words are powerless to reproduce.

After a little while she continued: "Before we part, 'like ships that pass in the night,' I feel that it is right that I should express to you the high esteem I feel for our true friend Luke Pendarell. Not one man in a million would have given up his free life, and devoted himself to a pair of—if not exactly old—at least, faded women, and suffered the daily martyrdom of separation by a barrier more terrible than death, from the one love of his life, and with the presence of the death-in-life always before him. Yet all these lonely years, more than ten now, Luke Pendarell has bravely toiled on, generously helping me to keep the old home, such as it is, together, which, but for him, I must long ago have sold, and drifted into

some miserable city room. Now I know that we three shall 'sail in company,' as Luke expresses it, until in our appointed time we shall moor in that haven where the storms of this life never reach, and where 'perfect love casteth out fear.' "

Miss Middleton looked calmly out of the window, away over the glittering waters of the Gairloch, as if in the far distance she saw that haven where the storms of life would cease, while I industriously turned over the leaves of a book of engravings without seeing a single picture, but endeavouring to get rid of a queer choking sensation in my throat, which had troubled me several times that afternoon.

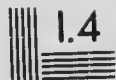
Then she asked me to ring the bell, and when the little maid came, told her to bring some fresh tea. As the girl returned with the steaming, cheery teapot, Irene Middleton also came into the room with the sad look and bearing of age and sorrow on her face and body. When her sister handed her a cup of tea I actually feared that she would let it fall through sheer weakness.

Just then Pendarell passed the window, with his quick, firm step, and knocked at the door. Before I could even move, Irene opened the



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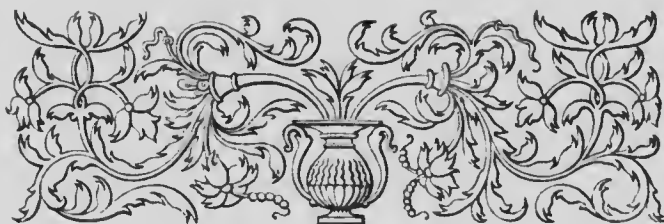
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door, and as she admitted the captain, and again turned towards us, I positively felt the same eerie feeling I once experienced in India, when a Hindoo fakir called *what appeared* to be my servant into our presence, whom I had seen dead and cremated a week before. But in that case, although it was startling enough, I knew it was hypnotism, while in this case I knew it was absolutely the power of the soul over the body. Irene Middleton stood before me a dazzlingly lovely woman, with all the beauty and charm of youth, not only in her face, but in her splendid personal bearing, where, a moment before, she stood trembling with the weakness of aged decrepitude.

That was my last day in Gairloch, and when I look back I am always glad I carried away that beautiful vision, or, should I say, beautiful reality, and call the sad, weak, aged woman, the vision!



THE LOST OASIS OF EL DARAG



THE LOST OASIS OF EL DARAG

CHAPTER I



SOME years ago I was spending the winter months in the pleasant seaport town of Algiers, but growing weary of town life I determined to betake myself to the oasis of Biskra, the furthest inland point to which the French have carried the railway.

It is rather a monotonous journey from Algiers to Biskra, and apart from the barren, rugged mountains, where the fierce, warlike Kabyles gave the French such hard work, there is really little to interest the traveller. The ruins of the Roman city of Timgad are too far off the line to be seen properly, and until the palm-groves—at the tail end of the Atlas mountains—are approached shortly before reaching

Biskra, there is hardly a living thing or a green leaf to be seen during the whole journey.

And so I was very tired and very dusty when the train at last came to a standstill at Biskra, "The Queen of the Desert" as the Arabs call that pleasant spot. Certainly it strikes one as a charming place, with its abundance of sparkling water, gorgeous flowers, and delicious foliage everywhere. In fact Biskra always put me in mind of the chronicler's account of the plain of Jordan before the destruction of Sodom, "Well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the Lord."

Of course the beauty and fertility of Biskra (like every other oasis) is intensified to the beholder by the sharp contrast of lavish growth and utter barrenness within a few yards of each other. For, in the rainless desert, underground water, naturally or artificially brought to the surface, is the genii who waves his magic wand, and lo! a veritable miracle is wrought, beauty and life springing from the lifeless waste of rocks and sun-scorched sands.

I chanced to run across a fellow countryman in Biskra, who, as a gay young lad thirty years previously, had taken service under the French flag when the French were engaged in the hard

task of subduing the native tribes. My friend had gradually become so accustomed to the country and modes of life, both French and Arab, besides having lost touch with the old land, that he gave up all thought of returning, being philosopher enough to know that after a great lapse of time—say half a life—it is better to let “sleeping dogs lie” than to tear our hearts to pieces, and other hearts also, trying to recall from the dead that which is lost for ever.

* * * * *

Macdonald, or, as his name had become Frenchified and Moorified, “Madonale,” was stationed at Biskra, at the time I refer to, as secret agent of the French Government. He had no particular position which I could hear of, but he was the greatest power in the district. Tribes in the furthestmost desert who had never even seen “Sheik Madonale,” made a profound salaam at the mention of his name, and invoked Allah’s mercy on themselves, and their erring people, lest they should fall into sin, and so incur the vengeance of the “Sword of Kismet,” as some rebellious tribes learned, to their sorrow, to call him.

“Madonale,” as I may now call him, had studied medicine at the University of Edin-

burgh, and had also taken a course of languages at Leipzig. He was one of those wonderful Scotch lads who have a talent for hard work of all kinds, the harder the better; the sort who always get to the top in whatever country to which they may chance to drift.

His mind was so stored with divers kinds of knowledge that it made him a most valuable friend, but, on the other hand, a most dangerous enemy. For instance, he would sometimes go into a disaffected district, disguised as a French merchant travelling with an interpreter and a few servants whom he had picked up on the way. Of course natives never betray natives, so the people of the district would talk freely before the despised, ignorant merchant, little thinking that the foolish-looking trader was noting every word uttered by man, woman, and child. Within a month the whole tribe would be surrounded, and every one of them safely bagged. There would be no need for a trial; Madonale had heard the sedition with his own ears, and all that was required further was the quick route of the rifle, or the slower, but, to the freedom-loving sons of the desert, the more miserable way of the calaboose.

This was the sort of man I chanced to fore-

gather with, and as we both happened to hail from King Jamie's town, "Bonnie Stirling," besides having many reminiscences in common of fishing exploits, mountain climbing, desperate battles with gangs of street gamin—*alias* "keelies"—in the dark wynds and closes of auld Reekie, and many other delightful memories of the halcyon and beautiful days of yore, we were naturally attracted to each other, and from a hasty but delightful foregathering on the Biskra train we became fast friends, each with a memory of the other which even time—that cruel tyrant—will never obliterate.

The day I made the journey from Algiers to Biskra there were not many passengers on the train, and they were all either Frenchmen or Arabs. There had been a gay week of high jinks, races, etc., which had attracted people to Algiers from all the surrounding country, and my fellow travellers were part of the concourse returning to their abodes, either in Biskra or its vicinity. Everybody smoked, every Frenchman talked incessantly in high pitched tones, while the Arabs conversed in grave, low, dignified voices, glancing every now and then, with silent contempt, at the noisy, hilarious, and hated invaders.

The railway seats were constructed to accommodate two persons. I happened to have as my seat companion a dignified quiet Arab, evidently a person of importance, who said little, but what he did say was listened to with quiet attention and respect.

I chanced to have in my pocket a small volume of Burns' poems, and once or twice I pulled it out to beguile an extra dreary bit of the dusty road. I noticed my companion looking at my book with a peculiar smile upon his lips and in his eyes. Thinking that he was tickled at the difference between our printing and Arabic, I handed him the book, at the same time making a gesture, meaning to convey the idea that it came from a far country. The Arab turned over the leaves slowly, still with the peculiar smile and twinkle of the eye, and then, to my utter consternation, read:

“When chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors neebors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak' the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An' getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles,

That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm."

I never felt so completely nonplussed in all my life. Here was an Arab of the desert reading not only English, but Scotch, as if to the manner born! And not only reading it, but evidently understanding all its subtle shades of meaning. Then we metaphorically fell into each other's arms, and kept up a running fire of the broadest Doric we could lay our tongues to until the train ran into Biskra.

That was the beginning of my friendship with Sheik Madonale—a friendship which has not only been a treasure-trove of romantic delight and profit to me, but also, I feel justified in saying, a friendship which has been equally appreciated by the Sheik himself. For five months after our meeting I was practically his guest, he kindly and delicately saying that I had eaten his bread and salt, and therefore he was responsible for my well being and safety. He had a house in Algiers and another in Biskra, but more than half of his time was spent in true Arab tent life in the desert—the very healthiest life in the world.

I never quite understood the Sheik's position in the French Government; I only know that he had a large income, that the police and military in the out districts were practically at his disposal, and the Arabs absolutely so. Yet he was, to all intents and purposes, a secret agent. No soldier or policeman dare salute him in public, although I have seen officers of high rank doff their caps when chancing to meet him in private life. Of course his object was to be as little known in public as possible, because the less known personally the easier it was for him to carry out his secret plans.

Every day I spent with my old Scotch friend was full of interest to me, and I have reason for thinking that those days were of pleasure to the Sheik. He had been so long absent from his native land that every event or change since he had last roamed on the heather hills was of intense interest to his tender Hieland heart. Of course his memories were all of youth, and therefore full of glamour and *couleur de rose*. The very fact of his long exile from his native land, and the total absence of events of a personal character either pleasant or otherwise connected therewith, made these memories of youth all the more intense to Madonale, and rendered

this hard-headed and—as some quite mistakenly thought—*hard-hearted*, clever diplomat, and fearless fighter, as ready to weep as a lass of fifteen over her first love disappointment.

A month or so after my arrival in Biskra, Madonale learned of some little business which would necessitate a journey of eight or ten weeks into the desert, and he invited me to go with him, and take pot-luck. Of course I jumped at the kind offer, only too happy to get the chance of living the desert-life pure and simple.

It did not take such an experienced hand as the Sheik long to get the caravan ready, and within a week we made a start in the early dawn of a certain morning in January.

There was no display about our departure. The idlers who saw us off, no doubt merely thought that we were ordinary wayfarers bound for some of the many little oases south of Biskra. So well had Madonale managed things that not a soul dreamed that the three or four score ragged-looking Arabs who rode into the desert that morning were the cleverest and bravest squad of men in Algeria, and knew every trick of desert warfare and desert life.

* * * * *

We steered in a general south-westerly direction, only varying our course as we fell in with rough bits of desert, but south-west was our usual line of march for three solid weeks. Then we got into a most dreary region of sand-hills and hollows most trying to man and beast. It is known in a hazy sort of way as the desert of Igidi, a general name of a vast territory, small portions of which are exceedingly fertile, but the greater part as worthless as the ocean, and can only be safely traversed by the wonderful "ships of the desert," as the ocean can only be crossed by the ships of the sea.

Here we found true Arab life uncontaminated by any foreign element good or bad. Excepting for keeping a vigilant watch for anything like sedition, the French wisely allow the Arab sheiks to look after things in their own old fashion. And if you leave primitive mankind and womankind to manage their own affairs, it is astonishing how peacefully matters progress as a rule. It is generally when the aggressive white man—with his fads and his boundless arrogance—comes along, and "puts in his thumb and pulls out a plum," like little Jack Horner, that trouble begins. And then the white man invariably cries (to again quote from

the immortal poem), "Oh, what a good boy am I." As a rule the majority of civilization believe him, and poor Browny or Blacky has to hide his diminished head and nurse the bitterness of defeat and misconception in his foolish, wild heart.

During our desert life my friend gave me much information on the present, as well as the ancient condition of Algeria. But to me the most interesting subjects were the simple stories and traditions of a people who have been singularly uninfluenced by European thought and manners. Madonale's mind was a perfect store-house of desert knowledge. From the robber bands, who exacted tribute from all and sundry, to the powerful *cadi*, who hanged these illusive gentlemen when he was lucky enough to catch them—from the rich sheik, in his luxurious tent, to the miserable leper on the roadside—there was no phase of life (or death, either, for that matter) which my friend Madonale did not understand; and in camp he would often beguile many an hour with fierce stories of "battle, murder, and sudden death," or touching reminiscences of love, friendship, and devotion, true and faithful unto death.

Once we were camping at a place called El

Darag. It was a curiously weird spot, even in that desert of ghostly shapes and uncanny things. El Darag was a great cup-like hollow surrounded by hills of red rock piled up in queer fantastic forms, which from some points of view assumed the appearance of men, horses, and camels on the march.

A strange feature about the place was the fact that although the sand in the hollow was quite damp, and although water could be obtained by digging a few feet, yet not a vestige of vegetation of any kind could be found. Madonale told me that it was the only spot he had ever come across in all his many wanderings where the two conditions of soil and water were present, and yet not a sign of plant life appeared.

In the bottom of the hollow, where the sandy soil was quite damp, our men obtained excellent water by digging four or five feet. The only trouble was that the loose sand crumbled and filled up the well in a day or two, so that digging wells was a frequent operation; but as it was an easy task no one grumbled. One day Madonale and I were watching the Arabs working at a new well. They had gone deeper than usual, perhaps eight or nine feet, and there-

fore had been obliged to make the excavation much wider than usual so as to give the sides a considerable slope to prevent the sand caving in. The two men at the bottom of the well had about completed their work, and were preparing to come up, when they both gave a sudden cry of alarm and bounded to the surface in much greater haste than is common in the slow moving, calm-mannered sons of the desert. The Sheik instantly knew by the cry that something unusual had happened, and stepped to the edge of the well to discover what it was. We all stood looking into the well. The water, which was rushing in quite freely, became clear in a few moments as the heavy sand at once sank; then we saw plain enough what had caused a panic among the men. In the middle of the excavation, and standing up quite clean and distinct, for the water had washed away the sand, there stood clear and fair several fronds of a date palm! The fronds were green and healthy looking, and showed about two feet of their tips. The reason why the well-diggers had not seen the fronds sooner was the fact that they had happened to dig exactly into the centre of the buried palm tree; but before reaching the short centre fronds, in widening

the well, which they did when they found the bottom too narrow to work in, they freed the long fronds from the pressure of sand, and the rush of water brought them into view.

Nobody said a word, or made a movement for several minutes, all gazing at the curious spectacle of an apparently healthy palm tree with its roots buried seventy feet or so under the sand of the desert.

Then the Arabs began quietly but quickly to fill up the excavation, and in less than five minutes the laborious piece of work, which had taken a day and a half to accomplish, was as completely obliterated as though it had never been done. And the men proceeded a full half mile farther west and started a new well.

When I asked my friend why he allowed the Arabs to fill up such a fine flow of water, to say nothing of the interesting palm tree, he only smiled and shook his head, saying: "I'll tell you the reason by and by. In the meantime I may say that all my power—and it is considerable, extending even to life and death in certain cases—could not have prevented those fellows from doing what they have just done."

* * * * *

Soon after the well episode Madonale told

me the curious tradition of El Darag. The fact is that the place is accursed, and the Arabs of the district never come near E' Darag if they can avoid it, even although they know that it is such a splendid spot to obtain that priceless treasure in the deadly desert—*water*! Our caravan being under the mysterious and powerful Sheik Madonale, and having come from far-off Biskra, our Arabs had less fear of this haunted spot than the surrounding tribes. But even our men would have refused point blank to keep open the well they had dug that day, and would rather have braved the wrath of the Sheik—terrible as they knew that to be—than have dared to arouse the righteous anger of the genii who held the doomed Oasis in thrall against the Day of Judgement.

That El Darag was an evil, uncanny place I began dimly to believe myself; for, besides the sincerity of the ill-concealed terror of our Arabs (terror is always more or less contagious), there was a something—I can hardly call it a sound, it was too faint and weird for that—which went whispering through the silent, desert night some time between midnight and dawn, when there was never a breath of wind stirring.

These strange ghostly sounds reached our

ears in many forms, sometimes like the muffled tinkling of camel-bells, sometimes as the rhythmical beat of horses' hoofs flying at speed over hollow ground, such ground as one often finds in spots free of drifting sands in the desert. A startling feature of the sounds was that they always seemed to be directly under our tents, which the Sheik had ordered to be pitched for himself and me on the spot known as El Darag, the remainder of our caravan being encamped behind the line of rocks which bounded the hollow space known by that name. Thus Madonale and I were separated from the main body of our troops by the rocky ridge—a distance of about five hundred yards—which was the nearest point at which the Arabs could be induced to sleep. The Sheik said that if he forced the men to camp in the actual hollow of El Darag, where we were, there would be danger some night of a panic and a stampede with disastrous consequences.

The Sheik and I had a very quiet camp, for there were no men with us excepting our two domestic servants and four mounted guards, who remained like so many statues, immovable day and night, excepting when they changed guard every two hours.

We were encamped for three weeks at El Darag. The Sheik had sent messengers to all the chiefs of the district, commanding them to report to him on a certain day, and give an account of their various trusts. It was rather rough on the Arabs, I thought, to appoint the meeting place at El Darag; but Madonale said it was a central point, and if he allowed them to camp beyond the rocky ridge—which is the boundary line of the enchanted ground—they could stand the ordeal well enough for a few days.

During this waiting time we had little to do except taking a gallop in the early dawn for exercise on our Arab ponies, which were always kept saddled and bridled ready for our use.

Madonale was often engaged with various details of camp business, or receiving messages from wild looking Arabs mounted on camels which seemed nothing more than *rickles* of bones, but had probably *waddled* through a hundred miles of weary desert sand within the last twenty-four hours.

Of course, when his business was concluded for the day, the Sheik and I had much spare time on our hands, but it was by no means

wasted time. At least I know it was a most interesting time to me, and my friend declared it was the very best sojourn he had ever had in the desert. Our yarns were practically endless, and included all manner of subjects and places, from the North Star to the Southern Cross, and from the Orient to the Occident.

But to me the most absorbing topic at that time was the desert, and its strange history, traditions, and wonderful people. I could lie for hours listening with always increasing interest to Madonale as he related in simple, clear language story after story of Arab life—ghostly legends of the desert, and wild adventures of the war time through which he himself had passed.

One splendid moonlight night, a night of such wonderful glory as can only be found in the rarefied air of the desert, we had been talking of memories, events, and places in the Old Land still dear to us both in spite of time and separation. Suddenly the Sheik looked at his watch, and with a low whistle said, "Hello! the 'wee short hour ayont the twal.' Time for all honest men to be in bed." At that instant, almost before the Sheik had ceased speaking, there rolled up, from *somewhere!* the ghostly,

muffled sound of bells and hoof-beats, and as it were the trampling of a great multitude!

"The nights are growing colder," said Madonale; "the wicked sheik and people of El Darag always make most noise when they are cold." It was the awfulest demonstration of the ghostly sounds I had yet heard, and it was with considerable trepidation that I asked Madonale the meaning of it all. My friend said that it was too long a history for the present moment, but he would tell me *all he knew himself* on the following night. So with this promise I had to be content, although I would have gladly foregone my slight chances of sleep to have had the explanation on the spot.

Next night, just such another glorious night as the last, and as we were sipping our coffee—true coffee, by the way, not the muddy-chicory concoction which they call "coffee" in Europe—I pressed the Sheik for his promised explanation of the weird subterranean sounds. After reflecting awhile, and meditatively smoking, he laid his hookah aside, settled himself comfortably on his cushions, and proceeded to give me the legend of "The Lost Oasis of El Darag" as follows:

CHAPTER II

"I SHALL endeavour to give you the history," said Sheik Madonale, "according to the true Arab tradition, and to do that I must *think* in Arabic, while I *speak* in English. So if I *seem* to leave blanks here and there for you to fill in, or, if I express Mussulman views, you must attribute it to my mind running in Mohammedan grooves, while I am telling the history in English.

"What I am going to relate happened in the tenth century of the Hegira. At that time an Arab chief, named Asmahoud, was the sheik of the Oasis of El Darag. At the time I speak of El Darag was one of the most extensive, fertile, and populous oases in the desert of Igidi. It not only had many natural advantages, such as an abundant supply of water and a fertile soil, but it had been ruled for many generations by wise and pious sheiks, who extended and improved cultivation as much as possible; governed the people wisely and justly—punishing evil and rewarding good—and so fulfilling the laws of Allah as expounded by His prophet Mohammed.

"Sheik Asmahoud, like all other petty chiefs of the desert, paid nominal fealty to the powerful Dey of Algiers. But the fact was that that potentate found it more profitable to superintend the pirate business in the Mediterranean than to attend to his own dominions and subjects, who, as a rule, had nothing worth taking in the shape of taxes, but mayhap a burnous, an old camel, and a copy of the Koran; and even these necessities are by the law of the Prophet exempt from seizure for public or private debt.

"Asmahoud had succeeded his father in the government of El Darag. Every one on the oasis supposed that he would make a good ruler, for he had always been an exemplary man. But the laws of *Kismet* are beyond our knowledge, and evil was decreed against El Darag, and when evil is decreed it will come, even if the Angel Gabriel tries to prevent it. This we know must be true for the Prophet has told us so.

"The evil came to El Darag through the breaking of the sacred law of hospitality, which never was, and never can be, broken with impunity.

"All the world knows that for many, many years the Deys of Algiers carried on the profit-

able pirating business from end to end of the Mediterranean Sea. The Powers bordering on that sea were either friendly to the Deys or were so afraid of the power of the Algerines that they winked at the whole dreadful business. Pirate ships raided even as far as Britain, and carried off both treasure and prisoners from the south coasts of Cornwall and Devon.

" This miserable state of things went on for many, many years, until that gallant Britisher, Admiral Exmouth, stormed Algiers, brought the proud Dey to his knees, and rescued nearly two thousand European men and women from the vilest slavery.

" But the judgement of Allah, which I am going to relate, took place a long time before the reduction of Algiers. The power of the Algerine was still in its glory, if that is a proper term for such an evil *régime*.

" It was about this time of the year—the cool season—when people are busy preparing the ground for planting crops, and also securing any late dates which may have escaped notice at the general harvest. This is a time when men's hearts are usually open to all charitable impulses, for they have received the generous fruits of the earth, and in most cases their flocks

have increased in due proportion. So it is a season when all people are devout in praising and thanking Allah for His manifold blessings, and a season when all men should remember the poor and needy, according to their ability.

"As I said just now, it was about this time of year, when men's hearts should be merry and thankful, that the evil deed was done which brought ruin upon the Oasis of El Darag, upon its skeik, upon its people, and even upon its poor brute-kind!

"One day at sunrise, when all good Mussulmans are at prayer, two exceedingly poor and miserable men came up from the desert and entered El Darag. They were evidently not Arabs, although the rags they wore seemed of Arab manufacture. Notwithstanding the men were miserably way-worn, yet they carried themselves with a certain dauntless bearing which commanded respect, for among Arabs a man's bearing is the mark of high or low degree.

"In Arabic—but not the Arabic of Arabians—the strangers asked for the sheik's tent, and when directed, boldly proceeded thither, and with stately salaams and greetings entered. Of course this was a most unusual proceeding, and

everybody stood open-mouthed to see the result of this strange and bold method of entering the great sheik's presence; for, to the poor Arabs of El Darag their sheik represented more power than the Dey of Algiers, or any other potentate in the world.

"The strangers saluted the Sheik in true Oriental style, and in all humility; and he ordered food and drink, and all things necessary to be set before the men. The poor wayfarers were evidently famishing, but they showed their high caste by eating lightly and slowly, and washing carefully before and after meat, just as all good Mussulmans do.

"Now, according to all Mohammedan law, custom, and religion, these men having eaten of the Sheik's bread and salt, were not only safe from all molestation by him or his people, but could claim protection while within his territory. So Sheik Asmahoud entertained the men hospitably enough; and after some days when they were rested and clothed and properly refreshed, he desired to hear their account of themselves, whence they came and whither they were bound. This, of course, was quite reasonable, and without demur these men at once complied with the request.

"The elder of the men, as was fit and proper, became spokesman for both, and saluting the Sheik courteously, he proceeded to give an account of himself and his companion as follows. He spoke in quite intelligible Arabic, but yet in such manner as made it clear to those who listened that he was not of this land.

* * * * *

"Know, O Sheik! that we two are brothers, sons of one father and one mother, born and bred on an island in the Northern Sea named Britain. Our father came of an ancient and noble ancestry, but because he was a very generous and merciful man, he was naturally very poor. Therefore, after my brother and I grew to manhood, we decided to do what so many poor gentlemen have done, viz., seek our fortunes abroad.

"We hired a barque, with captain and crew, and with the help of friends loaded her with various kinds of merchandise, such as generally make good traffic in eastern lands; and having bade our father, mother, and friends a sorrowful, yet hopeful, farewell, we left our native shores and steered for the warm lands of the south.

"As you may think, we were young and inexperienced, and like all such we were more

or less reckless. But our captain was a man of much knowledge and wide experience, and when we sailed into the Mediterranean Sea, he warned us to keep away from the Algerian coast if we had a mind to fare well.

“That was ten years ago in time, and twenty years ago in misery. But we were young and foolish, and made answer that with our stout ship, good guns, and brave crew, we did not fear all the pirates in the Mediterranean Sea. However, in due time, we were taught our lesson, as vain youth always is taught sooner or later.

“One day we were becalmed on that sunny sea, and the Algerines, who had espied our ship from their watch-towers, rushed upon us with their swift galleys in such overwhelming numbers that our captain and half our crew were instantly slain, and in spite of our stoutest resistance we were forced to submit. But if we had then known all the misery that was in store for us, we would have fought on until every man of us had died.

“Ten years, O Sheik! we have prayed for death! but death holds aloof from the abode of the wretched, and comes unbidden to the house of the happy and contented.

“ ‘ At last we determined to make our escape or perish. For three years we watched for an opportunity, either by sea or land, and at last, through God’s mercy, our chance came about. One day while we and many other captives were working in the stone quarries in the fierce glare of the sun, our guards had gone into the shade for a rest, and thus God gave us our opportunity. Before we fled I tried to induce all my fellow prisoners to come with us, and make a bold dash for life and freedom, but they were too miserable and broken-hearted to make the attempt. So we two fled alone from that hell, and Christ gave us strength to travel four days and four nights without rest, or sleep, or food. All this time we held our way directly south, holding a course by the sun by day, and by the stars by night. After those first terrible days and nights we ventured to approach men and beg in the name of Allah for food and drink, and, miserable sinners though we be, yet our Lord so softened the hearts of poor, desert men, that we have never been refused by man, woman, or child during a year of wandering in the wild regions we have traversed. At last, O Shiek! God directed us to cast ourselves upon thy mercy, and thou hast graciously per-

mitted us to eat of thy bread and salt, and God will assuredly requite thee according to thy conduct.'

"Perchance there was some dark foreboding in the hapless Christian's mind as he spake that last word. For we all know that sometimes evil intentions are felt in the air even before the deed is committed.

* * * * *

"For some years there had been a misunderstanding between Sheik Asmahoud and the Dey of Algiers. It was a mere trifle at the first, but through careless neglect and additions as the years went by, the trifle had grown to serious proportions, illustrating in a very practical way that wise admonition of our Lord, 'Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.' Sheik Asmahoud had of late been realizing the wonderful common-sense truth of this aphorism, and, moreover, feeling very uncomfortable thereat, and endeavouring to devise some means to assuage the Dey's wrath.

"Now Satan, who is always looking for

opportunities to further his business—to the sorrow and misery of mankind—at once put it into the heart of Sheik Asmahoud, and into the hearts of his people, to renew peace and amity with the accursed tyrant at Algiers by returning these two Christians to their woeful life of bondage, notwithstanding that by doing so they would break the sacred laws of hospitality, and even of common humanity. So after these men had thus given an account of their history, and had again cast themselves upon the mercy of the Sheik and his people, and had for many days eaten his bread and salt, and were therefore under his sacred protection according to the laws of God and the prophet, and according to the most ancient customs of this nation, yet this wicked Sheik determined to commit the greatest sin in Mohammedan law, and said:

“‘Hear, O ye sons of an evil race, and seditious followers of the *Nazarene*! Out of your own mouth shall ye be judged. Lawful authority must on no account be broken. Ye have eaten of my salt it is true, but criminals must reap the reward of their crime, so ye shall be taken back to your lawful lord, and he shall judge what your punishment shall be.’ And all those wicked people applauded their Sheik’s

decision, and they put chains upon these men, and prepared to take them back to their miserable bondage under the Dey of Algiers; and of all the inhabitants of El Darag, there was but one man's voice raised in solemn protest against the wicked proceeding of the Sheik and his people.

"Ben-raffa was a very poor man, so poor, indeed, that he was quite unknown excepting to his immediate neighbours. He lived alone in a miserable little hut of date leaves, and earned his scanty living by hiring himself to his richer neighbours at seed and harvest times. Ben-raffa had neither kith nor kin. No one knew of his origin. He was an old man at the time these events happened, and many years before that time he had come to El Darag; but from whence he came no one ever knew, and being so exceedingly poor, people never troubled themselves to inquire.

"That he was a good and useful neighbour, for all men and women were fully aware of in every case of sudden emergency Ben-raffa was in much request, and never refused his help as far as in him lay. If a man had a bad fall and cracked a bone—a thing which sometimes happened even with the most expert climbers at

date harvest—Ben-raffa could set a bone and soothe pain in a miraculous manner; and as he would take no fee for such services (saying that he was only doing what Allah commanded men to do to each other) of course he was much sought after, and, also of course, he remained poor all his life.

“When the two strangers from the far-off sea-coast arrived at El Darag, every man was talking about the strange event, and going to see them. But Ben-raffa being so poor and accountless, did not obtrude himself upon the Sheik’s presence, until he by chance heard of the dreadful sin which was being committed upon those helpless strangers who had asked and received the Sheik’s hospitality and protection.

“Then did Ben-raffa take staff in hand and travel from the extreme south of the oasis to the extreme north thereof, where the Sheik of El Darag abode. It was so that when Ben-raffa reached the Sheik’s place, he was preparing to start on the journey to the coast, with a strong, mounted guard to take these two Christian men back to the evil ruler of Algiers.

“Ben-raffa approached the Sheik with humble and lowly salaams, making his request to be

allowed to speak upon a matter of much importance not only to the Sheik himself, but to every man, woman, and child upon the Oasi of El Darag.

"Asmahoud was highly amused at the conduct of this bold, poor man, who had come so fearlessly into his presence asking to be allowed to speak; and, no doubt, thinking that it was some paltry dispute with a neighbour, he requested Ben-raffa to tell his story as briefly as possible, for he was about to start upon a long and dangerous journey.

" 'It is of *that dangerous* journey I have come to speak, O Sheik!' said Ben-raffa, 'and I implore thee, as thou fearest Allah, and valueth thy soul! forbear to do this dreadful thing which Satan has not only prompted thee to do, but has compelled all these foolish people to endorse.'

"At this Sheik Asmahoud was so much astonished that instead of falling into a rage, as his followers expected him to do, he requested to know who this fearless man might be who dared to teach the Sheik of El Darag his duty! Then it was told that the man's name was Ben-raffa, that he was a solitary man who lived in the southern part of the oasis, and that he was

by no means a quarrelsome man, but, contrariwise, was much given to deeds of kindness.

"When the Sheik heard these things he laughed and said: 'Oh, I suppose he is one of those half-witted fellows, followers of that *Nazarene*, who taught that when you are smitten on one cheek you must turn the other also.'

"But Ben-raffa still craved to speak, and the Sheik said sarcastically, 'Well, *Cadi* Ben-raffa! say on. But be brief, or by the Prophet I shall order thee the bastinado to teach thee manners.'

"But Ben-raffa feared not at all, and heeding not the scornful jesting of the Sheik, proceeded with calm dignity to deliver his warning.

"Sheik Asmahoud! beware of false tongues and flattering lips! It is an easy thing for men to flatter and applaud thee whether thou doest right or wrong, but God shall bring all such men into judgement. Thou knowest that I have never made request of thee before this day; indeed, thou didst not even know of my existence. But by chance—or rather by the will of God, for there is no such thing as chance—I heard of thy wicked resolve to sacrifice these two wayfaring men after they have cast themselves upon thy mercy, eaten of thy bread and salt,

and drank of the God-given waters of El Darag. Even if I—one of the poorest of thy subjects—had given these men succour they would have been sacred from molestation; how much more so when they have received the rights of hospitality in thy tent?

“‘Beware, O Sheik! If evil befall these men through thy action, and through the concurrence of the wicked and weak of thy people, then unutterable woe shall overtake El Darag and all who dwell therein!’ When Ben-raffa had finished his bold speech, he swept a low salaam to the Sheik, and with a scornful look at the scoffing people, he went fearlessly forth.

“Sheik Asmahoud said never a word. And no one ever knew what he thought of this matter, or indeed of any other matter, for of late he had become a morose man, and not given to speech. So without more ado he hastily gave orders to mount and start for Algiers.

CHAPTER III

“I PASS over the long hard journey to the coast, and take up the record of Sheik Asmahoud when he brought his two prisoners, weary

and wayworn, into the presence of the Dey of Algiers.

“The Dey had ordered all his high officers of state to assemble, and had also commanded the guards to bring several of those miserable European slaves for whom he hoped to get high ransoms from their friends.

“When all were assembled the Dey courteously (and this was a high honour, for the Dey very seldom spoke courteously to man or woman) asked Asmahoud to produce the escaped slaves who had feloniously fled from legal bondage, and whom he, Asmahoud, had honourably brought back to their legitimate lord. Then were the two Christian prisoners brought in, and the Dey demanded why they had dared to break away from their *legal* bondage, and, moreover, had tried to induce others to do likewise?

“The brothers were chained together, and after their terrible journey and hopeless condition they seemed utterly broken, and quite incapable of resistance in mind as well as body. But these two men came of an indomitable race, and though their bodies had suffered more than it is in the power of most men to suffer and live, yet their souls were of that sort

which all the power of the devil cannot subdue, for the God whom they serve gives them strength to overcome 'all the fiery darts of the wicked.'

"All the assembled multitude waited breathlessly to hear the doom of these two men who had dared to desert the service of the great Dey! and had been brought back in such miserable case, chained together by their necks, as Arabs drive troublesome goats to market.

" 'Miserable followers of the *Nazarene!*' said the Dey, 'I ought to order you to the sword at once, but inasmuch as I am a believer in the true God, and because His prophet commanded that all captives should be offered the great mercy and blessedness of accepting the true Faith, I do now offer you that great happiness, and life. Otherwise I swear that here and now ye shall die.'

"Then did the elder brother make answer, looking straight and fearlessly in the fierce Algerine's eyes as if he were a free man speaking to an equal whom he had no cause to fear, and as if he valued not at all the gifts of life or death.

" 'Herasan, Dey of Algiers, I speak for my brother and myself, and our answer shall be

brief. What thou hast offered to us is an insult to our Blessed Lord and Saviour, and also an insult to our manhood. If thou order us back to our work in the quarries, we perforce must obey, for thou as a great pirate chief hast our bodies in thrall, but in our souls we are free men, and only take commands from our Lord Jesus Christ.'

"At these bold words the Dey's face grew fierce and black with rage, and he made a quick secret gesture to his executioner who stood before him, and the man drew his sword, and on the instant the brave speaker's head rolled in the dust, while his brother stood free and unscathed. Even the Moors, accustomed as they were to bloodshed, shuddered a little at this sudden act of 'justice' as they called it, while the slain man's brother fell on his knees beside the body, and, looking to heaven, prayed for his brother's passing soul.

"Then did a strange thing happen, as strange things will happen, if there is a strong man to bring them to pass. While the people and guards were looking this way and that to see what would happen next, the dead man's brother gathered the blood-stained chain in his hands, and, or ever a hand could be raised to stay his

fierce spring, he leapt forward and thrust the iron with such force into the Dey's throat, that the miserable tyrant ceased to breathe ere a dozen scimitars ended the brave Christian's earthly life, and his soul hastened—free and happy—after his brother into Paradise.

“When these horrors were over, and Sheik Asmahoud had time to draw his breath, as it were, he became aware that he was in an evil case, for the Moors of Algiers might naturally think that if the fugitives had not been brought back, their Dey (who made them much gain by his pirate trade) would not have come to this untimely end. Thus, in face of these dire events, Asmahoud perceived that it would be wise for him to get back to his far-off desert home with as little delay as might be.

“So in the turmoil and rushing to and fro of the people, some lamenting over the body of the Dey, but the greater number hasting to the dead man's son, eager to be the first to proclaim him Dey of Algiers, and thus gain his favour—so, I say, in the general uproar, Asmahoud hurriedly got his people together, and under cover of night fled like a criminal from the city which he had entered two days before like a hero coming from a successful campaign.

"And it was well for Sheik Asmahoud that he got away into the desert without delay, for the party who lost power by the death of the Dey would most certainly have entreated him evilly if he had fallen into their hands. But from subsequent events it appears that evil was appointed to befall this wicked sheik and his people, however craftily they sought to avoid their fate.

"The Sheik and his guards made all speed possible from what they *knew* was danger, towards that which they *thought* was safety. But we have a proverb to this effect, 'A man's deeds shall be his judge,' and again, 'Evil shall slay the wicked.'

* * * * *

"Within a month Asmahoud and his people reached their home, and much relieved were they to see again the palms and cool waters of El Darag, each man secretly vowing in his heart never to leave the beautiful oasis again; and strangely and awfully were these men compelled to keep their vow.

"The people of El Darag were, of course, anxious to hear of the success of the expedition and to see, and perchance share in, the costly presents with which they all expected the great

and wealthy Dey of Algiers would reward his poor but faithful vassals of El Darag for their prompt manner of returning his runaway slaves.

"But Sheik Asmahoud and his escort were exasperatingly silent, and it was many days before it became generally known that the expedition had ended in catastrophe, and that the Sheik had commanded strict silence on the subject. But it is one thing to command silence, and quite another to enforce it. For it hath been known of old, 'A bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.'

"So very soon all the details of the *happy* escape of the Christians from bondage and suffering, and the miserable ending of the pirate Dey, were known to every man, woman, and child in El Darag. But no one spoke of it openly, for the Sheik had warned the people that whosoever dared to whisper it in any wise should have his right hand cut off, even if a man spoke it in his sleep.

"Thus there fell a great fear and unrest upon the people. No one trusted his neighbour. Men feared their wives, and wives feared their husbands; even children and parents looked with suspicion upon each other, not knowing

when a thoughtless word would bring suffering, and mayhap death.

“In the midst of this evil time, the poor man, Ben-raffa, again presented himself and demanded speech of the Sheik. When he was admitted, Asmahoud, looking sternly at the man, said:

“‘Ben-raffa, instead of granting you an audience, I ought to order you the bastinado for your insulting words when you were last before me. But the prophet commands us to be merciful to the poor, therefore drink coffee and eat bread, and after that say your say, but be brief, and speak not one word, good or bad, of my visit to Algiers, or, by the life of Allah, thou shalt die.’

“Then did Ben-raffa prostrate himself thrice to the earth, because the Sheik had uttered the sacred name, and thereafter he said:

“‘Sheik Asmahoud, God hath given me a heart to fear Him, and to fear no man whatsoever unless I have done him wrong in thought, word, or deed. These things I have never done to any mortal, and therefore, O Sheik, I fear not any man! And as I have been commanded, even so I must speak.

“‘Know thou, O Sheik Asmahoud, there is

no hope for thee on this earth, but if thou wilt humble thyself in sack cloth and ashes, as our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did when they had committed sin, peradventure God may pardon thy great iniquity after a season of purifying in Hades. And He may altogether spare these foolish people of El Darag. But if thou and they are utterly given over to evil, as Korah and his tribe were, then shall ye all perish, as Korah, and all that pertained to him, perished.'

"At these bold words, Sheik Asmahoud waxed exceeding wroth, and calling his chief men to council, asked them what should be done to Ben-raffa for his evil speaking, both now and formerly. And they all with one consent declared him worthy of death. So they slew him, with much contentment, for each man had a private grudge against Ben-raffa, since every one of them remembered some words of admonition in past times; and we all know that words of admonition are very hard for men, and even for women, to bear.

"Thus perished Ben-raffa (or, I should say, that so perished his body, for his soul went back to God, who gave it), and the Sheik and his people thought to be no more troubled with

his evil speeches, as they foolishly called his wise warnings.

"When these events were past and somewhat forgotten, the people of El Darag settled once more quietly to their ordinary life, and thinking that the things which Ben-raffa had spoken were merely vapours of his own brain, they dismissed the lingering fears which had somewhat disturbed their souls, and calmly fell into the condition of mind in which people were *before* the Flood, and *since* the Flood, for that matter.

"But Nemesis was coming, although invisibly, as most of the dire catastrophes of this world have come—not unheralded, but in spite of warning—unexpectedly.

"The destruction of El Darag came to pass in this wise. It happened in the season of the simoom, that terror of the desert, feared alike by man and beast from Egypt to the great sea. Men of the desert know well the signs of the wind of death, and the people of El Darag with all haste gathered their flocks and herds into the safe folds (as they had proved hitherto) of the Oasis. But nothing is safe in all the universe when the word of doom is spoken by Him 'Who hath measured the waters in the hollow

of His hand, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure.'

"The simoom blew one whole day from the east with such terrific force that man and beast lay on the earth, only intent upon inhaling air to keep life in the body. Then with the same dreadful violence it veered round to the south, and without one moment's merciful cessation, the awful terror came rushing from the west; and on the fourth day came the deadly north wind, killing man, and beast, and plant with its blighting cold, and rolling great waves of sand, like billows of the ocean, until all men and animals and creeping things in El Darag perished, and the Oasis was buried, as it is this day, a thousand feet under the sand of the desert.

"The Arabs will not sleep over the site of the 'Lost Oasis of El Darag,' for they say that the place is accursed, and that the strange sounds which men hear are the wailing and crying of the lost souls which the evil genii are holding in thrall until the Day of Judgement.

CHAPTER IV

"THAT," said Madonale, "is the Arab tradition pure and simple. We western people may, and often do, hold quite different views of this and kindred matters. For instance, some ten years ago the French Government sent a very learned and clever scientific gentleman from Paris to investigate these subterranean noises, and to report thereon. At that time the French were industriously developing the water resources of Algeria, and the engineers having heard of the noises at El Darag, came to the conclusion that the sounds were caused by underground water, hence the appointment of a geologist to make a thorough investigation. When this gentleman arrived at Algiers, the authorities asked me to take charge of the expedition, and to endeavour to make a success of the undertaking.

"It was quite a formidable cavalcade which I was asked to command. The desert tribes were then in a much less pacific mood than they are now. So I had to take a strong force of reliable men. Besides, the scientist had a number of servants and working engineers with

their instruments and tools to carry out any experiments which he might deem advisable.

"When all were mustered we made an imposing caravan; no fewer than three hundred men, with five hundred horses and camels. It was rather a troublesome expedition to manage, and the scientist himself was one of the most difficult component parts to keep in order. He was utterly without knowledge of desert life, and consequently without fear, or even common prudence. Some break in the usual dead monotony of the desert would attract his attention, and before I was made aware of it, the light, wiry little man, on his spirited Arab pony, would be miles away, forgetful of everything excepting his eager desire to test some rocky cliffs to see if they contained iron, silver, gold, or what not, and quite oblivious to the probability that sharp eyes and savage hearts were hiding in those fastnesses, wildly eager for plunder, or even only for a flying shot at one of the hated invaders of their beloved desert wastes.

"However, after a good deal of anxiety, I brought the scientific gentleman safely to the site of 'The Lost Oasis of El Darag.' And very happy he was to get to work upon the water 'theory' at last.

"He and I camped upon this very spot for nearly two months, and I never saw a man so happy and tirelessly absorbed in his work. He took careful measurements, he made plans, he sank iron pipes. He had his tent moved from point to point, and lay on the bare sand for hours to study the sounds, and note their various vibrations from different positions.

"During all those scientific operations he assured me that there was no question but that the sounds were caused by the movement of water in large quantity and great force. And he said that as soon as he returned to Algiers he would organize a body of engineers, and would himself return with all things necessary to bring this vast treasure of water to the surface, which would enrich the whole country within a radius of fifty miles, besides doing more towards subduing the wild tribes than all the soldiers and *diplomats* (a mild dig at myself) had ever yet done.

"Of course I had been here before that time, and on former occasions I had heard the mysterious sounds much more startlingly and fearfully than at any time with the professor; and I told him this fact. But it only seemed to confirm my scientific friend in the water-

rushing theory which he had formed. In fact I think he lingered day after day for the simple reason that he hoped to hear one of the great explosions, of which I had told him, so as to finally close his report with such convincing proofs of his own conclusions.

"At last the scientist's intense desire for auricular proofs of the weird sounds I had often described was gratified with such unmistakable clearness, that even his philosophic mind did not desire any further proofs or demonstrations.

"He and I were sitting in my tent door, enjoying our hookahs and coffee after the evening repast. The full moon, in all her glory, was a degree or two above the horizon, its brightness defining, with clear cut exactness on the white sand, the shadows of our tents and our mounted guards, who sat as motionless as if they had been images in stone. The Professor and I were, as usual, discussing the faint, subterranean sounds to which we had been listening, more or less intently, for the last two months, when there suddenly burst upon our startled ears such sounds as might have made the boldest shiver with—well, if not with fear, then with something very much akin to it.

"Upon the still, silent desert night there rushed forth the terrifying and awful sounds of the trampling of a mighty host, the cries of a multitude of men and women in dire distress, and, rising clear and shrill, the screaming of horses in agony, as when they are wounded in battle, which is a most dreadful thing to hear, even more appalling than the cries of wounded men. And strangest sound of all—which I never heard before or since at El Darag—there came quite distinctly the scattering crackle of musketry, a thing with which Arabs sometimes try to disperse sand storms.

"Over and above all these sounds, or, rather, *through* them all, there was the awful, ceaseless, howling of the simoom, although the night was absolutely still, with not a breath of wind stirring.

"In a moment our careless talk ceased. The Professor laid a trembling hand on my arm, and turned on me a very pale face indeed. Our guards leapt from their shivering horses, and huddling near us, fervently prayed for deliverance.

"As I said, I had heard most of these sounds before, but never with such awful distinctness, and I must confess that I felt the miserable

terror creeping upon me which staggers the bravest of us, and sends the medium sort flying in mad panic, which no amount of discipline can control.

"We remained absolutely still and speechless (save for our Arabs' low muttered prayers) for perhaps two hours, and during all that time the sounds never ceased nor even abated one jot.

"Then the Professor whisperingly proposed that we should betake ourselves to the main camp, which lay about two miles north. Realizing that there could be no sleep for us under the weird circumstances at El Darag, and fearing that our guards might bolt and cause a panic and stampede in the main camp (in which event the Professor and I would never get out of the desert alive), I determined to adopt his suggestion, and accordingly we trudged away over the desert to the main camp, which was really quite a formidable township, what with its many rows of white and black tents and picketed horses and camels in the open spaces.

"We felt considerably relieved when we were safe within the great encampment, for there is always much consolation to fear-stricken mortals when they get among a crowd of their

fellow creatures, even if these are of the brown portion of creation.

"Here the strange sounds were audible enough, but not in the terrifying manner as at our late encampment. We soon had a tent at our disposal, and throwing ourselves on the cushions we instantly fell into that dead, dreamless sleep which God mercifully gives to those who have suffered some great strain of mind or body.

"When we had slept long and well, taken our morning refreshment, and our nerves somewhat restored to their normal condition, I asked the Professor what he would now suggest as to our future proceedings, and he instantly proposed to depart on our return journey to Algiers. As this was quite in accordance with my own wishes, I gave the order to strike camp and load the camels as quickly as possible. The Arabs being heartily tired of their long spell of inactivity—besides having no love for the vicinity—set to work with much satisfaction to prepare for a start.

"While things were in this state, I rode over with some men to our tent at El Darag to bring away our effects. I asked the Professor to go with me, but he said he was *tired*, and would

depend upon me packing his various things. This was all the more surprising as I never before knew him to allow any one to touch, much less to pack, his delicate instruments.

“During our long journey to Algiers, although we rode together by day, and occupied the same tent by night, the Professor never once mentioned El Darag. I don't think he ever made a report to his government—at least, I never heard of it; and during all these years of changes and so-called improvements, neither scientists nor bustling business men have tried their hands at developing the *water*, or in any other way disturbing the lonely isolation of ‘The Lost Oasis of El Darag.’”



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THE HISTORY OF THE KNIGHT,
SIR CONRAD DELAMERE



THE HISTORY OF THE KNIGHT, SIR CONRAD DELAMERE

CHAPTER I

 HAD taken up my abode for the time being in the sacred city of Jerusalem, employing my days studying the endless subjects of vital interest which are to be found in and around that city of tremendous tragedies both human and divine, and devoting my nights to thinking and dreaming about those subjects.

But I do not intend, at the present moment, to enter upon the history of Zion—the most awful history in all *our* world, whatever awful histories there may be in *other* worlds. I am merely going to relate a story of old times, which was given me by my friend Ezra Ben-ammi. And this is how it came about.

One morning I had a little adventure at the

"Wailing Place of the Jews," which led to my making a very pleasant friendship, and hearing this strange legend of the days when the crusaders were in the land—the days when the followers of "The Prince of Peace" and the fierce followers of Mahomet were killing each other with great zest whenever they had opportunity, both sides quite convinced that they were doing God service every time they slaughtered a man, woman, or child of the enemy.

On the particular morning I refer to, I was standing, as my frequent custom was, near the foundation wall of the temple, studying the intensely interesting group of worshippers who were praying and weeping as near their holy place as the Mussulman would allow them to set foot. I happened to have taken my position near a venerable and very handsome man, who was reverently reading and praying, while lovingly leaning his head against the sacred wall. As he concluded his devotions and turned towards the little mean dirty street which leads to the Jewish quarters, I had a full view of the man's face and figure. He was, I judged, seventy years of age, or thereabouts, but still straight as a rush, with a handsome, clear-cut face and noble bearing. When he passed me I

stood a little to one side of the narrow, rough road to give room, and as I did so he turned and made a graceful acknowledgement of my slight courtesy. Just then one of Jerusalem's incorrigible little donkeys came round the corner with heavily laden panniers; and thinking of nothing I suppose excepting the centuries of ill-usage which his ancestors and he had suffered, went plodding along, picking out the least bad part of the miserable street, quite regardless of any one who might be incommoded by his dirty load.

The Jew, who did not notice or hear the little brute coming, was struck by one of the donkey's panniers and fell rather heavily. Of course, I stepped forward to offer my assistance, and although several of his fellow religionists hurried to his help, he only accepted my assistance, saying something to his friends, with a wave of the hand and a smile, which I suppose—for he spoke in a language I did not recognize—was simply making light of the accident.

That was the curious beginning of my long, true, and affectionate friendship with Ezra Ben-ammi.

Fortunately for us both—for I am quite sure that our intercourse did us both much good—

my friend spoke English fluently, and to me his house became a sort of city of refuge in the midst of strange, sad surroundings, and sorrowful, inexplicable problems.

My friend's father had sent him to University College, London, from the age of fifteen until he was twenty, and thus during that time of life, when the mind and character are forming, Ezra Ben-ammi had been kept from the narrowing effects of too exclusive association with his own people, yet being at the same time thoroughly taught the practice and noble principles of the Jewish religion.

After his college course, young Ezra Ben-ammi had travelled for some years in Europe, his father wishing him to acquire the intricate knowledge of that business which is dear to the hearts of the whole Jewish race, or rather I should say the delicate art which is an ineradicable passion in the Jew's heart—the love of dealing in precious stones.

My friend's father had been a great diamond merchant, and had sent his son all over the world to buy or sell, especially to *buy*, the beautiful things which he loved as he loved his own children.

After his father's death, Ezra Ben-ammi

succeeded to the business, and had for many years been one of the greatest diamond merchants in the East, or I might almost say in the world, for he had agents in all the European capitals. It was truly astonishing his perfect knowledge of all the great stones in the world. He knew exactly where they were at any given moment, their history, when they changed hands, their actual value, and their speculative value, etc.

An intensely romantic, or perhaps I should say spiritual, love for the land of his ancestors alone kept him in Jerusalem, but he was careful, he told me, to bank his money and great-priced stones in London and Berlin, so that if any of the Sultan's tax-farmers should take it into their heads to overhaul his stock-in-trade, they would only find a tray or two filled with Paris diamonds ticketed at a few score francs apiece, or per half a dozen, according to size.

My friend's house—like all others in the Jewish quarter—was of the unpretentious sort, so as not to attract the notice of greedy officials, for in *their notice* lies danger all over the withering East. His house, however, had the great advantage of standing on a high position, and from the roof there was a grand view of the

southern portion of Jerusalem, and of the dim and distant hills and plains which stretch away southward towards Egypt; that land, as Ezra Ben-ammi declared, which, by oppression and hardship, had taught his people endurance and tenacity of life, such as no other people have possessed in all the world's long history of bloodshed, misery, and suffering.

My friend was a widower, and his household consisted of a very beautiful widowed daughter, and a granddaughter just budding into womanhood. I have had many friends among the Jewish people, and I have invariably found them happy in their family relationships. Ezra Ben-ammi's domestic affairs were no exception to this generally satisfactory condition. I spent many a pleasant afternoon and evening at my friend's hospitable and delightful abode, so I can speak with some authority on his domestic life.

The house inwardly had much of that peculiarly delicious restfulness which I have found more or less in all Jewish homes of high or low degree. I think it must be a characteristic inherited from centuries of nomadic life in hot or cold desert countries. What I mean is the love of delightfully *cool shaded* rooms in summer, and

warm shaded rooms in winter—just as if the inhabitants were always mindful to shut out the glare and heat, or the cold and wind of the endless sand wastes of the desert. With regard even to furniture, that is also distinctive of the race, who know as no other race ever did know, the blessedness of comfortable, easy attitudes after long, harassing, and restless wanderings. Of course, each household is furnished according to the means of the master of the house, but rich and poor never vary in a passion for easy, luxurious, restful articles which suggest repose of body and mind.

My friend and I had many interesting talks upon all manner of subjects. As I said, he had travelled much, and read much, and had thus enriched an intelligent mind and tenacious memory with a vast store of knowledge. Moreover, Ezra Ben-ammi had the inestimable advantage of a melodious voice, that quality which gives a charm to any subject, however simple, but impossible, alas! to be reproduced in cold print. Besides having a more or less shrewd understanding of nearly every country and government in the world, he knew intimately every corner of his own sad, wonderful, native land. From the "Great sea" to the "River," from

Antioch to Egypt, Ben-ammi had explored east, west, north and south, until every desert and fertile plain, every hill and valley, were recorded indelibly on the pages of his memory, and could be read by him with loving exactitude, like the pages of an open book.

He was never weary of recalling the wonderful and terrible history of his own race, from the triumphant march out of Egypt, to the disruption of the nation upon the death of Solomon. The many centuries of Moslem government, or rather misgovernment, of Palestine, Ben-ammi considered as only a period of God's correction of the Israelite nation, a correction which in due season would result in repentance and reform, as all chastisements had done in the past.

My friend was firmly convinced that the British were the so-called "Lost ten tribes," who at the proper time would realize their splendid ancestry and glorious privileges. *When* that much-to-be-desired time would come was, of course, only known to God Himself. But when that day dawned, as dawn it must sooner or later, then would be fulfilled God's promise, "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord."

As I have said, Ben-ammi's memory was

stored with all manner of interesting subjects, and he always seemed to me "like unto a man that is an householder which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

The wars of the Israelites was a subject we often discussed, and it seemed to me that he had a deeper insight into that profoundly perplexing history than any theologian I had ever heard speak upon the matter. To his mind there was no more doubt that the wars of conquest under Joshua (in spite of all the apparently awful cruelties practised) were perfectly righteous, than there was any doubt in his mind that it is good for fire to burn and water to find its level, no matter who may suffer when these elements are in active operation.

My friend maintained that those wars were perfectly unselfish, in that every man was prohibited from personal aggrandizement in any shape. The spoils, whether material or honorary, were not for the individual, but for the nation. Each man, in his heart, was longing for the flesh pots of Egypt, or the ease and safety of the manna-fed life in the desert. But the promised land had to be taken, the accursed things had to be swept away root and branch, and woe betide these soldiers of God (as woe

did befall them) if they in their idleness, luxury, cowardice, or even pity, failed to execute to the bitter end Joshua's awful command. "And the City shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein."

According to Ezra Ben-ammi's logic, all these strange wars were undertaken at the express command of God, and, therefore, must have been justified. But he could find no words too scathing for the attempted justification of any single war since Solomon's glory went down in shame and death.

This naturally led us to the wars of the Crusades for the recovery of Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre from the Moslem power.

My Jewish friend condemned these "holy" wars as strongly as he did all the rest, but—out of delicacy to my feelings, I daresay—he granted that those wars had a beautifully tender sentiment as their incitement. Still, on the same breath Ezra Ben-ammi declared that to qualify these concessions to the Crusades for cruelty, treachery, and all manner of wickedness, there was not much to choose between the Christians and the followers of Mahomet. Nevertheless, in spite of the cruelty, treachery, and selfishness of the major part of those so-called

soldiers of the Cross, there were any such brilliant exceptions that we were compelled to admit that the loving spirit of the Nazarene had not completely vanished from their midst.

"And when next you honour me with a visit," said Benjamin, "will you a little tradition be so good as to show me which I found among a heap of old MSS. I rescued from destruction a wonderfully interesting and old book which the Crusaders called the Holy Sepulchre. The legend is written in old English, but I have gone over it so often that I can read it in modern parlance, and in this way you will imbibe more of the spirit than if your attention is attracted to the writing of eight hundred years ago."

"I am very sure that I soon called upon him to fulfil his promise, and I must give him the honour of a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER II

THE LEGEND OF SIR CONRAD DELAMERE

"IN the year of grace 1098 (thus ran the legend), when Duke Godfrey, with many knights, squires, gentlemen, and men of low degree, were marching on Jerusalem for the holy purpose of rescuing the tomb of our Blessed Lord from the accursed Saracens, there dwelt at Hastings by the sea, in Britain, a great warrior, Sir Delamere Delamere. But the days of his fighting were past, for, besides being old, he had been often sore wounded in many battles both by sea and land. He was a Norman knight, and had come over to England with William, being one of the Conqueror's bravest and most trusted knights. When William's ships dashed upon the shore at Hastings, Sir Delamere was the very first man who leaped upon British soil, and for this he was rewarded by the King with lands and vassals, besides being made Lord-Warden of that part of the coast.

"Sir Delamere Delamere had one only son—Sir Conrad Delamere—and he it is with whom this veritable history has to do.

"Sir Conrad was born after his father settled in England, and was at the time this record takes up his life thirty years of age. He was, in all knightly courtesies and deeds, the handsomest and most accomplished knight at William's Court, and was so strong of arm and true of eye, that he was never once worsted at joust or tournament.

"Sir Conrad had to wife the most beautiful and good lady on all the south coast. She was his cousin, and having fallen an orphan when a babe she and her twin brother Ethelbert had been nurtured and brought up by Sir Delamere Delamere as his own children. Thus Sir Conrad, the Lady Mary, and her brother were playfellows and inseparable companions from their childhood, and in due season his beautiful cousin became Sir Conrad's wife, and soon thereafter her brother Ethelbert went to the wars in France, and thereby the devil caused a fell disaster to befall.

"It chanced that, at a great banquet of the English knights in France, high words were spoken by Duke Alfred de Leon and the young Squire Ethelbert, and in a moment of wild passion my lady's brother was slain. Such was the bond of love between the twin sister and

brother, that when the Lady Mary heard the woeful tidings, she fell into a swoon and died.

"Then did Sir Conrad, in the madness of his grief, swear a great and terrible oath—to the jeopardy of his own soul—that he would slay Duke Alfred de Leon wheresoever he met him, even if it were before the Holy Altar of God! And, hereafter is how his wicked oath was changed, to the saving of two souls, albeit by heavy, woeful suffering and sorrow.

"In those troublous times men were inured to the profession of arms from their youth. Sir Conrad had taken part in many campaigns both in his native land and abroad, but the greatest campaign of all was the last, and that came about in this way.

"The coast line over which Sir Conrad's father held watch and ward was much infested by Scandinavian Viking rovers, who, during the summer months, ravished and raided far and near, and were a constant source of terror to the inhabitants of the sea-coasts of Britain and France. Those seahawks (as they were appropriately termed) were so strong, so cruel, so swift and deadly in their swooping attacks, that it was necessary to keep watch and ward day and night to repel their ruthless forays.

"Once, in a fierce fight, in which Sir Conrad had but few men, and the Viking bands were unusually numerous, he and his followers would all have been slain had not Christ, upon whom Sir Conrad called in his extremity, appeared in the form of an angel, and thereby so terrified the Vikings, that they fled to their ships, and never again came to that part of the coast.

"Upon this great deliverance, Sir Conrad fell before the angel to worship, but the Lord took him by the hand and said: 'Hitherto thou hast depended upon thine own strength of arm, hereafter thou shalt depend upon My strength. Hitherto thou hast gloried in "the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," hereafter thou shalt glory only in My name, and doing My command'.

"Then the angel, that is, the Lord, commanded Sir Conrad to go on pilgrimage, and in due time, and at the proper place, his eyes would be opened to see, and his ears would be opened to hear, and his heart would be enabled to understand some of the mystery of *good* and *evil* which Satan hath hidden from the eyes of miserable men. Then the Lord said words to Sir Conrad, which his vassals could not understand, and kissing him on the forehead, van-

ished from their sight, leaving them in their terror like dead men; but Sir Conrad's face shone like the prophet's face shone when he came down from the presence of God.

"Soon after this Sir Conrad took the vows of the Cross, viz., poverty, chastity, humility—and went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He went all the weary journey on foot, as was fitting for an humble and true pilgrim to do, receiving only such usage by the way as his Lord, in His loving-kindness bestowed. And after a year of sore travel, and endurance of hunger, thirst, wounds, sickness, and contumely heaped upon him by the servants of the prince of darkness, Sir Conrad beheld with reverent eyes the Holy City—as all men have called Zion, in spite of such wickedness done within her walls by Jew, Assyrian, Roman, Moslem, and Christian, as makes the careless world shudder with horror, and caused the loving Saviour of men to weep tears of compassion for all her misdeeds and sufferings.

"Mingling with the gallant array of brave knights led by Godfrey, Baldwin, Tancred (and all the rabble of French, German, and other western people who followed the flags of their chiefs), Sir Conrad entered Jerusalem, and im-

mediately the Lord opened his 'eyes to see, and his ears to hear,' as He had promised! But his heart was not yet 'enabled to understand'; that great and holy gift was to be given later.

"As Sir Conrad went into the city, this is what he saw and heard: Throughout the Christian host, but invisible to them, there were innumerable evil spirits flitting hither and thither, urging men to kill! kill!! kill!!! And, while they committed the most cursed deeds, they blasphemously shouted the holy name of the Prince of Peace, and carried banners emblazoned with His sacred emblem.

"It made no difference to these men (or rather the chronicler should say to the fiends) *whom* they slew. The lust of blood held them in thrall, and they slaughtered men and women, babes and aged men, until, from sheer weariness, the hand could wield the cruel weapons of war no longer.

"After a time Sir Conrad came to the place which men vainly call 'The Holy Sepulchre,' and went therein to pray and rest, for he was dumbfounded and sick at heart, and sore amazed in soul that he had seen an host of devils, instead of legions of angels, leading the Christian army.

“As Sir Conrad prayed, in sorrow and bewilderment, he was aware of a knight who came and knelt beside him, and in lowly and humble fashion prayed also. And ever as he prayed he crossed himself and wept, not loudly, but silently as it were, and with heavy sighs. When they had both ended their prayers, but were still kneeling, Sir Conrad said softly, ‘Brother, I know not who thou art, or what is thy sorrow, but whosoever thou art I have prayed our Lord to grant thy petitions, for I perceive that thou art in sore distress.’ Then answered Duke Godfrey, for it was he:

“‘Would God I had died as I lay on my mother’s breast! Then would I have been spared the sights and sufferings of this day, and my share in the sin thereof.’ And Sir Conrad embraced him and said: ‘I am only a poor pilgrim on a mission which is yet to be revealed to me, but I am a true knight, as thou art, though I bear neither sword nor shield. I have only seen the holy city to-day for the first time, and to-day I go hence to behold it no more. I am an humble servant of our Lord Christ, as I know thou art thyself, and I shall pray for thee every day, at morning and evening orisons, that thou mayest be kept in a sane

mind, and soon and safely taken away from the evil that is, and the evil that is to come!'

"Then Sir Conrad told his name, and his father's house, and asked the other by what title he should remember him in prayer. And Godfrey said: 'To men I am Duke Godfrey of the royal house of Lorraine, but to God I am only the sinner Godfrey!'

"And then did these two true knights embrace each other lovingly, and promised to pray for each other, without fail, morning and evening, and so they parted, and met no more until they met each other in the Paradise of God.

"After parting with Duke Godfrey, Sir Conrad betook himself to his journey with a heavy heart and much questioning of soul as to why such things should be. But when he came to the Mount of Olives, and looked back upon Jerusalem from the exact spot where our Blessed Lord stood and wept over the city, he fell upon his knees and worshipped in thankfulness that the Saviour of men could thus behold all His miserable and wicked creatures with such a divine pity as must prevail somewhere, somehow, in bringing light out of darkness, and good for all at last, even if it is in some far

cycle of ages so vast that the mind of man cannot conceive it.

"With these reflections, which his guardian angel put into his mind, Sir Conrad went on his way with such a lightened heart that even his countenance reflected the inward comfort of his soul, so much so, that a poor lame beggar, who could in no wise stand upright, seeing the subdued glory of peace reflected on the knight's face, cried out to him for a blessing, forgetting altogether his usual cry for alms. And, immediately Sir Conrad taking the man's hand, looked earnestly up to heaven and repeated the words of Peter and John; and the beggar, leaping to his feet, as the other beggar had done, went on his way 'walking, and leaping, and praising God.' Then did Sir Conrad (after telling the man to reflect thankfully and humbly on what great a thing God had done for him) proceed joyfully on his way, pondering in his heart upon all these marvels which God had permitted him to witness.

"Thus, with a calm spirit, and knowing well in his heart that he would soon come to the end of his pilgrimage, and that it would then be revealed to him wherefore he had been sent thither, the knight went on his way towards

the Jordan. And, ever as he went, it was borne in upon his mind that his feet touched the very footprints that his Lord's feet had made a thousand years before as He journeyed footsore and weary for the salvation of men!

"Then Sir Conrad came to the inn of the good Samaritan, and the man who kept the inn, seeing that the knight was poor and weary, had compassion upon him (as the Samaritan had upon the wounded man), and invited Sir Conrad to rest and refresh himself, which he did with much thankfulness, for he was worn with all the events of that strange day. And on the morrow he arose, and after thanking the Saracen for his kindness and charity, prepared to betake himself to his journey. But the innkeeper besought him to rest some days, for he perceived that the knight had come from far, and sorely needed rest and comfort. Nevertheless Sir Conrad would not stay, for he said that his business was imperative, and could brook no delay. But, ere he departed, he blessed the good heathen man, and said: 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.' And wishing the man God's peace,

the knight proceeded on his way much refreshed and comforted with the rest and kindly cheer of the night. Then he passed down the travel-worn road, past the dark blood-stained spot where the thieves left the wounded man half dead, past the cave where the ravens fed Elijah morning and evening, past the site of the for ever vanished city of Jericho; and so at last, after a year of hunger, pain, evil usage, and many sorrows, but never despair, Sir Conrad came to the banks of the Jordan, knowing in his soul that here was the end of his pilgrimage.

"After devoutly thanking God for all his care and merciful guidance, Sir Conrad slaked his burning thirst with the cool water of the sacred river, and bathed his weary body where our Lord himself was baptized. Then he laid himself down under the shade of the sycamore trees which fringe the banks of Jordan, and slept for a whole day and night such sleep as he had never slept before, and dreaming dreams that are only vouchsafed to 'the pure in heart; for they shall see God.'

"When Sir Conrad awoke from the heavenly sleep and visions he became aware of a Bedouin tent, and at the door of the tent there sat a man

of noble appearance, but he was, of all creatures on this woeful earth, the most woeful to behold—a leper!

“As Sir Conrad looked upon the lonely man stricken with that sorrowful disease which no physician has ever healed save only that Physician who has also healed men’s souls, a great rush of tenderness came into his heart, and, looking into the man’s calm, sad eyes, he saluted (with the secret salutation which all knights understand) and said:

“‘Sir, if thou art a servant of Christ our Lord, as I infer thou art, it is borne in upon my mind that thou art the man to whom I have been sent, and for whose comfort I was commanded to leave my father’s house, and the graves of my wife and babe, and go on pilgrimage for thy solace, and to make my proud, rebellious soul fit for the kingdom of heaven.

“Then the leper arose, and reverently thanking God, made reply: ‘Sir, I am, as thou thinkest, a servant of our Lord Christ, and a true soldier of the Cross. But since I left England, in the pride of youth and vain-glory, God in His mercy has given me many hard lessons to learn; and two, which I have learned at sore cost to my body, but with much comfort to my

soul, are these: Never to despise any man for low degree, for perchance he may be an angel in disguise, and again, never to cry out that anything is "common or unclean" which I do not understand, or which may not be according to my way of thinking, for mayhap "of such is the kingdom of heaven."'

"Sir Conrad asked the man his name, and of his estate; and why he had been left in that miserable condition by his comrades? and how he had existed in that lonely place? And the leper made answer as follows:

"When the Christian army reached this place, after the great battle of the plain, I prepared (like many other knights) to rush into the river to cool and cleanse my hot, weary, blood-stained body. But a poor Bedouin, whose tent this is, came and implored us to forbear until our bodies had cooled, or we might *all*, and most certainly some of us would, be smitten with that disease which the Saracens call "the curse of God." Terror struck all my comrades, but I laughed at the "heathen man," as I called him, and leaped into the delicious water. Then coming up from the river with my body fair and clean, I taunted the knights for cowards, and so went to sleep, and slept happy and

peaceful; but that was the last happy sleep for me until God, in His mercy, shall call me hence. At dawn of day a horrible dream, or vision, passed before me. I saw Satan standing over my bed, and crying "the curse of God! the curse of God! the curse of God!!!" and thereupon I leaped up in a great agony, a hopeless man—a leper from head to foot! ¹

"My friends fled from me, and, throwing myself on the earth, I prayed the poor Saracen who had warned me, to take my sword and so let my soul escape from my miserable body. Then I fell into a great swoon, and our Lord sent an angel to comfort me in my dire extremity. That was two years ago, and although I have no hope for this life, yet our Blessed Lord hath given me abundant proofs of forgiveness and solace when he shall call my soul hence.

"As I have said, I fell into a deep swoon that dire morning when all my comrades fled. But the poor Moslem, whom I had despised and derided, bore me to his tent, and has shared all his living with me like a true brother. Thus I have learned the hard lesson, "that God is

¹ The writer has known of such strange, sudden cases in the West Indies and other countries.

no respecter of persons." When my brother kneels and prays to God, prostrating himself towards Mecca, I kneel before the Cross on my sword, and pray to Christ the Lord, and we both know that one day we shall meet joyfully in the Paradise of the one true God!

"As to who I *was*, for I am *nothing* now, I was the son of Duke Alfred de Leon of Brittany, who came over to England with the great William, and was slain at the battle of Hastings. I was my father's only son, and therefore of course his heir. But my father was a careless man with regard to wealth, so that when he died I inherited little save an ancient and honourable name.

"Five years ago I took service under Prince Rufus, and went campaigning in France. After the battle of Rouen our prince gave a great banquet to his knights to celebrate the victory, and, as is the custom at such feasts, all good cheer was abundant, for the town lay at our disposal. In the midst of our merry-making I said some foolish words in jest—as young men so often do—regarding a lady in our land of England, and a gallant youth at table (who I did not know was the lady's brother, or the foolish words would never have been spoken)

dashed his gauntlet in my face, and, with the strength and fury of wild rage, I flung him on the stone floor, and he never spoke again.

“The prince was fiercely wroth at my wicked and cruel deed, and after holding a council ordered me to join a Spanish contingent of knights who were then passing through France on their way to take shipping at Marseilles to join the crusades in Palestine. And so the prince dismissed me with the hope that by hardship and suffering, by fighting the blasphemous Saracens, and by rescuing the tomb of our Lord from the hands of His enemies, and at last by dying in His holy cause, I should purge the black sin of murder from my soul. But God saw fit to purge my sin in another way, and with a heavier affliction than death.’

“Then answered Sir Conrad, with an agony as if his heart were breaking:

“‘Sir knight, he was my brother whom you slew, and I vowed upon the Holy Cross to slay thee wheresoever and whensoever I had opportunity—even if God himself tried to stay my hand! And—now—woe is me!’

“At this Sir Conrad fell on his face on the

earth and lay as one dead, and the leper knight, kneeling before the Cross on the handle of his sword, which stood upright in the ground by his bed, prayed to the Lord Christ with such a passion of repentance and faith, that the Saviour sent an angel to comfort these two stricken men. And the angel laying his hands upon them, and so calming their raging and grief-smitten hearts, spoke words of such heavenly tenderness and power, as can only be understood by those to whom the message is sent, but must be translated into common language to be understood by others.

“O Brothers! still toiling on the road of vain, earthly desires, dead hopes, and broken hearts! I have been sent to you with this message from my Lord, and your Lord!”

“That which men call gain is always loss. The heaviest burdens change to wings at last, and sorrow is laid upon the body for the healing of the soul, and to teach all creatures, in all worlds, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”” So the angel commanded them to dwell as loving comrades, despising no creature, and day by day it would be revealed to them what they should do. And the angel, kissing them lov-

ingly, bade them farewell, and so passed out of their sight.

"Then did these two men arise from the dead, as it were, with the things of this life sitting lightly on their minds, and their hearts changed from restless selfish hate to the perfect peace of unselfish love, and they embraced each other, and wept long and softly, not as men in sorrow, but rather as loving friends, who, having been long parted, weep for joy when they unexpectedly meet.

"After these happenings, Sir Conrad and Duke Alfred dwelt lovingly together with the poor Moslem, Noor-a-deen, learning and teaching as they had opportunity. It was a marvel of God how these two proud knights, who had been served all their lives by vassals and serving men, did now perform the most menial tasks with perfect cheerfulness and contentment. Which proves that 'a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth,' but rather in the fewness of the things with which he is encumbered. Noor-a-deen had a small field by the river, which by an ingenious contrivance could be irrigated from the Jordan. Grain and pulse, and a few vegetables, together with goat's milk, sufficed for

the needs of the humble household. To the labour of the little field the knights contributed a generous share, especially Sir Conrad, who was always strong and robust, but, of course, Duke Alfred was often unable to work, owing to his woeful infirmity.

"The poor Moslem, Noor-a-deen, was a man of few words, but most noble deeds. He entertained the knights with all the hospitality which his humble circumstances did permit; and it was the hospitality which comes from the heart, a sort which is often absent from the entertainments of the great ones of the earth.

"Noor-a-deen had been driven from his father's house because he refused to kill all Christians who fell into his hands, and even treated them with kindness, in spite of much sorrow and evil which the Christian wars had brought upon the land. Nevertheless Noor-a-deen was a most devout Mussulman, and prayed morning, noon, and night, prostrating his body towards Mecca with all humility. But above all he showed in his loving and charitable deeds that he was a true servant of the most high God!

"Of course, to the good Christian knights, Noor-a-deen's devotions only sounded like

mere shabby, vain little repetitions, but to the poor Moslem they were real enough, and had kept his soul alive for over three score years and ten. So regular was he, and so impressive was the poor man's example, that the two Christian knights, much to their comfort, fell into the same pious habit; and these three devout men, each day, humbly presented their petitions to God at the same moment, each one in perfect faith that the great God would hear and answer according to their several needs and the welfare of their souls. And we have authority for thinking that, 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'

"The unfailing charity of the poor Saracen did greatly humble the hearts of Sir Conrad and Duke Alfred, and filled them with astonishment that an infidel man could show forth in his daily life such lessons of humility and virtue.

"One day, while these three men were resting in the shade during the heat of noon-day, the knights asked Noor-a-deen what induced him to be so charitable to all people, especially to themselves, men of an alien faith, and alien race—a race which had been at war with his

nation since before he was born. And the Moslem made answer:

“‘When I was a little lad in the beautiful city of Damascus, I went every day to the mosque to learn the Koran and all the rules of the Islamic faith. There was a great and good Rabbi (Yussuf-el-abdel, by name, and may God rest his soul in Paradise!) who taught the class in which I had a place. This pious teacher always impressed upon my young heart the duty and blessedness of *kindness*, and the wrong and misery of *cruelty*.

“‘I suppose all nations and all peoples have different laws and customs, and each one thinks that their way must be right. Our teachers proceed somewhat differently from your teachers, although no doubt each and all hope to reach the same goal at last.

“‘Our teachers instil *first* into the child's mind those things which pertain to the eternal life, and *afterwards* those things which pertain only to this life. So that if by misfortune, poverty, death, or what not, a child shall miss the second part of his education, he shall always have the most important part. As it is written in your Book and our Book, “These words shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach

them diligently unto thy children." Thus, no man of our faith shall be able to rail at his doom being unjust, for *all* are taught alike of the things pertaining to eternal life. But I have heard it said that in your land the learning which pertains to this life is first imparted, and that it is so wonderful and complicated, that there is no room left in the youthful mind for those things which pertain to the eternal life.

" 'Now, I am only a poor, ignorant peasant, and you must bear with me, and doubtless you know, being high and learned Christian knights, if these things are so.

" 'In our religion God hath one hundred names, but owing to the sinfulness of men, we only know ninety-nine. The hundredth name is the most beautiful and marvellous of all, and we are taught to believe that we shall never know it until we enter the gates of Paradise.

" 'But the Rabbi who taught me in Damascus was a very holy man, and he said that it *was* possible to know that *wonderful* name, even in this life, if men fulfilled the law of charity perfectly. So thy servant hath endeavoured to keep that holy law, in thought, word, and deed. And I pray that some day, before I am called hence, God, in His infinite mercy, will reveal

that sacred Name to me. For I would fain be able to cry all God's names as I enter the gates of Paradise.'

"Then did these Christian knights marvel greatly at the faith and steadfastness of heart which had enabled this poor infidel, and unlearned man to hold fast by his beautiful ideals through all the years of a long hard life. So they concluded, after much debate thereon, that the less a man's brain is entangled by abstruse learning, the better for the peace of his soul! And mayhap that is a truth.

"Sir Conrad, Duke Alfred, and Noor-a-deen the Moslem abode lovingly together for many years. Then Duke Alfred died, worn, and in sore trouble of body, but in much happiness and great peace of mind, and his soul returned to God who gave it.

"Sir Conrad and Noor-a-deen laid his body by a great rock which stood on the banks of Jordan, and graved his name and estate on the rock, recording him as a crusader who had fallen in battle—which was indeed the case, and a very sore and hard battle it was, but he conquered at last in the Name of his Lord and Saviour. And the two lonely men who were left, mourned for their comrade many days, praying night and

morning by his grave. But they were much comforted, knowing that, like the afflicted man of whom our Saviour spake, he 'was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.'

"At last the day dawned, and the hour struck which was appointed for Noor-a-deen to go to his account, as it is appointed for all men to do. But before his soul departed he told Sir Conrad, with a joyful countenance, as though he were truly looking into the glory of Paradise, that God had at last answered the prayers and petitions of his life by revealing to His servant His Hundredth Name!

"Then did Noor-a-deen slowly and carefully write *the Name* in his copy of the Koran, which he reverently kissed, and gave to Sir Conrad, adjuring him not to look at what he had written until his (Noor-a-deen's) body was laid in earth. And for this he explained that lip must not utter, nor eye see that Holy Name until *he* himself spake it at the gates of Paradise. Thus Noor-a-deen the Moslem passed, and the whilom proud, but now most humble Christian knight Sir Conrad, held the poor man's hand in his own and whispered words of peace and blessing in his dying ear, for the mercy and love he had showed unto two lonely and sorrow-stricken

men: and withal, humbly thanking God for the tender love and charity He had inspired in the heart of this poor Saracen.

“Thereafter Sir Conrad prepared another grave by the great rock where the body of Duke Alfred lay. And, waiting until the appointed time, and after lovingly praying for the repose of the souls gone hence, he reverently opened the Koran wherein Noor-a-deen had written the Name which had been revealed to him as the Hundredth Name of God, and, to the knight's utter amazement and profound gratitude, he found the Name which transcends all names—even as the noonday sun outshines the stars of heaven—*Christ!*”

“Whereupon Sir Conrad fell upon his knees and worshipped, humbly thanking God for these two comrades who were now safe from pain and sorrow and all other perils of this world.

“Soon after these happenings Sir Conrad, with a heart full of peace and comfort, as one who has learned the lessons of life, prepared to return to his own land as the angel had commanded him to do. And, after many sore adventures and much wearisome travel (for he returned, as he had gone, a poor pilgrim receiv-

ing such alms as God vouchsafed to him), he came to his own country and his own house.

"Sir Conrad's father had long been dead, and the great castle by the sea was only held by retainers who were holding it until the rightful heir should return.

"When Sir Conrad had made himself known and taken possession of his estates, he set himself, as his life-work, to comfort the poor and the afflicted, as he himself had been comforted and taught the loving kindness of God. He brought the poor and the outcast to dwell with him, much to the terror of his retainers, who, fearing that they also would be smitten with the fell disease, fled from the castle, and the knight abode there alone with the sorrowful, comforting and teaching them (as he had been comforted and taught) 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.'

"Thus Sir Conrad lived many years consoling the afflicted and those who had no helper. And God revealed to him in a dream that he should make his house a refuge for the sorrowful, and leave his lands for their support after he had passed. This command the knight strictly obeyed, as is recorded in the archives of



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England to this day. And woe shall befall the sacrilegious hands which shall dare to pervert or ravish that sacred trust, for, it is written, 'The Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.' "



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WHERE THE SUN SETS.

MEMORIES FROM OTHER YEARS AND LANDS.

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THE publishers take this opportunity of reproducing in a collected form some reviews of MR. FRANCIS SINCLAIR'S last book.

WHERE THE SUN SETS.

("Memories from other Years and Lands." By Francis Sinclair. London: Sampson Low and Co., Ltd. 8vo, pp. 450, cloth.)

The author of this remarkable book says in his preface that he belongs to a "Coterie of Wanderers" who make it a point to foregather in London during the month of May—that is, as many of them as happen to be in England at that festive season. One of the rules of the Coterie is that a candidate, before he can join it, must have spent at least a fifth of his life abroad. At their reunions they are expected to recount any striking adventures in which they have taken part, the only condition being that a contribution be edifying as well as entertaining, and that in its main points it must be true. The present volume is the result of notes taken at the meetings by the author.

The author has managed to convey an air of mystery, both as to the existence at all of this "Coterie of Wanderers" as well as of the stories they tell; but one must assume that the nine stories contained in this volume are all true, with a truthfulness perhaps somewhat intensified, "as a painter lightens or darkens his colours without in the least changing the truth of the scene he portrays." A fair example of the quality of the whole of the stories may be found in the one entitled "Mark Wynyard's Story." The teller of this tale meets with his friend Mark, after a separation of ten years, under singular circumstances. He had by chance wandered into a Melbourne law court while a trial was going on; it was that of Mark Wynyard, who had pleaded guilty of murder. The author is terribly shocked at this discovery; he seeks an interview, and in the brief interval, "between the saddle and the

ground" as it were—that is, in the few days left him till the expiation of his crime on the gallows—Mark tells the whole story of his life and adventures during those ten years. The story occupies 140 pages of the book, and is very interesting. Ten years previously he had married Mary Hawkins. At the wedding breakfast she had passed him to change her wedding gown for a travelling costume, and that was the last time he ever saw her. She had eloped that morning with Laurence Percival, and it was into Percival's heart that Mark had plunged the dagger, for which he was now about to suffer. In the course of his wanderings Mark is lost in the Andes, in a kind of *cul de sac* out of which there is no way to be found, till after many days he discovers a crevice in the apparently solid rock, which proves to be the opening through the mountain of a subterranean passage, in which he wanders for many days, until he succumbs from exhaustion. When he awakes, he finds himself "lying luxuriously on a bed in a curiously furnished room, in the wonderful valley of Araucaca, and among a people, the handsomest, the gentlest, and the most virtuous" he had ever met. The valley is situated in the heart of the most inaccessible peaks of the Andes within the tropics, but the adventurer had no means of locating its exact position. In this valley he dwelt for six years, and he gives a pleasant account of the people he found there—a remnant of that very ancient nation who occupied Mexico before the Toltecs and Aztecs. In this happy valley, like that of Rasselas, was found the one prize worth living for—*contentment*—a valley so walled in by impassable barriers that ingress or egress by the mountains was impossible. Eventually he returns by the underground passage, and after many wanderings he reaches the climax by committing the murder for which he is now condemned to die.

The stories are all interesting, and they have this element of novelty and freshness that they for the most part describe life in the islands of the Southern Pacific. The author himself has dwelt long among these islands, from Tahiti westward to Fiji, and from Tonga northward to Hawaii; he has seen more of the native races, and understands them better than most people; he is of opinion, however, that white men never can quite understand these coloured people. "The brown man knows," he says, "by some subtle sense, exactly what his friend or foe is thinking or feeling, so there is no need of expression by words,"—an instinctive intuition which white races seem to have lost, if they ever possessed it. It is on this theory that the first story, "Where the Sun Sets" rests. The book is one, which from the unhackneyed freshness of the scenes it

describes, as well as the pleasant style in which it is written, is sure to attract a good deal of attention. The author is a true lover of Nature, and he describes the scenery of the islands and the curious manners and customs of the natives in simple, plain language, which has always an air of poetry running through it. His comparisons of the simplicity and innocent lives of the natives before they were contaminated by so-called civilization are always scornfully in favour of the native races.--*Publishers' Circular*, Aug. 12th, 1905.

WHERE THE SUN SETS.

("Memories from other Years and Lands." By Francis Sinclair. London: Sampson Low & Co.)

Nine short tales make up this very readable volume. They have been brought together in an ostensibly novel way. The author (should we not say the editor?) belongs to a coterie of wanderers who make it a point to foregather in London once a year—that is, as many as happen to be in England at the time. Every member of this coterie has travelled far and wide, one of the rules of the body being that before a candidate is eligible for election he must have spent a fifth part of his life abroad, the further afield the better. At the annual reunions "members are expected to recount any striking adventures in which they have taken part, the only conditions being that a contribution is edifying as well as entertaining, and that in its main points it must be true." This quotation fairly indicates the scope and character of the stories in Mr. Sinclair's volume. Of course, we may take it that they "intensify" the subject a little, but their essential truth is everywhere apparent. Some of the tales are exciting, some pathetic, some weird and terrifying some plaintive and passionate. All are interesting and well-written, and will be read, alike by travellers and stay-at-homes, with the greatest avidity.—*Glasgow Herald*, Oct. 25th, 1905.

WHERE THE SUN SETS.

("Memories from other Years and Lands." By Francis Sinclair. Sampson Low, Marston & Co.)

The short stories of which this book is composed purport to have been related by members of a Coterie of Wanderers who make it a point to assemble in London

each May, and at their reunion "are expected to recount any striking adventures in which they have taken part, the only conditions being that a contribution is edifying as well as entertaining, and that in its main points it must be true." The reader will hardly enquire too closely into the doings of the little club, or the authenticity of all the narratives, but will receive with thankfulness the good things Mr. Sinclair has provided for his entertainment. The stories, which cover a very wide field, including the South Seas, America, and our own land, and deal with various tragic events, in the lives of those to whom we are introduced, are written with a good deal of power, a shrewd knowledge of life, and with an eye to local colour that make them extremely interesting. If we have a fault to find it is that the pictures are painted too much in sombre tints, and they would have been all the better for a touch here and there in lighter colours. But this apart the book is one much above the average.—*Birmingham Post*, Oct. 20th, 1905.

WHERE THE SUN SETS.

"Memories from other Years and Lands." BY FRANCIS SINCLAIR. (From Messrs. Sampson Low and Co.)

It would not be courteous to inquire too curiously into the identity of the "coterie of wanderers" who, we are told in the preface, are responsible for the nine stories contained in this volume. The articles of association of that coterie included, it would appear, a clause to the effect that the contribution of any member should be edifying, entertaining, and, in its main parts, true. The book fairly fulfils this condition. The tales given consist of accounts of episodes and adventures in America, the South Seas, and other parts of the world, and are all written fluently, graphically, and attractively. We are inclined to like best "Mark Wynyard's Story," six chapters of thrilling adventure, and "An Idyll of the South Seas," a pathetic tale of the love and heroic devotion of Kona and Roké, a native boy and girl.—*Bookseller*, Oct. 16th, 1905.

WHERE THE SUN SETS.

(Memories from other Years and Lands. By Francis Sinclair. 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 5 $\frac{1}{4}$, 449 pp. Sampson Low.)

Perhaps we should apologize to Mr. Sinclair for classifying this as fiction; for it owes its origin to "a Coterie of Wanderers who meet annually and recount adventures,"

one of the conditions being that they must be "in their main points true." But the nine contributions are worked up into tales, and it is their interest rather than their truth which concerns the reader. Moreover, they are very well worked up, and their interest is considerable. We find ourselves in the South Seas, America—"the old South" and California—Canada and Australia; and two are little tales of the English country.—*The Times*, London, Oct. 6th, 1905.

"HIC ET UBIQUE."

WHERE THE SUN SETS.

("Memories from other Years and Lands." By Francis Sinclair. Sampson Low, Marston and Company.)

One or two of these tales are of England, but the prevailing setting is that of the Pacific islands. The collection takes its name from the first story which is of Hawaii, and which tells of a wonderful cure wrought by an aged wizard, or medicine man, who saved the life of a young woman, the suggested "modus operandi" being the transference to the sick girl of the life principle of a Chinaman, who is quite content with his share of the bargain, which is so many thousands of dollars and an assured grave among his ancestors in China. The story will perhaps hardly be convincing to the medical faculty. Most of the stories are grim, but they are all well told, and make excellent reading.—*Newcastle Chronicle*, 1st, 1905.

WHERE THE SUN SETS.

(F. Sinclair. Sampson Low, Marston and Co.)

Just half a dozen stories, and three more to the back of them, mostly of adventures far afield, though two of them are laid in Devonshire. Mystery and glamour are the prevailing tones, and the first story, which gives the book its title, is undoubtedly the best—a very curious piece of magic. As to its truth that may or may not be, but we have known for hundreds of years that "there are more things in Heaven and earth," etc., as well as the indisputably occult powers possessed by some tribes, as yet uncivilized by whites, and it is unwise to be too sceptical of anything. Next to this, "The Beauty of Branscombe" pleased me most—a touching and simple little tale.—*Western Morning News*, Nov. 11th 1905.

WHERE THE SUN SETS.

("Memories from other Years and Lands." By Francis Sinclair. London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company.)

Be the origin of these tales what it may—whether they possess substantial basis of fact, as is more than hinted in a preface, or are the outcome of the fertile imagination of a man who has travelled much in the Pacific—they are of a character which will appeal strongly to many readers. It may be that several of them are too sad and pathetic for some people. But in any case, they are distinguished by feelings of the kindest nature and a warm-hearted sympathy that render even the weirdest of the stories not unpleasing. Adventures on sea and land stand out prominently in some of the tales. All will be read and some of them will be remembered.—*Scotsman*, Edinburgh, Dec. 7th, 1905.

WHERE THE SUN SETS.

("Where the Sun Sets." By Francis Sinclair. London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, Ltd., 15A, Paternoster Row.)

"Where the Sun Sets" is a congeries of good things. There is a pleasant variety of themes presented in these four hundred and forty-nine pages of "Memories from other Years and Lands"—Mr. Francis Sinclair's sub-title to his latest book. It is a wide, wandering and thoughtful muse that presided over the selections of a traveller who knows the isles of the western seas "from Tahiti to Fiji and from Tonga to Hawaii." Great merit, a very true balance between dark and bright in spiritual moods, and a sure and quiet mastery of expression are present in the nine stories comprising this book.

"Jacob Busby," "Shirley Wold," and "Mary Driver" are stories which possess both pathos and passion; descriptions of scenery or places are delightful. "Mist," "Tanekai," and "A Reminiscence of the Old South" possess local colour rather than plot, for it is the atmosphere which charms; Mr. Sinclair having not only travelled extensively through the countries he describes but lived for several years in them. "Mark Wynyard's Story" is a strong, solid piece of work; if Mr. Sinclair could tell us how to reach that valley of Araucaria would that its like were more common—we feel sure but few travellers to it would return to the wider world. It is the longest story in the

book; to our mind no objection; a large theme deserves a roomy canvas. "Where the Sun Sets" is also the title of the initial story as of the book. It is weird and uncanny. It dives into the mysteries of Kahuna Anaana or Priest enchantment, with its subtle, inscrutable facts. Facts which are as real to the Pacific islanders as are Jumbies and Obi men to thousands of the Negro race. Christian civilization has done a good deal for the islanders, but, as Mr. Sinclair tersely sums up, "the missionary has forgotten or rather never learned 'That it takes forty generations to make the wild duck tame.'" "An Idyll of the South Sea," is perhaps the gem of the collection. The byways of life often have a fascination denied to the highroads, and in Roké, the heroine of a distant, lonely Pacific isle, is portrayed the power of a soul which proves

"That Faith has still an Olivet
And Love a Galilee."

Mr. Sinclair claims he knows well 'he island world of the Pacific, and his latest work substantiates the claim. His men and women move and speak, weep and laugh, hate and love, with an intensity of life which makes them real beings of flesh and blood. Furthermore, Mr. Sinclair has an eye for colour and form, and loves the picturesque and beautiful. He has travelled looking eagerly for all that was new and strange. These stories prove he has the gift of extracting from his subjects much that is suggestive and human, and sometimes much that is lovely, tender, and charming. In these days, when so many makers of books are either hysterically sentimental, blasphemously impious, or resort to the sewers of human life to produce their nasty novels, their corrupt books bestial in implication, it is good to the taste and pleasant to know that a scholar and gentleman can describe in a large and fascinating way love for human nature and love for that part of this beautiful world, which he says is "a dream of romance to those who have only read of it, and a memory which never fades to those who have drifted from island to island on its azure bosom by day and its moonlit waters by night."

It is impossible to do justice to so pleasing a book in a brief notice, so it only remains to commend Mr. Sinclair's pages to the reader in their entirety. Many more pretentious books have been less fascinating.—*The British Californian*, December, 1906.

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