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THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE.

VOL. V.

JULY, 1906.

No. 3.

FOR GOD AND THE KING.

By ETHEL LOUISE COX.

A romantic love story of the time of Marie Antoinette and the French Revolution.

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CHAPTER I.

MARIE ANTOINETTE.

THE strains of a minuet as gay and graceful as if danced at the court of France had just died away amid a soft rustle of brocade and a glitter of waving swords, joined in an arch above blooming beauty and youth.

Newport, one of the most opulent of American towns in the early period of American independence, was familiar with the refinements of pleasant life; and the great manor-house of Major Wentworth was noted for its hospitality.

There the citizens of good standing, with their wives and fair daughters, interchanged stately courtesies with Washington's captains.

The presence of several glittering French officers, friends and brothers of the young nation, lent additional gaiety and grace to the scene.

One of these courtly soldiers was in eager attendance upon the daughters of the house, fair damsels whose rich attire enhanced their beauty, born of pure air and healthful pleasures.

The elder made him laughing replies and roguish sallies. The younger listened to him with eloquent, blushing cheek and downcast eyes; and the innocent picture was scrutinized benignly by the fatherly host.

It caught the eye of a second onlooker, who, coming in from the star-lit outer world, brought with him a breath of sea air and a scent of mignonette from the sisters' formal, old-world garden. As the dance came to an end, he advanced to the French officer's side.

"I have heard news that gives me great pleasure, Monsieur Saint-Leu," he said. "I understand that my friend and comrade Saint-Leu has at last determined to make one of us, and become a citizen of the new republic."

The young man turned toward him with a frank smile.

"France protected my childhood, but I think that this noble though undeveloped country of yours will make a fitting home for the man," he replied.

"We were born here, and we love this wild land of forests which we have wrested from the red tribes," said the other. "But you may well regret your France."

"A soldier can claim no home, Major Waite," said Saint-Leu gravely. "I have sweet memories of early life, but—are you acquainted with the laws of the French noblesse? The ancient custom of bequeathing titles and estates from oldest son to oldest son bears hardly on the younger children of the great house."

"My elder brother being established in his rights, I became familiar with troop and camp at an early age, serving

under De Rochambeau; my elder sister, possessing beauty, was married, with a slender portion; my younger sister took the veil. I am free to carve my own fortunes and make my own home."

As he spoke his eyes turned unconsciously toward the beautiful sisters, moving in their young May loveliness amid their laughing guests, whose powder and patches and embroidered coats vied with the elegance of foreign courts. His companion watched him, smiling.

"There is the key to your self-devotion, Saint-Leu," he cried, clapping his hand upon the young man's shoulder.

"It delights me," he continued, "that we have turned our thoughts in the same direction without becoming rivals. I love the fair Anne's sister, who is as bright and sweet, though, perhaps, more roguish than that gentle lady."

"Then we shall be brothers as well as comrades," said the young man, with cordial pleasure, "and we will serve our new country side by side."

"May it be so. I have chosen you," answered Waite. "You saved me from the Indians' burning stake. Yet I only hope for this consummation. I do not doubt my friend's courage in trial of strength against the British, but, Saint-Leu, I doubt the prejudices of your early training and the strict laws of that aristocratic order so foreign to our ideals."

"What do you mean, monsieur?"

"Your pardon, Saint-Leu. I mean that we should guard jealously these forest blossoms of our new world; and Mistress Anne is too tender to bear a disappointment that her sister, saucy witch, would laugh away."

"Monsieur!" cried Saint-Leu in indignation.

"Major Waite, what are you about? That is a face for a court-martial and not for a ball," cried a laughing, silvery voice, as the elder of the sisters passed on the arm of her father, who smiled fondly on his children—perhaps with wistful thoughts going back to a young wife as fair, and now long departed.

"Now, do not challenge me, Saint-Leu," said Waite gaily. Then, with sudden seriousness:

"Are you absolutely proof against the claims of your order?"

"I am free to live and die in my adopted country without reproach," said Saint-Leu. "What claim do you fear?"

"Your oath!" said a voice at his side.

Saint-Leu turned hastily toward the speaker. He saw a stately, soldierly form and an unforgotten face.

"Montauran!" he cried in surprise, and clasped the newcomer warmly by the hand. "When did you arrive, and from what quarter of the world?"

"I come from Quebec, where I have been watching the English for several years. I had intelligence of your whereabouts from a scout in my service," said the stranger, who bore marks of travel strangely unsuited to the glittering scene.

Major Waite had retreated. The newcomer drew Saint-Leu to the embrasure of a diamond-paned window.

He spoke rapidly and as one forgetful of all other claims but those of his mission.

"I have questioned various persons about you, and I have learned of your determination to cast in your fortunes with those of the new world," he said, with a touch of sadness.

"It is ten years since we last saw each other, and now I come to haunt your happiness, and to say to you, 'Do you remember?'"

He paused.

"Do you remember the brilliant accession of a young queen to the French throne?" he went on.

"Do you remember how voices acclaimed her with wild enthusiasm; how rose leaves strewed her way; and how the joyful tears of a people welcomed the royal maiden to France?"

"Do you remember that then a thousand swords were hers to protect and defend her who needed no bulwark but the loyalty of her people?"

"You recall memories that I have put behind me," said Saint-Leu. "They are past and forgotten, however brilliant, and I stand in the land of the future."

"Do you remember, Saint-Leu, the night at the Little Trianon, and the secret oath that five faithful friends took there to devote their lives and honor to Marie Antoinette?"

"Why do you recall my oath to me, marquis?" asked Saint-Leu, paling slightly.

"Because ominous tidings have come to me from time to time over the sea. That young queen has fallen from her high estate; the crown of stars gleams no longer about her brow.

"France goes from disaster to disaster, through famine, plot, treachery of public servants.

"Splendor of the court amid wo of the nation has aroused the wrath of a people bereft of faith, who, in their wretchedness, have risen in rebellion against royal authority and armed power, have executed a wild justice on their oppressors and razed the Bastille; who now are turning their eyes toward the glittering crown above them, and will hurl their rulers from their places, with peasants' violence, make a nation of the people and reign."

"But a queen is inviolate," said Saint-Leu.

"She has borne adversity, disgrace, and sorrow," resumed Montauran sadly. "Her name has been tarnished by malefactors. She now has bitter need of men's loyalty, and she suffers their coldness and neglect."

"France then is changed?"

"She has tried vainly to escape from the toils that are closing about her.

"With the help of Fersen and the Duke de Choiseul, the royal family attempted flight to Metz. They were on the high road, with liberty in sight, when overtaken and brought back to virtual captivity in the Tuileries."

"Such a queen in captivity, and a palace her prison!"

"Listen, Saint-Leu! Of the three who took the oath with us, Delatouche is dead of a sword thrust in the Pré-aux-clercs, Marfontaine was lost among the savages, De Parnes is held by his duty at St. Petersburg.

"You and I—you, the youngest of us all, and I, who have most cause for devotion to my sovereign—alone remain to fulfil that oath.

"She needs us in her misery whom we would have served in her radiance. Must I recall your oath to you, Saint-Leu, my friend?"

"You come to claim me in the brightest hour of my life, Montauran."

"Her danger claims you."

"She is menaced?"

"By friend and foe, and since her attempted flight her position is doubly perilous."

"You call me to the defense of a woman—I must comply," said Saint-Leu with a groan. "But to follow you I abandon a woman—perhaps forever!"

"It is the call of honor," said Montauran, "the honor of centuries."

"It is enough. I will accompany you, marquis," answered Saint-Leu.

"We must be gone by morning," said Montauran reluctantly. "At four o'clock the vessel *Eveill * sails for France."

Saint-Leu was silent.

"I will be with you in an hour," he said finally. "Where shall I find you?"

"Meet me at Carver's tavern, Saint-Leu, and the morning shall see us on our way to France."

He left the young man's side, and Saint-Leu found himself alone by the glimmering pane.

The panorama of his life unrolled before him—the sunny scenes of childhood, pictures of camp and battle-field, and of the glittering French court, through which moved a queenly form, the first bright ideal of his youth.

To this form succeeded that of the woman he loved, and he turned with anguish from golden glimpses of the life he had hoped would be his—quiet, homely, smiling, and far from the ambition and warfare of kings.

"Valentin," said a gentle voice.

Anne stood before him. The sudden appearance of the stranger and his long conference with Saint-Leu had awakened vague alarms in her breast. Intuition of coming evil had overcome the maidenly delicacy that shrank from claiming her share of her lover's secret.

She looked ghostly to him in the dim light that stole the rose from the soft round of her cheek and from her parted lips, and silvered her powdered locks.

"Valentin?" she questioned softly.

He drew her hands to his breast.

"You were anxious, my love, and you came to find me?"

"It was the face of that mysterious stranger," she confessed. "He seemed like a shadow from your old life coming between us."

He sighed.

"If there is any peril threatening you, may I not share it?" said the sweet, timid voice.

He looked at her, mechanically noting her maiden splendors assumed to please him—the jewel that had belonged to her dead mother at her breast. Then his gaze rested on her wistful eyes.

"Your father was loath to surrender his treasure to a soldier and an alien," he said sadly.

"He has learned to know you, Valentin."

"Anne," he said tenderly, "you will be a soldier's bride. Have you the strength of heart to send me to my duty and wait patiently for my return?"

"I have not asked myself," she answered, with quick-coming breath and tremors that shook the silvery tissue about her white shoulders.

"Will you be brave, Anne?"

"Why do you ask me? Our wedding-day is set. What should come between us at such a time? They are taking you from me!"

"You know that I would come back to you, Anne, even from another world."

"Another world!" she whispered, and shivered in the soft breeze.

"Anne, love! Listen to me. Suppose that I had given my word, before I knew that the world held Anne, and were called on now to fulfil my oath and save my honor. Would you keep me by your side?"

"No, Valentin."

"Let us not have a thought unshared. Anne, when little more than a child I became inured to camp life and changing fortunes. A woman, radiant and adored, bestowed on me, a boy, a smile full of sunshine and a few words of gentle sympathy.

"The lad thought his life little enough to give in payment. That woman was the queen, and now I am called on to succor that sovereign lady in her need."

She paled still more, but her eyes were steady as she answered:

"Go, Valentin. France claims you—and I will let you go."

"We thought that we loved each other before, but this is our real betrothal," he cried. "Put your hands in mine. I swear to you that I will come back.

"I swear never to forget you in the hour of danger. I leave you, but I will return."

A freshening air blew in from the sea, and the moon swung low in the sky.

"Montauran waits for me. I must go," he said.

"You will not leave me to-night? Oh, give me time to grow used to wanting you. Only one more day!"

"My beloved."

"If you pass from my life," she whispered, "leaving only a dream and a regret, I will never lose faith; but do you think that we shall see each other again?"

"Anne, I cannot delay. I must leave you to-night, and it will be long before I return to you. Promise me to wait patiently, to keep a cheerful heart. I ask you to live for me!"

"I promise to be brave," she said, smiling through her tears.

"Think, love, that I am only returning for the time to my native France."

"Do not forget that I am waiting for you," she said softly, "morning and eve at this window by the sea where I have often watched the sails of the French ships. Do not forget."

He bent to take his farewell of her.

"Oh, one moment!" cried the sweet, piteous voice.

"Bend your head," she said, releasing her hands from his.

She loosened the jewel from her bosom and fastened it about his neck.

"Carry it with you like my love on your heart. It was my mother's."

"Adieu!" he cried.

She clung to him.

"Saint-Leu!"

As if in a dream, he heard Waite's familiar voice.

"Watch over her and befriend her!" he said. "I leave her to your care."

And bending once more to her pale lips he murmured, "Adieu, my love and my life! Adieu!"

CHAPTER II.

THE MIRROR.

IN a room of the Inn de la Providence, in Paris, a young man of good mien was listening earnestly to the re-

port of his servant, a gray-headed valet, with a grave, astute face.

"When did Sœur Louise hear from her last?" the master questioned.

"A month ago, monsieur. Before Mademoiselle de Vernage started for Paris with her guardian she wrote to the good sister telling her of her intended journey and promising to see her. Since then, not a line!"

"Sœur Louise has made no inquiries?"

"They were unavailing, monsieur. No one has heard of the young lady's arrival in Paris. Servants are mute as fish. The Chevalier de Maubray stated that his ward did not accompany him."

"Villainy somewhere, Bridaine! She left Caen, of that I have assured myself. What has happened since then?"

"Monsieur, Sœur Louise declares that she will gladly shelter mademoiselle if she takes refuge with her, although the temper of the times grows dangerous toward the convent. The nuns themselves may soon need succor."

"She would seek shelter there if at liberty. We will begin and end each day's search with inquiries at the convent gate."

As he spoke, there arose outside the wild beat of a drum advancing from the head of the street. Master and servant silently approached the wide window.

A tumultuous crowd passed—citizens in red nightcaps and soldiers in the blue uniform of the Nationals intermingled, hand on shoulder and fraternally embracing.

A flag flashed in a glory of sunlight, and a fierce, heart-stirring chant of male voices arose. They swept by.

In another street distant drums prolonged the echoes.

"The storm is rising," said the younger man.

They left the window.

"Monsieur," said Bridaine, "Sœur Louise bade me tell you that at the taking of the Bastille an inmate, a young unknown lady, was rescued from the besiegers and hurried away. The sister thought that the description of the stranger tallied with that of mademoiselle."

"I have made inquiries in that direction, Bridaine."

As the young man spoke, he sighed.

"The chevalier's valet remains to be questioned. How do you stand with him?"

"We advance very slowly, monsieur. He is a Norman, and long-headed."

"Try him again, Bridaine. Offer him more gold."

"I go, monsieur."

They parted without further speech. The young man, after a minute's meditation, took up his hat, and, leaving the inn, walked rapidly toward the Rue St. Honoré.

Before him and about him he could hear the roll of the drums, like the throb of the heart of Paris, now distant, now close at hand.

At the entrance of the Champs Elysées, he was caught in an eddying mob of people, singing and dancing, hand in hand, who parted with sobs and cries of joy before the triumphal march of some five hundred armed men.

These men, travel-worn, swarthy, and grim of visage, kept step to a swelling melody of voices, singing the awful hymn that already had saluted the young man's ears. A bugler, mounted on a man's shoulders, sounded a long shrill blast, and the crowd broke into wild hurrahs.

"The Marseillais!" voices shouted.

"The Marseillais!" was repeated by the tossing, seething crowd.

"They have come to teach the people of Paris how to defy the Tyrant," a woman cried to her child.

Responsive voices repeated with stern triumph, "The Marseillais!"

The young man patiently extricated himself from the crowd and hurried on, absorbed in thought. He turned into the Rue St. Denis.

Suddenly he stopped, gazed about him as if in doubt of his locality, retraced his steps, and paused before a house of four stories with a façade of lilies and roses and dancing cupids blackened by time.

Entering a small dark door he ascended a staircase and rapped at an inner door.

It was opened by a dwarfish, grotesque black, a child with melancholy eyes, clad in a thin cotton robe and wearing heavy rings of gold on his arms.

The young man transferred a coin to the hand of this strange figure, whereupon the door was opened wide.

He entered a dim, lofty room, empaneled with delicate paintings of rosy, flower-bearing nymphs. A few scattered stools and a carved press of dark wood formed the only furniture.

The room was occupied. Two men by the cold hearth looked hastily at the new arrival, and one of them, a tall man, in the vigor of middle years, skilfully concealed the lower part of his face in the collar of his cloak and turned his back upon the intruder.

Without noticing this movement, the young man threw himself down upon a stool with a heavy sigh, and lapsed into thought. The other, finding himself unobserved, cautiously turned again and studied the downcast face before him with keen, ironic glances.

The small black, reappearing, whispered to the smaller and sligher of the former occupants of the room, who as he waited was drumming idly on the carven chimney. He rose and limped through the inner door.

He entered a room of the same noble proportions as the first chamber, with darkened windows. It was lighted by candles.

The walls were concealed by tattered black hangings, on which were outlined diagrams and cabalistic signs in glaring white.

In the center of the room stood a small table with glass legs. On it was an antique incense burner, from which arose a light cloud of perfumed smoke that permeated the close air of the room. Two vast, high-backed chairs were drawn up on either side.

From one of these chairs, as the man entered, arose the tall, mysterious figure of a woman in Persian attire, the seams of her robe sewed with gold sequins.

Her light figure, in its silvery gauzes, seemed to float toward him rather than touch the floor.

This woman was L'Egypte, the noted fortune-teller of a Paris leaning toward the occult.

She made a deep reverence to the man, who paused as if in surprise, turning toward her a thin, keen face, woful and sickly but expressing a sardonic strength

in the grim compression of a mouth set in lines of pain, and in the small eyes.

"You mistake the quality of your visitor, mademoiselle," he said quietly.

Without replying, she motioned him to be seated, and, resuming her position in front of the table, turned her deep glance full upon his face.

He then became aware of her fantastic companion, a black cock perched on the back of her chair, with its head under its wing.

Behind her chair stood a mirror so arranged that the person facing her could look into its clear and shining depths.

They faced each other in silence for some minutes. Presently she spoke in a dulled, monotonous tone that seemed to come from a veiled distance.

"Man's life comprises Present, Past, and Future. From the seed of Past and Present the lurid flower of the Future springs. Let us go back to your Past. Let us return to Arras."

The man made an imperceptible movement.

"The past is rich in significance," said the woman, speaking with a certain measured dignity.

"The humble student of law at Arras, in his peaceful domestic surroundings, is learning that subtle eloquence that hereafter shall convince a people.

"His early reputation for an upright life and merciful spirit is the weapon that shall fell his future enemies, of whom he will have many.

"Let us proceed. On a fair May morning a diligence rolls from the white highway into busy Paris, heedless of this fateful arrival. The skill of the advocate of Arras advances him to the States-General called by the king to advise a remedy for the evils of the times.

"Hear the distant thunder of applause from benches of the patriotic clubs and galleries of the Convention Hall! The next steps are swift as fate. From States-General, summoned by crowned Louis, to the all-powerful Convention of the Republic, risen against kings. Then over prostrate France from the Convention to a Tyranny and Dictatorship. His star is at meridian."

She rose to her feet with a spring.

"You shall be greater than kings, for a king's life shall lie in your hand.

Spirits of evil hail you. You shall be as their brother."

The man silently eyed her, resting his chin upon his hand.

"Marat, whose red star rose before your own, will be your friend. You will overtop him. Marat shall fall by the hand of a woman—beautiful and innocent! What does she here amid these specters?"

"Danton, your colossal rival, Hébert, Ronsin, you will send to the scaffold. The Girondins, the hope of young patriot France, shall fall. You rise."

She wavered back and forth. Her face was contorted and ghastly white. She thrust her hands out before her as if to ward off some coming unsubstantial horror.

Through the clouds of overpowering incense, the small, steady eyes of the man fixed her with the glassy stare of a serpent eye.

"What specters!" she hoarsely whispered.

"Man, are you the young judge who, in far-away, red-walled Arras, refused to sentence a convicted wretch to death? who could not deprive a fellow mortal of life?"

"Look! about you and above you rise the appealing hands of the murdered. At each step you take groans resound from the earth. The young, the helpless, the wise, the patriot, even the soldier whom red war will spare, swell the vast, dim procession of your victims.

"From the blood-stained soil of Lyons comes a terrible cry, voices of men, voices of women, weak voices of children!

"The sluggish wave of the Loire rolls heavy with corpses whose open eyes and dumb lips condemn you!

"Listen! from the secret, subterranean earth comes a rattle of bones. The walls shake. From the Catacombs they are coming to bear their fatal witness against their judge. They swarm about you.

"Look, look! The room is filling with the awful shells of humanity and the sound of their dismal clatter. Oh, horror, horror!"

She was conscious that the man had risen. Through the eddies of smoke she faintly discerned his features, and conjectured rather than heard his words.

He made a gesture of command. She gazed, fascinated, at his lips.

"The end?" he said.

"In the mirror," she gasped, and fell back into her chair, covering her eyes with her shaking hands.

As she crouched, shivering, the fearful dirge died softly away in the distance and her courage returned. She had no idea of the lapse of time. The sound of a shutting door recalled her to actual life.

When she finally uncovered her face and looked up her visitor had departed as silently as a dream, and another figure confronted her. She noted his unusual height, and the stateliness of his bearing.

As she gazed at him, bewildered, her mind was still rapt on her vision. He seated himself and turned a clear, questioning gaze upon her.

"You are indisposed, mademoiselle?"

She drew herself together as her eyes met his. The stranger's orbs flashed with sudden suspicion.

"So you also wish to consult the future?" she said, in a somber tone.

"Say that I would test the world-famed skill of the Zingara L'Egypte."

"In which you do not believe," she murmured, musing on his face.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I have seen several of your kind. It is a clever game, and requires skill and a knowledge of life easily acquired by such wanderers in city mart or on the world's highway.

"I have seen Indian jugglers who, I confess, puzzled me for a moment. But as to these astrologers, diviners, fortune-tellers, I will say that there was not one but failed in my test.

"Tell me some one secret thing, known only to myself and never shared with another, and I will believe in you."

A quick sense of power was visible in her face.

"Let me try, Monsieur the Chevalier de Maubray."

She hesitated, but resumed in a mocking tone.

"You have hidden a young girl of good birth, your ward, away from her friends in an obscure corner of Paris, in the purlieu of the vagrant.

"It would be very convenient for you,

if she should disappear—for not only does she hold estates to which you would succeed upon her death, but she was named the heiress to a fortune you have dissipated and for which you cannot give account.”

He made a sudden movement.

“Listen, chevalier. This fortune was bequeathed to her in a lost will, of whose existence and hiding-place no one is aware but yourself. Behold the one secret fatal thing buried in your bosom.”

As she finished speaking, she involuntarily shrank back appalled by her exorcism and by the sinister fire that flashed from the clear gray eyes before her.

He had half risen from his chair with a sudden spring, but slowly as he eyed her, his fine features regained their clear composure, and he smiled.

“That would have been a dangerous disclosure for another to have made,” he said quietly, resuming his place, “but I know that my secret is safe with Mademoiselle Marie.”

She tossed aside her glittering veil.

“You recognize me then?” she said defiantly.

“Very good. The veiled mystery reveals familiar features. I know that you are the Duchesse d’Aiguillon’s waiting-maid, child, as I know that the man who has just left you is Robespierre,” he answered.

“True, the gipsy girl was placed about Madame the Duchesse by those who command her,” she said sullenly, “but there were important reasons why she should be in the secrets of that lady.”

“I see,” he said attentively, “and now, my dear, go on with the little horoscope. It amuses me.”

“God forbid!” she said hastily.

“Bah, we are neither of us cowards, Marie. The Unknown is the bugbear of children. Proceed.”

“Why will you dare to go beyond the stretch of man’s audacity, and then throw away your prize in a moment of indolence?” she said gloomily, staring before her.

“Why are you cruel and kind in one moment’s breath? Why will you spare me, a waif of doubtful honesty, in possession of your secret, and crush the innocent cause of your peril?”

“Why will you break, careless;

through every danger to your vengeance to find that vengeance ill-secured?”

“Why will you, who believe in no virtue, trust all to a prince’s honor? I warn you that you yourself will forge the sword that shall slay you—you who will coldly acquiesce in the death of hundreds and throw away your hard-earned popularity to save a humble priest from your fellow tiger’s cruelty.

“Why will you scorn the powerful and lackey the weak? You will risk your life for Philippe d’Orleans, but you will not stoop to cloak your policy from that fearful and unsleeping vigilance, Robespierre.”

She shuddered.

“A little, viperous, fawning advocate, child,” he said, smiling.

“Beware of him,” she said earnestly, leaning forward and laying her hand on his. “Watch him ceaselessly; weigh his words. Some day he will utter your sentence. He is to be feared as things out of nature are abhorred.”

His smile grew provocative, and her face hardened. Its eager entreaty died away.

“You wish the full tale?” she said slowly and with an accent of weariness. “Courtier and Friend of the People, Jacobin and aristocrat, you play a perilous game.

“You led Mirabeau to Marie Antoinette, and you aided in her recapture.

“You would solve the secret of the power behind the power. You plot in dark ways.

“Before other men, you will recognize the fount and head of the Revolution and ally yourself with the Tyrant. Thereafter there is no turning back. You are on the way.”

“The game for itself. Shall I fail? Shall I succeed?” he asked.

She shivered beneath the veil that again half concealed her face.

“You wish to know your fate?” she said in altered tones.

“Yes.”

Her eyes met his in a dull stare through the drifting eddies of smoke. She murmured a few words in a strange tongue.

“Look in the mirror,” she said.

He gazed quietly into its misty, silvery depths.

"What do you see?"

"I see nothing," he replied.

She made a swift gesture, sweeping away the cloud of smoke before his eyes.

"Look again," she said.

They were silent. He gazed steadily, curiously into the mirror. His face expressed grave recognition, but no surprise, as though encountering a secret long surmised. It gave inflexible acquiescence to fate and a challenge to life.

When at last he recovered himself with a start and turned to her again, his features were as placid as before.

"To how many have you shown this vision of the guillotine?" he asked quietly.

"To fifty at least," she answered in a dreary tone. Her forehead had fallen upon her hands.

"They will all die?" His tone was faintly incredulous.

"They will perish," she said.

"Have you ever cast your own horoscope, child?" he asked suddenly.

She looked at him, and a vivid horror dilated her eyes.

"The broad highway is still free to the gipsy, but she may not escape, and her end will not be merciful. The stars that often have watched her sleep beneath the open sky have declared it," she said somberly.

Then, raising her head:

"Farewell, Monsieur the Chevalier. We shall meet once more in life. I have warned you.

"Guard yourself against the man who has just left me and who soon will be by your side day after day. Farewell!"

He rose. At the door he suddenly paused and returned to her.

"Secret for secret," he said, smiling. "Make the most of this. Your next client will be the Comte de Marsan. He is awaiting my departure in the next room, and he doubtless desires news of my ward.

"He has been led to seek your aid by that wild and glittering will-o'-the-wisp, first love. The first virgin passion of his life bedazzles the youngster. He walks by the water brooks and in the green and rosy fields of youth, and he counts himself unhappy."

He smiled.

Her eyes met his. She sighed and leaned her cheek on her hand. A long dark braid fell over her shoulder.

"What? Dreaming, child?" said the chevalier.

A sullen, rebellious anger burned in the gipsy's eyes, and her hand slid to her many colored girdle.

"You make men and women your puppets," she said with passion.

He turned abruptly to go, but she arrested him.

"What will you do with the demoiselle?" she asked sharply.

"Do not care for her," he replied. "Her life has been sad. Her fate shall be speedy and kind."

His face took cruel lines.

"If he asks news of the lady," he continued, "tell him——"

He bent to her ear, and she nodded sullenly, with her eyes bent on the floor.

She remained in an attitude of dejection after the door had closed upon him. The room seemed to darken, and the clouds of perfumed, suffocating smoke floated in thicker wreaths about her head.

The mirror streamed with ghostly white light. It vibrated softly as if to a vagrant waft of wind. The cock, suddenly awakened, turned a bright, quick eye about him, but remained motionless, silently brooding.

The door opened, and the latest of her clients hesitated before her. She did not stir.

He spoke to her, but received no reply. Finally she raised her head to look at him, contemplating dully the vigorous, graceful figure before her. As he opened his lips to speak, she made an imperative gesture commanding silence.

"You have not come to me, as others come, to question your own future. You seek what is lost," she said, in a harsh, grating voice.

He bowed his head. His silent emotion was depicted in his face. He looked at her earnestly.

"You would learn the fate of the young girl whom you love," said the fortune-teller. Then with a sudden wild laugh:

"Look in the mirror, lover!" she cried.

He paused in surprise, but she beckoned him to approach. He followed the

gesture of her arm, and bending forward gazed into the mirror's depths.

As he looked, the black cock, dislodged by the gipsy's wild gestures, fluttered from her chair and perched on the narrow rim of the silvery glass.

The young man's eyes interrogated the shining surface. A blur passed across his sight. Then gradually an image formed and moved amid the crystal lights, a weird, pallid outline of vague, gray shapes.

With a sudden cry, he started back and leaned, trembling, on the arm of the chair.

The gipsy's shrill peals of laughter grew louder and higher. He stumbled from the room, and descended the stair, fleeing from the horror of that vision.

As he reached the open air, and the forgotten outer world, from the city's steeples sounded a terrible storm of bells that seemed to beat with iron tongues upon his heart.

They pealed and clamored over Paris, flying like sinister cries across the placid, brilliant sky. They rolled an ominous wave that beat against the glittering palace walls.

The storm was rising!

CHAPTER III.

AUX ARMES.

FROM the steeple of Saint-Roch, from that of Saint-Jacques, from Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, the iron voices pealed over Paris the summons to arms.

They were heard by haggard courtiers, gathered in anxious groups at the open windows of the Tuileries, where royalty was held at bay. They flew over the many-colored throng in the Paris streets; and they reechoed through a quiet cabinet in a stately *hôtel* where two men were talking together.

Something in that stormy tocsin touched even the lighter mood of the smiling speaker of the moment with gravity. He leaned back in his chair and held up his hand to call attention to the clamor, and thoughtfully eyed his companion, an alert, youthful figure, clad in a carmagnole or Republican jacket, across the great table between them.

The young man, who mingled with his natural dignity something of an air of diffidence before his neighbor, broke the silence.

"Paris speaks for me, monsieur," he said. "As I tell you, the pear is ripe. The section Saint-Antoine is ready to march. Saint-Marceau will follow with the Marseillais, hot from the south, and ready to walk up to the cannon's mouth.

"All is going well. It is only a question of hours when the Château of the Tuileries and the king's Swiss mercenaries will be at the disposal of the people."

"But you forget Commandant Mandat and his squadrons, which he has sworn to station at the Pont-Neuf, the Hôtel de Ville, the Palais Royal, and the Place Vendôme," said the Chevalier de Maubray. "You will not pass those barriers of steel easily. Soldiers and leader are one. He holds the insurrection in check."

"We have not been idle on our part," answered the chevalier's companion. "Since midnight much has happened."

"Mayor Pétion, who gave Mandat the order to meet force with force, is in our hands, and new municipals the people have elected will uphold the people and are no lackeys to dangle in kings' antechambers.

"Santerre is our present commandant, and under him the Nationals will not fire on their brothers. Long live the nation!"

"And Mandat?" said the chevalier, startled from his habitual carelessness.

The other's face fell.

"Mandat, I grieve to say, is dead," he answered with a sigh. "He fell a victim to the wrath of the people."

"Then Louis, save for his Swiss, is helpless?"

The chevalier was silent for a moment. The clangor of the bells filled the pause.

"The tocsin does not ring badly," said the young man.

"My friend, are you confident that you can lay this fiend you have raised?" said the chevalier.

"The king must be forced to forfeiture," replied the other, not without an air of importance, "and the Tuileries, which is now the shelter of Austrian spies

and is cobwebbed with plots, must be ours.

"We demand forfeiture and the prince royal to be made king, with the protectorship left in our hands. The nation should guide the king."

"Or a new king who is with the people at heart, and who would not stand in the way of light and liberty," said the chevalier. "Heart to heart with the people, yet still a son of France."

The other met his glance with rustic impenetrability, blankly courteous.

"Come, friend," said the chevalier, "we know that in these uprisings the people pay, and the skilful leader of the movement reaps the harvest. When they subside again it is only to recognize a new master—call him Louis or call him Philippe."

The other shook his head.

"We cannot measure ourselves by the past. There is something more in men's hearts and minds. We stand at the beginning of an era of glory. We have a duty to perform, first to France and then to the world."

"Ideas? Bah, the world is ruled by the individual," said the chevalier. "But you must first mold your iron arguments to convince the federation of kings. There will be hot work enough on our own frontiers soon."

"With faith we may go round the globe," said the other, "with drum and musket, in the cause of liberty. What answer shall I return to the Committee from you, monsieur?"

"Let them go on," answered the chevalier after a minute's pause. "Bring it to trial, and I pledge myself to furnish the proofs of the king's treason."

"That is enough," said the other, rising and bowing, with an air of satisfaction.

When he found himself alone, the chevalier crossed to the window, and lounging in the low stone seat listened to the tocsin. He undid the catch and leaned out, letting in the golden rays of early morning sunshine.

"Bah, the canaille!" he murmured aloud.

"Are you listening to their howls by your dying fire, son of kings? You are no coward, my good Louis, I know. But

can you prevail? Have you the heart in you to face them, defenseless, and bend them to your will?

"The game is in your hands. Pity to give up, without a struggle, the kingdom that your fathers conquered and held. Will you fight now that you are brought to bay? With a man in your place, Louis, there would be no insurrection."

He turned to leave the window.

"Monsieur Saint-Leu" was announced, and with a hasty exclamation of surprise the chevalier advanced to meet and embrace the newcomer.

On the night of leave-taking, Saint-Leu joined his friend at the inn, and they set sail at break of day. The French vessel bore them safely to their native shores, after a long tossing by the sea, and they hastened on to Paris.

France offered a picture to their eyes even stranger than those their imaginations had drawn. The signs of ruined splendor and terror about them told a tale that oppressed their hearts, with wasted harvests, and battered walls of stately châteaux, and the threatening looks of hunger-bitten peasants in the fields.

Revolt, disloyalty and coming change were in the air.

The two friends journeyed silently. The thoughts of each were busy with the drama under their eyes and conjectures as to the welfare of kinsman or friend in the struggle. Montauran, with fast-beating heart, marked their rapid approach to the royal beauty, the smiling queen and star of France.

They were ill prepared even by their journey for the whirlpool of the Paris streets.

Seeking out an inn of decent appearance, they lay in the same room overnight. In the morning, Saint-Leu arose to find his companion gone out to the stir of the streets.

Saint-Leu, growing restless with waiting, left the inn in turn. He found his brother's *hôtel* empty and silent; its windows shattered and the stones wrenched apart in portions of the building.

He turned to his remaining kinsman, the Chevalier de Maubray, for information and aid in reaching the queen, if she were in need, as rumor of the Paris

streets reported. Memory, illumining that gracious sovereign with its soft light, almost cast a doubt on this rumor.

The young man met his kinsman with a frank smile of pleasure. The chevalier's greeting displayed the grace of manner that lent an illusion of poetry to his singular and fatal character.

"You are welcome, monsieur my nephew," he said jestingly, "although apparently you have fallen from the skies."

"From the new world, monsieur," answered Saint-Leu respectfully.

"You find us making a new world here and *peste!*—but we are botching the undertaking."

"France is changed enough to bewilder me. We arrived in Paris last night, and this morning I found that my traveling companion had deserted me. He did not return, and I am afraid that he is in difficulties. Paris is a camp. But where is the enemy?"

"Come here, monsieur, and I will show you: a man and a woman, once king and queen of France, now besieged in those walls yonder that are just catching the sun," said the chevalier. "Brunswick is on the march and Paris is mad with terror."

"What are you saying, monsieur? Will they force the king's house?" said Saint-Leu, in surprise.

"Truly you come from afar, my friend," said the chevalier. "The old *régime* is fast disappearing."

"The revolution held in check by Mirabeau is overflowing in rapid waters. At his death the last support of the French throne-toppled and fell."

"Royalty, enfeebled and restricted, sanctioned a States-General, sanctioned the constitution, and leaned first on a Lafayette and then on a Mirabeau."

"On the death of Mirabeau came the wild flight toward the frontiers and the appeals to the Austrian Kaiser. Now Brunswick is on the march, accompanied by the *émigrés*, and the storm is rising. Paris awaits the attack, and will not be held long in suspense."

As if in corroboration of his words a sharp volley of muskets was heard in the street outside.

"You are right. She is in danger," cried Saint-Leu, starting to his feet.

"Who?"

"The queen."

"Is that the magnet that has drawn you across the sea?" said the chevalier.

"It is folly," he added coldly. "Their sentence is spoken. The troops have been removed. The body-guard of Swiss is their sole protection."

"And Paris stands idle!" cried Saint-Leu indignantly.

"What would you have us do?" inquired the chevalier, smoothing his ruffles foppishly.

"Die with them, if we cannot save them," answered Saint-Leu brusquely.

"Stop. Where are you going? You will not be admitted behind the grates."

"True. I had forgotten my errand to you. Aid me. Where is there a friend of the king?"

"You will go?"

"Assuredly."

The chevalier laid a hand on Saint-Leu's arm. Contrary to what might have been supposed, the young man's attitude in the face of his own nonchalance pleased his pride of race.

"Listen, my dear fellow. If a man wishes to cut his throat, he can always find a way and friends to accomplish his desires. I am not indifferent to her peril, for great qualities lie in that royal heart. I can provide you with a ticket-of-entry."

"Then in the name of heaven, monsieur, let me have it and begone."

The chevalier cast a preoccupied glance on him.

"Let a man of our race aid her when she is deserted by the creatures of the king," he murmured.

He left the room, and came back promptly.

"Honor is a bad paymaster," he said, as they parted. "It gives us death for life, and folly for wisdom—but I admire your folly."

Saint-Leu pressed his hand in silence.

A sudden thought crossed the young man's mind, causing him to ask, with a slight feeling of remorse, for news of the companions of his childhood.

"The count has emigrated," said the chevalier. "The abbess followed him to London. Your elder sister's husband is a Republican and an artillery officer of the Nationals."

"Poor Louise!" murmured Saint-Leu, thinking of the struggle between love and conscience in the heart of the gracious beauty of his house.

His mind being set at rest as to the immediate safety of his family, he turned with high spirit to the service of the queen.

Paris, in open revolt, was a rolling mass of steel. Close lines of patriots marched in silence, marshaled by the Marseillais, to the slow beat of drum. Strange and wild figures were among them, phantoms of the lower world, whose faces betrayed ferocious and unrestrained passions.

The dress of the marching men was almost uniform. They wore the carmagnole, and the red woolen caps of liberty were pulled over their locks. Some wore pistols in their girdles; others were armed with gleaming pikes, or muskets, or unsheathed sabers.

Many marched in wooden shoes. Their arms were bared as if for the fearful work in contemplation. A few pikes decked in tricolor ribbons were borne as standards.

In the pauses of the drum beats came the rush and rattle of cannon hauled through the streets by gesticulating figures toward the king's dwelling.

Never before had such a foe been ranged against the lilies of France.

In the midst of the armed men might be seen a woman, or one who should have been that tender creature, fair and young. She was brandishing a saber, and inciting her comrades to battle with words and gestures of frantic fury and fierce outcry that met as fierce an answer from their burning eyes. A fleeting whirl of tattered, shoeless dancers, hand in hand, accompanied the line of march.

Cries of "On, on," greeted them from windows and pavements, but for the most part the onlookers were silent and sullen, seemingly regretful but entirely passive.

From a group intent on the flashing sea of patriot steel, a man suddenly started directly across Saint-Leu's path. Saint-Leu halted in surprise and suspicion as the other stretched out both hands to him.

He was a short, stoutly built young man, with a broad peasant face and frank eyes. He spoke in a trembling

tone, weeping with joy, and falling unconsciously in the excitement of the moment into the patois of the Breton peasant.

"My good monsieur! My dear young master!" he cried.

"Théot!" exclaimed Saint-Leu with an accent of pleasure, placing his hand on the other's shoulder. The stranger took it in his own, and kissed it with a devotion that might have attracted patriotic suspicion in a scene of less confusion and excitement.

The face of Théot was like a "Welcome home!" to the soldier. Saint-Leu's thoughts strayed back to the green fields; the magical oak woods, tangled with bright holly; the wild beauty of his own dear land. Old scenes and faces rose before him, and swift, half-laughing, half-sighing questions and answers passed between him and Théot, who had been his peasant foster-brother, born on his ancestral estates.

"But how do you happen to be in Paris, Théot?" inquired Saint-Leu at last.

The other looked embarrassed.

"You see, monsieur, I was the clerk and pupil of Sieur Michel, the village notary, an early Republican. He came to Paris as deputy, and also, good, thrifty man, to claim a small inheritance falling to him at the same time. I came with him. Things have not gone ill with me here."

His face, in its shrewd simplicity, invited confidence.

"Are you returning home, monsieur, to Brittany?"

"No, my good fellow," answered Saint-Leu, "fortunes and home now lie on the other side of the sea for me, in the new world."

Théot's face wore a rueful expression.

"I have heard of these Americans," he said guardedly. "The good *curé's* uncle was martyred among them. They wear feathers, and paint themselves to the likeness of beasts."

"Yes," said Saint-Leu, smiling.

He grasped the Breton's hand, and parted with him almost with a feeling of regret as if from the last gleam of sunshine. But in a few minutes Théot was again at his side.

"Monsieur, shall I see you again?"

Saint-Leu hesitated.

"No, Théot," he said firmly. "Off with you, lad! and good fortune attend you here and in our native Brittany!"

"Monsieur, after ten years' absence do not send me from you so soon," said Théot respectfully but determinedly. "May I not accompany you to your inn?"

"No, my dear foster-brother," answered Saint-Leu.

"I may not take you with me," he added, "for I am bound to those palace walls yonder to add myself to the band within who defend them against Paris."

"Ah, I thought as much," said the other mournfully.

He stood watching Saint-Leu's retreating figure.

The roll of drums in the distance marked the approach of a second grim host. A sudden fearful figure sprang by the Breton, brandishing a billhook. Its body rose to colossal height or shrank to ordinary proportions as it leaped along the pavement.

The Breton followed it with his eyes until it was lost to view, and then suddenly he, too, began to run in the direction of the drums.

"Long live the nation!" he murmured between set teeth, "but let them not harm a hair of his head!"

The beat of the drums increased in wild, surging fury, and then rolled into the distance.

CHAPTER IV:

THE SWISS GUARD.

IN the Tuileries confusion and tumult filled the stately halls, once thronged with glittering masks and court revelries.

Gentlemen in black, French nobles loyal to fallen majesty, crowded the royal apartments. They gathered in shifting groups, consulting and reporting, and pausing to listen, falling silent in the midst of their speeches, to listen for sounds of the approaching host.

A few stood, gun on arm, in the great windows, keeping anxious watch for the first gleam of pikes. At the grates outside there was a hasty coming and departing of hurried messengers. The peril was near.

Such guard as was left to the brilliant palace walls was posted. Armed Swiss, grave and impassive, crowded the great stairs and corridors. These were men absolutely faithful. They were to be trusted with life and death in the coming strife.

In the court the Nationals were ranked, a sullen, unstable guard, in sympathy with the people. A nervous disquiet was manifest among them. From time to time they cast gloomy, rebellious looks at their officers. Cannon were pointed, but whether they would be fired in defense of the palace was doubtful.

The Syndic Roederer and the patriot ministers, of hardly more weight in the crisis than Louis himself, the ghost of absolute majesty, were in anxious consultation with the king.

A little apart was a group of noble women, the queen of France, with the little prince royal at her knees, Madame Royale, and the gentle Madame Elizabeth.

Behind the queen's chair two of her women were cowering, with clasped hands. They shivered in a stream of sunshine that glowed on the rich colors of their dresses, and shone in the deep eye of a jewel or on the silken hangings of the royal apartment. The child, gay and rosy, prattled, very busy with his own small affairs, to his fair mother.

The queen was silent, apparently regardless even of the child at her knees.

Her wide open eyes were fixed on some distant vision, perhaps of the peaceful fields and the white roads along which the maiden of fifteen had journeyed into France till bells and acclamations greeted her entry into Paris, of the tears and joy that faced her as she stood forth, crowned, on the balcony from which the royal brides serenely confronted with their tremulous beauty the stormy, hundredfold ardor of a loyal people. Echoes from the brilliant past surged about her.

Kingship, of pure and infinitely beautiful possibilities, had broken like a sacred vessel in earthly hands.

Daughter of a line of mighty rulers, no fear of death could touch her royal heart, but she bent in anticipation before that awful cry of execration that appalled her more than former perils of

riot or insurrection—the rage and condemnation of a people.

"Madame," said the old Marshal Maillé, stopping before her as if with some vague perception of the workings of her mind, "all hearts have not deserted you. Here are two more gallant gentlemen ready to die for your majesty. Will you be pleased to receive Monsieur the Marquis Montauran and Monsieur Saint-Leu?"

As he spoke, Montauran and Saint-Leu, who had come together once more at the grates, parted from a group of friends and drew near the queen.

Marie Antoinette roused from her reverie and turned toward the two gentlemen with a sunny smile that softened and lightened her haughty features. Her eye dwelt thoughtfully on their faces.

"You have been long absent from the court of France, messieurs, but you return when others are fleeing from us," she said with an accent of wistfulness.

"You left the king's guards for foreign service, did you not, monsieur?" she added to Montauran, with that peculiar memory of personal histories displayed by sovereigns.

"I served in America under our Marshal de Rochambeau, madame," he answered.

"A people whom France aided to free themselves from their king," she said, voicing the common unspoken thought that struck a sudden silence upon them. Every word had some significance to their anxious minds relating to the fearful crisis threatening the French throne.

Montauran gazed with tremulous eagerness at features that had risen hauntingly before him in the flame of camp fires or in the clear depths of green-fringed forest streams; that had glimmered before him through red Indian mêlée or on battle-fields, and had led him back to the shores of France.

Years had passed, dimming the splendor of the royal beauty that had shone unclouded upon him in the bowers of Versailles or in the brilliant court dance.

Smiles were foreign to the lips, and the beautiful eyes spoke of sorrow, but a brighter courage flashed from the fair, proud face.

"Ah, my young guard of St. Cloud," she said, turning with sudden gracious

recognition to Saint-Leu, "you also, they tell me, have been sent in campaign to the wilds of the new world. Good Lapérouse, on quiet evenings, sometimes would tell us tales of the perils of the French soldiery. Yet you have been given back to us in our need."

Saint-Leu fell on his knee, and silently kissed the fair hand held out to him.

"Madame," said Montauran, "our lives have been cherished and guarded, for they belong to you alone. We have come across the sea to lay them down at your feet."

The ardent fire of his eyes softened to humble devotion as he gazed at the queen who, more than any other princess of her house, possessed the gracious power of enlisting men's loyalty and love in her cause. That dark hour of danger and death was, perhaps, the sweetest of his wild life.

There was a hurry of feet on the stair. In the distance a low, threatening murmur rose.

As the clash of marching men and the rolling of drum music was faintly borne on the air, a click of firelocks and a flash of drawn steel ran through palace halls and corridors.

Posts were quickly assigned. The pale queen clasped her smiling child closer in her arms. The strain of suspense ended in a sudden revulsion of defiance as the breathless warning passed from listening group to group.

"They are near."

The Syndic Roederer quickly left the room, and returned with an anxious face. He was eagerly questioned. It became known that the cannoneers had thrown down their linstocks, with cries of "Long live the Nation!" and had refused to fire on the people.

"What is this, monsieur? The cannoneers refuse to fire? Well, then, his majesty can dispense with the service of the Nationals," said Marshal Maillé, the fire of youth flashing from under his grizzled brows. "The Swiss and his faithful servants here will keep the king's house."

The syndic shook his head dejectedly.

"Bah, let them come on," said a gentleman near, clapping him light-heartedly on the shoulder. "On the faith of

a gentleman, they have bored me with their howling till I long to come to blows."

"Let all the disaffected abandon the king's cause," said the marshal, laying his drawn sword at the king's feet. "When we are brothers and of one heart, we will die together."

The queen's eyes flashed high approval of his words, and then dwelt entreatingly on the king's face.

"Messieurs, the Assembly cannot permit their majesties to be taken before its eyes," said the syndic.

"Then let the Assembly bring the troops to their duty, or leave us alone to do what we may," answered Maillé grimly.

The anxious syndic flashed into something like anger in spite of his respect for the king's presence.

"Their duty? Men must be clear as to the necessity of performing their duty before they will move a step.

"Harassed and impeded as we are, we cannot declare war on Paris. That would be letting the last sail fly. We cannot hold the Tuileries, but we can protect their majesties, if they will only deign to consider our proposition."

He hesitated.

In the distance the rattle of drums sounded more distinct, and a hoarse roar of many voices, through which ran the piercing wail of women's tones, rose on the summer air.

"There is no time to lose," said the marshal. "Speak. What can you do for us, syndic?"

"If their majesties will go over to the Assembly——" began Roederer, and then faltered.

"Our lives are the king's, to dispose of as he will. We are ready to meet death for him if he will put his trust in us," said the marshal slowly. "Speak to his majesty."

"Your majesties will be safe with the Assembly and nowhere else," petitioned Roederer, in the midst of absolute silence, "and there is still time to open a way for your majesties and the National guards. Your majesty will thus save your people from a signal crime."

A deathlike stillness reigned over the groups of courtiers as he ended. Every eye sought the king's face as they waited

with regretful reluctance yet loyal submission for his decision.

The king sat in an attitude of abstraction; his eyes upon the floor. He did not manifest by any sign that he had heard the syndic's words. In that moment of solemn silence Monarchy breathed its last sigh.

Rousing himself by an effort, the king, without answering, turned toward the queen and spoke:

"Let us go," he said briefly.

The queen grew a shade paler as her glance wandered from group to group.

"And our friends, sire?" she said with an accent of poignant pain and appeal.

The king cast a troubled glance of pathetic indecision about him. Some dim smoldering of the valor of splendid ancestors, faint trumpet echoes of Ivry field, for the moment may have roused his lethargic spirit to a realization of the part a king should play in such a tragedy. But his strength lay in patient and courageous endurance alone. The faint fire-flash faded from his placid features.

"Messieurs, you may withdraw," said the king.

"I cannot spill the blood of my people in this cause," he added coldly.

The tears sprang to the marshal's fiery eyes as he returned his sword to its scabbard with a shaking hand.

"We will be here to watch over them," said Montauran in his ear, "and Brunswick will soon reach Paris. Courage! That well-tried sword shall not lie idle."

Without a word, the old man grasped his hand warmly.

The movement of retreat was made. The king led the way through his lords, who bowed deeply to fallen majesty. A few of those of the highest rank took a respectful farewell of their king.

Marie Antoinette followed, with her little son and daughter.

A deep flush stained the queen's pale face, but her eyes wandered to her children's fair heads and rested there with an expression that the hearts of the nobles found easy to interpret. They knelt and kissed her fair hand silently and devotedly as she passed through their groups.

In silence, the royal family departed. They passed through the steady, silent ranks of Swiss, taking their way toward the *salle de manège*; and the National Guards fell in, clanking, in double file on either side.

With scarcely a backward glance the king left the Tuileries forever, to exchange in a few brief days a palace for prison walls.

The glittering age of chivalry and personal loyalty passed with him from the stage of France, and the tide of the new era of popular and national thought swept over his place. The advancing drum beat sounded out this melancholy funeral of honor.

"The king is going to the Assembly."

As the king and queen left the palace the sea of insurrection rolled up to the barriers with a roar and clangor that reverberated through the heart of Paris. The tide burst through, resistless. Wild figures, haggard and tattered, bearing pikes and firelocks, leaped into the Court of the Carrousel, led by the Marseillais, in a living deluge of terror.

Fearful, threatening heads emerged and sank in that whirlpool with menaces and with howls of rage and terrible glee. The colossal figure of a smith, armed with a hammer which he whirled lightly in the air in time to his grotesque gambols, was conspicuous in the forward ranks.

Drawn up above them were the steady lines of red-coated Swiss, bravest of mercenaries, who, descending from their far mountain cantons, their pastoral Puy de Vaud and peasant life of liberty, had sold their swords to the king and would keep faith with him.

They faced maddened Paris steadily, with death breathing upon them like an icy wind from the mountain glacier.

In the interior of the Tuileries the doomed inmates of the palace, who were no longer necessary to the safety of the king, banded together.

As Saint-Leu rushed, sword in hand, toward the outer eastern staircase, a thunderous vibration shook the walls. At that moment the roar and glare of the Marseillais cannon filled the air.

The conflict had begun.

He felt the clasp of Anne's arms about him, and breathed the soft breeze, sweet

with mignonette, from the old garden at Newport.

"Oh, never reproach me, love," he murmured to the face that faded away in fleeting mists from his heart's vision.

The response to the cannonade came with flashing swiftness as the Swiss shouldered muskets and poured a murderous volley into the close ranks of patriots.

The mob recoiled, beaten back by the fiery hail of shot, and the Court of the Carrousel was quickly emptied. The living tide retreated, leaving a red flotsam of dead and dying. Some of these had fallen from the ranks of the Marseillais.

One shriek of vengeance rose from patriots and Nationals, and the besiegers poured back, maddened by the sight of their dead, whose lifeless forms were borne, shoulder-high, with cries of rage and pity, through the surge of advancing patriots. Friends, bending over dying friends, clasped their hands with oaths of revenge, and then rushed, stained with their blood, to the fore.

A blaze of artillery opened upon the Swiss from the terraces and from all advantageous places that the people had gained.

The thinning red ranks returned a steady fire. On the great staircase the dead and dying were heaped, and long streams of blood flowed slowly down the stairs, which were slippery to the soldiers' feet.

The palace windows volleyed death. A rolling fire came from the Feuillants' Terrace.

The Nationals, no longer mere spectators, became active participants in the struggle, joining their brothers in combat with the aliens, and adding the volley of their muskets to the fusillade of the patriots. The Marseillais, leading and rallying, ruled the whirlwind of insurrection, raging through its storm.

Reinforcements of patriots arrived beneath the hail of bullets. The doom of the house of princes was vehemently urged, since it harbored death and destruction for Paris, and more cannon were rushed through the city toward the scene of conflict, and halted on the Pont Royal, whence they volleyed and roared against the palace.

As the first salvo was launched there rose from the distance a faint yet mighty sound that echoed in the ears of the terrible fighters in the fiery arena. It was the applauding of the far throng.

The madness of battle descended both on the combatants and upon onlooking Paris, and the attack took on colossal proportions:

Speedy death and destruction threatened guard and château. Soldiers and patriots already had joined forces, and now Paris entered the struggle. Citizens rushed into the fray, armed with any weapon that could be caught up. In the fury of murder muskets were turned against gendarmes galloping toward the Pont Royal, where the cannon were flaming; and officers of the Federation, who wore the hated red coats, were shot down as Swiss.

In the midst of the struggle the Court of the Carrousel burst into a sheet of flame through which poured the red volley of musketry.

At this moment Théot was inquiring anxiously of an onlooker, "How are things going with the king's Swiss over there, citizen?"

The person questioned, a short, slight youth with a quantity of loose dark locks falling over a musing brow and piercing eyes, raised his head, with a formidable look, and made brusque reply:

"Badly, citizen."

He added in soliloquy:

"They might have the best of it yet, if they only had a commander. It could be done."

He cast a reflective glance at the combatants, and the shadow of the eagle's wing fell over his brow.

"Look, Bonaparte!" ejaculated his companion.

"Ah, I see they have found one," said this strange bystander with an accent of satisfaction.

The distant battle-piece unfolded before their eyes.

As he spoke, an officer passed like a flash of fire down the lines of the Swiss, who accepted him with the quick obedience of the soldier to the voice of command and the flaming eye of bravery, and springing to their head, gleaming sword in hand, led them in a charge upon the patriot ranks.

Desperate valor closed with fiery patriotism. The encounter was gloomy and silent, though full of fury, as they fought, hand to hand and body to body, steel taking the place of flaming shot.

The Swiss advanced irresistibly through the smoke of the artillery. Then a terrible combatant appeared among the patriots in the form of the smith who welded the human mass with blows of his battle hammer.

The Swiss recoiled confusedly, abandoning their officer, whom the attack had carried far ahead.

Seizing a musket, he whirled it about his head, and, bounding back through the slash of sabers, he gathered the Swiss together and hurled them once more against the patriot lines.

A brief, sharp conflict ensued between Swiss bayonets and the sabers and pikes of the patriots, terminating in a repulse with heavy loss for the besiegers.

At the close of the encounter the Swiss were seen to be in possession of captured Marseillais cannon, the object of the sortie. The cannon were turned upon Paris. Disorder and alarm were manifest in the patriot ranks.

The officer reappeared, and proceeded to serve and adjust the cannon under a deadly fire. Muskets were leveled at him as he stood out alone before the bristling mass of steel.

The Swiss were plainly remonstrating, casting discipline aside in that brotherhood of danger. But he appeared oblivious of the fiery swarm of bullets flying about his head as he tried the steel and flint.

Careful aim was taken at him by different armed men among the assailants. Sometimes the fire of the Swiss protected him, or the bullets fell harmless at one side. His immunity at length aroused a sort of fury. It became a trial of skill to scatter death closest to that proud, calm head.

As they looked, a stone hurtled through the air and struck the officer on the head. He sank to the ground and lay there, motionless, his right hand still clutching the cannon.

Love of woman, love of honor was crushed beneath the iron tread of War, with the faint gasp of his breath.

"He was not needed there. It was not his destiny," said the youthful onlooker, turning away.

Théot sprang forward, with a cry. He had recognized Saint-Leu in the fallen officer.

He plunged through a scene of horror.

On the fall of Saint-Leu, the Swiss made a final desperate rally.

Taking an heroic farewell of each other, they separated into three bodies. The first was to try the Rue de l'Echelle; the second, to make a rush across the Garden, which was one fiery blaze of musketry, and seek refuge with the Assembly; the remainder massed themselves together, three hundred strong, to charge toward the Champs Elysées.

Life might be without, but certain death was in that blood-stained palace, where the dying clutched the splendid folds of the throne. A last hope carried them out to the sea of rage and terror.

The deluge closed about the thin, red lines. The column broke, and the Swiss were cut off in small bodies and hewn down, set shoulder to shoulder and fighting desperately for their lives.

They struggled in their death agony from street to street, seeking the smallest refuge from the pitiless mob and leaving a trail of mangled bodies in their flight.

They fell in lugubrious heaps, massacred almost to a single victim by the fury of the people.

—As Théot struggled forward he remembered that he was unarmed, and stopped to pick up a broken sword blade from a heap of the slain. The massacre of the Swiss and subsequent sack of the palace left him undisturbed to search for the fallen body of Saint-Leu among the dead. He was guided to him by the gleam of the silent cannon.

Saint-Leu lay by its side. The bodies of two soldiers had fallen over him, but his head was free; Théot gently released him, and placing a hand on his breast found to his joy that the heart still beat.

There was a frightful abrasion on the head, from which blood was flowing, and this the Breton bound up roughly with Saint-Leu's scarf. He was disturbed in his ministrations by a grumbling voice.

"Heads, heads," it said in a dismal

tone like that of a ghoul counting the slain on a midnight battle-field.

Théot looked up, and saw the smith standing before him. He had exchanged his Titanic hammer for a heavy saber, on which he leaned with both hands.

"The aristocrat is still living, eh? Let us finish him," he said, advancing his weapon perilously near the unconscious man.

"Take care," said the Breton menacingly. "What do you want?"

"Heads, heads," answered the smith. "Bend back his head over your knee, citizen, and I will take it off."

He added in a grumbling tone, like that of an oger soliloquizing, "A charming head. It will look so fine on a pike."

"Be off!" growled the Breton, rising to guard his charge with stubborn fidelity.

Sparks of wrath shot from the smith's eyes.

"Another word and you shall dance on the pikes together," he yelled.

He subsided.

"They have their standards. Let us have ours," he said.

The smith made another movement toward the unconscious man, but was intercepted by Théot.

Then, with a ferocious howl, the giant drove his saber at the Breton. Théot met it, stooping; and, slashing up with the jagged sword blade, he struck the huge throat square, and laid the smith low on a blood-stained mound.

The encounter had been observed. Théot was now surrounded by Marseillais. A dozen muskets were leveled at him. He drew himself up, with simple dignity, head erect and arms folded, offering his defenseless breast to their bullets.

"Kill me," he said. "I am a hero of the Bastille."

The gleaming barrels fell.

"That is a title that shall command everlasting respect from the French people," said a voice.

A young man, the leader of the Marseillais, tall and black-locked, with the face of a student and a dreamer, stepped forward.

"Who is this dying man? Does he belong to the Swiss Guard?" he asked.

"He is a Frenchman."

"My friends, do not slay a brother," said a grave, calm voice.

At this gleam of hope, the Breton fell to trembling, and stammered out an incoherent appeal.

"You will not kill him! You will show pity! Oh, how much need I have of gaining your sympathy, citizen patriots—if I could only speak!

"I should have to show you the dear country of Brittany to make you understand. We are of one heart there, lords and vassals, and loyalty is inherited from father to son with the cottage and the little home field.

"He was my foster-brother. I taught him to shoot, for you understand that I was the elder, and had charge of him. He was so brave and gay. And to-day, although he sent me away, I could not help but follow him to save him or die with him here."

(To be continued.)

They looked at him silently, with rough pity for a strong man's emotion.

"We have had comrades," murmured one. And another added, "He is a brave lad, this aristocrat officer. He gave me this wound. *Parbleu!* Let him go."

"After war comes brotherhood," said their leader, "and victors in the cause of liberty should not count a man's tears, and refuse mercy to the brave."

The bravery and simplicity of the Breton touched him.

"This is a peasant, once in bondage to ignorance and shadow," he said. He added:

"Uncover to the hero of the Bastille."

They silently bared their heads as Théot passed through their lines, bearing the unconscious form of Saint-Leu.

Before him were the Paris streets, seething with murder.

VENGEANCE IS MINE.

By George Allen England.

HOW the defenders of the
hearthstone lost and won
and lost again and yet won out.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN THE BAR-CROSSERS CAME.

"BUT, Sam, they acquitted you!"

"What of it? D'you think a little thing like acquittal by twelve sworn men has any reel carryin' power with a sheep-killin' gang o' thugs like Moreno's Bar-Cross gang? D'you think when them coyotes set out to drop their brand on anybody they're goin' fer to let a little thing like the *law* stop 'em? Say, you've got another guess comin', that's all!"

Ryerson dragged off his gauntlets and swabbed from his forehead the dust of a forty-mile race up Huecos Valley with life and death as prizes.

"But, but——"

"Aw, quit yer buttin', Jen! I tell you

jestice is deader 'n a careless hoss-thief in these 'ere parts. I tell you the whole bunch will be here in less 'n half an hour fer to clean us out!"

"What? After Coroner Rinehart himself said as how the bullet in old Perez Moreno was a .44, an' *your* gun—an' the alibi——"

"Yes, after that an' ten times *more* 'n that! What's evidence an' coroners to them 'ar Greasers? They're jedge, jury an' hangman all on their own hook, that's what, an' don't give a cuss fer all the evidence an' coroners from here to Hades, when thar's a chance to butcher sheep or clean out a sheep-owner.

"They'd ruther raid a flock an' string the keeper than eat tortillas, *any* day, an' I reckon they're goin' to git me 'fore sundown, jury er no jury—if they *kin*!"

Sam spat out the last three words as though they burned him.

"D'you know who's leadin' 'em?" he went on rapidly. "No? Well, a boy with manner on him what make *me* look like a logger—Kid Andrews!"

"Kid *An*-drews? He's comin' *here*!"

"Yep, that's what he is, an' he's got twelve er fifteen of them sons o' guns back of him, too. It'll be *this* er nothin'!" Sam laid his hand on his holster.

"But you see here, gal," he commanded, "you got to vamose mighty sudden, see? I'll saddle Nig fer you an' you kin git clear anyway!" His words tumbled out like a cataract.

"Sam!"

"Tie up some duds an' mosey outa here to Jarilla as fast as the Lord'll let you! Mebbe if you hustle a posse down here right off they'll git here 'fore the buzzards is quite through."

"You tryin' to drive me 'way from you?"

"Drive you 'way? Say, you're plumb loco! Don't you un'stand? All I want's to spare you seein' me do a pendulum act off'n a cottonwood down by the creek. I'll play *that* game lone hand! Mosey now! Pack up!"

He dragged her saddle from a corner of the "doby"; but she slammed the heavy plank door and set her back against it.

"Drop that, Sam!" she said. "You come 'long, too, or I don't stir a peg!"

He stood still, gaping.

"What?"

"Either you ride with *me*, or I stay with *you*. Savvy?"

"Aw, don't go an' be a pesky darn fool, Jen!" His voice rose angrily. "How in tarnation d'you expect I kin go? Old Belle was that winded when I got here I couldn't much more'n lead her into the lean-to—why, she couldn't carry me another mile.

"Be-side, d'you think I'd run away from Kid Andrews an' his gang, leave my sheep an' everythin' as long's I got ammunition an' my own shack to shoot from? Not much! Now, be sensible, Jen, an' let me send you off while ther's time, won't you?"

"No, siree, I won't!" Her eyes blazed defiance.

Ryerson jumped at her and tried to drag her from the door, but she fought him like a Tartar.

"Sam! Sam! You let me be! I kin shoot as good's you kin, an' I'm goin' to stay right here an' do it! You won't never git me outa this 'ere door alive.

I'll see my man through this business, or we'll go up the flume together! Thar!"

She clawed his face, cat-fashion, till the blood started. Sam recoiled, his eyes bulging with blank admiration.

"Say, gal," he asked in an awed voice, "you mean that, on the level?"

"Did you ever know a Whitman t' say anythin' he didn't mean?"

"No, by Jing, I didn't!" The saddle flopped down on the trodden earth floor. "Come here, gal!"

He took her clumsily in his arms and turned her face up to his.

"Jen, old pard," said he, "you're the slickest an' the whitest gal ever breathed New Mexico air. Say, I've been hog-mean to you, once or twice, but——"

"Hush, Sam, that's all past an' forgotten ages ago!"

"Sure pop?"

"Sure!"

She put up her arms and drew his head down and kissed it.

"Boy," she whispered, "if we pull through this——"

"Hark! Hark!" he cried, and her arms loosened. Through the glazed July silence they heard, faint and far away beyond the turn of Arroyo Hondo, a rapid rhythmic pattety-pat-pattety-pat.

"I reckon you an' me are two all-fired fools," said he, "to stand here moonin' while them hounds is skyhootin' up the valley! Quick, gal, load up every danged thing in the place that'll throw lead, an' chuck out plenty ca'tridges. Thar'll be doin's here right off, er I miss *my* guess!"

He flung the door open and stepped outside; tense, alert. A second he listened; then he put two unseemly fingers into his mouth and whistled twice, shrilly as a steam-siren.

Over back of the knoll which dominated the "shack" a barking answered him; then a big collie came bounding across the *patio* and flung himself extravagantly upon the man.

"Down! Down!" commanded he. "In, in, Brusco! Git *in* thar!"

He shoved the dog inside, banged the door and dropped the thick iron bar. Then he seized the heavy stove poker and jammed it deep down into the ardent coals of their cook-stove.

This done, he slammed and bolted the shutters; then with an ox-goad began boring and punching a row of holes, breast-high, in the adobe wall, at intervals of three or four feet.

Ryerson finished the row of holes around the front and both ends of the doby.

"Thar, I reckon that'll do!" he passed judgment, glancing about. "The back's all pertected by the lean-to. It's so all-fired thick I don't cal'late they kin shoot *us* from that side; I hope the hosses don't git hurt!"

The poker was now glowing red-hot. Sam hauled it out of the stove and ran to the door; greasy thick smoke coiled up, filling the darkened room, and soon the poker plunged through.

Sam enlarged the aperture carefully and had a loophole through the solid planking. While the poker was heating again he hurriedly overhauled his Marlin to be sure that all was right.

He flung the blackened poker to the floor, after having bored both shutters.

"Thar!" said Jenny, "the last blessed thing in the shack is loaded plumb to the muzzle. I reckon somebody's goin' to git hurt 'fore all these guns is empty agin! But this ain't much of a place, is it, to stand a gang off in?"

"No—not over *an'* above strong, but I reckon she'll have to do. You an' me together could hold 'most any old shanty.

"Hang it, though, it's sure our luck to jest git this ranch paid fer an' put on five hundred head o' sheep fer a starter an' then have *this* happen. Oh, say——" His voice trailed off into a groan.

There came the sound of many hoofs climbing the knoll. Sam peeked through the door with hard and narrow eyes, holding up his hand for silence.

"Git back, gal, git back!" he whispered. "They're jest comin' inta sight. You git right back an' let me do the palaver. If it comes to shootin', I bet some o' them fellers'll get all that's comin' to 'em from *you!*"

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST SHOTS.

THE Bar-Crossers, twenty-three of them, rode with a brave jingling and trampling over the rise into the *patio*.

The foremost, a half-Greaser "squaw-man" from Ciudad Juarez, held up a handkerchief which might once have been white. Ryerson, squinting through the loophole, took the will for the deed and reserved his fire.

"Come along, come along!" he shouted. "If you've got anythin' to say, cough it up!"

The squaw-man, still holding his rag conspicuously, advanced away from the others, who reined in and sat their horses with the loose languor of old rancheros, rifles well in hand.

Ryerson's quick eye perceived that most of them were Mexicans and that Kid Andrews rode the best horse in the bunch.

"Thar, that'll do!" called Ryerson to the flag-bearer, "don't bring that rag no closer. You're close enough—as close as I want to git to a skunk."

The horseman reined in his cayuse, the ugly lines hardening in his face.

"Is thar a sheep-drivin' gent named Ryerson inside?" he asked in an even voice.

"Thar is. Who've I got the pleasure of speakin' with?"

"No matter, though I don't mind tellin' you my name's Nogales. Is this Mr. Ryerson a-talkin'?"

"Does it sound like a woman? You'd oughta know woman's talk, seein' as you got a red one yourself."

Nogales paled at the affront, but kept cool.

"Ryerson," said he, "you'd better come out here. We wants you good an' plenty. Your sheep lies down in the arroyos, knocked in the head, an' I reckon you'll foller mighty soon. Come out!"

"Who's leadin' this here expedition?"

"Seems to me you're askin' a dev'lish pile o' questions, but I'll humor a dyin' man an' tell you. Kid Andrews here's in charge."

"So? Well then, *if* you please, let's have a word with him, an' you go take a rest."

Nogales chewed his mustache at this second body-blow.

"You be a little more pertic'lar how you talk, in thar! I reckon the Kid ain't aimin' to waste no breath on *you!* No, sir, not by a jugful!"

"When it comes to the grand fi-nale he'll be on hand, but fer preliminaries I reckon I'll do. *Air* you a-comin' out? We needs you bad fer a certain purpose."

"After what Rinehart said?"

"We-all don't give a cuss fer Rinehart ner no boughten evidence ner jury. You'd better come out here peaceable, er we'll shoot your danged old shack up till she looks like a busted salt-shaker. Non-combattant inside thar might git hurt, too."

"Who's that you refer to?"

"You know, your woman."

"My *wife*, sir, *if you* please. S'posin' I told you thar wa'n't no non-combattant *in* here?"

"So much the better. Say, now, you slab-jawed crook, you'd better quit your talk an' mosey 'long out here! We-all's gittin' impatient fer the doin's to proceed!"

The Kid spoke up nonchalantly, with corroding scorn:

"Give him five minutes. That ought to be enough for vermin such as *he* is!"

"Five minutes or we'll rush you!" Nogales repeated, fingering the stock of his Springfield.

"I've got one er two guns in here, with somethin' more in 'em than toothpowder an' dough-balls, an' I won't be took alive, now I promise you *that*. Before I go I'll git my satisfy!"

"All right, give an' take. But I reckon enough of us'll pull through to stretch your neck some! Twenty-three agin one!"

"*Muy bien*, we'll see."

"What? You ain't comin' out?"

"You're a ring-tailed wonder at guessin'."

"All right, think it over. If you don't walk out here in five minutes the sere-nade begins."

"*Hasta la vista* (see you later), you backslidin' son of a Greaser. Mosey along outa my front yard now, er I'm apt to git rash, you Injun-lovin' squaw-man! Move on! I don't allow no *cabrones* 'round here!"

As the Mexicans caught that word, whereof the price is death, a little ripple of malicious laughter ran among them.

Nogales sat perfectly still an instant, as if petrified; then he turned a dark crimson.

Up twitched his rifle convulsively; it barked fire with mortal spite and hatred. The bullet kicked splinters out of Ryerson's door not two inches from his head.

The war was on.

Ryerson poked his Marlin out the loophole, cuddled the stock close to his cheek, and with the joy of an artist drew his globe-sight down on to the horseman just as he had pumped a fresh shell into his rifle.

Ryerson pulled trigger; Nogales gave a quick jump, keeled and fell to earth, his right foot tangled in the stirrup. The cayuse bolted, dragging him head downward. The bullet had ripped squarely through his jaw and whirled out through his spine. He had cashed in.

"*One!*" yelled Ryerson at the top of his lungs, and ducked aside as a dozen shots ripped the planking.

"Up! Up!" he commanded his wife in a low voice, lifting her on to their rude table. "Here, take this chair an' stand on it, up thar!"

"They'll shoot breast-high, er else near the floor, to git me lyin' down. They dunno you're here. You watch an' see me fool 'em. My soul, but *hear* 'em go it!"

"You'd better come up here, too," said Jen. "It won't pay fer you to git potted while thar's twenty-two of them cusses left. If anythin' happens to *you*, I'll have to play the game alone, an' *that* would mean shootin' my own brains out, so's the Kid shouldn't git me. Climb up!"

"I hate to skulk, gal, but I reckon it's the best thing fer the present," answered Sam, and placed another chair for himself. Then he lifted a grain sack on to the table and climbed up.

Shots crackled outside and showers of dirt flew as bullets pierced the adobe, to fall spent at the rear wall. They both stood motionless in the gloom.

"Hear 'em go it!" Sam whispered. "Whoop 'er up, boys! Burn all the powder you kin! Hear that on the door? It sounds like them big Missouri hailstones, don't it? Go it, you Greasers!"

Brusco, whining, crawled under the bunk and tried to obliterate himself in a corner.

"Good Lord!" said Jenny, "but I hope they don't do *him* no damage! Ain't thar no way we kin git back at 'em?" She fingered her rifle nervously.

"Hold yer hosses! Keep still!" he commanded. "We'll git back good and plenty, but not just yit. I got to *die* first, savvy?"

"Die?"

"Yep, this way, see?"

He screamed wildly, a scream of mortal agony, and shoved the meal sack off the table. At the shriek and heavy fall the fusillade slackened and ceased; then a hard voice cried—

"*Es acabado!*" and the rancheros cheered vociferously.

"What's that, Sam?" the woman asked in a puzzled whisper.

"That? Oh, that's the Kid tellin' 'em I'm all in, I reckon. He speaks some diff'rent, don't he, from the way he speaks to *gals*?"

"I'm dead now, see?" he continued cheerfully, "an' I shouldn't wonder if some one else would foller me pretty quick, too, if they tumble into my game. It's workin' grand, Jen, grand!"

Jen opened her lips to speak again, but the man laid a broad palm over her mouth.

"Hush, gal, mum's the word. Dead men ain't much on conversation; jest bear that in mind!"

He stepped down from the table. She made as though to follow, but he motioned her back and tiptoed to the loophole in the door.

After one look through, he grinned at Jen reassuringly, and wiggled his fingers in imitation of men walking. She understood, and noiselessly clapped her hands. Her cheeks were flaming with excitement, her eyes luminous.

In a moment she heard the tinkle-tinkle of spurs, and many footsteps on the hard earth, then a murmur of words which she could not comprehend. A strong hand tried the door. Sam, who understood something of the Greaser lingo, heard one of the Bar-Crossers ask in Mexican Spanish:

"Think you the American is dead?"

"We heard him scream," answered another.

"Let us be careful, *compaños!*" said the first.

"Careful with a dead man?" asked a third. "Only cowards speak of care!"

"*Cobarde, tu!*" came the retort.

"Men, men!" commanded the Kid, "No quarrels now! Come! Break this door in *prontissimo!* Shoulders here!"

The door creaked and swayed; then Sam's old Marlin barked furiously through the loophole, once! twice! and terrible cries arose outside, mingled with the running of swift feet.

"Two! Three! Four!" yelled Sam, peering out. Again he fired, just as Jen leaped down from the table.

"*Five!*" rose his triumphant cry. "Thar they go, over the knoll! Jen, old gal, only eighteen varmints left!"

"Oh, Sam! Sam!" cried Jenny with wild enthusiasm, "Oh, what a man you are! Thar ain't another in this world like you, *I* know!"

Her arms went 'round him, but he elbowed her away.

"Aw, cut this out!" he bade her sternly. "This ain't no time fer lally-gaggin'! This here show ain't over yit, not by a jugful—it ain't *much* more 'n commenced, savvy?"

CHAPTER III.

THE SALLY IN THE DARK.

THEY waited, silent, tense.

After a certain while they heard dull distant blows of an ax, down by the creek.

"Sam, what d'you reckon *that* is?"

"Well, Jen, I dunno fer certain, but I should jedge they're cuttin' a stick o' timber fer to batter us in some. If they do—if they git in—well, *you* know!"

They both reconnoitered.

"Three on 'em piled up agin our door here, Jen, an' one out yender, see him? That's Leon Pachuca, that one. If I ever paid a just debt in my life I done it when I spotted *him*. D'you see any more? The sun's gittin' too low to make out much."

"I think thar's a couple on 'em down behind the sheds, though I ain't sure. An' don't that look like a white somebrero over in that patch o' shoemake?"

"Ummm, yes it does. I reckon they've got pickets all 'round us."

"See thar!"

"By God, comin' with the log!"

"Eight on 'em carryin' it! Say, ain't it 'bout time to do some more shootin'?"

"Nope! Hold yer fire till they git close up, an' when you *do* let go, jump away quick. I reckon the pickets'll try to spot us by our smoke. This sure looks mighty bad."

"Do they know I'm here?"

"I reckon not."

"In that case, seein' two guns a-goin', they'll think you're all-fired spry, eh? Hadn't we oughta down at least four or five more?"

"Gosh, gal, I dunno. P'raps you hadn't oughta git into this at all. If anythin' was to happen to *you*—"

"We'd better *both* go than either one. Hear *that*!"

A crackle of shots outside announced that the attack was commencing. The pickets from their hiding-places behind the sheds and back of the ridge were bombarding the front door, from which the chips jumped right merrily. Thus they counted on silencing resistance till the log-bearers demolished the door.

The attack was suicidal, but Kid Andrews, who from his safe place over the knoll generaled the undertaking, had dealt out *aguardiente* with a liberal hand and the rancheros' blood was up.

"You take that end o' the doby an' I'll take this," said Ryerson. "Hold yer fire till you're *sure*, an' then let go. Now then, to work!"

Jen took precise aim from the last loophole at the western end of the shack, and fired; she stepped aside just as three bullets "*plopped*" through the adobe, flinging a shower of fine dust in her face.

"Number six—all yours!" Sam shouted, and let drive. "Missed mine, by heaven!" he groaned, peering through the hole in the shutter.

Next instant the planking splintered; Sam wobbled, stepped back and sat down hard on the dirt floor, the whole right side of his face awash with blood.

Jen's rifle spoke twice again and her voice shrilled out:

"Seven! Eight! They've dropped the log! They're runnin'!"

Then she saw her man, and turned waxy under her sunburn.

"Sam! Sam!" she cried, running to him, kneeling, clasping his head.

"Hush, gal, it ain't nothin'!" he protested. "Only a side-swipe over the eye. Strip o' skin gone, nothin' more. Tie a rag on 't an' I'll be O K in a minute. Kinda stunted me, that's all. Thar, thar now, don't go an' git foolish!"

He managed to get to his feet, and she helped him over to the bunk. Then with considerable fortitude she bound his head up with a towel.

"I reckon I'll have to cover one eye," she said as she made it fast. "Your gun-eye, too!"

"I'll have to squint with t'other, won't I?" he answered, trying to smile. "Say, I don't reckon I'm any more cut up, though, than the Kid is. Jest hear him cuss!"

They listened. The shots had ceased, and from afar there came to them a high-pitched tirade, too faint for any words to be distinguished, yet eloquently profane in sound.

"Huh, I reckon them fellers is gittin' a mighty fearful goin'-over!" Sam commented. "That Kid beats the very devil fer eloquence when he once gits started. What? Another towel?"

"Yep, hold still; this here one's plumb soaked through. Hold on a minute, hold on. Thar, *that* oughta fix it!"

Jen washed her hands, replenished the fire, and then with admirable coolness sat down beside Ryerson, supporting him with her shoulder.

An occasional whine from Brusco, and their own breathing, rhythmic as the tick-tick of their little tin alarm-clock, was all that broke the silence. Andrews' shrill tirade had ceased; no sound came to them from the besiegers.

After a few minutes Ryerson opened his free eye and said:

"I guess, gal, I guess—I need a drink, some. Make it somethin' strong."

Jen fetched him raw Four-X in a tin cup; he swallowed it, unwinking.

"Thar now, I reckon I'll feel all right agin in half a minute. What time's it gettin' to be, anyhow? My head's roarin' an' carryin' on that scan'lous I can't seem fer to locate nothin'. I ain't cashin' in yit, I know, but it looks all-fired dark here."

"No wonder; the sun's been down half an hour behind Mosca Butte. It's goin' on half past six."

"Late as that?"

"Yep."

"Well now, *that's* hopeful. If we kin keep alive till it gits reel good an' dark outside, why—why——" He paused, as though ashamed.

"Why, *what?*"

"Well, p'r'aps it'll be so we kin dodge the critters an' mosey off down the crick—make a break fer Jarilla on foot, eh?"

"Sam, d'you mean that?"

"Ummm, yes, I do." His tone became defiant.

"You mean t' tell me you're willin' to skip out now, after the stand you've made, an' run away from these 'ere varmint? Have you forgotten what you said 'bout never takin' no back tracks fer the like o' them?"

"No, I ain't fergot nothin', but things has turned out diff'rent from what I reckoned. First place I didn't count on thar bein' sech an infernal pile on 'em; then agin I ain't no good to shoot left-handed, none whatsoever. I don't b'lieve I could hit a silver dollar that way at twenty yards.

"'Nother thing, they've killed the sheep, anyway, which I wa'n't sure they would, at first. Beside, I think we've done all any one *could* do, you an' me. We've stood 'em off more 'n an hour, already, an' potted eight on 'em——"

"Six was yourn, Sam!" she interrupted admiringly.

"Eight on 'em, altogether," he continued, "an' still we're penned in by—let's see, let's see, by sixteen——"

"Fifteen," she corrected.

"Yes, so 'tis; by fifteen of them coyotes. They'll have another bunch to reenforce 'em termorrer, if they find they can't manage the job alone, too. I reckon it's sure death to dally 'round these 'ere parts much longer, plus the disgrace o' me bein' strung, plus, well, plus——"

"Well?"

"Hang it, gal, you know what I mean! You don't reckon they'll kill *you*, do yuh?"

"When I said I'd stay I thought I might git you to skip out, anyhow; an' then we argued an' fit till it was too late to send you off. Now that it's comin' on towards night I'm goin' to snipe you outa here someway, if it takes a leg!"

"You said yourself you'd blow your head off 'fore you'd be took. *I* say, let's mosey!"

The girl got up from the bunk and paced about, considerably agitated. Finally she came and stood in front of Ryerson.

"Pard," she said, laying her hand on his shoulder, "Pard, I dunno but you're right. I hate like sixty to have you quit a good fight on any account, most of all on *mine*, an' if you want to change yer mind an' see it out, I'm right thar; but if you think we'd better light out, why, I'm thar, too! Your say!"

He drew her close.

"I guess you're 'bout the right kind, Jen, d'you know it? God never give a man no better gift than Jenny Ryerson. You sure assay one hundred per cent.

"I'm goin' to save you outa this, that's cartain, an' if I kin git away myself I'll be danged glad of it, so's I kin go on livin' 'long of you. I've thunk it all over, every which way, an' I say vamose!"

"All right, vamose it is; but how? Nex' thing to do is fix some way to *do* it. You got any insp'ration?"

"Not yet I ain't; I dunno—lemme think. Set somethin' on the stove so's we kin have a bite, an' feed Brusco, an' lemme see if I can't figger this thing out. My brains ain't over an' above kinky, fer a fact, but p'r'aps I'll git 'em goin' after a while."

Jen heated some coffee and got a little food ready; Ryerson sat in the dark, thinking, his red-banded head between his palms.

Over the doby and the unseen enemies and the vast buttes a leaden silence hung. The tin clock seemed impertinently loud.

When the girl brought him corn-bread and coffee he was still thinking. They sat eating and drinking without speech. Finally,

"We can't, we can't!" said Ryerson.

"We can't do it no way in this world. I'll bet they've got a sentry out in every which direction 'round us.

"Two agin fifteen—that ain't much of a show, *is* it? Chinese puzzles ain't one-two-three 'side of *this*!"

He got up and began treading 'round the doby, blundering in the dark, threshing out a game to play with Old Man Death and cheat him.

He walked a long while; Jen sat silent and Brusco rattled his beef-bone on the hard floor. At last he said:

"Peek out, gal, an' tell me what you see. My other eye's all blazin' fireworks so I couldn't make out nothin' more'n two rod off."

She looked, long and carefully.

"Well, Sam," she reported, "it's gittin' pretty blame dark, an' that's a fact, but still I reckon if thar was anybody in-sight I'd spot 'em."

"I don't see a livin' soul. Thar's fire-light jest over back o' the ridge, though, an' I guess that's where most on 'em is stayin', though prob'ly as you say they've got sentries out. How does it happen, anyhow, they're willin' to let things go till mornin'?"

"I dunno, unless they want the hangin' to be done in daylight, so's they kin take it all in. P'r'aps, too, they don't want to take no risks of hurtin' each other in a night scrimmage. You say you don't see nobody?"

"Nary man—exceptin' the late lamented out there."

"That's good; first-rate! Now then, we've got to take some risk, an' we've got to act quick. We've got to open the door fer a minute."

"The door?"

"Yep—long enough to pull in the three departed ones what's clutterin' our door-step. We got to pull 'em in, an' what's more we got to do it P. D. Q., so's thar won't nobody see us. Everythin' hangs on gittin' 'em in here without bein' observed."

"You goin' to bring *them* in?"

"That's what! They'll be ace, king an' joker fer us, *if* we ain't caught doin' it. You jest wait an' see!"

Sam unbolted the door, half opened it, and with all the haste he could command dragged the three rancheros into the doby.

Then he crawled out to retrieve at a little distance the white felt sombrero of one of the men, which had rolled to one side when he had fallen. The other two Greasers still retained their felts, the distinguishing mark of the Bar-Crossers.

"*First* step all well an' good!" exclaimed Ryerson when the door was shut and bolted again. "This ain't over an' above nice fer you, I know, but thar ain't

no other way. Now I'll git some clothes off'n these here fellers an' we'll proceed to do a transformation scene. You tumble?"

"Dress up in their duds, you mean? You goin' to make me wear a dead man's things?"

"Yes, I reckon I be. It ain't extry slick, but it's a lot slicker 'n bein' dead yourself, now I tell yuh. Thar ain't nothin' else to do, so we'll have to do this."

"What's the idee, Sam?"

"Well, you see it's this way," he began, kneeling beside one of the rancheros and beginning to strip off the man's outer clothing.

Jen listened while he explained his plan. Now and then she offered a suggestion or made some useful comment. When Sam arose and held out to her the buckskin trousers and blue shirt of Manuelito Aguas, the smallest of the three, she took them without a word.

In five minutes the transformation was complete; they were both Bar-Crossers so far as appearances bore witness, even to the white sombreros and blue neckcloths. Sam lit a lantern to survey the change.

"Say, Jen," he asked, amazed, "is that reely you, or Manuelito? I don't feel safe, somehow, with anythin' that looks like *that* in the doby! Hadn't you better throw up your hands?"

Jen laughed.

"If I look any dangerous-er than *you* do, I'd be plumb skeered o' myself! I was jest thinkin' I'd better dodge behind the stove. But say, d'you reckon we'd better leave that light a-burnin'? It prob'ly glimmers out the loopholes some an' makes this place too all-fired good a target."

"That's right, it does," assented Sam, "but contrarywise they won't have the leastest idee we're goin' out if they see the light."

"Now if we'd *had* a light an' then put it out, *that* might ha' looked suspicious, but as things is I think the lantern will be 'bout the best bluff we kin make."

"Here, you want to jam some o' that hair under your hat-brim. So, so—that's right. I guess you'll pass in the dark all right enough!"

The metamorphosis of the two Ryersons

sons was perfect. It would have taken a good deal keener eye than most men possess to have told, at first glance, that they were not two of the besiegers.

"Come, git yer revolver, gal, an' let's be goin'," said Sam with decision, coiling up a riata which he flung over his shoulder.

"I don't reckon they've bothered much about the lean-to, 'cause the Kid knows it don't connect no way with our quarters; so it looks to me like that's the very way we want to leave. Now, then, watch an' see things happen!"

He seized a spade from the corner and vigorously attacked the rear wall at the western end of the doby. In a few moments he had pierced an opening considerable enough for them both to crawl through.

"Here we go!" said he. "It ain't over-ultry to have our stable an' parlor connectin', this way, but I cal'late it's a case of plumb necessity. Come along, foller close!"

He crawled through the hole in the wall and helped Jen through. "Whoa, thar, Nig! Whoa, Belle!" he commanded the horses in a low tone, as they trampled and started at the sudden apparition of their master and mistress in the stable by so unusual an ingress.

Jen and he stole to the door.

"One last thing!" he cautioned her, "Don't make no noise at all that you kin possibly help, an' *don't shoot* unless you have to. We ain't out fer blood this time, remember; we're out to git away. Come on, now; foller me!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE CAPTURE.

HE unlatched the lean-to door with slow precaution and peered out.

Nothing—the thickening twilight of the butte country, the dark valley wall over which peered a multitude of stars, the parched south-wind; nothing to betray the hostile, bitter presence of mankind.

Yes, something—a distant snapping of burning wood, a glow of fire-light over beyond the creek.

"That ain't their main fire," said Jen in a hushed whisper. "Must be that

whoever's watchin' over thar must have built it fer company. Kin we git past 'em, Sam?"

"Kin we? I reckon so—or die! But you must help me see, fer my one eye's plumb full o' Roman candles an' pin-wheels from that lick I got. Come along; let's be goin'!"

"Oh, say, Sam, you goin' to leave Brusco?"

"Eh? What? By gorry, I never thought o' *him*! But I guess he'll have to stay, 'long of the hosses."

"Ain't thar no way to take him?"

"'Fraid not; come on now, an' keep still!"

They stole out and crept, silent as shadows, along the back of the lean-to until they came to the corner nearest the creek. Then Sam dropped on all-fours and crawled rapidly, noiselessly, across a little open danger-space to the shelter of a fringe of sumacs and elders which bordered the half-dry water-course.

Jen followed closely and joined him at once in the darkness. So far their escape was a success.

"Now, remember we're Bar-Crossers, ourselves, from this time on," he whispered. "We've got to stan' right up an' front down past that fire, see?"

"If it comes to sayin' anythin', which I hope it won't, you let me sling the Spanish. I ain't much on that lingo, but I reckon I can toss out a few *palabras* that'll pass muster if they're said like I had a chaw of tobacco in my face. If anythin' happens so's we can't pass, remember that the side that gits the drop first is the side that wins!"

"But—no shootin' till you *have* to! Once we're past that fire, an' among the arroyos, good-by Bar-Crossers, Kid an' all! Here goes!"

They started, striding confidently down the path; Sam even whistled carelessly between his teeth a scrap of *petanera*.

They had gone perhaps five rods when a dark figure wearing the white Bar-Cross sombrero loomed up suddenly in front of them.

"*Quién?*" it asked in a low voice.

"*Amigos!*" answered Ryerson without a tremor, and strode on toward the figure. Then he leaped, cat-like. *Crack!* went his hard fist on the Greaser's jaw.

The man doubled up and dropped like a plummet. Sam fell on his chest, stifling his groan.

"That makes number nine!" he said, stuffing a handful of dead grass into his mouth. "Hurry! Rope him!"

Jen caught the riata from her husband's shoulder and triced the fellow's feet in an instant. Then, with Sam's help, she lashed his wrists and wound him over and over with the rawhide.

"Leave him here?" she whispered.

"Naw, keep him fer a specimen in the doby; he'll be wuth a lot to us in case we don't make good. You hide right here an' I'll be back in a shake!"

Jen knelt in the bushes, revolver in hand, every nerve strung tight as telegraph-wire, while Ryerson dragged the unconscious Mexican back up the path, across the open space and through the lean-to into the shack.

There, by the light of the lantern, he gagged him with a tent-peg and some twine, then rolled him under the bunk along with the whining Brusco.

"Thar, *he'll* do, I reckon!" said he with the air of a critic. "When he comes out of it I guess thar won't be a more surprised-er Mexicano this side the Ryo Grand!"

In two minutes he was back with Jen.

"Now, old gal, fer number ten!" said he, and they went forward again, crossed the little plank bridge unchallenged and climbed the slope on the other side, toward the fire. As they drew near they perceived sitting beside it the figure of a man, wrapped in his poncho.

"*Donde Muñoz?*" (Where's Muñoz?) asked Ryerson in even tones.

The figure raised its head, and the fire-light showed them the face of—Kid Andrews.

"*Donde Muñoz?*" drawled the Kid, as Sam stepped closer. "I don't know where Muñoz is, and what's more, his whereabouts is a matter of not the slightest interest to me; but I *do* know where Sam Ryerson is, and I advise him to throw up his hands *now!*"

His gun flashed in the light, but Sam's foot shot out like a catapult; the Kid's wrist snapped and the gun whirled to one side. Sam jumped and rolled him over; they grappled; fire and ashes flew in every direction.

"*Avudo! Avudo!*" the Kid screamed; but before he had time to call for help the third time Jen smote him twice behind the ear with the butt of her revolver.

The Kid's grip loosened, his arms grew nerveless, and he keeled over, limp as an empty meal sack.

Sam got up, considerably blown, and gasped:

"Now I'll—chuck some—wood on, so the fire sha'n't—go out an' put the others wise to—what's up. Then I reckon—we'll hit the trail outa here for 'bout all—we're worth. Inside of half an hour——"

His words were broken by a crackle of shots from off to the right, where vicious little jets of flame spat through the night; bullets pattered near them.

"Up with his feet, Jen!" commanded Ryerson. "I'll take his head! *Jump!*"

• "Where to?"

"The doby! Grab holt!"

They lifted the unconscious Kid and ran heavily, clumsily down toward the creek; the bullets zipped after them, kicking up dust-whirls all about.

"Sha'n't we drop him?" panted Jen.

"No! No! Hang on! Nex' best thing to gettin' clear is havin' *him* in our han's! Once we git inside we're O K. Only a minute more—here's the bridge! *Now* then——"

He stumbled and cursed.

"Plumb through my leg!"

"Are you *shot*, Sam?"

"Guess so! But I kin limp along someway; come, come, this ain't no place fer investigatin'! Up the bank with him! So, so . . . *now* through the door——"

The shots grew scattering, ceased. The Ryersons, exhausted, dragged their second captive through the hole and dropped him.

"Go back an' bar the lean-to door," Sam commanded.

While she obeyed he rolled up his trousers-leg and examined the wound in his calf. It bled little, but looked blue and ugly.

"How about it, pard?" Jen queried anxiously when she returned, kneeling beside him.

"I dunno; it ain't much, I guess. Lucky it wa'n't one o' them soft-nose

bullets or it w'd ha' tore my whole leg off. Where *is* the bullet, anyhow? You reckon it's still in thar?"

"Lemme git the lantern an' look. No, I guess it went right through without stoppin'. See? Here's whar it come out, on t'other side. Wait till I git some water and wash it, then I'll tie it up. Prob'ly it ain't nothin' serious."

"No, it won't hurt me none. I'm still in the ring fer biz, but if this sort o' thing keeps up *much* longer, doggone me if thar'll be enough o' me left fer decent obsquizzes."

"That's right, wash it good an' plenty; now, so, the rag. Here, I'll hold the lantern while you tie them knots."

The Kid stirred and groaned.

"Hold on, Kid, hold on!" said Sam. "One at a time! Wait till Jen gits through tyin' me up, an' she'll tend to you. She's a boss hand at tyin', Jen is; I'll bet a million you won't git away from no knots *she* makes!"

CHAPTER V.

HOW THE KID OWNED UP.

THE night dragged on, silent, eternal, and morning dawned at last upon the beleaguered doby and its surrounding enemies.

The Ryersons had laid their two captives over by the east wall, had turned the lantern low and passed the long hours discussing every past and possible future phase of the siege.

Sam lay at full length in the bunk; Jenny sat beside him, still clad in her ranchero costume.

"Jen," said Ryerson, "you'd better chuck a blanket over them three has-beens by the door. It's gittin' light now, an' they're sure unpleasant fer to look at."

"While you're about it, you might start a little grub goin' on the stove. I'm mighty glad we ain't let the fire go out. I feel like a little fodder would do me heaps o' good."

Jen did his bidding. When she had returned he continued:

"Now, if we've reckoned right thar's only thirteen o' them fellers left outside. That ain't a great many. Either they'll attack or they won't."

"If they do, I reckon we kin stand 'em off; if they don't we ain't a-goin' to starve *right* away. All I'm skeered of is that they'll send fer more men or mebbe invent some new deviltry an' bust the doby some way we can't prevent. It looks to me like we'd better hit the first blow an' sorta surprise 'em, don't you think so?"

"Good idee, but how?"

"Well, I dunno jest yet, but I'm figgerin', I'm figgerin'. Maybe I'll hit somethin' yet 'fore the sun gits over old Cornudas Mounting. Lemme puzzle 'er out a bit, gal. If you think of anythin', let's have it!"

Jen left him and busied herself about the stove; Ryerson lay in the bunk, his one good eye closed, thinking, thinking. Finally he got up and began limping to and fro.

"Treadin' it out, Jen," he explained to her. "Idees with me is like butter—got to be churned er they won't come!"

"You better go an' lay down!" she urged, but Sam took no notice.

After the woman had prepared a very simple meal she set it on the table and then went out into the stable to feed the horses. When she returned Sam was eating and drinking, the while he hobbled up and down the shack. He held his bread in one hand, his tin cup in the other, and thus provided was "churning" his plan.

After a while he set down his cup, took the lantern and went over to where his prisoners were lying. They were both conscious, and the Mexican was groaning as loudly as his gag permitted, but Kid Andrews' lips were sealed by pride.

As Ryerson inspected them, the ranchero closed his eyes; the Kid smiled slightly.

"Mornin', Kid," said Sam. "You passed a comf'table night?"

"As comfortable, thank you, as I could expect with such company!"

"Meanin' the departed ones yender, I take it?" asked Sam innocently, ignoring the insult, though his fingers itched.

The Kid made no reply, but turned his eyes away as though suffering from ennui.

"Your nerve, Kid, is plumb splendid," Ryerson began again, "but I don't

reckon it'll do you much good this trip. You're right up agin somethin', for the present, that's 'bout as thorough in its grindin' as them 'ar mills o' the gods it tells about in the books.

"I advise you, fer your own good, to come down off'n your perch before you're took down forcible, which you sure will be. I've busted quite a few broncos in my day, an' some of 'em was reel wicked, so I'm used to the biz. You won't give me much difficulty, now I'll bet my stack on *that*."

"I've got a few questions to ask you, an' I want 'em all answered truthful an' perlite, like we was in Sunday-school. What's your say 'bout it?"

Silence on the Kid's part.

"Nothin' doin', eh? Oh, *all* right!" Sam hobbled over to the stove and cheerfully inserted the poker in the hottest part.

The Kid squirmed uneasily, then opened his lips and said:

"See here, Ryerson——"

"Mr. Ryerson, if you please!"

"Mr. Ryerson, I wouldn't bother about that, if I were you. It will be quicker and neater, all in all, to take your gun and blow me over the divide immediately."

"I'm not afraid to go all together, but I do object to being made a botch of, by Inquisition methods. You see, I haven't reached the point yet where my looks mean nothing to me. Kindly remove that poker and train your artillery this way!"

"Artillery?" smiled Sam, limping back. "No, sir, I reckon not! That poker's fer a purpose, an' she stays put, see?"

"Artillery? Huh! D'you s'pose I want to kill you—at one whack? Guess agin! If you was dead, now, you wouldn't be wuth no more to me than *them*, under that 'ar blanket, but livin' you're what folks calls a valuable asset; yes, sir, that's what you be."

"Now, I want some heart-to-heart talk with you, an' what's more I'm goin' fer to git it. If you give up the information, well an' good; if you *don't*——" He finished with a gesture toward the stove.

"Rather medieval methods you employ, aren't they?" asked the Kid.

"Med—med—*which*? I didn't quite git that; I ain't much on med'cine. Go easy on the jaw-breakers, pard, or you'll have me down an' out, here. What I want to know is this—will you talk or *won't* you?"

The other captive, bound and gagged, squirmed with fear and his eyes began to bulge, but Andrews gave no sign, except that his sallow skin commenced to show a tinge of red.

"Ryerson—Mr. Ryerson—do you expect me to lie here and talk with you about—matters, before *her*? Do you mean to bullyrag me for the sake of letting her sit there on that bunk and take it all in? Why, not very long ago that same woman——"

"Cut that part right out!" commanded Sam, raising a thick forefinger. "Jen's goin' to stay right whar she is an' listen to the whole thing. Whatever may have been, Jen an' me is one, now, an' what I hear she hears, savvy? Tell me, d'you understand that much?"

"I do."

"All right then, let's begin. I want to finish this before them fellers of yourn outside thar gits ready to sail in again."

"Mind, now, you tell the truth! We ain't got no Bible here fer you to sw'ar on, but I reckon if you get catched in any lies you'll feel somethin' hotter 'n your conscience burnin' you. To start with, d'you reely think I killed old Moreno?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because I know who *did* kill him."

"Which was Kid Andrews?"

"Yes—it was."

"Ummmm—I guessed that quite a while ago. Did you do it personal, or how?"

"Pedro Cazador pulled the trigger."

"How much did you give him for the job?"

"That's none of your business!"

"Well, I dunno as 'tis. We'll pass that. Now 'bout the Bar-Cross ranch; the old man had willed that to you a spell before, hadn't he?"

No answer.

Sam got up deliberately.

"Sit down, sit down!" said the Kid. "He had."

"Edzactly; I felt certain of it from

the first, though somehow I credited the old man with havin' more gumption.

"He ought to have known 'twas jest the same as delib'rate suicide, makin' that 'ar will. I could ha' told him, if it had been any o' my biz, which it wa'n't. So then, you had Cazador plug the old boy out on the range that night, yes? An' then laid it off on me an' engineered this 'ere little social expedition?"

"Now, reely an' on the level, what d'you think I'd oughta do with you? Don't you think a pair o' boots made outa your hide would fit me mighty good?"

"How much longer are you going to keep this farce up?" asked the Kid. "Here I am, in your hands. For God's sake, man, if you're going to butcher me, hurry up and have it over with!"

"Butcher you? Who said anythin' about butcherin'? I told you before, you was too valuable to kill. It ain't sure fatal to peel off part of the hide.

"But we'll let that go fer a while; I want to sum this thing up an' find out how it looks to you. Them fellers outside may git impatient of their siege biz an' start active op'rations before I git done with you, so I must hurry.

"See now; two years ago you come prowlin' 'round my wife, an' I had to give you a darn good lickin'. Shootin' was too good, so I used these, jest *these*, you remember?" Sam held out his rugged fists.

"You swore then you'd git square, an' I ain't been nappin' much sence. The minute I heard old man Moreno was shot I said to Jen, 'Jen,' says I, 'this here means trouble fer us, an' the worst kind too. Hadn't we better light out?'

"'What?' says she, 'light out an' leave the ranch an' all the stock? Not by a whole row of jugfuls! Let 'em lay it on you if they want to, an' try you, too; they can't do nothin'! They're bound to let you go in the end!'

"Them was her arguments, biled down. So we stayed, an' I was arrested on your accusation, an' stood my trial, an' got clear, spite of a dev'lish lot of perjury, the worst I ever run against in all these years I been West.

"Now then, after that was all over an' done with, up you come with your

gang of thugs, kill my stock on the false charge that I been pasturin' over the cattle-line, an' amiable try fer to string me up.

"You know the results so fur—they ain't over an' above promisin' fer you, what with eight men killed an' two captured, which one of 'em 's yourself. Take it by an' large I've got quite a fancy score to settle with you, Kid Andrews. Do you know what I'm a-goin' to do with you, eh? *Do you?*"

Sam's fingers crooked and he leaned forward, glaring with his one eye. The Kid met his gaze with apparent *sang-froid*, though his face had become as parchment.

"No," he answered nonchalantly, "I don't know, and what's more I care very little. Almost anything is better than lying here on a broken wrist, lashed up with rawhide and listening to the vagaries of a tenth-rate herder!"

"Hold on, pard! Hold on! Va-va-what the devil? Thar's another of them 'ar astronomical terms. *Can't* you talk U. S.? No matter; I gather from your soarin' rhetoric that you're tired of bein' roped up like a maverick, an' long fer freedom.

"Well, all right; I'm goin' to give you a taste of it, anyhow; goin' to free your left hand, the one what ain't busted, an' set you up to the table, so's you kin write some literchure fer me, savvy?"

"Write?"

"Yep, to whoever's in charge out thar, tellin' 'em simply what you've been a-tellin' me."

"I won't!"

"Eh? What was that word you used?"

"I'll never do it!"

"Oh, *all* right."

Sam pegged over to the stove and drew the ruddy poker forth. Then he brought it over to the Kid and thrust it down at him.

The Kid drew his head back, back till it could go no further, and still Sam advanced it slowly till Andrews had to wink and squint. His long eyelashes began to curl up and shrivel.

"Plumb in the eye, pard, plumb in the eye, nex' time I hear any sec'n remarks from you. Jest one plunge and

a *twist* does it, you git me lucid? Chew on *that!* Now, you goin' to write fer me, eh?"

"Yes," the Kid answered sullenly. "Set me at the table."

"Jen," Ryerson said, "hunt up some paper an' a pencil, please. The gent's goin' to produce a masterpiece of confession right off."

Jen roused herself with a start from the fixed and horrified fascination which had enwrapped her, took the lantern, and went to rummage in the cracker-box which stood them in stead of a cupboard.

When she had found writing materials she helped Sam carry the Kid over and seat him at the table. Sam placed the lantern close at the Kid's elbow, and Jenny laid a cheap blue-lined pad and a lead pencil in front of him. Then she went back to the bunk and sat down, while Ryerson freed the Kid's left hand.

CHAPTER VI.

VENGEANCE IS MINE.

"Now," said Ryerson, "we're ready fer biz. I'll dictate an' you write. Take yer time an' do it thorough. By the way, is thar any one outside who kin read?"

"Yes, that Alvaro fellow can—Spanish."

"Spanish, eh? Well, kin you write Spanish?"

"I was brought up to, more or less."

"Good. You're sure thar ain't nobody kin read English?"

"Sure; the only English-speaking man left is George Stephens, and *he* can't read anything."

"All right; in that case make the letter to Alvaro, an' put down everythin' I say, jest so, or I'll make things a heap livelier fer you than they're apt to be this side o' Hades. I kin foller the lingo good enough to catch on if you try any funny biz. Remember. Now begin:

"From Kid Andrews, held captive in Ryerson's shack, to Pedro Alvaro, in command of a dozen Don Fulanos, et cet., Greeting:

"You got that? Good; tell me when you're ready fer more."

A pause, while the Kid scrawled painfully.

"Now, then, the next sentence."

Ryerson dictated it slowly, pausing for Andrews to catch up with him. When, after fifteen minutes, the letter was done, he commanded:

"Sign it, now, an' read it out to me."

The Kid signed, then in a sullen voice translated the letter:

From Kid Andrews to Pedro Alvaro,
Greeting:

This is to inform you that Federigo Barniz and myself are, as you probably have cause to know, in the hands of the Señor Ryerson. The Señor is well armed and provisioned.

It is to inform you, further, that you are after the wrong man, since the Señor never shot Perez Moreno. I shot Moreno myself, by the hand of one Cazador from Pecos.

The proof of this lies first in my own word; second in Moreno's will, which on examination you will find to have given me the Bar-Cross ranch; and third in the story that Cazador will tell you (if you can catch him) concerning what took place on the night of June 18 at the southeast corner of quarter-section 72.

Wherefore, these things being so, the Señor Ryerson asks for a conference, under flag of truce. Send George Stephens, who speaks English.

(Signed) ANDREWS.

"Hand her over!" said Ryerson, and took the note. He looked at it a few minutes with a puzzled frown.

"Well," said he at last, "that'll do, as near's I kin figger. Now, Kid, Jen'll set you out some breakfast while I send this out."

Jenny placed bread and coffee before the prisoner, but he sat with lowered eyes and refused to touch the food.

"Got a piece of white cloth in the place, gal?" Ryerson asked, breaking a whip-stock in two. "Nothin' fine—any old rag—thar, that'll do 'first rate."

He took the coarse handkerchief she handed him and tied it flag-fashion to the stock.

"Better rope the Kid up agin, Sam," Jen whispered. "He won't eat, an' it ain't safe to leave him with one hand free."

"Right you are, gal!" Sam answered. "Call Brusco out an' feed him while I fix our guest."

Ryerson tied the Kid securely, then

pinned the note conspicuously to the flag of truce.

"Now, Brusco, old boy, here's where your little stunt comes in," said he. With a stout cord he lashed the whip-stock firmly to the dog's back.

"I hate to send you out among them yahoos," he added, "but it's a case of *have to*. Come on, boy, come on!"

He limped to the door; the dog bounded and fawned on him.

"Out with you!" he commanded, unbolting the door. "Go fetch!"

He pointed across the *patio*. Brusco, seeing that his master was not going to accompany him, whined and hung back, cringing.

"Out! Out!" Ryerson cried, cuffing him.

Brusco slunk away, dejected; he paused and looked back. "Go on!" yelled Ryerson from the door menacingly. The dog drew his tail between his legs and trotted off, disappearing behind the knoll.

"Put out the lantern, Jen," said Sam, bolting the door again. "It's broad daylight outside, an' I reckon it'll be all right in here without burnin' any more ile."

He stood at the loophole, watching. Five minutes passed; ten minutes. Then Ryerson swore softly and drew a deep breath.

"Thar comes Stephens!" he exclaimed, and Jenny, running to the pierced shutter, saw an old ranchero coming unarmed across the yard bearing the handkerchief. Sam unbuckled his holster and went out to meet him.

"Howdy, pard?" said he, when Stephens had come close.

"Never better. How's yourself?"

"All here, yet, though somewhat perforated. You here to talk biz?"

"I reckon so."

"Ready to vamoose with your Greasers?"

"Ummm, well, mebbe, when you give up our men, dead an' livin'."

"You b'lieve what the Kid wrote, then?"

"I guess we do. Fact is, his story tallies with what Jiminez out thar says he knows.

"Beside, we been talkin' on it over—the alibi, the .44 bullet an' all—sorta

tryin' out the case agin—an' then, this here note; well, call it quits. Give up the remains an' the pris'ners an' we'll mosey."

"No git-even with me on account of what damage I've did?"

"No—give an' take—we'll call it square when you hand over the relics."

"You're welcome to what Greasers I've got, dead an' livin', but Kid Andrews is a different proposition. I'm a-goin' to *keep him*."

"You be? What fer?"

"Well—s'posen I let you have him, how fur would he git with that gang o' yourn?"

"Oh, 'bout as fur's the nighest tree." The old man grinned a discolored grin.

"I thought so. Well, you can't have him; that's flat."

"Can't, eh? Why, what d'you want with him?"

"That's *my* business, pardner. A few pussonal matters, datin' all the way from two year ago down to yesterday. No, I reckon the Kid'll stay right whar he is."

"Well, Ryerson, I dunno but what you're right. 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord,' but that applies more on t'other side of the Llano Estacado than what it does in Hueco Valley. All right, keep him as long's you like. Only one thing——"

"What is it?"

"If thar's anythin' left fit fer to hang, when you git through, turn it over to us."

"I will."

"Good. Now fetch out what b'longs to us an' I'll go tell the boys. In half an hour I reckon you-all will be shet of us. Here's my 'pology, an' my hand."

"I'll take 'em both. You're a *man*!"

The two shook hands. Then Sam went back into the doby and old Stephens returned whence he had come. A ranchero's word had been given and accepted; this time Ryerson did not bolt his door.

* * * * *

When the doby and the ranch were clear of Bar-Crossers, dead and living, and the last dust-whirl of their departure had sunk down over the spur of Cornuda, Ryerson limped back to the Kid, who still sat bound and silent.

The morning sun of New Mexico glared in through the door, the windows and the bullet-holes; it sought out every splinter of the battle's wreckage and showed brown stains on the earth floor where yesterday no stains had been.

Outside, high above the arroyos, wheeling buzzards were eloquent of the dead sheep which spelled ruin for the Ryersons.

"Wife," said Sam, "why don't you ramble out an' take some air? Git Brusco an' see if you can't round up a few odds an' ends of stock. P'r'aps we may have enough left to start agin with. A walk will do you all kinds o' good."

Jen, once more a woman in woman's clothes, raised her eyebrows at the hint, but answered nothing. She put on her sombrero and went out; Sam heard her whistle, heard the dog's bark answer her, far away.

"Kid," said he, as silence dropped about them once more, "Kid, I reckon I've got some awful grievances to settle up with you. Look at my leg here; look at my head—your work."

"Think of all them sheep out thar, my fortune. Leavin' out all what went before this last business, you've done us mortal harm. We staked everythin' on this 'ere ranch, an' now she's plumb up the spout."

"I guess we're 'bout as good as ruined, her an' me. I don't b'lieve we kin make this up inside of three years, an' meantime how are we goin' to live?"

"Well—I ain't goin' to rehearse it all over with you—all I got to say is that even yer own friends has given you up, left you in my hands. You're mine to do with as I see fit. What d'you suggest?"

Andrews bowed his head.

"You know," he answered, "and I know. Go ahead, Ryerson—have it over with as soon as possible. I won't insult you by offering to pay."

Ryerson kept silent a moment, rubbing his unshaven chin and cheek where dust and powder-smoke had settled. He ignored the covert offer.

"If it was so you could hold a gun, Kid," he went on presently, "God knows I wouldn't have no greater joy than to pace off twenty yards an' stand up agin you. To drop you in a square

fight, or git dropped myself—I wouldn't ask fer nothin' better; but that don't seem possible, so I've got to do the next best thing."

"Which is——"

"Hold on a minute an' you'll hear. Prob'ly you don't know Sam Ryerson over an' above well, but I'll tell you to begin with he ain't no man to take advantage of an accident."

"That red-hot poker biz of mine was all pure bluff. I had to git that letter wrote an' I *got* it wrote, but hang me if I'd ha' more 'n scorched you a trifle. I tell you I was all-fired relieved when you give in so nice an' didn't make me show down."

"Now that you know my hand it ain't no use tryin' to bluff any longer; when it comes to settlin' our account thar's only one way Sam Ryerson *kin* settle it."

He hobbled over to Nig's-saddle, took it and went painfully out of the doby. Three minutes later he came back, without the saddle.

"Nig's ready," he said laconically, drawing his knife. "Hold still now while I cut the riata!"

He freed the Kid's ankles with one slash, then more carefully divided the wrist-bonds.

"Stand up, now, if you kin," he commanded. "Stand up an' stretch yerself. It's a long ride to Jarilla."

"Jarilla?" The Kid spoke scarcely in a whisper, rubbing his swollen wrist.

"Yep, that's what I said. Come now, take a drink of that 'ar coffee an' lemme put some o' this bread in your pocket. *That's* the idee. Here's part of a pint of Four X that you may need more'n what I do. Take that, too."

"Jarilla?"

"Due north, then the first trail to the west. You kin strike the cars there, an' after that it's easy. Nex' time I see anyone from Bar-Cross I'll tell 'em realistic how you cashed in, so thar won't never be no pursuit ner nothin'. But of course you un'stand that after this Otero County's jest plain suicide fer you."

"Go back to old Missouri, Kid, where New Mexico ain't heard tell of much. Now, what d'you say to startin'? I want to git you on the road 'fore Jen comes back."

Andrews tried to walk, as in a dream,

but his cramped ankles would not bear him, and Sam had to steady him out of the doby. Nig stood outside, saddled, bridled, ready for the trail.

The Kid's lips moved as if he were trying to find appropriate words, but no words came. At the door he turned and held out his purple discolored hand.

"Ryerson!" said he.

Sam shook his head.

"Nope!" he answered, "I can't do it. Don't ask me. I'm human, that's all. I don't want to have no touch of your hand to remember you by—I don't want to have *nothin'*! I want you to drop out ab-so-lutum.

"Kin you mount the critter? So—so—*thar* you are. Due north, then off to the left 'round Hueco. When you git to Jarilla, send Doctor Brady down with Nig—don't fergit the name—Brady.

"I'll need him 'fore long by the feel o' my leg. Tell him to bring needles an' truck to do some fancy work with. Good-by."

He went back into the doby and closed the door.

Jen returned with Brusco, an hour later, and entered with some trepidation, fearful of what might be awaiting her. She found Sam sitting on the bunk.

"How many left?" he asked her, without looking up.

"Oh, mebbe forty or fifty, includin' wounded ones, so far. Mebbe Brusco kin scare up some more later. Where—

where's the Kid? I didn't hear no shots ner nothin'. Did you—did you?"

"No, I sent him away."

"Sent—him—away?"

"Yep, on Nig, to Jarilla. He kin strike the cars thar an' git somewhere outa danger 'fore night."

"Sam, you did *that*, after all the Kid—"

"Shh-hhh! Drop it!"

"Sam, pardner!" She went over to him and he drew her down beside him.

"Jen, old gal," said Ryerson, taking her hands, "I'll tell you why I done it if you want to know. You do? Yes; that 'ar feller, that Kid, well—he was the only livin' thing on God's green earth ever so much as begun to come 'tween us, now wa'n't he?"

"S'posin' I'd killed him, planted him out yender, would *that* ha' taken him away? Would *that* ha' fixed things right with us—you knowin' what I'd done, my knowin' whar he laid?"

"But *now*—he's plumb gone, see? An' he ain't never comin' back. That's the finish, 'cordin' to my idee.

"What say we begin an' try reel hard, reel good an' hard to—to——"

"To forget?"

"Yes, gal, *por siempre*."

"I'll go you, Sam!"

"You mean it?"

"Did you ever know a Whitman to say anythin' he——"

But that was a question which was never finished.

THE FISHER BOATS.

By Frank H. Sweet.

THE boats sail into the break of day,
 Out into the day they sail;
 The sullen clouds in the sky are gray,
 And the winds they sob and wail;
 Oh, the winds they sob to the fisher folk,
 And the sea is loath to give;
 But calm or blow, the boats must go,
 That the fisher folk may live.

Back into the night the boats return,
 Into the gathering night;
 And the homeward bows the whitecaps
 spurn,
 And turn them to left and right;
 Oh, the boats come back to the waiting
 ones,
 And the boding hearts grow bold,
 For work or play the hearts grow gay
 With the gift the sea has doled.

FLAT-BROKE.

By Bertram Lebbhar.

A hard-luck yarn that is not troubled with poverty of action and excitement.

CHAPTER I.

A CUT-RATE PASSAGE.

JACK FRANCIS, was flat-broke and down on my luck. Of course I was by no means the only young man in the cruel city of London with only a few shillings between himself and starvation, so that I am aware that I might easily have selected a more striking sentence with which to begin this chapter.

A story-writer should always endeavor to awaken interest by starting out with his best thriller. This I am willing to concede, but nevertheless I must tell this story from the very beginning, and if I had not been flat-broke, out of work, and down at heel, in all probability I should never have been called upon by the fates to go through the series of strange experiences recorded in this veracious tale.

My employer, Adam Skinflint, a pettifogging lawyer for whom I clerked, told me that it was all my own fault, and that I had brought my misfortune on myself. I admit that I had reached the office an hour late on seven consecutive mornings; but in my opinion that was too slight an offense to warrant dismissal.

Yet here I was, discharged for this trivial offense, and sick at heart from trying to get another job.

I think I must have tried half the solicitors in London; but nobody seemed to want a clerk, or at least, if they did, it was plain that they didn't want me.

My clothing was shabby almost to the point of raggedness, for old Skinflint was stingy and paid me just about half as much as my services were worth. I had just two pounds in my pocket and

no prospects of getting any more, and when that little store should be spent I shuddered to think what would become of me.

When an Englishman is down on his luck nowadays, he turns his eyes and his thoughts in but one direction—toward that western land of the free, where shattered fortunes are to be rebuilt by hard work, and where money is so plentiful as almost to be found on the streets.

So, when I found myself in the distressing circumstances above described, I sighed to myself as I thought how dearly I longed for a chance to get to that land across the sea, where a man of my ability must surely make a fortune within a few years.

I was filled with this thought when I went into one of Lockhart's combination coffee houses in Hoxton to get a cup of coffee and a ham sandwich.

As I sat at the rough, uncovered table, elbows on the board and hands supporting my weary head, a picture of dejection, I was aroused by a voice which sounded close to my ear.

"Brooding, eh?" said the voice, in which I recognized the American accent. "In love, I suppose."

I looked up quickly to find that the stranger was sitting opposite me at my table and that he was shabbily dressed and unshaven, but with a certain rough handsomeness and refinement of features.

"In love! No," I answered with a bitter laugh. "Never was in love in my life. I'm flat-broke, if you want to know. That's what's the matter with me."

"Broke, eh? Got any folks in England?"

"Folks—no. Haven't got a soul in the world who cares whether I'm alive or dead. To tell you the truth, I'm beginning to feel that I hardly care myself, now."

"Why don't you go to America?" drawled the stranger. "Ours is a great country for men who are down on their luck. You might do well out there."

"You can bet that I'd go to America if I had the chance," I said, "but unfortunately I can't walk over, and all the fortune I have in the world is one pound, nineteen shillings and ten pence half-penny."

The stranger mused a minute as though weighing well some question.

"I'll sell you a ticket across to the States, if you want to buy it," he said at length.

"Didn't you hear me say that I have no money—only one pound, nineteen shillings and ten pence," I replied with some impatience.

"I'll sell you my ticket to the United States for two shillings," was the quiet reply.

"What, man! You're only joking. If it's a legitimate ticket, you won't sell it for forty times that amount. What are you giving me?"

"I'm not offering you a first-saloon passage on the Cunard or American lines. Don't think that for a minute," said the man. "But if you want to rough it on the return trip of a cattle-steamer, where the food will be of the plainest quality and your bed a hard plank one, you can have the return half of my double trip ticket."

"What kind of work would I have to do?" I asked cautiously, for I had heard of the exacting demands upon the man who is rash enough to work his way.

"No work at all. You see, England doesn't ship cattle to the United States. It's all the other way around. Therefore when you ship as a worker on a cattle-steamer you only have to work your way to England. Then they provide you with free passage back, when the ship sails for home. You are just a passenger then, on the return trip, and treated as such. I'm not going to avail myself of this return privilege because I intend to stay over here; so there is your chance."

"But wouldn't they notice the substitution on board ship?" I asked. I had heard of the American bunco-steerer and was very much on my guard.

"No. I understand that these exchanges are quite common. Of course you will have to take my name and my passports, which will be of advantage to you, by the way, because they will enable you to get past the immigration officials without trouble. You answer my description closely enough, luckily, to conform to the description on the passport."

"And if I should be detected by the immigration authorities on the other side, what would happen to me?" I asked.

"Why, I guess they will make it pretty hot for you; but don't fear, you won't be caught," answered the American.

"All right. I'll take the ticket. When does the ship sail?"

"From Liverpool to-morrow afternoon. My name is Henry Bush. You see that the passports are so made out. Remember that from to-day on until you are safely landed in the United States, your name is Henry Bush, of New York. Here's your passport and the ticket."

He handed over the papers, and I eagerly gave him the two shillings, for fear he should suddenly experience a change of mind.

The American spent the best part of an hour giving me further instruction and advice. He was thirty-five years of age, according to the passport, while I was ten years his junior; but then I have always looked old for my age, while he had one of those youthful faces common in America.

I was convinced that I resembled my new-found friend closely enough to carry out the deception. Of course we did not look like twins, by any means; but the only man who would have to pass upon the substitution at close range would be the captain of the cattle-ship, and I concluded that he must see so many faces in the course of his trips that he would never be able to notice any slight facial discrepancies.

It cost me a good part of my remaining few shillings to get a railway ticket to Liverpool, and I made the sacrifice with a pang—it was like pulling teeth.

I arrived on the dock of the Philadelphia and Liverpool Transportation Company a day after my meeting with the American, a few hours before the vessel's sailing time.

The one-funneled cattle-steamer, with steam up, was lying at her dock. I examined her curiously. She didn't have the grand, sleek appearance of an ocean liner. She looked, in fact, just what she was—a cattle-steamer; and the prospect of spending two weeks aboard of her was none too inviting.

However, beggars could not be choosers, and in some respects I thought I was not any better than the cattle who were the legitimate passengers on the vessel.

As I stood on the pier gazing curiously at the steamship, a newsboy, loaded down with evening papers, approached me yelling "extra" at the top of his little lungs.

"What's all the excitement about, sonny?" I asked him.

"Murder and Bank Robbery. 'Orrible Murder and Bank Robbery in the City of London. Buy the extrer," yelled the urchin.

Money was scarce with me, Heaven knows; but I was always a voracious consumer of news and I expended a whole half-penny for an evening paper.

The youngster had not lied to me, for on the front page of the paper I read of the sensational tragedy which had occurred that day in the city of London.

Bank robbers had broken into the Metropolitan Bank and got away with ten thousand pounds in notes, gold, and securities. The night watchman had evidently interrupted the marauders in the middle of their work, for they had shot him dead and then disappeared with their booty without attracting the attention of anybody else.

All London was greatly excited by the daring robbery and Scotland Yard was working its hardest to unearth the criminals.

These facts I read with interest and swallowed every detail with great relish.

"Poor wretch," I ruminated, thinking of the unfortunate watchman, "I wonder if they will ever catch those daring rascals."

With this reflection, however, I dis-

missed the whole matter from my mind. I had other things to think of.

The captain of the Cattle King, as our ship was called, had signaled from the deck that passengers could come aboard, and I found myself the rear-guard of a procession of shabby, hungry-looking men, all marching up the gangplank.

There were about ten of us. I assumed that these fellows had all worked their way across, although, of course, there may have been others in that crowd, besides myself, who were taking the place of those entitled to the return voyage.

The captain stood at the end of the gangplank and examined each of us searchingly as we passed him.

I trembled as he directed his gaze upon me; but he said nothing as I handed him my ticket, so that I congratulated myself on getting over my first bridge without mishap.

That some of my fellow passengers had noticed the imposture, however, I felt certain.

When you are thrown into a man's society for a week on shipboard, you are bound to retain a distinct recollection of him for some time, even though you have spent the most of your voyage feeding cattle or helping in the stoke-hole.

Most of the fifteen passengers, therefore, knew each other, and nobody seemed to know me, which of itself must have made them suspicious.

There was one man, however, who came over to me when I stood upon the lower deck. He was shabbily dressed and there was something cunning and cruel about him which repelled me.

"Say," he said, extending his hand. "Ain't you Henry Bush?"

"That's my name," I replied with surprising calmness.

"Thought I recognized you from the trip across, but you seem to have changed some somehow. We was good pals going over, weren't we?"

"I must look out for this fellow," I thought. "He will get me in trouble."

"Yes," I said aloud, "I hope that we shall be just as friendly going back. It's lonely enough on shipboard, God knows."

"Yes, but we ain't got to work going back, and they certainly did make us sweat working our way across, didn't they? Gee! I shudder now when I think of that trip. I lost twenty pounds in that one voyage. You must have lost quite some yourself."

"I did, a good fifteen pounds," I replied, remembering that there was about that much discrepancy between the real Bush and myself.

I saw much of this man going over. The name he sailed under was Bill Jordan. It seemed that he must have struck up a steamer-acquaintance with the real Bush on the other trip, although Bush had neglected to tell me anything about him.

I didn't like his looks at all. His expression repelled me, as I have said. I more than half fancied, too, that he suspected that I was not the real Bush.

I shall not describe the details of that uncomfortable voyage.

It will suffice to say that we were all very seasick; for the vessel pitched terribly. It took us two weeks to reach Philadelphia, and during that time we slept in the forecastle on rough wooden shelves and dined every day on hardtack and salted meat, with plum duff on Sundays.

The personnel of the passengers was varied.

Some of my fellow unfortunates were evidently men of refinement, down on their luck; others were as rough and uncultured as they looked. It is always a curious crowd of men that works its way across old Ocean. Each one of them, you may be sure, has his story, although it is not always to be learned for the asking.

By the end of the voyage we had come to know each other pretty well. None of the men hinted at my imposture. If they suspected, they kindly kept their suspicions to themselves.

When we reached port the greatest ordeal awaited me; but my fears proved groundless.

The captain called us all together and made a cursory examination of our passports. He scarcely troubled to look at them, and the government accepted his affidavit that everything was all right, without further investigation.

The only government official to examine us was the health officer, and of him I was not afraid.

Weak from my long spell of seasickness, and feeling that strange sensation experienced by every penniless wanderer on reaching a foreign soil, I entered the city of Philadelphia, exactly two weeks after sailing.

Bill Jordan offered to show me around the town and to show me afterward how I could freight it to New York.

I accepted his offer gladly, although I still retained my mistrust of him.

He had managed, during the trip across, to pump considerable out of me concerning myself and my prospects, but of him I could learn little except that he was down on his luck for the time being.

We spent the day in Philadelphia, wandering over the quiet town.

Bill Jordan, who had a few dollars in American money, "treated" to a good juicy beefsteak in a cheap restaurant.

The meat was tough and sinewy, but it tasted better to us than food for the gods, for we had eaten nothing but salt meat and hardtack for two long weeks.

As we ravenously devoured the meat, a newsboy entered the restaurant.

"All the evening papers," he cried.

"Hello," said Jordan, "let's see what's going on. Give us a *Journal*, kid."

The boy handed him a lurid-looking sheet—a journalistic revelation to my conservative English eyes.

Jordan buried himself in the paper and read with interest. Suddenly he uttered an exclamation and rose to his feet.

"Hullo," he said sharply, "what's this? Listen to this, my friend." He read from the paper:

CLUE TO BANK ROBBERY.

Scotland Yard Detectives Say American Crooks Robbed London Metropolitan Bank and Killed Watchman.

The Philadelphia police department has received to-day a cablegram from Scotland Yard asking that detectives be sent to meet the cattle-ship *Cattle King* (Liverpool to Philadelphia) and

apprehend an American named Henry Bush.

Bush, the London police say, is one of the men who robbed the London Metropolitan Bank of ten thousand pounds, and killed the night watchman, two weeks ago.

The Scotland Yard Police have been working hard on the case with apparently no results until to-day, when they claim to have obtained conclusive evidence that Bush was one of the men concerned in the murder and robbery, and that he came over from the United States on the cattle-ship *Cattle King*, working his way across, expressly to rob the bank.

The request of the Scotland Yard Police reached Philadelphia three hours after the *Cattle King* had docked. The captain's sailing list shows that there was a man named Henry Bush aboard, and the police are now scouring the city for him.

"Harry Bush," said Jordan, roughly pointing an accusing finger at me. "So you are a murderer, are you, Mr. Bush? A bank robber to boot? I have had my suspicions of you all along. Do you know what is to prevent me from giving you into the hands of the first officer we meet?"

"Nothing to prevent you except this," I cried starting up suddenly and striking him a blow on the chin which felled him and overturned the table.

Before the startled waiters could restrain me, I had bolted out of the door and disappeared up the street like a streak of greased lightning, with shouts of "Stop him" echoing in my ears.

CHAPTER II.

THE AMBULANCE CALL AND THE OVER-COAT.

PROBABLY no man knows how fast he can run until there is somebody at his heels threatening his life, his liberty, or his pursuit of happiness.

With head bent desperately forward and my breath coming in heavy, quick gasps, I sped on through streets I had never seen before, expecting any minute to feel the grasp of the pursuer on my collar or to be tripped up from in front by some public-spirited citizen.

I never was much of a runner and my sedentary habits of the past few years had not tended to improve my

physical condition; but it seemed to me then, in the effort of desperation, that in a few seconds I had covered a considerable number of city blocks.

I had not run very far, however, before I felt a sharp stitch in my side. But I dared not stop, and, putting my hand to the affected part, I kept on in my wild course with the staid citizens of Philadelphia turning to look at me in surprise as I rushed past them, nobody attempting to stay me.

It was only when I was so fagged out and winded that it was a physical impossibility for me to run any more, that I stopped, panting and gasping, and sank wearily down upon a convenient house-stoop.

If my pursuer had come up to me just then I could have offered no further resistance. I was completely played out and my heart seemed to be beating like a sledge-hammer against my ribs.

But to my great joy nobody appeared. I had evidently outdistanced Jordan and whoever else had joined him in the chase.

My situation was indeed not enviable, however. Here was I, an unsophisticated London law clerk, in a strange city and a strange country, a fugitive from justice, on the first day of my arrival, on the score of a crime I had never committed. I was practically penniless; without a friend to guide me; and with the glad knowledge that the police of Philadelphia were at that very moment scouring the city for me.

If any immigrant ever landed on the shores of the United States of America under less auspicious circumstances, his story ought to be interesting indeed.

Let the reader figure out for himself my desperate predicament.

If I gave myself up to justice and protested that I was not Harry Bush, the bank robber, but Jack Ferris, the London law clerk, I knew not what dire punishment the American government would mete out as retribution for the imposture I had practised.

If I became a fugitive, in my penniless, friendless condition, it meant that I must remain an outcast in a strange land and that I must shun all men, lest my first chance acquaintance should turn out to be a clever detective.

How I cursed the real Harry Bush and his dastardly lack of consideration, as I sat on that cold stone stoop with my head buried in my hands, thinking it all out.

Of course the cowardly bank robber had used me as a catspaw. By inducing me to sail under his name he had completely hoodwinked the Scotland Yard authorities, and while they were waiting for news of his capture by the American police, he was probably still in London, laughing at them all and planning fresh crimes.

Only two weeks ago I had regarded this man with feelings of gratitude for his kindness. Now I hated him like poison, and yearned for revenge.

There was not time, however, for bitter repinings. Part of my course was perfectly plain. I must leave Philadelphia without delay. It was only a question of a few hours before the police would discover my presence in the city and place their heavy hands upon my shoulder.

How to leave the city was the question. I had in my pocket one dollar and a half which the captain of the Cattle King had given me in exchange for what remained of my English money; but then, inexperienced though I was, I knew that it took much more than that amount to pay my railway fare to New York. Jordan had told me so himself.

This thought of Jordan's reminded me of a conversation I had had with him one day during our trip across on the Cattle King.

"America is a great country for freighting it," he said. "If you are broke you can beat your way all over the United States on freight trains, providing that you don't look like the genuine, simon-pure tramp.

"Just preserve a semi-respectable look, and have a plausible hard-luck story always ready, and you'll find an accommodating train-conductor, nine cases out of ten, willing to give you a lift.

"Conductors generally hate tramps like poison, and will throw them off a train whenever they find them. But it's only the real Weary Willies who never have worked and never will work that they are sore on. A fellow like you or me can always win them over.

"If you have the price of a bottle of booze in your clothes, all the better. Don't be foolish enough to attempt to offer it to a conductor in the form of a bribe though.

"If you do you'll probably find yourself lying on your back on the other side of the freight yard before you realize what has happened to you.

"Just keep the whisky in your pocket until you are safely aboard the train and flying to your destination. Then bring it out and gratefully offer it to your benefactor, and he won't be able to do enough for you to make you comfortable for the rest of the trip."

I remembered these words now with great joy. I had the price of at least one bottle of whisky, I thought, and I hoped that I looked, despite my shabby clothes, respectable enough to persuade some conductor to let me ride on the back of his freight train to New York City, where I should at least be safe from the Philadelphia police and from Jordan.

As soon as I had rested sufficiently, I looked around for the equivalent of a London public-house.

It was not hard to find one. At the very next corner I saw a drunken man standing like a sign outside a place with swinging glass doors through which I recognized the familiar sight of the bar and white-coated bartender.

I eagerly entered the saloon and took out my dollar bill, keeping the half for emergencies.

"How much whisky will this money buy?" I asked the bartender, completely at his mercy as to the purchasing power of American dollars.

The bartender looked at me in surprise for a minute.

"Want to drink it here?" he asked.

"No. I want a bottle to carry away on a train," I replied.

"Ah. From your question I thought you must be a human tank. That one bone, my friend, will purchase one bottle of good whisky; two bottles of bum booze."

"Give me a bottle of good whisky." I said, handing him the bill.

He wrapped up a pint bottle of a well-known brand. As I was going out of the place I turned suddenly.

"Say," I said, "where do you get the trains to New York? I'm a stranger here."

"Thought you were by your blasted English accent," said the bartender. "You go two squares up the street and two squares east to Broad Street. It's a big depot. You can't miss it."

"Are the freight yards there, too?" I asked.

"Freight yards a few squares beyond. Going to beat it to New York, eh? Well, I wish you luck, stranger."

I followed his directions and was fortunate enough to arrive at the freight yard just as a big coal train was about to pull out for New York.

Trembling with apprehension I approached the conductor of the long train.

"Say, mister, will you give me a lift to New York?" I asked, pleadingly.

"Eh? What?" he snorted regarding me with distasteful suspicion.

"I know I've got an awful cheek," I continued desperately. "But, honest, I'm not the wretched tramp I look to you. I am an Englishman stranded in Philadelphia, and I want to get to wealthy friends in New York. If you can give me a lift I'll appreciate it highly," I said pleadingly.

The man looked me over searchingly from head to foot.

"All right," he said, "hurry up and get up then. Quick, before the boss gets a glimpse of you. I hate to see a likely looking young fellow down on his luck."

I lost no time in scrambling aboard, and the conductor, who, despite his rough exterior, was a prince of good fellows shoved some things off a trunk to furnish me with a seat.

After some time had elapsed I produced the bottle I had bought, and passed it around to the conductor and the three other trainmen who occupied the caboose. Its appearance was hailed with joy.

The train was by this time steaming at high speed toward New York, and over the liquor we all grew very friendly.

It was a dirty trip, for the dust from the coal-cars blew in our faces and covered us from head to foot with grime.

And that is how I came to New York City.

When we reached the Pennsylvania

depot it was night. I shook hands with the trainmen and crossed on the Twenty-Third Street Ferry.

Here I was in the city I had heard so much about and dreamed of so often, looking like a combination of tramp and coal-heaver, with only fifty cents in my pocket and a fugitive from justice to boot.

As I walked along Twenty-Third Street my heart was as heavy as lead. I fancied that because of my disreputable appearance people shunned me and drew aside as they passed.

Suddenly I found myself standing before an amazing piece of architecture, the strangest I had ever seen.

Many a time I had stood before the impressive structure of St. Paul's Cathedral and admired its lofty grandeur. Many a time I had stood on Westminster Bridge and gazed in awe at the majestic Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. But never in my life had I seen an architectural sight such as this.

The extraordinary building, every window lighted, towered above me, and all around me crowds were hurrying in every direction, while trolleys whizzed by like flashes of light and vehicles dashed merrily along.

It was the Flatiron Building. I had heard of it, read of it, and seen pictures of it, but nevertheless I wasn't prepared for the sight which burst upon me.

The wind was blowing a hurricane. It was all I could do to hold on to my hat as I stood wondering at the architectural ingenuity which had devised this towering building with its small base and pointed front.

In all my strange impressions of America I shall never forget the sensation I experienced when first I gazed at that monstrosity of construction.

And as I stood staring there an extraordinary thing happened.

As I have said the wind was blowing a hurricane. Suddenly there came an unusually heavy gust which almost swept me off my feet, and a second afterward a deafening, terrifying crash, followed by screams of women and yells of men and a wild scurrying on the part of the crowd. It all happened so quickly that I stood rooted to the spot, not understanding what had happened.

In a second there was a panic. Screaming women fought with each other and got in each other's way. Men crowded together, white-faced and struggling. Policemen came rushing toward the scene from all directions.

"What has happened?" I asked of one hatless man.

"What has happened?" he replied. "Why, didn't you see yourself? A block of granite half as big as a trolley car fell from the roof of the Flatiron Building and killed several people."

He dashed forward to where a big crowd had gathered.

In his excitement, he had exaggerated somewhat. A good-sized granite block had indeed become detached from the Flatiron's roof and fallen with a great crash to the sidewalk.

Luckily nobody had been beneath the heavy mass as it came like a comet to the ground; but as the great piece of rock struck the sidewalk with terrific force, big lumps of granite broke off and went bouncing in every direction; and some of these had struck unfortunate passers-by.

Several people had scalp wounds and contusions, but one unfortunate old man who was passing near where the granite block fell had received a killing blow on the base of the skull from a big piece of the stone and lay stretched on the street, apparently lifeless.

In an incredibly few minutes three ambulances were on the scene, and the surgeons were working over the victims.

The doctors attended to the needs of all save the old man on the spot, and sent them to their homes; but over him a surgeon worked for several minutes, and looked very grave when his patient gave no signs of animation.

I stood in the front rank of the big crowd which gathered around this unfortunate.

The surgeon put his ear to the old man's heart and shook his head dubiously.

"He's alive," he said, "but that's about all. He can't live long either. Let's take off his overcoat. Here, hold it somebody."

The surgeon divested the unfortunate victim of his heavy coat and threw it to me as he spoke.

I never had stolen a thing in my life previous to that. In fact the posing as Harry Bush on that unfortunate trip on the Cattle King was the first dishonest deed I had ever done.

It wasn't the fact that the coat the surgeon threw to me was a very good one and almost new, while mine was threadbare and covered with coal dust, that first put it into my head to become a thief. It was the circumstance that just as the coat was handed to me the doctor decided to take the old man to the hospital as quickly as possible.

Telling the policeman of his intention, the officer of the law at once drove back the crowd to make a passage to the ambulance, and I found myself separated, perforce, from both the owner of the coat and from the surgeon.

Before I could fight my way to the ambulance, it had driven off at break-neck speed, with loud clanging bell, and I found myself with the old man's fine overcoat on my hands.

It was only then that the thought, "Why should I not keep this coat?" first came to me. It would enable me at least to appear partly respectable. The surgeon had said that the owner could not live. Surely his heirs would not miss the overcoat.

I am ashamed to say that I yielded to the temptation.

With the coat over my arm I hurried away from the scene, across the Square, and, in a hallway of a cross-street, I shed my own shabby coat as quickly as I could and donned the new one.

It was a perfect fit, and I went out of that doorway looking ten times as respectable as I had gone in.

Then I proceeded to walk down-town with no other purpose save to get as far away as possible from the Flatiron Building, where my theft of the coat might be detected.

I must have walked briskly for an hour and at the end of that time found myself in a squalid street which looked like some sort of a main thoroughfare.

There were four trolley tracks in this street, and overhead rumbled the trains of the elevated railroad. The people I passed were for the most part shabby and rough-looking. There were flaming lights outside every store, and every block

or so a cheap show of some sort with orchestra playing merrily.

"What is this street?" I asked a shabby-looking man.

"Where are you from that you don't know the Bowery?" he answered roughly.

The Bowery. So this was the Bowery about which I had read so much. It was a sad disappointment, for I had expected something far different.

Near where I stood, a man was baking griddle-cakes in the window of a cheap restaurant. I watched him as he quietly twirled the pan and his motions gave me an appetite. I had not eaten all day.

I entered the place intending to purchase a meal with the fifty cents I still possessed. It was a rough-looking restaurant, not even as high-toned as the plebeian Lockhart's of dear old London, and its patrons were even coarser than the frequenters of the last-named resort.

But I am never squeamish and I was desperately hungry.

I ordered a steaming mess of fried frankfurters and sauerkraut, and just as the order was brought, a horrible thought occurred to me.

I had left my sole remaining fifty-cent piece in the pocket of the overcoat I had discarded. I was left without a cent.

I explained my predicament to the waiter as gently as possible. He was none too gentle-looking and possessed the jaw of a prize-fighter.

"Busted, eh?" he said, "Workin' the graft stunt, eh? Come with me, young feller."

Wonderingly I followed him to the front of the restaurant quite at a loss as to his intentions and casting a regretful look at the plate of frankfurters and sauerkraut I had left behind.

Why had I not discovered my penniless condition after I had eaten that savory mess? Evidently the fates were dead against me.

"Do you see that door?" asked the waiter in an almost gentle voice.

"Yes," I said meekly.

"Well, git," he replied.

As I turned to comply with his urgent request, congratulating myself on my easy escape, he lifted his foot and brutally dealt me a kick which sent me flying into the gutter.

I landed on my side, and something bulky in the inside pocket of the overcoat I had stolen pressed painfully against my ribs.

As I picked myself up, bruised and mud splashed, I felt, half instinctively, in the inside pocket of the coat to see what this bulky object could be.

Then, as I drew out what felt to the touch like a roll of paper, I uttered a cry of amazement.

For by the sputtering glare of a Bowery street lamp I recognized money—American money. Bills in a roll as thick as my fist, most of them bearing the numerals "one thousand" on each corner, and several of them of the not-to-be-despised denomination "one hundred."

Around the roll was a band of paper on which was written in pencil the staggering figures \$25,501!

CHAPTER III.

OUR HERO COMES TO A DECISION.

WAS it real money? That naturally was the first question that occurred to me. If so, what should I do with it? If it was real money it must represent a fortune. I couldn't count it there on the crowded street to find out if the roll really contained the amount penciled on the paper band, but even a casual glance showed that I held many thousand dollars in my hands.

Where should I go to examine my find with safety and privacy.

As I looked up and down the Bowery nervously, with my hand in my pocket tightly clutching the roll, my attention was attracted by a sign in a building on the opposite side of the street.

BEDS 15c. ROOMS 25c. to \$1.00

The place was rough-looking and dirty; but then, for that matter, so was I.

Here at least I could find a room to count the money uninterruptedly, as well as to test its genuineness.

Without taking the roll from my

pocket, I peeled off the two top bills which I knew to be respectively a one-dollar bill and a one-hundred-dollar bill.

These I carefully placed in the small ticket pocket of the overcoat, crossed the street, and went into the place.

The ground floor was a barroom filled with a rowdy crowd of fellows.

"Is this where I get a room up-stairs?" I asked of the bartender.

"What kind of a room?" asked that worthy. "How much do you want to pay?"

"How about the one-dollar rooms?" I inquired.

"One-dollar room. All right, cull. Where's the money?"

I handed him the one-dollar bill and he held it to the gas light and gazed searchingly through it for a full half minute, then put it in the drawer of the cash-register, and took a key off a hook.

"There's your key; best room in the house," he remarked. "Come on up-stairs, I'll show you the way."

So far so good. The one-dollar bill was undoubtedly genuine, for the bartender looked too shrewd to be deceived by a counterfeit.

That the thousand-dollar bills, or even the hundreds, were anything more than stage-money, however, I still could scarcely believe.

I determined to make a test of the one-hundred-dollar bill I had drawn from the rest of the roll.

It was a foolhardy thing to do, to flash a hundred dollars before that rough crowd, and the reader may well feel inclined to put me down for an ar-rant simpleton.

My uppermost thought was to discover if the fortune I had found was really genuine, and to accomplish this I was willing to throw caution to the winds.

I drew the bill from my ticket pocket and handed it over the bar.

"Could you oblige me with change for this?" I asked.

The bartender took it quickly and held it up to the gas light as he had done with the one-dollar greenback.

"Whew!" he exclaimed. "A hundred spot, eh?" and at his words there was a peculiar shuffling of feet on the part of the other men in the place.

"Genuine, too," remarked the bartender. "We don't see them every day in here, colonel. Have a drink?"

"No, thanks," I said. "But I'd like to have the change!" for he made no attempt to hand over either the change or my bill.

"Afraid I haven't got it," he answered, almost with a sigh. "I'll take care of this bill for you until the morning and give you the change then, if you like."

"I'm much obliged, but never mind; on second thought I don't need to have it changed at all," I said, not trusting the man's looks.

"Very well," he replied coldly as he handed me back the bill. "This way up-stairs, please."

I followed him up two flights of dark rickety stairs into a small, ill-smelling room not much bigger than an ordinary closet.

I looked into this chamber with extreme distaste. Even after my none-too-comfortable experiences on the cattle steamer and the coal train, I shrank from such dirty quarters.

"The nicest room in the house. You'll find a wash-room at the end of the hall," remarked the bartender as he withdrew down-stairs, after turning up the gas and handing me the key. If this was the nicest room in the house, I thought, God help the other tenants.

I went down the hall to wash my face and hands; then returned to the room; and, turning the key in the lock, sat down upon the squalid bed. There was no other article of furniture in the room, in fact the bed took up nearly all the floor space there was.

There was one small window which looked out upon the Bowery. The walls were of thin wood. Evidently the room had been partitioned off. Was it a safe place to take out the fortune and count it?

Although I mistrusted the people down-stairs, I could see no way that any of them could enter the room, save by the door.

As an extra precaution against this means of ingress, I dragged the iron bed around so that it completely blocked the doorway.

This barrier, together with the locked

door, I thought should afford me the necessary protection from would-be intruders.

Then I carefully examined the thin wooden walls for any signs of a spy-hole; none was apparent.

With a sigh of relief, I pulled the precious roll from my pocket and spread the bills upon the bed.

With feverish hands I counted out the money.

One thousand, two thousand, ten thousand, twenty thousand, twenty-five thousand dollars in one-thousand-dollar bills and four hundred dollars in one-hundred-dollar bills, making with the one dollar I had given for the room and the hundred-dollar bill I still kept in my ticket pocket a total of \$25,501.

The total penciled on the paper band surrounding the wad was correct to a dollar. "What a lot of money," I thought to myself, "what an awful lot of money."

I hastily gathered together the bills and was placing them in the inside pocket of the overcoat, when I heard somebody trying the handle of my door, from the outside.

"Who's there?" I cried loudly. There was no answer, but I could plainly hear the sound of somebody hastily withdrawing down the passage.

I spread the overcoat on the bed and lay down upon it, fully dressed, afraid to go to sleep, and yet too tired to trust myself to stay awake once my head rested upon a pillow.

I had not to wait long before there came again the noise of somebody trying the lock outside.

"Who's there? What do you want?" I cried again, by this time I must confess thoroughly frightened.

"Excuse me," mumbled a half drunken voice outside, "I made a mistake in the room."

The explanation did not allay my fears. I felt sure that if I remained a minute longer in this place I should be robbed, and perhaps murdered.

I resolved to leave the place, although I shuddered to abandon the partial security of this room with its locked door and barricade to pass once more through the murderous-looking group downstairs in the barroom.

I slipped into my overcoat, and half expecting to be set upon and murdered as soon as I set foot outside the room, I dragged the bed into its former position once more, and throwing the door suddenly wide open, stepped out into the darkened hallway.

The key of the room had a big brass tag attached to it and this I held in my hand as a weapon, determined to dash it with all my might into the face of the first assailant who appeared.

To my relief, however, I encountered nobody outside, and I stepped rapidly down the dark staircase and regained the ground floor without molestation.

I was surprised and glad to discover that it was possible to get to the street without passing through the barroom.

The hotel, it seemed, had a separate entrance—a long, dark hallway which ran alongside the barroom, and communicated with it by a swinging door.

I fairly ran down this hallway, glancing fearfully through the swinging door as I passed.

The bartender was drawing a mammoth glass of beer, and caught but a glimpse of me as I shot out of the front door and into the street. The same crowd was lounging inside around the bar.

I sped down the Bowery, almost on the run. "Safe, safe at last, thank heavens," I said to myself.

I had little cause for self-congratulation, however. I had not gone far, before I was aware of the fact that there was somebody at my heels.

I turned to confront a tall, burly fellow, whom I immediately recognized as one of the loungers I had noticed in the saloon when I had first entered.

"How are you, old pal?" he said in a husky voice, which he doubtless meant to sound cordial. "Come and have a drink. I ain't seen you in an age."

"No, thanks. I don't drink," I answered, on my guard.

The man muttered something about being "darned unsociable," and apparently left me. Then I made the foolish mistake of leaving the Bowery, well lit and crowded with people, and disappearing down a side street, anxious to get away as soon as possible from this seemingly undesirable thoroughfare.

The street down which I turned was Bayard Street, which, at that hour of night, was dark and deserted. I realized my mistake before I had gone many steps, and turned to regain the Bowery once more.

But this was not to be, for suddenly I found myself confronted by the fellow who had addressed me a few minutes before.

His manner was no longer friendly. He had sprung up suddenly, apparently out of the ground, and he towered above me menacingly.

"Say, youngster," he said, "I want no blamed nonsense. Hurry up and hand over that hundred."

His heavy jaw was set grimly and his manner brooked of no delay or argument.

"I can't," I protested; "it doesn't belong to me. Really."

He raised his fist menacingly. It was a powerful fist, and I shuddered to think what would happen to me if it struck me.

"Hand it over here, I said, do you hear?" he repeated in a voice that chilled me with fear.

I hesitated no longer. There was nobody in sight, and if I had attempted to shout for help, he probably would have killed me. I handed him the hundred-dollar bill, which luckily I had kept detached from the roll. My act probably saved me from losing the rest of the money, for the man snatched the hundred roughly from my hand and made off quickly without even a thank you.

Evidently he did not dream for a minute that I possessed more than this one bill, or he would have killed me if necessary to obtain the rest.

In this one respect fate therefore was particularly kind to me; but it was this daring hold-up which turned my thoughts to the third and greatest act of dishonesty I had ever attempted.

Previous to being robbed I had not had the slightest intention of keeping this money.

I had hoped, it is true, that the owner might offer me some slight reward for the returning of his coat and his fortune.

But now I was one hundred dollars

short. If I told the owner of the coat the story of the hold-up, provided the poor old man was still alive to hear the story at all, he would doubtless look upon my yarn with great suspicion, and perhaps have me arrested as a thief.

What should I do? The bills were undoubtedly genuine, for the Bowery bartender must be a competent judge. If I gave them back to the owner and got into trouble over that missing hundred-dollar bill, the police would probably discover at the same time that I was the supposed Harry Bush.

Then a daring thought came to me. I sought to fight it off, but it kept coming back with irresistible force, and in the end I yielded to it, and thus left for good the path of honor, and fell into the maze of astounding situations which shall be narrated in these pages.

The old man who was evidently the owner of the money was doubtless dying or dead. Probably nobody would ever know that he had left all that money in the overcoat. Even if they did know, they would never discover what had become of the overcoat.

I, the penniless Jack Francis, was in continual danger of being arrested on a charge of murder and bank-robbery as the villainous Harry Bush.

If I were well dressed and carefully groomed, no detective could know that I was not a wealthy London tourist on his first visit to the United States.

It was a daring decision, but I made it quickly. My father had been a man of gentlemanly parts and attainments, and I had inherited his refined manners and characteristics.

It would not be a difficult matter for me, I told myself, to assume the rôle of a wealthy, well-bred Englishman. In fact, I rather flattered myself that it was a rôle to which I was really by birth and nature entitled.

I would throw honor to the winds and avail myself of the opportunity fortune had put in my way.

There should be no half measures about the plan either.

Right there and then I determined to stop at the very best hotel in New York and spend my fortune like a prince.

I had heard much, as all London has heard, of the splendors of the Waldorf.

To the Waldorf I determined to go as soon as I could supply myself with an adequate wardrobe, and to place my name upon the hotel register in company with the names of the best people in the land.

It was not my real name that I should place there, for that might prove a dangerous step; nor, of course, should I sign the name of Harry Bush.

It would be safer to adopt a brand new name, so I resolved to be called henceforth by the name of Arnold Murray.

When once I am resolved upon a thing I never draw back or go about it in a half-hearted manner. I would have carried out the plan right at that minute had circumstances permitted.

But it was impossible to buy any fashionable clothing at a moment's notice, and I could not dream of going to the Waldorf in the clothes I wore.

Where should I sleep for this one night before I became Arnold Murray and a gentleman of fortune? The smallest bill I had was a hundred-dollar bill. After my first experience I hesitated to try and change another of the same denomination in order to hire a cheap room.

While I was thinking all this out I had regained the Bowery and was walking abstractedly toward Park Row.

Here at last was a thoroughfare which seemed to be respectable. The squalid gin-mills and squalid houses had given place to lofty buildings and pretentious stores. The well-dressed people hurrying up and down filled me with confidence, and were a welcome relief from the poor wretches I had just left.

Into a well-lighted all-night cigar store near the City Hall "L" Station I went.

Here at least was a place where I could produce a one-hundred-dollar bill without being held up and robbed as a consequence.

"Got change for a hundred-dollar bill?" I asked the polite clerk, as I took a handful of cigars from an open box on the counter.

The man sized me up carefully. The stolen overcoat I wore was a good one, but my hat was shabby and my face still bore signs of the coal-dust, although

I had tried to wash it off in the lavatory of the saloon.

He held the bill searchingly to the light, as the Bowery bartender had done, but he handed me the change without saying anything, carefully counting out the bills before me.

Placing one of the cigars in my mouth, I said, as I turned to the cigar-lighter:

"I'm a stranger in New York. Can you tell me of a respectable hotel around here, where I can get a meal and a room, and a bath."

"Why not try a Turkish bath? You could sleep there all night," suggested the cigar-store man, looking hard at my coal-stained face and hands.

"The very thing," I declared. "Is there one around here?"

"Only two blocks down—on Nassau Street."

I had not experienced the comfort of a real bath for three long weeks. The thought of the luxury of a Turkish bath filled me with delight.

Suddenly I thought of the fortune I carried. If I went to the Turkish bath, I must naturally divest myself of all my clothes. Would it be safe to leave the money in the locker?

"I have considerable money in my pocket," I explained to the cigar-store man. "Will it be safe to trust it out of my sight in such a place?"

"Sure thing. Just put your money in a big envelope. Here's one right here. Seal it and hand it over to the cashier of the bath and get a check for it. It'll be as safe as in a bank."

Although I felt that I was taking some risk, I followed his advice.

First I went to Dennett's on Park Row and ate a heavy meal. Then I sought the Turkish bath establishment, placed the money in the big envelope as advised, got a brass check for it, and urged the cashier to be very careful of it.

Fifteen minutes later I was enjoying the delights of the bath, and, as the masseur worked over me with skilful hands, I sighed with contentment and thought that heaven itself must be something like the luxury I was then enjoying.

The bath over, I was taken to a neat little room with a clean white bed, and

fell fast asleep as soon as my head touched the pillow.

All night long I dreamed of Arnold Murray and the glorious way in which he would spend his money, and I am ashamed to say that in the morning, when I arose thoroughly refreshed from my long sleep, and thought the matter out a little more carefully, I did not experience any change of mind.

Honesty I had cast entirely to the winds and entered upon my new life with not the slightest twinges of conscience.

"Now for a fashionable clothier, where I can get rid of my rags," I said to myself, as I walked toward the barber-shop of the bath. "And then to the Waldorf-Astoria, where I can enjoy the luxuries and delights of wealth. Arnold Murray, old man, you will make a hit in high society, without a doubt."

CHAPTER IV.

I MEET ESTELLA.

ON the cattle-ship I had tried one day to shave myself with a blunt razor with a broken blade, possessed by one of the crew.

Apart from this my face had not felt a razor's keen edge for nearly three weeks, and the consternation of the barber when I presented myself before him to be shaved can be imagined.

He labored long and hard, however, and when he was through and I looked at myself in the long pier-glass, perfectly clean in body and clean shaven of face, I scarcely knew myself, so different was the appearance I presented from that of the tramp who had entered the bath the night before.

Like the other patrons of this barber-shop, I entered it clad only in the long comfortable "nighty" provided by the establishment.

As I stepped out of the barber's chair, I shrank from dressing myself once more in the filthy linen and ragged clothes which were thrown in an unsightly heap in a corner of my locker.

It was the barber who saved the day.

"Could you send your boy out to buy me a clean shirt and set of underwear—and socks," I asked him.

"Sure thing, sir. There's a gent's furnishing store right across the street."

"Do they sell clothes, too; a whole suit, I mean?" I asked eagerly, struck with an idea.

"Yes, sir, I believe they do. Nothing high class, you understand, but just cheap suits and overcoats."

"Say, boy," I said, turning to the shoe-black, "run across the street and tell the salesman of that store your boss speaks of to come over here at once with the best suit he has in the place, a stiff white shirt, a suit of underwear, a pair of socks and some shoes."

"But how about your size, sir?" asked the surprised lad.

"Never mind about that. Let him guess my size as well as he can. Take a good look at me and see if you can help him out in that respect. Tell him that I will pay him well for his trouble, and there is a dollar in it for you, if you manage the thing right. Now, hurry."

This strange plan did not cause the barber as much surprise as might be supposed. All sorts and conditions of men float into Turkish baths, and those attached to such establishments soon learn to be surprised at nothing they see or hear.

In fifteen minutes the salesman arrived in the barber-shop, carrying over his arm two suits of clothes and the other articles I had ordered.

He indeed did look somewhat surprised and puzzled, but I had an explanation all ready for him.

"Fell into the river yesterday and got drenched from head to foot," I explained. "Clothing isn't dry yet, so I want a complete outfit."

"See if this suit will fit you, sir," said the man. "I brought two along, thinking if one didn't fit the other might."

I stepped into my locker with the new clothes, and in a few minutes emerged fully clad.

The suit fitted me surprisingly well for a guess measurement. Not the kind of fit that would look well for Arnold Murray at the Waldorf-Astoria, of course; but that wasn't my plan.

My idea was simply to get some presentable garments with which to go into a fashionable clothier's and get fitted, for I shrank from risking suspicion by

appearing in such a shop in my own wretched rags.

This suit answered the purpose admirably. It cost only fifteen dollars, and I went to the cashier and drew out my envelope, still tightly sealed, tore it open, and paid the man his money, with five dollars over for his trouble, settled my indebtedness to the establishment, and left the place feeling spick and span.

I left my old clothes in the bath-house locker; taking, however, the overcoat I had stolen, as this was quite good enough to wear.

My next step was to get some breakfast, and then I proceeded to a fashionable ready-made clothier on Broadway, recommended to me by the cashier of the bath.

I should have gone straightway to a tailor and had some suits made to order; but I was anxious to begin my new life right away, so was forced to content myself with the best outfit that a ready-made clothier could afford.

I obtained a fine black suit that fitted me perfectly, a high silk hat, a new overcoat, and a full-dress suit.

This last I bought because I providentially happened to recollect that after six o'clock at a fashionable hotel I should look conspicuous if I did not have conventional evening garb.

I also bought some linen, neckties, etc., and a fine dress-suit case, into which I bade the salesman pack the clothing I could not wear right away.

My outlay in this place was considerably over one hundred dollars, but as I left the shop, dress-suit case in hand, and glanced into a mirror, I felt a thrill of pride to notice the difference that the high silk hat and the smart clothes made in my appearance.

Without conceit, I may say that I looked the gentleman of fashion, every inch of me. I scarcely could recognize in myself, as I stood reflected in the mirror, that poor, penniless Jack Francis, who only a few hours before had arrived in New York in the caboose of a coal train, cold and hungry and covered with dust.

"Now for the Waldorf-Astoria," I said to myself exultantly as I hailed a passing hansom cab.

It was a little after noon when I entered the Waldorf, giving the cabman three times his fare and walking through the vestibule of the fashionable hostelry with head proudly erect and conscious that I looked as fashionable and as gentlemanly as the best and most blue-blooded of the guests.

With due modesty I think I can say that nature has not been unkind to me in the matter of good looks and bearing, and in my pride it seemed to me that more than one pair of eyes was directed toward me as I marched majestically down the corridor with a polite page at my heels carrying my smart-looking dress-suit case.

Beautiful women and well-groomed men thronged the corridors, and a thrill went through me, as I thought that I, the penniless Jack Francis, was in future to rub shoulders with all these splendid people. The room-clerk nodded politely as I stood before the desk.

"I want a good room, a very good room," I said, quite at my ease.

"Yes, sir," he replied respectfully. "How would 402 on the fourth floor suit you, sir? Will you kindly go upstairs and take a look at it. Here is the register, sir."

I signed my name, "Arnold Murray, London, England," in a firm, round hand. The clerk called a page and directed him to conduct me up-stairs to room 402.

The young man led the way to the elevator, through long lines of leather chairs, on which sat fashionably dressed men who smoked expensive cigars and chatted idly.

As the elevator came down to our floor, a handsome gentleman, well advanced in years, as his gray hair and beard showed, stepped out of the car.

There was something about him so distinguished that I turned to watch him as he disappeared with firm tread down the corridor.

"Who was that gentleman who just stepped out of the elevator?" I asked the page.

"That was Mr. William Morton, of Chicago, a millionaire financier," replied the boy. "He has the next room to yours."

The page ushered me politely into room 402, a splendidly appointed chamber with a comfortable bed; in fact, I may as well confess, a far better room than I had ever slept in before.

"This room will do very nicely. Tell the clerk so," I said to the boy. "And give me the key."

When the page had disappeared I locked the door, unpacked my dress-suit case and threw myself upon the luxurious bed.

"So far so good," I mused. "Every thing is going along fine. Jack Francis, or rather Arnold Murray, you are indeed a lucky fellow!"

And all this time I gave not a single thought as to the dishonesty of which I was guilty, nor felt any compunction over robbing the old man in the hospital.

I carried the immense sum of money in the inside pocket of my vest; but I felt this to be a very unsafe proceeding, and determined to bank the greater part of it as soon as possible.

After I had made a few changes in my toilet, I locked the door of my room, rang for the elevator, and went downstairs.

I explored every part of the main floor of the Waldorf, sauntering leisurely through the beautiful palm-room, where pretty women sat around on settees and gilded chairs and looked at me out of careless eyes, as I passed.

In a corner of that room, sitting all alone and with an expression of sadness in her sweet face, was the most beautiful girl I had ever seen in my life.

She could not have been more than twenty-two years of age, and her dress, though plain, became her perfectly and showed off her beauty to the greatest advantage.

Allowing my admiration to overcome my politeness, I stared at her rudely as I walked by, and as a consequence, before I could prevent myself, had run full tilt into somebody walking in the opposite direction.

"Confound you, sir," said the person I had bumped into in a deep, angry voice, "why can't you look where you are going? You stepped square on my pet corn."

I turned hastily to find that the

speaker was the majestic Mr. William Morton, the Chicago financier, whom I had previously noticed stepping out of the elevator.

"A thousand pardons, sir," I said nervously. "I sincerely hope that I didn't hurt you."

"Oh, no, of course you didn't hurt me," said the great man sarcastically, "I like people to step on my corns. It's the most pleasant sensation imaginable. Don't try it again, that's all."

"It was very careless of me, sir, I must confess. I assure you that I deeply regret the pain I must have caused you," I said in the manner and words I felt would become Arnold Murray.

"Don't do it again, that's all I have to say to you, young man," snapped the great financier, and limped painfully away.

He may have been a great financier, but he certainly was not a gentleman, I thought, to make so much fuss over a little accident like that.

However, the incident did me no harm. The little argument had taken place before several fashionable women and within earshot of the beautiful girl in the corner, and I could see that our fair auditors sided with me and condemned the great financier for his rude display of bad temper.

I had the proud consciousness that I had behaved like a gentleman under the circumstances and felt a glow of pride to think that I was carrying out the part of Arnold Murray so well.

I had almost forgotten this incident, but it was brought to my mind again in a surprising way during the afternoon.

I had by this time been several hours in the Waldorf and felt terribly lonely.

My money could buy me the comforts of the magnificent hotel, but it could not buy me a friend or even an acquaintance among that exclusive set. At least so it seemed during my first few hours' stay there.

There was nobody to introduce me to anybody, and I dined alone and walked alone through the corridors and reception-rooms, almost repenting that I had selected this way of spending my fortune.

Here were beautiful women in abundance and I always enjoyed the society

of beautiful women, but where was anybody to introduce me to even one of them. There were not many men in the hotel in the daytime, and those that were there kept exclusively to themselves and seemed to shun any attempts to cultivate their acquaintance.

I had half expected that as soon as I entered the hotel I should be introduced to everybody in the place, just as if I had been attending a private dinner-party. The reality was a sad disappointment.

It was in a somewhat dejected state of mind that I entered the billiard-room.

As luck would have it, I had unconsciously arrived at the best means of making acquaintances. Many a lifelong friendship has started in the billiard-room of a hotel.

I am a good billiard player, but having no one to play with I stood at one of the tables, watching two young men who played a skilful game.

It was while I was standing there that the surprising thing happened.

My attention was centered on a particularly delicate piece of cue work, when I felt a heavy hand laid on my shoulder.

"Pardon me," said a deep bass voice, "but do you play billiards? I feel like playing a game with somebody."

I turned to confront the tall figure of Mr. William Morton, the Chicago financier.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" said he, recognizing me as I turned. "You're the man who stepped on my corn, aren't you? Guess I was grouchy over it. Hope you'll pardon my temper."

"Do not mention it, sir," I said affably. "I pray you will say nothing more about it. I presume I must have caused you very great pain."

"To tell you the truth, you did, sir. But, then, it was an accident, and I had no right to lose my temper. Even my daughter told me that I acted like a bear. She insisted that I apologize to you, so here I am."

"Your daughter, sir? I hope I shall have the pleasure of meeting her," I said audaciously.

"Perhaps you will, sir. I hope that you will. By the way, you have not told me your name."

"Arnold Murray, of London, England," I replied proudly.

"Mine is William Morton, Chicago," replied the financier, handing me his pasteboard. "I hope that we shall know more of each other, sir, and that you quite overlook my rudeness."

"I hope we shall, sir," I replied, overcome by the sudden friendliness of this important personage.

"But let us get a table and start a game. Do you play well?" asked Mr. Morton.

"Fairly well," I replied.

"Good. I'm a pretty good player myself. You start the game."

"All right, sir," I replied, and thanked heaven that I had made a friend, and that the ice was broken at last. "Now, I shall meet Miss Morton," I thought, "and be introduced into the society that she frequents."

Then I began to wonder what the young lady would be like. Rich she certainly was, and a society belle probably. As I turned to choose a cue from the rack, vague hopes and rosy visions began to flit through my head.

The Chicago millionaire played a good game of billiards, and after two hours we came out even.

Over the green table we grew quite friendly. The great man interested himself in me to a flattering extent, and asked many questions concerning myself.

In the course of conversation I told him that I was a wealthy young Englishman, here for pleasure, and that my fortune was over two hundred thousand dollars—it came easy for me to lie. When I spoke of my possessions, the financier sniffed contemptuously, as if the figure I had named were a mere bagatelle. I told him also that I knew no one in this country.

I also told him that I was of good family on the other side and that I was nobly connected, with a chance of some day getting a title.

In return the Chicago millionaire told me that he liked my looks and my manners and the way I played billiards, and that he would be glad to show me around town in his automobile and to introduce me to his daughter.

"Estella is a pretty girl," he said, "and very clever. She doesn't seem to

be very partial to young men, however. She generally gives the cold shoulder to those she comes across. She's a peculiar girl, is Estella."

My heart sank at these words. Would Estella be proud and haughty and give the cold shoulder to me also, I wondered.

Then I thought of the beautiful girl, with the sad expression, whom I had seen sitting all alone in the corner of the palm-room, and my heart beat quicker and the blood rushed through my veins.

Could it be that I was in love at first sight with a girl whose name I did not even know?

When we had finished our game we put on our coats and left the billiard-room.

I had won, and Mr. Morton congratulated me warmly.

"You play a good game, Mr. Murray," he said. "We must play again and often. It is a pleasure to play with an expert. I am a man who sizes up a fellow pretty quickly. That's how I made my millions. And I don't mind saying frankly that I like your looks and have taken to you immensely."

I expressed my appreciation of his kind words and together we walked to the palm-room. The ladies, dressed for dinner by this time, stood or sat around in their evening gowns, which revealed their lovely necks and fair, white arms.

In the center of the room, talking to an old lady, was the girl I had admired so much a few hours earlier, and whose charms had caused me to step upon the toes of the Chicago millionaire.

If she had looked beautiful before, in her afternoon costume, she was a dream

of bewildering loveliness now, in her dinner gown.

This dress was cut just low enough at the neck to show a perfectly rounded throat of wonderful whiteness. Her dark luxuriant hair had been dressed and decked with flowers. Her dark-brown eyes seemed to blaze like jewels, although the peculiar sad expression was still there.

I stood looking at her in an ecstasy of admiration, scarcely heeding the words of the millionaire at my side.

Indeed he had to repeat them before I heard them, but when I realized what he was saying I started as if shot.

"Estella," he said, "let me introduce to you Mr. Arnold Murray, of London, England. Mr. Murray, my daughter Estella."

The blood raced joyously through my veins as I realized that the beautiful creature whom I had so much admired but a short time before was none other than Mr. Morton's daughter.

This lovely girl was his daughter, and I, poor blind fool that I was, only a few minutes before had dreamed of the possibility of making his daughter my wife.

Her glorious eyes met mine, and her lips parted in a half smile as she bowed politely.

"I am delighted to meet you, Mr. Murray," she said in a low tone which thrilled me through and through.

And as I stood before that fair girl, I wished, for the first time since I had entered the Waldorf, that my name had been plain Jack Francis instead of Arnold Murray, and I lamented bitterly that I had stolen the \$25,501 of the old man in the hospital.

(To be continued.)

FORTUNE AND MISFORTUNE.

Anonymous.

FAIR Fortune is a fickle miss,
Not long with one her stay;
In haste she gives a smile, a kiss,
Then vanishes away.

Not so Misfortune, constant maid,
Her fancy never flits;
No haste is in her manner staid,
She seats herself and knits.

BY APPROVAL OF JOSÉ MARIA.

By Charles Francis Bourke.

**OF a rather sentimental bandit
who had a curious way of
doing the unexpected thing. ***

THE afternoon sun was shining over the Andalusian heights when José Maria rode down from the mountains.

An hour's ride behind him was that stronghold that had sheltered the bandit so well since that day when, near Sevilla, a trifling argument had occurred between himself and the King's Guards—an argument which had resulted in the death of one and the wounding of several others of the uniformed gentry.

Since then he had subsisted upon toll exacted from the more favored of fortune—for a man must still live, even when an unjust government has placed him under the ban and labeled him an outlaw.

The hour's ride had brought him far plainward from the heart of the mountain passes. He had passed the city, whose great gate bore a newly affixed proclamation promising a liberal reward for his capture, dead or alive.

He had designs upon this proclamation, but this was not the time to put them into execution. There was more serious work ahead—a life to save, if it were possible, and that same unjust government to cheat once again.

The bandit communed with himself, as the big bay mare pounded along the broad mail road.

"His Excellency should be at Herrera's tavern before dark," he murmured, as the pleasant vista of verdure flew by on either side. "If this new Governor of ours travels by night it will be morning before he reaches the city. A sorry pleasure it must be indeed—His Excellency's intention to witness the end of poor Pedro!" He laughed softly to himself.

"As for me—well! This blood-thirsty Governor must first catch his quarry."

He swung his mare into a by-path and waited while a lumbering coach, which had appeared in view over the brow of the hill, neared him and passed, the driver cracking his long whip over his four mules, the passengers gazing from the windows, all unsuspecting of the near proximity of the dreaded robber, whose name was a synonym for daring deeds on the highway.

As the sun's rays caught the last glint of the dusty coach windows, José Maria again swung the bay into the road and sped on toward his destination.

Herrera's tavern—the rude venta of the highway—was located in an isolated spot on the mail road; the solitary sign of human habitation for leagues around it abutted from the closing gloom, its scattered outbuildings trailing off in the back, in the deeper shadow of the undergrowth.

When José Maria reined up at the rear of the tavern, his quick ear caught the faint echo of clattering hoofs and swiftly rolling wheels. A second coach was approaching along the highroad, and through the trees the bandit saw the red coats of the royal mail guards, riding atop the coach. His hand dropped upon his pistol holsters and then stole to the stiletto concealed in his sash.

"Now for the first act in Pedro's little tragedy!" he softly murmured. "It is the coach that carries the Governor."

The bandit's bay mare was quietly feeding in a stall when the Governor's coach drew up before the tavern. José Maria was lurking in the shadow of the eaves when the landlord bustled from the door and the red-coated guards clambered down from the box and swung open the door of the coach.

Three travelers descended, a gentleman and two ladies, and the landlord came forward with a welcoming grimace on his round fat face.

"Their Excellencies will sup?" he asked, bowing low before the travelers, who were still muffled in their cloaks against the keen evening air.

"Guard!" exclaimed the gentleman harshly, ignoring the question and questioner; "bid the driver inform you how much time he means to waste here!"

The driver flung aside his reins with a muttered oath.

"Excellency, the mules must rest," he growled. "Never in the history of man has the mail come so quickly from Madrid——"

"That is not what I asked," the traveler interrupted imperiously. "Cannot you give me a straight answer?"

"It depends entirely on the mules," the driver returned sullenly. Then, with a knowing glance at the landlord, he added: "Certainly longer than Your Excellencies need to eat a bite."

The Governor, with an exclamation of impatience, turned to assist the ladies. From his shadow, José Maria saw that one of the latter was young and handsome; the other doubtless her duenna.

"His Excellency has brought his lady-love," the bandit murmured. "So much the better—no chance of a trap in this for me. But where"—and he glanced at the two men in red coats who stood leaning on their muskets—"where are the rest of the guards? Does this new Governor travel with mail guards only?"

The same thought seemed to strike the landlord. He addressed the gentleman hesitatingly.

"It is doubtless Your Excellency, Don Miguel?" he said. "Doubtless Your Excellency's guards are not far distant?"

"Do not concern yourself about His Excellency's guards!" the Governor returned curtly.

The landlord made a movement as though he was about to return the incivility in kind, when the younger of the two ladies interposed with a laugh:

"Mother of Heaven!" she cried in a clear and musical voice, "why do you quarrel with all you meet, Don Miguel? We are not the important personages here, perhaps, that we may be in Madrid.

"Señor Landlord," she added, turning to the chafing tavern-keeper, "some leagues from here it became necessary for the Governor to send his personal guards scattering on some errand of duty—important doubtless, as you perceive we continue our journey by the mail. Come, then, let us have refreshments; I, for one, am famished."

The doughty landlord was pacified. Bowing low to the ladies, he waved his hand gracefully to the tavern.

"The venta and all it contains is yours, down to my wife and child!" he exclaimed. "I myself will see to the preparations. Graciously enter!"

The lady turned gaily to the Governor, who was still frowning.

"See, Don Miguel," she cried; "I am the real governor, for I open doors which you might close!"

Don Miguel caught her extended hand and with a movement of impulse drew from his finger a ring, which he quickly slipped on her own slender finger.

"I seal the bargain," he cried; "if but for the occasion, then, you shall command with the Great Seal of State as well as by your own sweet authority!"

"Ah, now you are a more pleasant companion," she laughed; but with a little shiver of fear as she glanced at the great seal; "I shall retain it, if but to add to my dignity and importance."

So saying, the young lady took the arm of her duenna and entered the tavern. The Governor looked doubtfully after her; then, with a brief order to the driver to prepare for speedy departure, he followed the ladies.

The landlord had already returned to the duties of preparing refreshments for his guests, and the driver, leading his mules, took his way to the stable. As he threw open the doors, a man stepped from the shadow and accosted him, with his finger on his lips.

"Holy Mother!" the driver exclaimed with a backward step; "it is José Maria!"

"Quiet!" hissed the bandit, with his hand on his stiletto. "Quick! On what errand did the Governor send forth the guards?"

The driver crossed himself.

"Señor, do not fear that I will un-

mask you. The guards were sent to gather in the péasants who build the gallows for poor Pedro, who is to die in the morning. They but wait in the city for the coming of His Excellency, who may witness the execution. They took the six mules of the Governor's coach. The coach itself was unfit to continue the journey——"

"Ah, I thought it," the bandit murmured, with flashing eyes. "'Tis not enough that they kill the lad, but to compel his own friends and neighbors to build the gallows——"

"Señor Maria," said the trembling driver, "it is the custom; a bitter, cruel one, as we all know. The señor knows I am at his orders. It is by accident only the Governor took the mail."

The bandit nodded grimly.

"When do you leave and by which road?" he asked.

"We go through by the mail road—His Excellency stops but a space at the tavern."

"Señor Maria," the driver added, as the bandit stood thoughtfully stroking the flank of the bay mare; "the landlord, Herrera, whispered to me just now that within the tavern Pedro's lass awaits since early morning to beg for Pedro's life. Ah, but"—the man shook his head sorrowfully—"this Governor brute has the heart of a mule. It will be fruitless!"

"What passed between this Governor and his lady?" José Maria asked abruptly. "She speaks gaily for one going to a murder."

"Doña Sol? She does not know the mission they are on. His Excellency in jest gave the señorita his great ring of State. I heard him say it could kill or pardon. Saints protect us! What have we here?"

A sound of moaning and bitter weeping was heard without. The driver peered through the door into the darkness.

"It is Pedro's girl! It is as I thought. He has a heart of stone, this Governor!"

A girl, wrapped in a black mantle, and with a colored handkerchief bound around her head, was leaning against the doorway. Hearing the voice within, she lifted her tear-stained face from her

hands and then cried out in surprise and joy.

"Señor José! 'Tis El Tempranito himself!" she cried, staggering into the gloom of the stable, where the faint light of a lantern had illuminated the pale, handsome face of the bandit. "We are saved! Pedro shall not die! I have sought you everywhere. You do not forget, señor," she cried eagerly, "my Pedro once saved you at the ford from the uniformed ones——"

"Silence!" the robber murmured. "Do you wish us both lost? Do you understand, crazy one? I have sworn to save Pedro, or die with him. See to her, friend," he whispered to the driver, who endeavored to soothe the frantic creature. "And remember!" The robber showed an inch of his blade. "This night I shall meet you at the forks. If the guns of the red-coated ones are primed, or if you swerve before reaching the spot——"

"May my soul be lost——" the driver began.

"Count it already lost, if you balk me by a hairbreadth," the robber hissed. He sprang quickly back into the stall and backed the big bay to the door. Springing into the saddle, he bent over the disheveled girl.

"Return to the mountains," he said. "Go not to the town to-morrow. And now, trust to the honor of José Maria. *Adios!*"

He whispered to the bay and they sped like a meteor down the white road, where horse and rider disappeared in the darkness.

The driver looked after the bandit admiringly.

"Come, Pepita," he said; "I feel more consoled now for that poor Pedro of thine. Nevertheless, let us go into the tavern and weep bitterly!"

* * * * *

Half a league from Herrera's tavern the coach of the Governor lumbered along the same white, winding road which the robber had traversed before it, rising to the hills, sweeping at the speed of the four galloping mules into the valleys and threading the blackness of a long ravine where the flickering shadows aroused the growing fears of

the ladies and the apprehensions of the Governor himself.

Snatches of conversation concerning the feats of outrage perpetrated by the highwaymen who infested the mountains passed between driver and guards on the box and drifted to the ears of the occupants of the coach.

To Don Miguel, it almost seemed as though the men dwelt unduly upon the harrowing details of former robberies, the rifling of coaches and the maltreating of travelers, and the occasional slaughter of outriders and guards who had had the courage to oppose the designs of the bandits.

The Governor's blood boiled when he heard of these lawless attacks occurring within his own province, which he had vowed, in the safety of his club at Madrid, to rid forever of the law-defying brotherhood.

Seeing the fears of Doña Sol increasing, and the coach coming to a halt at a watering trough by the roadside, he called to him one of the guards.

"You have traveled this road before, on duty," he said; "assure this lady that the foolish tales we have overheard are of times before my coming."

"Excellency," the guard returned, with a nervous glance over his shoulder; "'twas on this very spot, not five days gone, the mail was held up and rifled, and furthermore all the travelers—pardon, Excellency, but so the driver tells me—all the travelers entered the city like angels."

"What do you mean?"

"Excellency, the brigands stripped them of everything, even to their shoes. It was also in the ravine that——"

A stifled scream came from the interior of the coach and Don Miguel angrily motioned the man away. A moment later the driver cracked his whip and the coach took up its journey.

The night was well advanced. Overhead the moon sailed in a cloudless sky, its silvery rays penetrating the dense foliage of the trees here and there, casting quivering gleams of light upon some huge boulder that loomed up in the shadow of the roadside.

They were approaching a black recess or narrow ravine in the mountain, on the hither side of which the great

white road forked away into two branches, projecting forward like a huge letter Y. The coach lurched and swayed as the mules picked up the traces. Through the enforced silence which had followed the Governor's rebuke the driver's voice came softly:

"It is not a place where one would care to be in the black books of those light-fingered gentry. Yonder is where they murdered——"

A piercing shriek rent the night. The duenna who, shaking and quaking, had been staring from the window of the coach, sank back, loudly lamenting.

"I saw them! Oh, I saw them!" she moaned. "Holy Mother, preserve us!"

"For the sake of heaven, control yourself!" Don Miguel cried. "'Tis enough to rouse all the bandits in Christendom!" He thrust his head from the window and in turn uttered an exclamation of consternation and surprise. "By my soul, I believe the old fool is right!" he muttered.

Some fifty paces down the road six or seven men waited, on horseback, motionless, impassive, barring their passage, their dim outlines silhouetted against the gloom. On the instant, the coach hurtled into their midst and drew up sharply, without spoken word of command, as the grim figures parted, surrounding it on both sides.

Before Don Miguel could release himself from the frightened women and spring to the ground, pistol in hand, the guards, in obedience to a harsh command, had dropped their muskets and clambered down from the box; the driver sat tranquil aloft, shifting the reins from one hand to the other and clucking soothingly to his mules.

"What is the meaning of this outrage?" the Governor blustered. "Guards, why do you permit this stoppage——"

A mocking laugh from the horsemen interrupted him.

"Easy, Excellency!" a voice warned. "Do not harm yourself with that little toy you carry. As for the guards, they were not consulted!"

"Excellency, our muskets were tampered with," the nearest guard whispered. "Besides, they are a dozen to two."

Don Miguel glanced around in the dim light of the coach lamp. Everywhere masked, forbidding faces glared back at him. With a groan and a curse, as he realized the helplessness of the situation—one man against half a score—he flung his pistol from him and folding his arms returned stare for stare with the robbers—for there was no doubt that they were the dreaded banditti.

As if this had been a signal, a big bay shot out of the gloom into the circle and the rider sprang to the ground.

"A gathering of friends!" he cried gaily. "Truly, an occasion to apportion the gifts that our host has provided!"

"It is José Maria—him they call the 'Morning Robber'!" one of the guards muttered.

"I shall not delay the feast long, Manuel," the bandit cried, tossing his reins to the horseman who had addressed the Governor. "Merely a word with one of His Excellency's charges."

"Whatever you are, you will not dare to disturb the ladies who are under my protection!" the Governor cried.

The bandit made a sign and two of the robbers sprang from their saddles and ranged themselves on either side of Don Miguel. Ignoring further the presence of the Governor, the bandit stepped quickly to the coach door. A slight scream met him, followed by a shriller and longer one.

"Pardon, ladies!" the bandit said, sweeping the ground with his hat. "I should be desolated should you misunderstand my motives."

"What do you wish?" a faint voice asked from the far corner of the carriage; "our jewels? Take them and leave us!"

The bandit bowed still lower.

"It is the Señorita Doña Sol?" he returned. "But one word with you, gracious lady, will outweigh all the wealth of Golconda."

The young lady, in a measure reassured by the manner of the bandit's address, showed her pale face at the door. The robber bent to the ground.

"If you will permit me to assist you from the coach," he said, extending his hand. "Ah, señorita, do not fear, I beg of you. But one word in private."

Despite the fears which still possessed her, Doña Sol placed her trembling hand in José Maria's and stepped lightly to the road. Before relinquishing the white, jeweled fingers, the robber bent low and kissed them, murmuring:

"Ah, señorita, a hand so beautiful needs no adornment!" With that he bent over and whispered eagerly into her ear. The lady suppressed a cry; her startled eyes swept the circle of masked robbers and then rested upon the bandit's pale, handsome face, whose whiteness was intensified by the straight black mustache which graced his mouth.

"Mother of Heaven, but I did not know it!" she cried with a horrified glance at the Governor, who was chafing angrily in the clutch of the robbers.

"'Twas therefore I counted on your good heart, as upon my own honor," the bandit returned, showing his white teeth in a confident smile.

"You dare to make this attempt alone?"

"Should I fail, I may again call on your good offices," the bandit returned.

The lady's eyes shone with admiration; then with a little hysterical laugh, which still rippled with merriment, she stepped lightly into the coach. In a moment the white hand reappeared and she passed a small package to the robber.

"Here!" she rippled: "Our escort did not meet these mail guards; these have faces of the rising sun. And pray," she whispered, "do not abuse this poor Governor overmuch! Ah, that poor mustache!"

"The saints bless you!" the bandit cried, as he thrust the parcel into his coat with a peal of laughter. He caught up the little hand again and pressed it to his lips before he closed the door. "Hola, Manuel!" he cried, still laughing, "we came to meet a benefactress and found an angel! Do not, therefore, deal harshly with His Excellency."

"Know, Señor Robber," the Governor cried in a rage, "I have important business in yonder city by daylight. This is a hanging matter you are engaged in —"

A sinister growl broke from the circle of robbers.

"Your Excellency's choice of words

is unwise," the bandit said coldly. "Ho, there, Manuel; though I must leave you, I think I have observed that your costume and those of your followers are in wretched condition. For shame, Manuel!"

With chuckles of delight several of the robbers tumbled from their saddles and proceeded to unstrap the Governor's baggage from the coach. In an instant the trunks were pried open and the contents emptied upon the road, the highwaymen tossing the garments from one to another.

"It is true, *capitan*," the tall robber said, "when one's profession forces him to avoid more frequented localities, there are difficulties about this matter of clean linen."

"Everything outside the coach is yours," José Maria said magnanimously, vaulting into his saddle as he spoke. "Fear not His Excellency's permission. Remember only what Hali said to the Sicilian: 'Between cavaliers all things are permissible!'"

"Let no one hereafter doubt the generosity of our new Governor!" Manuel exclaimed, thrusting his arms into a court coat and clapping upon his tawdled head a chapeau with long, drooping feathers. "Ah, it is a pity Your Excellency's waist is too high up. I shall be compelled to carry my pistols under my chin!"

"Tut, tut, Manuel," José interposed, laughing, "such words deprive a gift of half its value. You will set a new fashion with coat-tails flapping from your shoulder-blades."

The Governor was sputtering with rage and almost deprived of speech. As José Maria gathered up his reins, Don Miguel shook his fist, exclaiming:

"I know you, villain! You that are called Maria, El Tempranito, Robber of the Morning, or whatever else. For this you shall hang to the highest gallows in Spain—you and your fellows!"

"First catch your quarry, Excellency, Don Miguel, Governor of Andalusia, however you are called," the bandit returned mockingly. "And listen, Manuel," he added, "the night grows cold; see that His Excellency is fittingly apparelled, in exchange for his present costume."

"Well thought of!" the robber cried gleefully; "His Excellency shall have my own suit, which has resisted the brunt of many winters. Gascon, you thief!" he cried to one of the others, "it is not fitting that you should wear three shirts at once. You are going, *capitan*?"

"It desolates me to leave so pleasant a gathering, but you know I have business on hand. Besides, it is clear," the bandit added significantly, "you will be engaged for some time, selecting your costumes. Withdraw from the coach, therefore, and see that its contents are inviolate, until His Excellency is prepared to proceed."

"Upon my honor as a cavalier, *capitan*!" the tall robber said, bowing grotesquely in his ridiculous costume. "*Adios*, and may fortune go with you!"

José Maria beckoned to one of the red-coated guards who stood helplessly beside the coach.

"Accompany me a space up the road," he said. "Fear not for that important business in the city, Excellency," he called back to the Governor, "on the word of José Maria, it is in excellent hands! *Adios, camarades*!" he cried to the laughing robbers, who were engaged in piling their discarded rags on the road beside the restless mules, and quarreling over the distribution of the Governor's finery. He swung the big bay around the motley group and, accompanied by the guard, disappeared in the darkness, followed by the shouts and farewells of the robbers:

"*Adios, capitan*! Good luck! *Adios, adios*!"

José Maria, turning in his saddle and glancing back through the gloom, thought he caught the flutter of a white handkerchief against the window of the coach, and his white teeth glittered as he laid his hand upon the pocket wherein reposed the little articles which the beautiful Doña Sol had given him.

* * * *

Dawn was breaking over the Andalusian heights when a red-coated guard of the Royal Mail debouched from the mountain pass into the plain where, in the white haze of morning, lay the city which José Maria had passed on his long night's ride the previous evening.

The guard was mounted upon a powerful bay and led a riderless horse, saddled and bridled; his clean-shaven, red face was haggard with fatigue and hard riding, and his dark eyes strove to pierce the haze that hung over the town, through which he could vaguely make out the great stone prison that lay close by the city gate.

"I' faith! His Excellency has given me a hard ride of it," he muttered, as he reined in the horses for a breathing spell on the top of the plateau. "After all, my errand may be useless should those fools in the jail prefer to wait for the coming. But, pshaw! I am becoming faint-hearted at the wrong end of the journey. Up, girl!

He shook out the reins and the bay broke into a trot, the led horse loping easily beside her. The guard glanced at the eastern hills, already reddened by the coming sun.

"Doubtless at this time our friend Pedro is being prepared for the ceremony. My faith! it would seem better to lead an honest life, if one has to dance on nothing at the end! It was inconsiderate in that wretched *aguazil* to die from the lad's knife thrust. Otherwise I should have spent the night comfortably between the blankets."

Little black specks began to appear upon the distant roads leading to the city. The guard's lips curled.

"The country folk wish to witness the show," he murmured. "Doubtless, their greatest grief would be news of a reprieve. If it were the Honorable Señor José Maria now that they were about to hold up by the head—" his white teeth glistened.

"I doubt not we shall be given a summer's work scouring the mountains for that heedless rascal. But what is that? Now, may the saints forgive me if I am not late!" He thrust his spurs into the bay and the horses lunged into a gallop.

The great bell of the prison was tolling. The sound was faintly wafted to him on the morning air. The guard swung the bay to the right, swerving a little from the road along a rising ridge whence he could see a black speck at the foot of the stone wall of the prison through the gates, which were now

swung wide open to admit the crowd waiting outside.

"It is the portal," he muttered, "and by the head of my father! they are issuing forth from it. The man is lost; they are heading for the scaffold! He was to die at sunrise."

The flying hoofs of the bay opened the grim scene more clearly every second.

"The soldiers are forming a lane to the gallows. . . . Doubtless he was shriven in the cell. On, lass! It is but a step across the square. He is there now. I see the bloodthirsty wretches gazing toward the scaffold. . . . And not a face looking toward me!"

The bay was speeding like an arrow and the led horse was pulling at the bridle, hardly able to keep the pace. They had reached the level and the guard could see nothing but the frowning walls and the black crowd huddled within the gate. He rose in his stirrups and, dropping the bay's reins, waved his hat. There was no answering signal, and he groaned.

"What is it they do at the scaffold? Ah! The condemned comes forth with a cord dangling from his neck. . . . The monks are muttering prayers. . . . Then comes one with broad-brimmed hat with the ivory ladder on the front: the executioner! In the name of the blind devil—why can't they see me? Hola, hola, hola!" He shouted at the top of his voice.

He was still too far off, and for only answer he saw a movement run over the crowd, like a shadow.

"They are removing their hats. . . . The executioner has his hand on the prisoner's shoulder. . . . 'Brother, the hour is come!' . . . Saints be praised. One has seen me!"

A man on a balcony, overlooking the gate, had seen the galloping horseman. He stood up, motioning with his arms to the square below. A great outcry came from the gate and a light flashed across it as many faces were turned to the approaching guard. In a score of strides the big bay dashed through the crowd, both horses jostling and trampling the crying spectators. In another moment the guard had swung up to the foot of the gallows, pulling the bay

to her haunches as she crushed through the line of soldiers, who cursed as they broke to either side.

The executioner already had the rope in his hand and the condemned, who had just mounted the scaffold, stopped at the top of the stairs and gazed down with pallid face.

"A reprieve—an order from the Governor," the guard cried, holding aloft a small object as he shouted: "Holla, my friends! It seems I am but just in time!"

The executioner dropped the rope and the head jailer shouldered his way forward.

"His Excellency is coming then?" he cried. "My faith! It is well for me you arrived in time."

The guard drew a white handkerchief from his pocket and wiped the perspiration from his face. Unnoticed by all, a tiny packet dropped to the ground, under his horse's feet.

"His Excellency is three leagues away," he returned quickly. "The mail coach was attacked in the mountains this morning and His Excellency now lies wounded at the home of Don Rebriero, near-by. His Excellency also sends for this man." The guard pointed to the prisoner, who uttered a cry, and as quickly stifled it.

"His Excellency wounded! His Excellency sends for the condemned!" the jailer cried.

"Such are my orders," the guard returned coolly, "and here is the ring which His Excellency directed me to show." He held up the Governor's Seal of State, and handed it to the jailer.

A soldier came forward from a group of others who wore the uniform of the Royal Guard.

"It is true; this is the Governor's ring," he said. He looked curiously at the messenger, who nodded.

"His Excellency's orders are that his own guard return with us to Don Rebriero's," the messenger added, glancing up at the prisoner and lowering his voice. "His Excellency hopes to effect the capture of the bandit who stopped the coach, whom he believes to be no other than the outlaw, José Maria, known as El Tempranito."

"But the orders also are that the con-

demned be executed at sunrise," the jailer said, looking doubtfully from one to the other. "God hears me! I am glad to obey; but I am responsible for the prisoner's safe keeping."

"I am but the mail guard, and I have fulfilled my orders," the messenger returned indifferently. "The Governor did not know, naturally, when he sent his guards forward that this accident would happen. It appears he must be pressed for time when he sent me on with Don Rebriero's own horse to convey the prisoner."

"That is true," the Governor's guard said. "I know, too, His Excellency is accustomed to be obeyed. For my part, I shall mount my men on their mules and join the Governor. Scatter, lads, and prepare to travel!" he called to the others.

"Come!" the messenger cried impatiently; "do you wish to remain jailer, or shall I return and inform the Governor you set him at defiance?"

"You must either hang him or obey," the other guard observed, grinning at the puzzled jailer. "A little ride won't hurt the poor lad before he takes a longer journey!"

"Rather would I myself take Pedro's place," the jailer cried, obeying a sudden impulse. "Unbind the lad and bring him down!" he called to the executioner; but the prisoner, shrinking away, ran down the steps. "The guard is answerable for his safety," the jailer added.

"Bah! you shall keep the ring for a receipt," the messenger returned. "I will bind his hands in front so that he may ride, and lead his horse myself. If he should—" He tapped his pistol holsters significantly by way of finishing the sentence.

The Governor's guard came clattering across the courtyard on their mules, and in the midst of a laughing, cheering throng the prisoner clambered into the saddle of the led horse.

"We have but two hours to reach Don Rebriero's," the Governor's messenger said, as he carefully bound the prisoner's hands. "So, *adios!* And now, lads!" he cried to the mounted guard, "forward! that we may not outstrip you!"

"And God go with you!" the jailer exclaimed, waving his hat, and following them toward the portals of the gate tower.

The messenger and prisoner trotted across the square after the clattering mules, whose riders were already belaboring them through the gates. As the two passed under the portals, the great white placard caught the eye of the red-coated guard. He cast a quick glance out upon the broad road, with smooth-lying plains on either side stretching far away to the foot-hills; then he reined in the bay and leaned closely over the proclamation for a moment. The next instant he threw his companion's reins to him and, setting spurs to the horses, they both dashed through the gateway and, turning to the right, shot across the plain toward the mountains.

A shout went up from the mule-mounted guards, who scattered to right and left as a mail-coach came lumbering through them, the driver lashing furiously, the two guards on top—one of whom was in his shirt, without his uniform coat or hat—waving their muskets and shouting back.

As the coach swept past the Gov-

ernor's stern face was thrust from the window and he shouted to the bewildered guards with inarticulate fury. But the driver could not stay the maddened mules upon the instant. The momentum of their speed carried the coach forward to the very portals of the tower, and in that brief respite the two horsemen had grown to mere specks in the distance.

A tattered and filthy Don Miguel burst from the coach and sprang to the jailer's side, where that official stood in the gateway gazing open-mouthed at the proclamation.

There, beneath the offer of reward for "*José Maria, known as El Tempranito, Dead or Alive,*" the Governor read:

"Approved! JOSÉ MARIA."

* * * * *

While the hue and cry was going on at the gate, one of the soldiers who surrounded the scaffold picked up a small packet from the ground where the "mail guard's" horse had stood. The packet contained a little empty rouge pot and a tiny pair of lady's scissors. On the golden scissors was inscribed the name "*Doña Sol.*"

TO AN OLD FAMILY PORTRAIT.

Anonymous.

If you could think, if you could speak,
I wonder how your voice would sound?
And what opinion you would hold
Of those who idly crowd around?

Why are your eyes, with passive gaze,
Fixed on us as we laugh or weep,
As though you seemed to stand aloof
And mystic self-communion keep?

Can all we say and all we do,
And all we are or might have been,
Be naught to you, as though we were
Unknown, uncared for, and unseen?

'Tis ages since the artist's brush
Upon a snowy canvas drew
Your features; then revered and loved,
Now only known by name to few.

It may be ages since you left
To enter on your endless trance;
But day by day we love to build
Around your face some fresh romance.

FOUL PLAY.*

Sometimes called "The New Robinson Crusoe."

By Charles Reade and Dion Boucicault.

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

ARTHUR WARDLAW, junior partner of a large mercantile concern, forges his father's name, contriving to throw the guilt upon Rev. Robert Penfold, his best friend. Penfold serves his sentence in a penal colony in Australia, and then, under the name of James Seaton, procures a position as shipping clerk in Wardlaw's Australian office. This is obtained for him through Helen Rolleston, Wardlaw's fiancée, in return for a service which Seaton had rendered her.

Helen is to sail for England in the Shannon, one of her lover's ships, but finally takes passage in the Proserpine, which carries a large sum of money much needed by the English end of the concern. Seaton, disguised as Mr. Hazel, a curate, accompanies her, and she reveals to him that she is suffering from a lung affection and has but little time to live.

Seaton discovers a plot between Wylie, the mate, and Captain Hudson, to scuttle the ship and steal the treasure. He tells Helen, but, as he has previously declared his love for her and his purpose in returning to England to bring Wardlaw to justice, she will have nothing to say to him. The vessel runs into a gale, but not until the wind has died and the ship is a little becalmed, does Cooper, one of the sailors, discover a leak.

CHAPTER X.

THE fiddle ended in mid-tune, and the men crowded aft with anxious faces.

The captain sounded the well, and found three feet and a half of water in it. He ordered all hands to the pumps.

They turned to with a good heart, and pumped, watch and watch, till day-break.

Their exertions counteracted the leak, but did no more; the water in the well was neither more nor less perceptible.

This was a relief to their minds, so far; but the situation was a very serious one. Suppose foul weather should come,

and the vessel ship water from above as well!

Now, all those who were not on the pumps set to work to find out the leak and stop it if possible. With candles in their hands, they crept about the ribs of the ship, narrowly inspecting every corner, and applying their ears to every suspected place, if haply they might hear the water coming in.

The place where Hazel had found Wylie at work was examined, along with the rest; but neither there nor anywhere else could the leak be discovered. Yet the water was still coming in, and required unremitting labor to keep it under. It was then suggested by Wylie, and the opinion gradually gained

Note.—In reprinting as a serial Charles Reade's memorable novel "Foul Play," we feel that we deserve our readers' thanks. Charles Reade has for some years experienced that temporary eclipse of popularity which always follows on the death of a great writer and the rise of new celebrities in literature. But there are many signs that he is once more coming back into his old ascendancy as one of the most vividly dramatic and thrilling story-tellers who ever used the English language. "Foul Play" has been selected from among his six or seven finest novels because it is a masterpiece, in the sphere of adventurous fiction; because the purpose of its author was purely to interest and fascinate and not to point a moral; and because in it his most splendid qualities as a picturesque narrator are seen on every page.—The Editor.

* Began June All-Story Magazine. Single copies, 10 cents.

ground, that some of the seams had opened in the late gale, and were letting in the water by small but numerous apertures.

Faces began to look cloudy; and Mr. Hazel now showed excellent qualities. He worked like a horse; and, finding the mate skulking, he reproached him before the men, and, stripping himself naked to the waist, invited him to do a man's duty. The mate, thus challenged, complied with a scowl.

They labored for their lives, and the quantity of water they discharged from the ship was astonishing; not less than a hundred and ten tons every hour.

They gained upon the leak—only two inches; but, in the struggle for life, this was an immense victory. It was the turn of the tide.

A slight breeze sprung up from the southwest, and the captain ordered the men from the buckets to make all sail on the ship, the pumps still going.

When this was done, he altered the ship's course, and put her right before the wind, steering for the island of Juan Fernandez, distant eleven hundred miles, or thereabout.

The Proserpine glided through the water all night, like some terror-stricken creature, and the incessant pumps seemed to be her poor heart, beating loud with breathless fear.

At daybreak she had gone a hundred and twenty miles. But this was balanced by a new and alarming feature. The water from the pumps no longer came up pure, but mixed with what appeared to be blood.

This got redder and redder, and struck terror into the more superstitious of the crew.

Hazel inquired, and found the ship had a quantity of dye-wood among her cargo; he told the men this, and tried to keep up their hearts by his words and his example.

He succeeded with some; but others shook their heads. And by and by, even while he was working double tides for them as well as for himself, ominous murmurs met his ear. "Parson aboard!" "Man aboard, with t'other world in his face!" And there were sinister glances to match.

He told this, with some alarm, to

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Welch and Cooper. They promised to stand by him; and Welch told him it was all the mate's doings; he had gone among the men, and poisoned them.

The wounded vessel, with her ever-beating heart, had run three hundred miles on the new tack. She had almost ceased to bleed; but what was as bad, or worse, small fragments of her cargo and stores came up with the water, and their miscellaneous character showed how deeply the sea had now penetrated.

This, and their great fatigue, began to demoralize the sailors. The pumps and buckets were still plied, but it was no longer with the uniform manner of brave and hopeful men. Some stuck doggedly to their work, but others got flurried, and ran from one thing to another.

Now and then a man would stop, and burst out crying; then to work again in a desperate way. One or two lost heart altogether, and had to be driven. Finally, one or two succumbed under the unrelenting labor. Despair crept over others: their features began to change, so much so that several countenances were hardly recognizable, and each, looking in the other's troubled face, saw his own fate pictured there.

Six feet of water in the hold!

The captain, who had been sober beyond his time, now got dead drunk.

The mate took the command. On hearing this, Welch and Cooper left the pumps. Wylie ordered them back. They refused, and coolly lighted their pipes. A violent altercation took place, which was brought to a close by Welch.

"It is no use pumping the ship," said he. "She is doomed. D'y'e think we are blind, my mate and me? You got the long-boat ready for yourself before ever the leak was sprung. Now get the cutter ready for my mate and me."

At these simple words Wylie lost color, and walked aft without a word.

Next day there were seven feet of water in the hold, and quantities of bread coming up through the pumps.

Wylie ordered the men from the pumps to the boats. The jolly-boat was provisioned and lowered. While she was towing astern, the cutter was prepared, and the ship left to fill.

All this time Miss Rolleston had been

kept in the dark, not as to the danger, but as to its extent. Great was her surprise when Mr. Hazel entered her cabin, and cast an ineffable look of pity on her.

She looked up surprised and then angry. "How dare you?" she began.

He waved his hand in a sorrowful but commanding way. "Oh, this is no time for prejudice or temper. The ship is sinking: we are going into the boats. Pray make preparations. Here is a list I have written of the things you ought to take: we may be weeks at sea in an open boat."

Then, seeing her dumfounded, he caught up her carpet-bag, and threw her work-box into it for a beginning. He then laid hands upon some of her preserved meats, and marmalade, and carried them off to his own cabin.

He got hold of Welch, and told him to be sure and see there was plenty of spare canvas on board, and sailing needles, scissors, etc., also three bags of biscuit, and, above all, a cask of water.

He himself ran all about the ship, including the mate's cabin, in search of certain tools he thought would be wanted.

Then to his own cabin, to fill his carpet-bag.

There was little time to spare; the ship was low in the water, and the men abandoning her. He flung the things into his bag, fastened and locked it, strapping up his blankets for her use, flung on his pea-jacket, and turned the handle of his door to run out.

The door did not open!

He pushed it. It did not yield!

He rushed at it. It was fast.

He uttered a cry of rage, and flung himself at it.

Horror! It was immovable!

CHAPTER XI.

THE fearful, the sickening truth burst on him in all its awful significance.

Some miscreant or madman had locked the door, and so fastened him to the sinking ship, at a time when, in the bustle, the alarm, the selfishness, all would be apt to forget him, and leave him to his death.

He tried the door in every way, he

hammered at it; he shouted, he raged, he screamed. In vain. Unfortunately the door of this cabin was of very unusual strength and thickness.

Then he took up one of those great augers he had found in the mate's cabin, and bored a hole in the door; through this hole he fired his pistol, and then screamed for help. "I am shut up in the cabin. I shall be drowned. Oh, for Christ's sake, save me! save me!" and a cold sweat of terror poured down his whole body.

What is that?

The soft rustle of a woman's dress.

Oh, how he thanked God for that music, and the hope it gave him!

It comes toward him; it stops, the key is turned, the dress rustles away, swift as a winged bird; he dashes at the door; it flies open.

Nobody was near. He recovered his courage in part, fetched out his bag and his tools, and ran across to the starboard side. There he found the captain lowering Miss Rolleston, with due care, into the cutter, and the young lady crying; not at being shipwrecked, if you please, but at being deserted by her maid.

Jane Holt, at this trying moment, had deserted her mistress for her husband. This was natural; but, as is the rule with persons of that class, she had done this in the silliest and cruelest way. Had she given half an hour's notice of her intention, Donovan might have been on board the cutter with her and her mistress. But no; being a liar and a fool, she must hide her husband to the last moment, and then desert her mistress.

The captain, then, was comforting Miss Rolleston, and telling her she should have her maid with her eventually, when Hazel came. He handed down his own bag, and threw the blankets into the stern-sheets. Then went down himself, and sat on the midship-thwart.

"Shove off," said the captain; and they fell astern.

But Cooper, with a boat-hook, hooked on to the long-boat; and the dying ship towed them both.

Five minutes more elapsed, and the captain did not come down, so Wylie hailed him.

There was no answer. Hudson had gone into the mate's cabin. Wylie waited a minute, then hailed again. "Hy! on deck there!"

"Hullo!" cried the captain, at last.

"Why didn't you come in the cutter?"

The captain crossed his arms, and leaned over the stern.

"Don't you know that Hiram Hudson is always the last to leave a sinking ship?"

"Well, you *are* the last," said Wylie. "So now come on board the long-boat at once. I dare not tow in her wake much longer, to be sucked in when she goes down."

"Come on board your craft and desert my own?" said Hudson disdainfully. "Know my duty to m' employers better."

These words alarmed the mate. "Curse it all!" he cried; "the fool has been and got some more rum. Fifty guineas to the man that will shin up the tow-rope, and throw that madman into the sea; then we can pick him up. There need be no fear of his drowning, as he swims like a cork."

A sailor instantly darted forward to the rope. But, unfortunately, Hudson heard this proposal, and it enraged him. He got to his cutlass. The sailor drew the boat under the ship's stern, but the drunken skipper flourished his cutlass furiously over his head. "Board *me!* ye pirates! the first that lays a finger on my bulwarks, off goes his hand at the wrist."

Suiting the action to the word, he hacked at the tow-rope so vigorously that it gave way, and the boats fell astern.

Helen Rolleston utter a shriek of dismay and pity.

"Oh, save him!" she cried.

"Make sail!" cried Cooper; and, in a few seconds, they got all her canvas set upon the cutter.

It seemed a hopeless chase for these shells to sail after that dying monster with her cloud of canvas all drawing, aloof and aloft.

But it did not prove so. The gentle breeze was an advantage to light craft, and the dying Proserpine was full of water, and could only crawl.

After a few moments of great anxiety, the boats crept up, the cutter on her port, and the long-boat on her starboard quarter.

Wylie ran forward, and, hailing Hudson, implored him, in the friendliest tones, to give himself a chance. Then tried him by his vanity, "Come, and command the boats, old fellow. How can we navigate them on the Pacific, without *you?*"

Hudson was now leaning over the taffrail utterly drunk. He made no reply to the mate, but merely waved his cutlass feebly in one hand, and his bottle in the other, and gurgled out, "Duty to m' employers."

Then Cooper, without a word, double-reefed the cutter's mainsail, and told Welch to keep as close to the ship's quarter as he dare. Wylie instinctively did the same, and the three craft crawled on in solemn and deadly silence for nearly twenty minutes.

The wounded ship seemed to receive a death-blow. She stopped dead, and shook.

The next moment she pitched gently forward, and her bows went under the water, while her after-part rose into the air, and revealed to those in the cutter two splintered holes in her run, just below the water-line.

The next moment her stern settled down; the sea yawned horribly, the great waves of her own making rushed over her upper deck, and the lofty masts and sails, remaining erect, went down with sad majesty into the deep: and nothing remained but the bubbling and foaming of the voracious water, that had completely swallowed up the good ship, and her cargo, and her helpless, drunken master.

All stood up in the boats ready to save him. But either his cutlass sunk him, or the suction of so great a body drew him down. He was seen no more in this world.

A loud sigh broke from every living bosom that witnessed that terrible catastrophe.

It was beyond words: and none were uttered, except by Cooper, who spoke so seldom; yet now three words of terrible import burst from him, and, uttered in his loud, deep voice, rang like

the sunk ship's knell over the still bubbling water—

"SCUTTLED—BY GOD!"

CHAPTER XII.

"Hold your tongue," said Welch, with an oath.

Mr. Hazel looked at Miss Rolleston, and she at him. It was a momentary glance, and her eyes sank directly, and filled with patient tears.

For the first few minutes after the *Proserpine* went down, the survivors sat benumbed, as if awaiting their turn to be engulfed.

They seemed so little, and the *Proserpine* so big; yet she was swallowed before their eyes, like a crumb. They lost, for a few moments, all idea of escaping.

But true it is that "while there's life there's hope," and, as soon as their hearts began to beat again, their eyes roved round the horizon, and their elastic minds recoiled against despair.

Their situation was briefly this: Should it come on to blow a gale, these open boats, small and loaded, could not hope to live. Therefore they had two chances for life, and no more: they must either make land—or be picked up at sea—before the weather changed.

But how? The nearest known land was the group of islands called Juan Fernandez, and they lay somewhere to leeward; but distant at least nine hundred miles; and, should they prefer the other chance, then they must beat three hundred miles and more to windward; for Hudson underrating the leak, as is supposed, had run the *Proserpine* fully that distance out of the track of trade.

Wylie, who was leading, lowered his sail, and hesitated between the two courses we have indicated. However, on the cutter coming up with him, he ordered Cooper to keep her head northeast, and so run all night. He then made all the sail he could, in the same direction, and soon outsailed the cutter. When the sun went down, he was about a mile ahead of her.

Just before sunset, Mr. Hazel made a discovery that annoyed him very much. He found that Welch had put only one bag of biscuit, a ham, a keg of spirit,

and a small barrel of water, on board the cutter.

He remonstrated with him sharply. Welch replied that it was all right; the cutter being small, he had put the rest of her provisions on board the long-boat.

"On board the long-boat!" said Hazel, with a look of wonder. "You have actually made our lives depend upon that scoundrel Wylie again. You deserve to be flung into the sea. You have no forethought yourself, yet you will not be guided by those that have it."

Welch hung his head a little at these reproaches. However, he replied, rather sullenly, that it was only for one night; they could signal the long-boat in the morning, and get the other bags, and the cask, out of her. But Mr. Hazel was not to be appeased. "The morning! Why, she sails three feet to our two. How do you know he won't run away from us? I never expect to get within ten miles of him again. We know him; and he knows we know him."

Cooper got up, and patted Mr. Hazel on the shoulder soothingly. "Boat-hook aft," said he to Welch.

He then, by an ingenious use of the boat-hook and some of the spare canvas, contrived to set out a studding-sail on the other side of the mast.

Hazel thanked him warmly. "But, oh, Cooper! Cooper!" said he, "I'd give all I have in the world if that bread and water were on board the cutter instead of on the long-boat."

The cutter had now two wings, instead of one; the water bubbling loud under her bows marked her increased speed; and all fear of being greatly outsailed by her consort began to subside.

A slight sea-fret came on and obscured the sea in part; but they had a good lantern and compass, and steered the course exactly, all night, according to Wylie's orders, changing the helmsman every four hours.

Mr. Hazel, without a word, put a rug round Miss Rolleston's shoulders, and another round her feet.

"Oh, not both, sir, please," said she.

"Am I to be disobeyed by everybody?" said he.

Then she submitted in silence, and in a certain obsequious way that was new, and well calculated to disarm anger.

Sooner or later, all slept, except the helmsman.

At daybreak, Mr. Hazel was awakened by a loud hail from a man in the bows.

All the sleepers started up.

"Long-boat not in sight!"

It was too true. The ocean was blank: not a sail, large or small, in sight.

Many voices spoke at once.

"He has carried on till he has cap-sized her."

"He has given us the slip."

Unwilling to believe so great a calamity, every eye peered and stared all over the sea. In vain. Not a streak that could be a boat's hull, not a speck that could be a sail.

The little cutter was alone upon the ocean. Alone, with scarcely two days' provisions, nine hundred miles from land, and four hundred miles to leeward of the nearest sea-road.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE long-boat was, at this moment, a hundred miles to windward of the cutter.

The fact is, that Wylie, the evening before, had been secretly perplexed as to the best course. He had decided to run for the island; but he was not easy under his own decision; and, at night, he got more and more discontented with it. Finally, at 9 o'clock, P.M., he suddenly gave the order to luff, and tack: and by daybreak he was very near the place where the *Proserpine* went down: whereas the cutter, having run before the wind all night, was at least a hundred miles to leeward of him.

This act of Wylie's was just a piece of iron egotism. He preferred, for himself, the chance of being picked up by a vessel. He thought it was about a hairbreadth better than running for an island, as to whose bearing he was not very clear, after all.

But he was not *sure* he was taking the best or safest course. The cutter might be saved, after all, and the long-boat lost.

Meantime he was not sorry of an excuse to shake off the cutter. She con-

tained one man at least who knew he had scuttled the *Proserpine*; and therefore it was all-important to him to get to London before her, and receive the £3,000 which was to be his reward for that abominable act.

But the way to get to London before Mr. Hazel, or else to the bottom of the Pacific before him, was to get back into the sea-road, at all hazards.

He was not aware that the cutter's water and biscuit were on board his boat; nor did he discover this till noon next day. And, on making this fearful discovery, he showed himself human: he cried out, with an oath, "What have I done? I have damned myself to all eternity!"

He then ordered the boat to be put before the wind again; but the men scowled, and not one stirred a finger; and he saw the futility of this, and did not persist; but groaned aloud, and then sat, staring wildly; finally, like a true sailor, he got to the rum, and stupefied his agitated conscience for a time.

While he lay drunk at the bottom of the boat, his sailors carried out his last instructions, beating southward right in the wind's eye.

At last, a vessel came in sight, and crept slowly up, about two miles to windward of the boat. With the heave of the waters they could see little more than her sails; but they ran up a bright bandanna handkerchief to their mast-head; and the ship made them out. She hoisted Dutch colors, and—continued her course.

Then the poor abandoned creatures wept, and raved, and cursed in their frenzy, glaring after that cruel, shameless man, who could do such an act, yet hoist a color, and show of what nation he was the native—and the disgrace.

But one of them said not a word. This was Wylie. He sat shivering, and remembered how he had abandoned the cutter, and all on board. Loud sighs broke from his laboring breast; but not a word. Yet one word was ever present to his mind; and seemed written in fire on the night of clouds, and howled in his ears by the wind—Retribution!

And now came a dirty night to men on ships; a fearful night to men in boats. The sky black, the sea on fire with

crested billows, that broke over them every minute; their light was washed out; their provisions drenched and spoiled; bail as they would, the boat was always filling.

Up to their knees in water; cold as ice, blinded with spray, deafened with roaring billows, they tossed and tumbled in a fiery foaming hell of waters, and still, though despairing, clung to their lives, and bailed with their hats unceasingly.

Day broke, and the first sight it revealed to them was a brig to windward staggering along, and pitching under close-reefed topsails.

They started up, and waved their hats, and cried aloud. But the wind carried their voices to leeward, and the brig staggered on.

They ran up their little signal of distress; but still the ship staggered on.

Then the miserable men shook hands all round, and gave themselves up for lost.

But, at this moment, the brig hoisted a vivid flag all stripes and stars, and altered her course a point or two.

She crossed the boat's track a mile ahead, and her people looked over the bulwarks, and waved their hats to encourage those tossed and desperate men.

Having thus given them the weather-gage, the brig hove to for them.

They ran down to her, and crept under her lee; down came ropes to them, held by friendly hands, and friendly faces shone down at them: eager grasps seized each as he went up the ship's side, and so, in a very short time, they sent the woman up, and the rest being all sailors, and clever as cats, they were safe on board the whaling brig Maria, Captain Slocum, of Nantucket, U. S.

The log, compass, and instruments were also saved.

The boat was cast adrift, and was soon after seen bottom upward on the crest of a wave.

The good Samaritan in command of the Maria supplied them with dry clothes out of the ship's stores, good food, and medical attendance, which was much needed, their legs and feet being in a deplorable condition, and their own surgeon crippled.

A southeasterly gale induced the

American skipper to give Cape Horn a wide berth, and the Maria soon found herself three degrees south of that perilous coast. There she encountered field-ice. In this labyrinth they dodged and worried for eighteen days, until a sudden chop in the wind gave the captain a chance, of which he promptly availed himself; and in forty hours they sighted Tierra del Fuego.

During this time, the rescued crew, having recovered from the effects of their hardships, fell into the work of the ship, and took their turns with the Yankee seamen. The brig was short-handed; but now trimmed and handled by a full crew and the Proserpine's men, who were first-class seamen, and worked with a will, because work was no longer a duty, she exhibited a speed the captain had almost forgotten was in the craft.

Now speed at sea means economy, for every day added to a voyage is so much off the profits. Slocum was part owner of the vessel, and shrewdly alive to the value of the seamen. When about three hundred miles south of Buenos Ayres, Wylie proposed that they should be landed there, from whence they might be transshipped to a vessel bound for home.

This was objected to by Slocum, on the ground that, by such a deviation from his course, he must lose three days, and the port dues at Buenos Ayres were heavy.

Wylie undertook that the house of Wardlaw & Son should indemnify the brig for all expenses and losses incurred.

Still the American hesitated; at last he honestly told Wylie he wished to keep the men; he liked them, they liked him. He had sounded them and they had no objection to join his ship, and sign articles for a three years' whaling voyage, provided they did not thereby forfeit the wages to which they would be entitled on reaching Liverpool. Wylie went forward and asked the men if they would take service with the Yankee captain. All but three expressed their desire to do so; these three had families in England, and refused. The mate gave the others a release, and an order on Wardlaw & Son for their full wages for the voyage; then they signed articles with Captain Slocum.

Two days after this they sighted the high lands at the mouth of the Rio de la Plata at 10 P. M., and lay to for a pilot. After three hours' delay they were boarded by a pilot-boat, and then began to creep into the port. The night was very dark, and a thin white fog lay on the water.

Wylie was sitting on the taffrail, and conversing with Slocum, when the lookout forward sung out, "Sail ho!"

Another voice almost simultaneously yelled out of the fog, "Port your helm!"

Suddenly out of the mist, and close aboard the Maria, appeared the hull and canvas of a large ship. The brig was crossing her course, and her great bowsprit barely missed the brig's mainsail. It stood for a moment over Wylie's head. He looked up, and there was the figure-head of the ship looming almost within his reach. It was a colossal green woman, one arm extended grasped a golden harp, the other was pressed to her head in the attitude of holding back her wild and flowing hair. The face seemed to glare down upon the two men; in another moment the monster, gliding on, just missing the brig, was lost in the fog.

"That was a narrow squeak," said Slocum.

Wylie made no answer, but looked into the darkness after the vessel.

He had recognized her figure-head.

It was the Shannon!

CHAPTER XIV.

BEFORE the Maria sailed again, with the men who formed a part of Wylie's crew, he made them sign a declaration before the English Consul at Buenos Ayres. This document set forth the manner in which the Proserpine foundered; it was artfully made up of facts enough to deceive a careless listener; but, when Wylie read it over to them, he slurred over certain parts, which he took care, also, to express in language above the comprehension of such men. Of course they assented eagerly to what they did not understand, and signed the statement conscientiously.

So Wylie and his three men were

shipped on board the Boadicea, bound for Liverpool, in Old England, while the others sailed with Captain Slocum for Nantucket, in New England.

The Boadicea was a clipper laden with hides and a miscellaneous cargo. For seventeen days she flew before a southerly gale, being on her best sailing point, and, after one of the shortest passages she had ever made, she lay to, outside the bar, off the Mersey. It wanted but one hour to daylight, the tide was flowing; the pilot sprang aboard.

"What do you draw?" he asked of the master.

"Fifteen feet, barely," was the reply.

"That will do," and the vessel's head was laid for the river.

They passed a large bark, with her top-sails backed.

"Aye," remarked the pilot, "she has waited since the half-ebb; there ain't more than four hours in the twenty-four that such craft as that can get in."

"What is she? An American liner?" asked Wylie, peering through the gloom.

"No," said the pilot; "she's an Australian ship. She's the Shannon, from Sydney."

The mate started, looked at the man, then at the vessel. Twice the Shannon had thus met him, as if to satisfy him that his object had been attained, and each time she seemed to him not an inanimate thing, but a silent accomplice. A chill of fear struck through the man's frame as he looked at her. Yes, there she lay, and in her hold were safely stowed £160,000 in gold, marked lead and copper.

Wylie had no luggage nor effects to detain him on board; he landed, and, having bestowed his three companions in a sailors' boarding-house, he was hastening to the shipping agents of Wardlaw & Son to announce his arrival and the fate of the Proserpine. He had reached their offices in Water Street before he recollected that it was barely half past 5 o'clock, and, though broad daylight on that July morning, merchants' offices are not open at that hour.

The sight of the Shannon had so bewildered him that he had not noticed that the shops were all shut, the streets deserted. Then a thought occurred to

him—why not be a bearer of his own news? He did not require to turn the idea twice over, but resolved, for many reasons, to adopt it.

At the railway station he found that a train had started at 4 A. M., and there was nothing until 7.30. This check sobered him a little, and he went back to the docks; he walked out to the farther end of that noble line of berths, and sat down on the verge with his legs dangling over the water. He waited an hour; it was six o'clock by the great dial at St. George's Dock. His eyes were fixed on the Shannon, which was moving slowly up the river; she came abreast of where he sat. The few sails requisite to give her steerage fell.

Her anchor chain rattled, and she swung round with the tide. The clock struck the half hour; a boat left the side of the vessel and made straight for the steps near where he was seated. A tall, noble-looking man sat in the stern-sheets beside the coxswain; he was put ashore, and, after exchanging a few words with the boat's crew, he mounted the steps which led him to Wylie's side, followed by one of the sailors, who carried a port-manteau.

He stood for a single moment on the quay, and stamped his foot on the broad stones; then, heaving a deep sigh of satisfaction, he murmured, "Thank God!"

He turned toward Wylie.

"Can you tell me, my man, at what hour the first train starts for London?"

"There is a slow train at 7.30 and an express at 9."

"The express will serve me, and give me time for breakfast at the Adelphi. Thank you; good morning;" and the gentleman passed on, followed by the sailor.

Wylie looked after him; he noted that erect military carriage and crisp gray hair and thick white moustache; he had a vague idea that he had seen that face before, and the memory troubled him.

At 7.30 Wylie started for London; the military man followed him in the express at 9, and caught him up at Rugby; together they arrived at the station at Euston Square; it was a quarter to 3. Wylie hailed a cab, but, before he could struggle through the crowd to reach it, a railway porter threw a port-

manteau on its roof, and his military acquaintance took possession of it.

"All right," said the porter. "What address, sir?"

Wylie did not hear what the gentleman said, but the porter shouted it to the cabman, and then he did hear it.

"No. — Russell Square."

It was the house of Arthur Wardlaw!

Wylie took off his hat, rubbed his frowzy hair, and gaped after the cab.

He entered another cab, and told the driver to go to "No. — Fenchurch Street."

It was the office of Wardlaw & Son.

CHAPTER XV.

THE inmate of that office was battling for his commercial existence, under accumulated difficulties and dangers. Like those who sailed the Proserpine's long-boat, upon that dirty night which so nearly swamped her, his eye had now to be on every wave, and the sheet forever in his hand.

His measures had been ably taken; but, as will happen when clever men are driven into a corner, he had backed events rather too freely against time; had allowed too slight a margin for unforeseen delays.

For instance, he had averaged the Shannon's previous performances, and had calculated on her arrival too nicely. She was a fortnight overdue, and that delay brought peril.

He had also counted upon getting news of the Proserpine. But not a word had reached Lloyd's as yet.

At this very crisis came the panic of '66. Overend and Gurney broke; and Wardlaw's experience led him to fear that, sooner or later, there would be a run on every bank in London. Now he had borrowed £80,000 at one bank, and £35,000 at another; and, without his ships, could not possibly pay a quarter of the money. If the banks in question were run upon, and obliged to call in all their resources, his credit must go; and this, in his precarious position, was ruin.

It was 10 o'clock in the morning. Mr. Penfold was sorting the letters for his employer, when a buxom young

woman rushed into the outer office, crying, "Oh, Mr. Penfold!" and sank into a chair, breathless.

"Dear heart! what is the matter now?" said the old gentleman.

"I have had a dream, sir: I dreamed I saw Joe Wylie out on the seas, in a boat; and the wind it was a-blowing and the sea a-roaring to that degree as Joe looked at me, and says he, 'Pray for me, Nancy Rouse.' So I says, 'Oh, dear Joe, what is the matter? and what ever is become of the Proserpine?'"

"'Gone to Hell!' says he; which he knows I object to foul language. 'Gone—*there*,' says he, 'and I am sailing in her wake. Oh, pray for me, Nancy Rouse!' With that, I tries to pray in my dream, and screams instead, and wakes myself. Oh, Mr. Penfold, do tell me, have you got any news of the Proserpine this morning?"

"What is that to you?" inquired Arthur Wardlaw, who had entered just in time to hear this last query.

"What is it to me?" cried Nancy, firing up. "It is more to me, perhaps, than it is to you, for that matter."

Penfold explained timidly, "Sir, Mrs. Rouse is my landlady."

"Which I have never been to church with any man yet of the name of Rouse, leastways, not in my waking hours," edged in the lady.

"Miss Rouse, I should say," said Penfold, apologizing. "I beg pardon, but I thought Mrs. might sound better in a landlady. Please, sir, Mr. Wylie, the mate of the Proserpine, is her—her—sweetheart."

"Not he. Leastwise, he is only on trial, after a manner."

"Of course, sir—only after a manner," added Penfold, sadly perplexed. "Miss Rouse is incapable of anything else. But, if you please, m'm, I don't presume to know the exact relation;" and then with great reserve, "but you know you are anxious about him."

Miss Rouse sniffed, and threw her nose in the air—as if to throw a doubt even on that view of the matter.

"Well, madam," says Wardlaw, "I am sorry to say I can give you no information. I share your anxiety, for I have got £160,000 of gold in the ship. You might inquire at Lloyd's. Direct

her there, Mr. Penfold, and bring me my letters."

With this he entered his inner office, sat down, took out a golden key, opened a portrait of Helen, gazed at it, kissed it, uttered a deep sigh, and prepared to face the troubles of the day.

He was writing his last letter, when he heard in the outer office a voice he thought he knew. He got up and listened. It was so. Of all the voices in the city, this was the one it most dismayed him to hear in his office at the present crisis.

He listened on, and satisfied himself that a fatal blow was coming. He then walked quietly to his table, seated himself, and prepared to receive the stroke with external composure.

Penfold announced, "Mr. Burtenshaw."

"Show him in," said Wardlaw quietly.

Mr. Burtenshaw, one of the managers of Morland's bank, came in, and Wardlaw motioned him courteously to a chair, while he finished his letter.

While he was sealing it, he half turned to his visitor, and said, "No bad news? Morland's is safe of course."

"Well," said Burtenshaw, "there is a run upon our bank—a severe one. We could not hope to escape the effects of the panic."

He then, after an uneasy pause, and with apparent reluctance, added, "I am requested by the other directors to assure you it is their present extremity alone, that—in short, we are really compelled to beg you to repay the amount advanced to you by the bank."

Wardlaw showed no alarm, but great surprise. This was clever; for he felt great alarm, and no surprise.

"The £81,000," said he. "Why, that advance was upon the freight of the Proserpine. Forty-five thousand ounces of gold. She ought to be here by this time. She is in the Channel at this moment, no doubt."

"Excuse me; she is overdue, and the underwriters uneasy. I have made inquiries."

"At any rate, she is fully insured, and you hold the policies. Besides, the name of Wardlaw on your books should stand for bullion."

Burtenshaw shook his head. "Names are at a discount to-day, sir. We can't pay you down on the counter. Why, our depositors look cross at Bank of England notes."

To an inquiry, half ironical, whether the managers really expected him to find £81,000 cash at a few hours' notice, Burtenshaw replied, sorrowfully, that they felt for his difficulty while deploring their own; but that, after all, it was a debt: and, in short, if he could find no means of paying it they must suspend payment for a time, and issue a statement—an—

He hesitated to complete his sentence, and Wardlaw did it for him.

"And ascribe your suspension to my inability to refund this advance?" said he bitterly.

"I am afraid that is the construction it will bear."

Wardlaw rose, to intimate he had no more to say.

Burtenshaw, however, was not disposed to go without some clear understanding. "May I say we shall hear from you, sir?"

"Yes."

And so they wished each other good morning; and Wardlaw sank into his chair.

In that quiet dialogue, ruin had been inflicted and received without any apparent agitation; aye, and worse than ruin—exposure.

Morland's suspension, on account of money lost by Wardlaw & Son, would at once bring old Wardlaw to London, and the affairs of the firm would be investigated, and the son's false system of bookkeeping be discovered.

He sat stupefied awhile, then put on his hat, and rushed to his solicitor; on the way, he fell in with a great talker, who told him there was a rumor the Shannon was lost in the Pacific.

At this he nearly fainted in the street; and his friend took him back to his office in a deplorable condition. All this time he had been feigning anxiety about the Proserpine, and concealing his real anxiety about the Shannon. To do him justice, he lost sight of everything in the world now but Helen.

He sent old Penfold in hot haste to Lloyd's, to inquire for news of the ship;

and then he sat down sick at heart; and all he could do now was to open her portrait, and gaze at it through eyes blinded with tears. Even a vague rumor, which he hoped might be false, had driven all his commercial maneuvers out of him, and made all other calamities seem small.

While he sat thus, in a stupor of fear and grief, he heard a well-known voice in the outer office; and, next after Burtenshaw's, it was the one that caused him the most apprehension. It was his father's.

Wardlaw senior rarely visited the office now; and this was not his hour. So Arthur knew something extraordinary had brought him up to town. And he could not doubt that it was the panic, and that he had been to Morland's, or would go there in course of the day; but, indeed, it was more probable that he had already heard something, and was come to investigate.

Wardlaw senior entered the room.

"Good morning, Arthur," said he. "I've got good news for you."

Arthur was quite startled by an announcement that accorded so little with his expectations.

"Good news—for me?" said he, in a faint, incredulous tone.

"Aye, glorious news? Haven't you been anxious about the Shannon? I have; more anxious than I would own."

Arthur started up. "The Shannon! God bless you, father."

"She lies at anchor in the Mersey," roared the old man, with all a father's pride at bringing such good news.

"Why, the Rollestons will be in London at 2.15. See, here is his telegram."

At this moment in ran Penfold, to tell them that the Shannon was up at Lloyd's, had anchored off Liverpool last night.

There was hearty shaking of hands, and Arthur Wardlaw was the happiest man in London—for a little while.

"Got the telegram at Elm-trees, this morning, and came up by the first express," said Wardlaw senior.

The telegram was from Sir Edward Rolleston. "Reached Liverpool last night; will be at Euston, two-fifteen."

"Not a word from her?"

"Oh, there was no time to write; and

ladies do not use the telegram." He added slyly: "Perhaps she thought coming in person would do as well, or better, eh?"

"But why does he telegraph you instead of me?"

"I am sure I don't know. What does it matter? Yes, I do know. It was settled months ago that he and Helen should come to me at Elm-trees, so I was the proper person to telegraph. I'll go and meet them at the station; there is plenty of time. But, I say, Arthur, have you seen the papers? Bartley Brothers obliged to wind up. Maple & Cox, of Liverpool, gone; Atlantic trading. Terry & Brown suspended; international credit gone. Old friends, some of these. Hopley & Timms, railway contractors, failed, sir; liabilities, seven hundred thousand pounds and more."

"Yes, sir," said Arthur, pompously, "1866 will long be remembered for its revelations of commercial morality."

The old gentleman, on this, asked his son, with excusable vanity, whether he had done ill in steering clear of speculation; he then congratulated him on having listened to good advice, and stuck to legitimate business. "I must say, Arthur," added he, "your books are models for any trading firm."

Arthur winced in secret.

However, the unpleasant topic was soon interrupted, and effectually, too; for Michael looked in, with an air of satisfaction on his benevolent countenance, and said, "Gentlemen, such an arrival! Here is Miss Rouse's sweetheart, that she dreamed was drowned."

"What is this man to me?" said Arthur peevishly. He did not recognize Wylie under that title.

"La, Mr. Arthur! why, he is the mate of the Proserpine," said Penfold.

"What! Wylie! Joseph Wylie?" cried Arthur in a sudden excitement that contrasted strangely with his previous indifference.

"What is that?" cried Wardlaw senior; "the Proserpine? Show him in at once."

The door opened, and the bronzed face and sturdy figure of Wylie, clad in a rough pea-jacket, came slouching in.

Arthur went hastily to meet him, and

gave him an expressive look of warning, even while he welcomed him.

"Glad to see you safe home," said Wardlaw senior.

"Thank ye, guv'nor," said Wylie. "Had a squeak for it, this time."

"Where is your ship?"

Wylie shook his head sorrowfully. "Bottom of the Pacific."

"Good heavens! What! is she lost?"

"That she is, sir: foundered at sea twelve hundred miles from the Horn, and more."

"And the freight? the gold?" put in Arthur, with well-feigned anxiety.

"Not an ounce saved," said Wylie disconsolately. "A hundred and sixty thousand pounds gone to the bottom."

"Good heavens!"

"Ye see, sir," said Wylie, "the ship encountered one gale after another, and labored a good deal, first and last; and we all say her seams must have opened; for we never could find the leak that sunk her," and he cast a meaning glance at Arthur Wardlaw.

"No matter how it happened," said the old merchant: "are we insured to the full; that is the first question?"

"To the last shilling."

"Well done, Arthur."

"But still it is most unlucky. Some weeks must elapse before the insurances can be realized, and a portion of the gold was paid for in bills at short date."

"The rest in cash?"

"Cash and merchandise."

"Then there is the proper margin. Draw on my private account at the Bank of England."

These few simple words showed the struggling young merchant a way out of all his difficulties.

His heart leaped so he dared not reply, lest he should excite the old gentleman's suspicions.

But ere he could well draw his breath for joy came a freer.

"Mr. Burtenshaw, sir."

"Bid him wait," said Arthur, aloud, and cast a look of great anxiety on Penfold, which the poor old man, with all his simplicity, comprehended well enough.

"Burtenshaw, from Morland's. What does he want of us?" said Wardlaw senior, knitting his brows.

Arthur turned cold all over. "Perhaps to ask me not to draw out my balance. It is less than usual: but they are run upon; and as you are good enough to let me draw on you—— By the bye, perhaps you will sign a check before you go to the station."

"How much do you want?"

"I really don't know till I have consulted Penfold: the gold was a large and advantageous purchase, sir."

"No doubt; no doubt. I'll give you my signature; and you can fill in the amount."

He drew a check in favor of Arthur Wardlaw, signed it, and left him to fill in the figures.

He then looked at his watch, and remarked he would barely have time to get to the station.

Arthur went to the door with him, in great anxiety, lest he should question Burtenshaw; but peering into the outer office, he observed Burtenshaw was not there. Michael had caught his employer's anxious look, and conveyed the banker into the small room where the shorthand writer was at work.

But Burtenshaw was one of a struggling firm; to him every minute was an hour. He had sat, fuming with impatience, so long as he heard talking in the inner office; and, the moment it ceased, he took the liberty of coming in; so that he opened the side door just as Wardlaw senior was passing through the center door.

Instantly Wardlaw junior whipped before him, to hide his figure from his retreating father.

Wylie—who all this time had been sitting silent, looking from one to the other, and quietly puzzling out the game, as well as he could—observed this movement, and grinned.

As for Arthur Wardlaw, he saw his father safe out, then gave a sigh of relief, and walked to his office table, and sat down, and began to fill in the check.

Burtenshaw drew near, and said, "I am instructed to say that fifty thousand pounds on account will be accepted."

Perhaps if this proposal had been made a few seconds sooner, the ingenious Arthur would have availed himself of it; but, as it was, he preferred to take the high and mighty tone.

"I decline any concession," said he. "Mr. Penfold, take this check to the Bank of England. £81,647 10s. that is the amount, capital and interest, up to noon this day: hand the sum to Mr. Burtenshaw, taking his receipt, or, if he prefers, it, pay it across his counter, to my credit. That may arrest the run."

Burtenshaw stammered out his thanks.

Wardlaw cut him short. "Good morning, sir," said he. "I have business of *importance*. Good day," and bowed him out.

"This is a High-flier," thought Burtenshaw.

Wardlaw then opened the side door, and called his shorthand writer.

"Mr. Atkins, please step into the outer office, and don't let a soul come in to me. Mind, I am out for the day. Except to Miss Rolleston and her father."

He then closed all the doors, and sunk exhausted into a chair, muttering, "Thank heaven! I have got rid of them all for an hour or two. *Now, Wylie.*"

Wylie seemed in no hurry to enter upon the required subject.

Said he, evasively, "Why, guv'nor, it seems to me you are among the breakers here yourself."

"Nothing of the sort, if you have managed your work cleverly. Come, tell me all, before we are interrupted again."

"Tell ye all about it! Why, there's part on't I am afraid to think on; let alone talk about it."

"Spare me your scruples, and give me your facts," said Wardlaw coldly. "First of all, did you succeed in shifting the bullion as agreed?"

The sailor appeared relieved by this question.

"Oh, that is all right," said he. "I got the bullion safe aboard the Shannon, marked for lead."

"And the lead on board the Proserpine?"

"Aye, shipped as bullion."

"Without suspicion?"

"Not quite."

"Great heaven! Who?"

"One clerk at the shipping agent's scented something queer, I think. James Seaton. *That was the name he went by.*"

"Could he prove anything?"

"Nothing. He knew nothing for certain; and what he guessed won't never be known in England now." And Wylie fidgeted in his chair.

Notwithstanding his assurance Wardlaw looked grave, and took a note of that clerk's name. Then he begged Wylie to go on. "Give me all the details," said he: "Leave *me* to judge of their relative value. You scuttled the ship?"

"Don't say that! don't say that!" cried Wylie, in a low but eager voice. "Stone walls have ears." Then rather more loudly than was necessary, "Ship sprung a leak that neither the captain, nor I, nor anybody could find, to stop. Me and my men, we all think her seams opened, with stress of weather."

Then, lowering his voice again, "Try and see it as we do; and don't you ever use such a word as that what come out of your lips just now. We pumped her hard; but 'twarn't no use. She filled, and we had to take to the boats."

"Stop a minute. Was there any suspicion excited?"

"Not among the crew; and, suppose there was, I could talk 'em all over, or buy 'em all over, what few of 'em is left. I've got 'em all with me in one house: and they are all square, don't you fear?"

"Well, but you said 'among the crew'! Whom else have we to fear?"

"Why, nobody. To be sure, one of the passengers was down on me; but what does that matter now?"

"It matters greatly—it matters terribly. Who was this passenger?"

"He called himself the Reverend John Hazel. He suspected something or other; and what with listening here, and watching there, he judged the ship was never to see England, and I always fancied he told the lady."

"What, was there a lady there?"

"Aye, worse luck, sir; and a pretty girl she was; coming home to England to die of consumption; so our surgeon told me."

"Well, never mind her. The clergyman! This fills me with anxiety. A clerk suspecting us at Sydney, and a passenger suspecting us in the vessel. There are two witnesses against us already."

"No; only one."

"How do you make that out?"

"Why, White's clerk and the parson, they was one man."

Wardlaw stared in utter amazement.

"Don't ye believe me?" said Wylie.

"I tell ye that there clerk boarded us under an alias. He had shaved off his beard; but, bless your heart, I knew him directly."

"He came to verify his suspicions," suggested Wardlaw, in a faint voice.

"Not he. He came for love of the sick girl, and nothing else; and you'll never see either him or her, if that is any comfort to you."

"Be good enough to conceal nothing. Facts must be faced."

"That is too true, sir. Well, we abandoned her, and took to the boats. I commanded one."

"And Hudson the other?"

"Hudson! No."

"Why, how was that? and what has become of him?"

"What has become of Hudson?" said Wylie, with a start. "There's a question! And not a drop to wet my lips, and warm my heart. Is this a tale to tell dry? Can't ye spare a drop of brandy to a poor devil that has earned ye £160,000, and risked his life, and wrecked his soul to do it?"

Wardlaw cast a glance of contempt on him, but got up and speedily put a bottle of old brandy, a tumbler, and a carafe of water before him.

Wylie drank a wineglassful neat, and gave a sort of sigh of satisfaction. And then ensued a dialogue, in which, curiously enough, the brave man was agitated, and the timid man was cool and collected. But one reason was, the latter had not imagination enough to realize things unseen, though he had caused them.

Wylie told him how Hudson got to the bottle, and would not leave the ship. "I think I see him now, with his cutlass in one hand, and his rum bottle in the other, and the waves running over his poor, silly face, as she went down. Poor Hiram! he and I had made many a trip together, before we took to this."

And Wylie shuddered, and took another gulp at the brandy.

While he was drinking to drown the picture, Wardlaw was calmly reflecting on the bare fact. "Hum," said he, "we must use that circumstance. I'll get it into the journals. Heroic captain. Went down with the ship. Who can suspect Hudson in the teeth of such a fact? Now pray go on, my good Wylie. The boats!"

"Well, sir, I had the surgeon, and ten men, and the lady's maid, on board the long-boat; and there was the parson, the sick lady, and five sailors aboard the cutter. We sailed together, till night, steering for Juan Fernandez; then a fog came on and we lost sight of the cutter, and I altered my mind and judged it best to beat to win'ard, and get into the track of ships. Which we did, and were nearly swamped in a sou'wester; but, by good luck, a Yankee whaler picked us up, and took us to Buenos Ayres, where we shipped for England, what was left of us, only four, besides myself; but I got the signatures of the others to my tale of the wreck. It is all as square as a die, I tell you."

"Well done. Well done. But, stop! the other boat, with that sham parson on board, who knows all. She will be picked up, too, perhaps."

"There is no chance for that. She was out of the tracks of trade; and, I'll tell ye the truth, sir." He poured out half a tumbler of brandy, and drank a part of it; and, now, for the first time his hand trembled as he lifted the glass. "Some fool had put the main of her provisions aboard the long-boat; that is what sticks to me, and won't let me sleep. We took a chance, but we didn't give one. I think I told you there was a woman aboard the cutter, that sick girl, sir. Oh, but it was hard lines for her, poor thing! I see her pale and calm—oh, Lord, so pale and calm—every night of my life; she kneeled aboard the cutter with her white hands a-clasped together, praying."

"Certainly, it is all very shocking," said Wardlaw; "but then, you know, if they had escaped, they would have exposed us. Believe me, it is all for the best."

Wylie looked at him with wonder.

"Aye," said he, "you can sit here at your ease, and doom a ship and risk her

people's lives; but if you had to do it, and see it, and then lie awake thinking of it, you'd wish all the gold on earth had been in hell before you put your hand to such a piece of work."

Wardlaw smiled a ghastly smile. "In short," said he, "you don't mean to take the £3,000 I pay you for this little job."

"Oh, yes, I do! but for all the gold in Victoria I wouldn't do such a job again. We have sunk a good ship, and we have as good as murdered a poor, dying girl."

"Hold your tongue, ye fool!" cried Wardlaw, losing his *sang-froid* in a moment, for he heard somebody at the door.

It opened, and there stood a military figure in a traveling-cap—General Rolleston.

CHAPTER XVI.

As some eggs have actually two yolks, so Arthur Wardlaw had two hearts; and, at the sight of Helen's father, the baser one ceased to beat for a while.

He ran to General Rolleston, shook him warmly by the hand, and welcomed him to England with sparkling eyes. The stately soldier returned his grasp in kind.

"Is Helen with you, sir?" said Wardlaw, making a movement to go to the door: for he thought she must be outside in the cab.

"No, she is not," said General Rolleston.

"There, now," said Arthur, "that cruel father of mine has broken his promise, and carried her off to Elm-trees!"

At this moment Wardlaw senior returned to tell Arthur he had been just too late to meet the Rollestons. "Oh, here he is!" said he; and there were fresh greetings.

"Well, but," said Arthur, "where is Helen?"

"I think it is I who ought to ask that question," said Rolleston gravely. "I telegraphed you at Elm-trees, thinking of course she would come with you to meet me at the station. It does not much matter, a few hours; but her not coming makes me uneasy, for her health

was declining when she left me. How is my child, Mr. Wardlaw? Pray tell me the truth."

Both the Wardlaws looked at one another, and at General Rolleston, and the elder Wardlaw said there was certainly some misunderstanding here. "We fully believed that your daughter was coming home with you in the *Shannon*."

"Come home with me? Why, of course not. She sailed three weeks before me. Good heavens! Has she not arrived?"

"No," replied old Wardlaw, "we have neither seen nor heard of her."

"Why, what ship did she sail in?" said Arthur.

"In the *Proserpine*."

CHAPTER XVII.

ARTHUR WARDLAW fixed on the speaker a gaze full of horror; his jaw fell; a livid pallor spread over his features; he echoed in a hoarse whisper, "The *Proserpine*!" and turned his scared eyes upon Wylie, who was himself leaning against the wall, his stalwart frame beginning to tremble.

"The sick girl," murmured Wylie, and a cold sweat gathered on his brow.

General Rolleston looked from one to another with strange misgivings, which soon deepened into a sense of some terrible calamity; for now a strong convulsion swelled Arthur Wardlaw's heart; his face worked fearfully; and, with a sharp and sudden cry, he fell forward on the table, and his father's arm alone prevented him from sinking like a dead man on the floor. Yet, though crushed and helpless, he was not insensible; that blessing was denied him.

General Rolleston implored an explanation.

Wylie, with downcast and averted face, began to stammer a few disconnected and unintelligible words; but old Wardlaw silenced him and said, with much feeling, "Let none but a father tell him. My poor, poor friend—the *Proserpine*! How can I say it?"

"Lost at sea," groaned Wylie.

At these fatal words the old warrior's countenance grew rigid; his large, bony

hands gripped the back of the chair on which he leaned, and were white with their own convulsive force; and he bowed his head under the blow, without one word.

His was an agony too great and mute to be spoken to; and there was silence in the room, broken only by the hysterical moans of the miserable plotter, who had drawn down this calamity on his own head. He was in no state to be left alone; and even the bereaved father found pity in his desolate heart for one who loved his lost child so well; and the two old men took him home between them, in a helpless and pitiable condition.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BUT this utter prostration of his confederate began to alarm Wylie, and rouse him to exertion. Certainly, he was very sorry for what he had done, and would have undone it and forfeited his £3,000 in a moment, if he could. But, as he could not undo the crime, he was all the more determined to reap the reward. Why, that £3,000, for aught he knew, was the price of his soul; and he was not the man to let his soul go gratis.

He finished the rest of the brandy, and went after his men, to keep them true to him by promises; but the next day he came to the office in Fenchurch Street, and asked anxiously for Wardlaw. Wardlaw had not arrived. He waited, but the merchant never came; and Michael told him that this was the first time his young master had missed coming these five years.

In course of the day, several underwriters came in, with long faces, to verify the report, which had now reached Lloyd's, that the *Proserpine* had foundered at sea.

"It is too true," said Michael; "and poor Mr. Wylie here has barely escaped with his life. He was mate of the ship, gentlemen."

Upon this, each visitor questioned Wylie, and they nearly all asked after the ship's log.

"I have got it safe, at home," said he. It was in his pocket all the time.

One or two complained angrily of Mr. Wardlaw's absence at such a time.

"Well, good gentlemen," said Wylie, "I'll tell ye. Mr. Wardlaw's sweet-heart was aboard the ship. He is a'most broken-hearted. He vallied her more than all the gold, that you may take your oath on."

This stroke, coming from a rough fellow in a pea-jacket, who looked as simple as he was cunning, silenced remonstrance, and went far to disarm suspicion; and so pleased Michael Penfold, that he said, "Mr. Wylie, you are interested in this business. Would you mind going to Mr. Wardlaw's house, and asking what we are to do next? I'll give you his address, and a line, begging him to make an effort and see you. Business is the heart's best ointment. Eh, dear Mr. Wylie, I have known grief too; and I think I should have gone mad when they sent my poor son away, but for business, especially the summing up of long columns, etc."

Wylie called at the house in Russell Square, and asked to see Mr. Wardlaw.

The servant shook his head. "You can't see him; he is very ill."

"Very ill?" said Wylie. "I am sorry for that. Well, but I sha'n't make him any worse; and Mr. Penfold says I must see him. It is very particular, I tell you. He won't thank you for refusing me, when he comes to hear of it."

He said this very seriously; and the servant, after a short hesitation, begged him to sit down in the passageway a moment. He then went into the dining-room, and shortly reappeared, holding the door open. Out came, not Wardlaw junior, but Wardlaw senior.

"My son is in no condition to receive you," said he gravely; "but I am at your service. What is your business?"

Wylie was taken off his guard, and stammered out something about the Shannon.

"The Shannon! What have you to do with her? You belong to the Proserpine."

"Aye, sir; but I had his orders to ship forty chests of lead and smelted copper on board the Shannon."

"Well?"

"Ye see, sir," said Wylie, "Mr. Wardlaw was particular about them, and I feel responsible like, having shipped them aboard another vessel."

"Have you not the captain's receipt?"

"That I have, sir, at home. But you could hardly read it for salt water."

"Well," said Wardlaw senior, "I will direct our agent at Liverpool to look after them, and send them up at once to my cellars in Fenchurch Street. Forty chests of lead and copper, I think you said." And he took a note of this directly. Wylie was not a little discomfited at this unexpected turn things had taken; but he held his tongue now, for fear of making bad worse. Wardlaw senior went on to say that he should have to conduct the business of the firm for a time, in spite of his old age and failing health.

This announcement made Wylie perspire with anxiety, and his £3,000 seemed to melt away from him.

"But never mind," said old Wardlaw; "I am very glad you came. In fact, you are the very man I wanted to see. My poor afflicted friend has asked after you several times. Be good enough to follow me."

He led the way into the dining-room, and there sat the sad father in all the quiet dignity of calm, unfathomable sorrow.

"Here is Wylie, sir. Come forward, my man, and speak to the general. He wants to know if you can point out to him on the chart the very spot where the Proserpine was lost?"

"Well, sir," said Wylie, "I think I could."

The great chart of the Pacific was then spread out upon the table, and rarely has a chart been examined as this was, with the bleeding heart as well as the straining eye.

The rough sailor became an oracle; the others hung upon his words, and followed his brown finger on the chart with fearful interest.

"Ye see, sir," said he, addressing the old merchant, for there was something on his mind that made him avoid speaking directly to General Rolleston, "when we came out of Sydney, the wind being south and by west, Hudson took the northerly course instead of running through Cook's Straits. The weather freshened from the same quarter, so that, with one thing and another, by when we

were a month out, she was five hundred miles or so nor'ard of her true course. But that wasn't all. When the leak gained on us, Hudson ran the ship three hundred miles by my reckoning to the nor'east; and, I remember, the day before she foundered, he told me she was in latitude forty, and Easter Island bearing due north."

"Here is the spot, then?" said General Rolleston, and placed his finger on the spot.

"Aye, sir," said Wylie, addressing the merchant; "but she ran about eighty-five miles after that, on a northerly course—no—wind on her starboard quarter—and, being deep in the water, she'd make leeway—say eighty-two miles, nor'east by east."

The general took eighty-two miles off the scale with a pair of dividers, and set out that distance on the chart. He held the instrument fixed on the point thus obtained.

Wylie eyed the point, and, after a moment's consideration, nodded his head.

"There, or thereabout," he said, in a low voice, and looking at the merchant.

A pause ensued, and the two old men examined the speck pricked on the map, as if it were the waters covering the Proserpine.

"Now, sir," said Rolleston, "trace the course of the boats;" and he handed Wylie a pencil.

The sailor slowly averted his head, but stretched out his hand and took it, and traced two lines, the one short and straight, running nearly northeast. "That's the way the cutter headed when we lost her in the night."

The other line ran parallel to the first for half an inch, then, turning, bent backward and ran due south.

"This was *our* course," said Wylie.

General Rolleston looked up and said, "Why did you desert the cutter?"

The mate looked at old Wardlaw, and, after some hesitation, replied: "After we lost sight of her, the men with me declared that we could not reach either Juan Fernandez or Valparaiso with our stock of provisions, and insisted on standing for the sea-track of Australian liners between the Horn and Sydney."

This explanation was received in dead silence. Wylie fidgeted, and his eye wandered round the room.

General Rolleston applied his compass to the chart. "I find that the Proserpine was not one thousand miles from Easter Island. Why did you not make for that land?"

"We had no charts, sir," said Wylie to the merchant, "and I'm no navigator."

"I see no land laid down hereaway, northeast of the spot where the ship went down."

"No," replied Wylie, "that's what the men said when they made me 'bout ship."

"Then why did you lead the way northeast at all?"

"I'm no navigator," answered the man, sullenly.

He then suddenly stammered out: "Ask my men what *we* went through. Why, sir" (to Wardlaw), "I can hardly believe that I am alive; and sit here talking to you about this cursed business. And nobody offers me a drop of anything."

Wardlaw poured him out a tumbler of wine. His brown hand trembled a little, and he gulped the wine down like water.

General Rolleston gave Mr. Wardlaw a look, and Wylie was dismissed. He slouched down the street all in a cold perspiration; but still clinging to his £3,000, though small was now his hope of ever seeing it.

When he was gone General Rolleston paced that large and gloomy room in silence. Wardlaw eyed him with the greatest interest, but avoided speaking to him. At last he stopped short, and stood erect, as veterans halt, and pointed down at the chart.

"I'll start at once for that spot," said he. "I'll go in the next ship bound to Valparaiso, there I'll charter a small vessel, and ransack those waters for some trace of my poor lost girl."

"Can you think of no better way than that?" said old Wardlaw gently and with a slight tone of reproach.

"No—not at this moment. Oh, yes, by the bye, the Greyhound and Dreadnaught are going out to survey the islands of the Pacific. I have interest

enough to get a berth in the Greyhound."

"What! go in a government ship! under the orders of a man, under the orders of another man, under the orders of a Board. Why, if you heard our poor girl was alive upon a rock, the Dreadnaught would be sure to run up a bunch of red tape to the fore that moment to recall the Greyhound, and the Greyhound would go back. No," said he rising suddenly, and confronting the general, and with the color mounting for once in his sallow face, "you sail in no bottom but one freighted by Wardlaw & Son, and the captain shall be under no orders but yours. We have bought the steam-sloop Springbok, seven hundred tons. I'll victual her for a year, man her well, and you shall go out in her in less than a week. I give you my hand on that."

They grasped hands.

"What, sir! Your own son lies in danger, yet your heart goes so with me—such goodness—it is too much for me."

"No, no," faltered the merchant, affected in his turn; "it is nothing. Your poor girl was coming home in that cursed ship to marry my son. Yes, he lies ill for love of her; God help him and me too; but you most of all. Ah, my friend, you and I are of one age; and this is a heavy blow for us; and we are friends no more; it has made us brothers: she was to be my child as well as yours; well, now she *is* my child, and our hearts they bleed together." At this the two stout old men embraced one another like two women, and cried together a little.

In a week the Springbok steamed down the Channel on an errand inspired by love, not reason; to cross one mighty ocean, and grope for a lost daughter in another.

CHAPTER XIX.

WE return to the cutter and her living freight.

After an anxious but brief consultation, it was agreed that their best chance was to traverse as many miles of water as possible, while the wind was fair; by this means they would increase their small chance of being picked up, and also of falling in with land, and would, at all events, sail into a lovely climate,

where intense cold was unknown, and gales of wind uncommon.

Mr. Hazel advised them to choose a skipper, and give him absolute power, especially over the provisions. They assented to this. He then recommended Cooper for that post. But they had not fathomed the sterling virtues of that taciturn seaman; so they offered the command to Welch instead.

"Me put myself over Sam Cooper!" said he; "not likely."

Then their choice fell upon Michael Morgan. The other sailors' names were Prince, Fenner, and Mackintosh.

Mr. Hazel urged Morgan to put the crew and passengers on short allowance at once, viz., two biscuits a day and four tablespoonfuls of water: but Morgan was a common sailor; he could not see clearly very far ahead; and, moreover, his own appetite counteracted this advice; he dealt out a pound of biscuit and an ounce of ham to each person, night and morning, and a pint of water in course of the day.

Mr. Hazel declined his share of the ham, and begged Miss Rolleston so earnestly not to touch it, that she yielded a silent compliance.

On the fourth day the sailors were all in good spirits, though the provisions were now very low. They even sang and spun yarns. This was partly owing to the beauty of the weather.

On the fifth day Morgan announced that he could only serve out one biscuit per day; and this sudden decline caused some dissatisfaction and alarm.

Next day, the water ran so low, that only a teaspoonful was served out night and morning.

There were murmurs and forebodings.

Hazel encouraged the men, out of his multifarious stores of learning. He related at length stories of wrecks and sufferings at sea; which, though they had long been in print, were most of them new to these poor fellows. He moralized and showed his fellow sufferers it was discipline and self-denial from the first that had enabled those hungry specters to survive, and to traverse miles of water, in those very seas; and that in spite of hunger, thirst, disease, and rough weather.

By these means he diverted their

minds in some degree from their own calamity, and taught them the lesson they most needed.

And Helen Rolleston's hazel eyes dwelled on the narrator with unceasing wonder.

On the sixth day the provisions failed entirely. Not a crust of bread: not a drop of water.

At 4 P. M. several flying-fish, driven into the air by the dolphins and catfish, fell into the sea again near the boat, and one struck the sail sharply, and fell into the boat. It was divided, and devoured raw, in a moment.

The next morning the wind fell, and, by noon, the ocean became like glass.

The horrors of a storm have been often painted; but who has described, or can describe, the horrors of a calm, to a boat-load of hungry, thirsty creatures, whose only chances of salvation or relief are wind and rain?

The beautiful, remorseless sky was one vault of purple, with a great flaming jewel in the center, whose vertical rays struck, and parched, and scorched the living sufferers; and blistered and baked the boat itself, so that it hurt their hot hands to touch it: the beautiful, remorseless ocean was one sheet of glass, that glared in their bloodshot eyes, and reflected the intolerable heat of heaven upon these poor wretches, who were gnawed to death with hunger; and their raging thirst was fiercer still.

Toward afternoon of the eighth day, Mackintosh dipped a vessel in the sea, with the manifest intention of drinking the salt water.

"Stop him!" cried Hazel, in great agitation; and the others seized him, and overpowered him: he cursed them with such horrible curses, that Miss Rolleston put her fingers in her ears, and shuddered from head to foot. Even this was new to her, to hear foul language.

A calm voice rose in the midst, and said: "Let us pray."

There was a dead silence, and Mr. Hazel kneeled down and prayed loud and fervently; and, while he prayed, the furious cries subsided for a while, and deep groans only were heard. He prayed for food, for rain, for wind, for patience.

The men were not so far gone but they could just manage to say "Amen."

He rose from his knees, and gathered the pale faces of the men together in one glance; and saw that intense expression of agony which physical pain can mold with men's features; and then he strained his eyes over the brassy horizon; but no cloud, no veil of vapor was visible.

"We must be mad," he cried, "to die of thirst with all this water round us."

His invention being stimulated by this idea, and his own dire need, he eagerly scanned everything in the boat, and his eyes soon lighted on two objects disconnected in themselves, but it struck him he could use them in combination. These were a common glass bottle, and Miss Rolleston's life-preserving jacket, that served her for a couch. He drew this garment over his knees, and considered it attentively; then untwisted the brass nozzle through which the jacket was inflated, and so left a tube, some nine inches in length, hanging down from the neck of the garment.

He now applied his breath to the tube, and the jacket swelling rapidly proved that the whole receptacle was air-tight.

Next, he took the bottle and filled it with sea water; then he inserted, with some difficulty, and great care, the neck of the bottle into the orifice of the tube: this done, he detached the wire of the brass nozzle, and whipped the tube firmly round the neck of the bottle.

"Now, light a fire," he cried; "no matter what it costs."

The fore thwart was chopped up, and a fire soon spluttered and sparkled, for ten eager hands were feeding it: the bottle was then suspended over it, and, in due course, the salt water boiled and threw off vapor, and the belly of the jacket began to heave and stir.

Hazel then threw cold water upon the outside, to keep it cool, and, while the men eagerly watched the bubbling bottle and swelling bag, his spirits rose, and he took occasion to explain that what was now going on under their eyes was, after all, only one of the great processes of Nature, done upon a small scale. "The clouds," said he, "are but vapors drawn from the sea by the heat of the sun: these clouds are composed of fresh water, and so the steam we are now raising from salt water will be fresh. We can't make

whisky, or brew beer, lads; but, thank heaven, we can brew water; and it is worth all other liquors ten times told."

A wild "Hurrah!" greeted these words.

But every novel experiment seems doomed to fail, or meet with some disaster. The water in the bottle had been reduced too low, by vaporism, and the bottle burst suddenly, with a loud report, which was followed by a piteous wail.

Hazel turned pale at this fatal blow; but, recovering himself, he said, "That is unfortunate; but it was a good servant while it lasted: give me the baler; and, Miss Rolleston, can you lend me a thimble?"

The tube of the life-preserver was held over the baler, and out trickled a small quantity of pure water, two thimblefuls apiece. Even that, as it passed over their swelling tongues and parched swallows, was a heavenly relief; but, alas, the supply was then exhausted.

Next day hunger seemed uppermost, and the men gnawed and chewed their tobacco pouches: and two caps that had been dressed with the hair on, were divided for food.

None was given to Mr. Hazel or Miss Rolleston; and this, to do the poor creatures justice, was the first instance of injustice or partiality the sailors had shown.

The lady, though tormented with hunger, was more magnanimous; she offered to divide the contents of her little medicine chest; and the globules were all devoured in a moment.

And now their tortures were aggravated by the sight of abundance. They drifted over coral rocks, at a considerable depth, but the water was so exquisitely clear that they saw five fathoms down.

They discerned small fish drifting over the bottom; they looked like a driving cloud, so vast was their number; and every now and then there was a scurry among them, and porpoises and dogfish broke in and feasted on them. All this they saw, yet could not catch one of those billions for their lives. Thus they were tantalized as well as starved.

The next day was like the last, with this difference, that the sufferers could no longer endure their torments in silence.

The lady moaned constantly: the sailors groaned, lamented and cursed.

The sun baked and blistered, and the water glared.

The sails being useless, the sailors rigged them as an awning, and salt water was constantly thrown over them.

Mr. Hazel took a baler and drenched his own clothes and Miss Rolleston's upon their bodies. This relieved the hell of thirst in some degree; but the sailors could not be persuaded to practise it.

In the afternoon Hazel took Miss Rolleston's Bible from her wasted hands, and read aloud the forty-second Psalm.

When he had done, one of the sailors asked him to pass the Bible forward. He did so; and in half an hour the leaves were returned him; the vellum binding had been cut off, divided, and eaten.

He looked piteously at the leaves, and, after a while, fell upon his knees and prayed silently.

He rose, and, with Miss Rolleston's consent, offered the men the leaves as well. "It is the Bread of Life for men's souls, not their bodies," said he. "But God is merciful; I think he will forgive you; for your need is bitter."

Cooper replied that the binding was man's, but the pages were God's; and, either for this or another more obvious reason, the leaves were declined for food.

All that afternoon Hazel was making a sort of rough spoon out of a fragment of wood.

The night that followed was darker than usual, and, about midnight, a hand was laid on Helen Rolleston's shoulder, and a voice whispered, "Hush! say nothing. I have got something for you."

At the same time, something sweet and deliciously fragrant was put to her lips; she opened her mouth, and received a spoonful of marmalade. Never did marmalade taste like that before. It dissolved itself like ambrosia over her palate, and even relieved her parched throat in some degree by the saliva it excited.

Nature could not be resisted; her body took whatever he gave. But her high mind rebelled.

"Oh, how base I am," said she, and wept.

"Why, it is your own," said he soothingly; "I took it out of your cabin expressly for you."

"At least oblige me by eating some yourself, sir," said Helen, "or" (with a sudden burst) "I will die ere I touch another morsel."

"No; if I take any, I must divide it all with *them*. But if you will help me rip up the jacket, I will suck the inside."

The next day was a fearful one. Not a cloud in the sky to give hope of rain; the air so light, it only just moved them along; and the sea glared, and the sun beat on the poor wretches, now tortured into madness with hunger and thirst.

Oh, it was terrible and piteous to see and hear the boat-load of ghastly victims, with hollow cheeks, and wild-beast eyes, go groaning, cursing, and shrieking loud, upon that fair glassy sea, below that purple vault and glorious sun.

Toward afternoon, the sailors got together, forward, and left Hazel and Miss Rolleston alone in the stern. This gave him the opportunity of speaking to her confidentially. He took advantage of it, and said, "Miss Rolleston, I wish to consult you. Am I justified in secreting the marmalade any longer? There is nearly a spoonful apiece."

"No," said Helen, "divide it among them all. Oh, if I had only a *woman* beside me, to pray with, and cry with, and die with; for die we must."

"I am not so sure of that," said Hazel faintly, but with a cool fortitude all his own. "Experience proves that the human body can subsist a prodigious time on very little food; and saturating the clothes with water is, I know, the best way to allay thirst. And women, thank heaven, last longer than men, under privations."

"I shall not last long, sir," said Helen. "Look at their eyes."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that those men there are going to kill me."

CHAPTER XX.

HAZEL thought her reason was going; and, instead of looking at the men's eyes, it was hers he examined. But no; the sweet cheek was white, the eyes had a fearful hollow all round them, but out of that cave looked the light hazel eye, preternaturally large, but calm as ever, and full of fortitude and reason.

"Don't look at *me*," said she quietly; "but take an opportunity and look at *them*. They mean to kill *me*."

Hazel looked furtively round; and, being enlightened in part by the woman's intelligence, he observed that some of the men were actually glaring at himself and Helen Rolleston in a dreadful way. There was a remarkable change in their eyes since he looked last. The pupils seemed diminished, the whites enlarged; and, in a word, the characteristics of humanity had, somehow, died out of those bloodshot orbs, and the animal alone shone in them now; the wild beast, driven desperate by hunger.

What he saw, coupled with Helen's positive interpretation of it, was truly sickening.

These men were six, and he but one. They had all clasp-knives; and he had only an old penknife that would be sure to double up, or break off, if a blow were dealt with it.

He asked himself, in utter terror, what on earth he should do.

The first thing seemed to be to join the men, and learn their minds: it might also be as well to prevent this secret conference from going further.

He went forward boldly, though sick at heart, and said, "Well, my lads, what is it?"

Then the men were silent directly, and looked sullenly down, avoiding his eye; yet not ashamed.

In a situation so terrible, the senses are sharpened; and Hazel dissected, in his mind, this sinister look, and saw that Morgan, Prince, and Mackintosh were hostile to him.

But Welch and Cooper he hoped were still friendly.

"Sir," said Fenner, civilly but doggedly, "we are come to this now, that one must die for the others to live: the greater part of us are for casting lots all round, and let every man, and every woman, too, take their chance. That is fair, Sam, isn't it?"

"It is fair," said Cooper, with a terrible doggedness. "But it is hard," he added.

"Harder that seven should die for one," said Mackintosh. "No, no; one must die for seven."

Hazel represented, with all the force

language possesses, that what they meditated was a crime, the fatal result of which was known by experience.

But they heard in ominous silence.

Hazel went back to Helen Rolleston, and sat down right before her.

"Well!" she said, with supernatural calmness.

"You were mistaken," said he.

"Then why have you placed yourself between them and me. No, no; their eyes have told me they have singled me out. But what does that matter? We poor creatures are all to die; and that one is the happiest that dies first, and dies unstained by such a crime. *I heard every word you said, sir.*"

Hazel cast a piteous look upon her, and, finding he could no longer deceive her as to their danger, and being weakened by famine, fell to trembling and crying.

Helen Rolleston looked at him with calm and gentle pity. For a moment, the patient fortitude of a woman made her a brave man's superior.

Night came, and, for the first time, Hazel claimed two portions of the rum; one for himself and one for Miss Rolleston.

He then returned aft and took the helm. He loosened it, so as to be ready to unship it in a moment and use it as a weapon.

The men huddled together forward; and it was easy to see that the boat was now divided into two hostile camps.

Hazel sat quaking, with his hand on the helm, fearing an attack every moment.

Both he and Helen listened acutely, and about three o'clock in the morning a new incident occurred, of a terrible nature.

Mackintosh was heard to say, "Serve out the rum, no allowance," and the demand was instantly complied with by Morgan.

Then Hazel touched Miss Rolleston on the shoulder and insisted on her taking half what was left of the marmalade, and he took the other half. The time was gone by for economy; what they wanted now was strength, in case the wild beasts, maddened by drink as well as hunger, should attack them.

Already the liquor had begun to tell,

the wild hallos and yells, and even fragments of ghastly songs mingled with the groans of misery, in the doomed boat.

At sunrise there was a great swell upon the water, and sharp gusts at intervals; and on the horizon, to windward, might be observed a black spot in the sky, no bigger than a fly. But none saw that; Hazel's eye never left the raving wretches in the forepart of the boat; Cooper and Welch sat in gloomy despair amidships; and the others were huddled together forward, encouraging each other to a desperate act.

It was about eight o'clock in the morning. Helen Rolleston awoke from a brief doze, and said, "Mr. Hazel, I have had a strange dream. I dreamed there was food, and plenty of it, on the outside of this boat."

While these strange words were yet in her mouth, three of the sailors suddenly rose up with their knives drawn, and eyes full of murder, and staggered aft as fast as their enfeebled bodies could.

Hazel uttered a loud cry, "Welch! Cooper! will you see us butchered?" and, unshipping the helm, rose to his feet.

Cooper put out his arm to stop Mackintosh, but was too late. He did stop Morgan, however, and said, "Come, none of that; no foul play!"

Irritated by this unexpected resistance, and maddened by drink, Morgan turned on Cooper and stabbed him; he sank down with a groan; on this Welch gave Morgan a fearful gash, dividing his jugular, and was stabbed, in return, by Prince, but not severely: these two grappled and rolled over one another, stabbing and cursing at the bottom of the boat; meantime, Mackintosh was received by Hazel with a point-blank thrust in the face from the helm that staggered him, though a very powerful man, and drove him backward against the mast; but, in delivering this thrust, Hazel's foot slipped, and he fell with great violence on his head and arm. Mackintosh quickly recovered himself and sprang upon the stern thwart with his knife up and gleaming over Helen Rolleston.

Hazel writhed round where he lay, and struck him desperately on the knee

with the helm. The poor woman knew only how to suffer; she cowered a little, and put up two feeble hands.

The knife descended.

But not upon that cowering figure.

CHAPTER XXI.

A PURPLE rippling line upon the water had for some little time been coming down upon them with great rapidity; but, bent on bloody work, they had not observed it. The boat heeled over under the sudden gust; but the ruffian had already lost his footing under Hazel's blow, and, the boom striking him almost at the same moment, he went clean over the gunwale into the sea; he struck it with his knife first.

All their lives were now gone if Cooper, who had already recovered his feet, had not immediately cut the sheet with his knife; there was no time to slack it; and, even as it was, the lower part of the sail was drenched, and the boat full of water. "Ship the helm!" he roared.

The boat righted directly the sheet was cut, the wet sail flapped furiously and, the boat having way on her, yielded to the helm and wriggled slowly away before the whistling wind.

Mackintosh rose a few yards astern and swam after the boat, with great glaring eyes. The loose sail was not drawing, but the wind moved the boat onward. However, Mackintosh gained slowly, and Hazel held up an oar like a spear, and shouted to him that he must promise solemnly to forego all violence, or he should never come on board alive.

Mackintosh opened his mouth to reply; but, at the same moment, his eyes suddenly dilated in a fearful way, and he went under water, with a gurgling cry. Yet not like one drowning, but with a jerk.

The next moment there was a great bubbling of the water, as if displaced by some large creatures struggling below, and then the surface was stained with blood.

And, lest there should be any doubt as to the wretched man's fate, the huge black fin of a monstrous shark came soon after, gliding round and round the rolling boat, awaiting the next victim.

Now, while the water was yet stained with his life-blood, who, hurrying to kill, had met with a violent death, the unwounded sailor, Fenner, excited by the fracas, broke forth into singing, and so completed the horror of a wild and awful scene; for still, while he shouted, laughed, and sang, the shark swam calmly round and round, and the boat crept on, her white sail bespattered with blood—which was not so before—and in her bottom lay one man dead as a stone; and two poor wretches, Prince and Welch, their short-lived feud composed forever, sat openly sucking their bleeding wounds, to quench for a moment their intolerable thirst.

Oh, little do we, who never pass a single day without bite or sup, know the animal man, in these dire extremities.

CHAPTER XXII.

At last Cooper ordered Fenner to hold his jaw, and come aft, and help sail the boat.

But the man, being now stark mad, took no notice of the order. His madness grew on him, and took a turn by no means uncommon in these cases. He saw before him sumptuous feasts, and streams of fresh water flowing. These he began to describe with great volubility and rapture, smacking his lips, and exulting; and so he went on tantalizing them till noon.

Meantime, Cooper asked Mr. Hazel if he could sail the boat.

"I can steer," said he, "but that is all. My right arm is benumbed."

The silvery voice of Helen Rolleston then uttered brave and welcome words. "I will do whatever you tell me, Mr. Cooper."

"Long life to you, miss!" said the wounded seaman. He then directed her how to reef the sail, and splice the sheet which he had been obliged to cut; and, in a word, to sail the boat; which she did with some little assistance from Hazel.

And so they all depended upon her, whom some of them had been for killing; and the blood-stained boat glided before the wind.

At 2 P. M. Fenner jumped suddenly up, and, looking at the sea with rapture, cried out, "Aha! my boys, here's a

beautiful green meadow; and there's a sweet brook with bulrushes: green, green, green! Let's have a roll among the daisies." And, in a moment, ere any of his stiff and wounded shipmates could put out a hand, he threw himself on his back upon the water, and sunk forever, with inexpressible rapture on his corpse-like face.

A feeble groan was the only tribute those who remained behind could afford him.

At 3 P. M. Mr. Hazel happened to look over the weather-side of the boat, as she heeled to leeward under a smart breeze, and he saw a shell or two fastened to her side, about eleven inches above keel. He looked again, and gave a loud hurrah. "Barnacles! barnacles!" he cried. "I see them sticking."

He leaned over, and, with some difficulty, detached one, and held it up.

It was not a barnacle, but a curious oblong shell-fish, open at one end.

At sight of this, the wounded forgot their wounds, and leaned over the boat's side, detaching the shell-fish with their knives. They broke them with the handles of their knives, and devoured the fish. They were as thick as a man's finger, and about an inch long, and as sweet as a nut. It seems that in the long calm these shell-fish had fastened on the boat. More than a hundred of them were taken off her weather-side, and evenly divided.

Miss Rolleston, at Hazel's earnest request, ate only six, and these very slowly, and laid the rest by. But the sailors could not restrain themselves; and Prince, in particular, gorged himself so fiercely that he turned purple in the face, and began to breathe very hard.

That black speck on the horizon had grown by noon to a beetle, and by 3 o'clock to something more like an elephant, and it now diffused itself into a huge black cloud, that gradually overspread the heavens; and at last, about half an hour before sunset, came a peculiar chill, and then in due course, a drop or two fell upon the parched wretches. They sat, less like animals than like plants, all stretching toward their preserver.

Their eyes were turned up to the clouds, so were their open mouths, and their arms and hands help up toward it.

The drops increased in number, and praise went up to heaven in return.

Patter, patter, patter; down came a shower, a rain—a heavy, steady rain.

With cries of joy, they put out every vessel to catch it; they lowered the sail, and, putting ballast in the center, bellied it into a great vessel to catch it. They used all their spare canvas to catch it. They filled the water-cask with it; they filled the keg that had held the fatal spirit; and all the time they were sucking the wet canvas, and their own clothes, and their very hands and garments on which the life-giving drops kept falling.

Then they set their little sail again, and prayed for land to Him who had sent them wind and rain.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE breeze declined at sunset; but it rained at intervals during the night; and by the morning they were somewhat chilled.

Death had visited them again during the night. Prince was discovered dead and cold; his wounds were mere scratches, and there seems to be no doubt that he died by gorging himself with more food than his enfeebled system could possibly digest.

Mr. Hazel, however, soon came to one resolution, and that was to read the funeral service over the dead, and then commit them to the deep. He declared this intention, and Cooper, who, though wounded, and apparently sinking, was still skipper of the boat, acquiesced readily.

Mr. Hazel then took the dead men's knives and their money out of their pockets, and read the burial service over them; they were then committed to the deep. This sad ceremony performed, he addressed a few words to the survivors.

"My friends, and brothers in affliction, we ought not to hope too much from Divine mercy for ourselves; or we should come to soon forget Divine justice. But we are not forbidden to hope for others. Those who are now gone were guilty of a terrible crime; but then they were tempted more than their flesh could bear; and they received their punishment here on earth: we may therefore hope they will escape punishment hereafter.

"And it is for us to profit by their fate, and bow to heaven's will; even when they drew their knives, food in plenty was within their reach, and the signs of wind were on the sea, and of rain in the sky. Let us be more patient than they were, and place our trust— What is that upon the water to leeward? A piece of wood floating?"

Welch stood up and looked. "Can't make it out. Steer alongside it, miss, if you please." And he crept forward.

Presently he became excited, and directed those in the stern how to steer the boat close to the object without going over it. He begged them all to be silent. He leaned over the boat-side as they neared it. He clutched it suddenly with both hands and flung it into the boat with a shout of triumph, but sank exhausted by the effort.

It was a young turtle; and being asleep on the water, or inexperienced, had allowed them to capture it.

This was indeed a godsend: twelve pounds of succulent meat. It was instantly divided, and Mr. Hazel contrived, with some difficulty, to boil a portion of it. He enjoyed it greatly; but Miss Rolleston showed a curious and violent antipathy to it, scarcely credible under the circumstances. Not so the sailors. They devoured it raw, what they could get at all. Cooper could only get down a mouthful or two: he had received his death-wound and was manifestly sinking.

He revived, however, from time to time, and spoke cheerfully, whenever he spoke at all. Welch informed him of every incident that took place, however minute.

On being told that they were passing through sea-weed, he expressed a wish to see some of it, and when he had examined it, he said to Hazel, "Keep up your heart, sir; you are not a hundred miles from land." He added gently after a pause, "But I am bound for another port."

About five in the afternoon, Welch came aft, with the tears in his eyes, to say that Sam was just going to slip his cable, and had something to say to them.

They went to him directly, and Hazel took his hand, and exhorted him to forgive all his enemies.

"Hain't a got none," was the reply.

Hazel then, after a few words of religious exhortation and comfort, asked him if he could do anything for him.

"Aye," said Cooper solemnly. "Got pen and ink aboard, any of ye?"

"I have a pencil," said Helen earnestly: then, tearfully, "Oh, dear! it is to make his will." She opened her prayer-book which had two blank leaves under each cover.

The dying man saw them, and rose into that remarkable energy which sometimes precedes the departure of the soul.

"Write!" said he in his deep, full tones.

I, Samuel Cooper, able seaman, am going to slip my cable, and sail into the presence of my Maker.

He waited till this was written.

And so I speak the truth.

The ship *Proserpine* was destroyed wilful.

The men had more allowance than they signed for.

The mate was always plying the captain with liquor.

Two days before ever the ship leaked, the mate got the long-boat ready.

When the *Proserpine* sank, we was on her port quarter, aboard the cutter, was me and my messmate, Tom Welch.

We saw two auger-holes in her stern, about two inches in diameter.

Them two holes was made from within, for the splinters showed outside.

She was a good ship, and met with no stress of weather to speak of, on that voyage.

Joe Wylie scuttled her and destroyed her people.

D—n his eyes!

Mr. Hazel was shocked at this final; but he knew what sailors are, and how little meaning there is in their set phrases. However, as a clergyman, he could not allow these to be Cooper's last words; so he said earnestly, "Yes, but, my poor fellow, you said you forgave all your enemies. We all need forgiveness, you know."

"That is true, sir."

"And you forgive this Wylie, do you not?"

"Oh, Lord, yes," said Cooper faintly.

"I forgive the lubber; d—n him!"

Having said these words with some difficulty, he became lethargic, and so

remained for two hours. Indeed, he spoke but once more, and that was to Welch; though they were all about him then. "Messmate," said he, in a voice that was now faint and broken, "you and I must sail together on this new voyage. I'm going out of port first; but" (in a whisper of inconceivable tenderness and simple cunning) "I'll lie to outside the harbor till you come out, my boy." Then he paused a moment. Then he added, softly, "For I love you, Tom."

These sweet words were the last of that rugged, silent sailor, who never threw a word away, and whose rough breast enclosed a friendship as of the ancient word, tender, true, and everlasting: that sweetened his life and ennobled his death. As he deserved mourners, so he had true ones.

His last words went home to the afflicted hearts that heard them, and the lady and gentleman, whose lives he had saved at cost of his own, wept aloud over their departed friend. But his messmate's eye was dry. When all was over, he just turned to the mourners, and said gravely, "Thank ye, sir; thank ye kindly, ma'am." And then he covered the body decently with the spare canvas, and lay quietly down with his own head pillowed upon those loved remains.

The night passed, and the morning brought nothing new; except that they fell in with sea-weed in such quantities the boat could hardly get through it.

Mr. Hazel examined this sea-weed carefully, and brought several kinds upon deck. Among the varieties was one like thin green strips of spinach, very tender and succulent. His botanical researches included sea-weed, and he recognized this as one of the edible rock-weeds.

There was very little of it comparatively, but he took great pains, and, in two hours' time, had gathered as much as might fill a good slop-basin.

He washed it in fresh water, and then asked Miss Rolleston for a pocket-handkerchief. This he tied so as to make a bag, and contrived to boil it with the few chips of fuel that remained on board.

After he had boiled it ten minutes, there was no more fuel, except a bowl or two, and the boat-hook, one pair of oars, and the midship and stern thwarts.

He tasted it, and found it glutinous and delicious; he gave Miss Rolleston some, and then fed Welch with the rest. He, poor fellow, enjoyed this sea spinach greatly; he could no longer swallow meat.

While Hazel was feeding him, a flight of ducks passed over their heads, high in the air.

Welch pointed up at them.

"Ah!" said Helen, "if we had but their wings!"

Presently a bird was seen coming in the same direction, but flying very low; it wobbled along toward them very slowly, and at last, to their great surprise, came flapping and tried to settle on the gunwale of the boat. Welch, with that instinct of slaughter which belongs to men, struck the boat-hook into the bird's back, and it was soon despatched. It proved to be one of that very flock of ducks that had passed over their heads, and a crab was found fastened to its leg. It is supposed that the bird, to break its long flight, had rested on some reef and, perhaps been too busy fishing; and caught this Tartar.

Hazel pounced upon it. "Heaven has sent this for you, because you cannot eat turtle." But the next moment he blushed and recovered his reason. "See," said he, referring to her own words, "this poor bird had wings, yet death overtook her."

He sacrificed a bowl for fuel, and boiled the duck and the crab in one pot, and Miss Rolleston ate demurely but plentifully of both. Of the crab's shell he made a little drinking-vessel for Miss Rolleston.

Cooper remained without funeral rites all this time; the reason was that Welch lay with his head pillowed upon his dead friend, and Hazel had not the heart to disturb him.

But it was the survivors' duty to commit him to the deep, and so Hazel sat down by Welch, and asked him kindly whether he would not wish the services of the Church to be read over his departed friend.

"In course, sir," said Welch. But the next moment he took Hazel's meaning, and said hurriedly, "No, no; I can't let Sam be buried in the sea. Ye see, sir, Sam and I, we are used to one another,

and I can't abide to part with him, alive or dead."

"Ah!" said Hazel, "the best friends must part when death takes one."

"Aye, aye, when t'other lives. But, Lord bless you, sir! I sha'n't be long astarn of my messmate here; can't you see that?"

"Heaven forbid!" said Hazel, surprised and alarmed. "Why, you are not wounded mortally, as Cooper was. Have a good heart, man, and we three will all see Old England yet."

"Well, sir," said Welch coolly, "I'll tell ye: me and my shipmate, Prince, was a cutting at one another with our knives a smart time, and he let more blood out of me than I could afford to lose under the circumstances. And, ye see, I can't make fresh blood because my throat is so swelled by the drought, I can't swallow much meat, so I'm safe to lose the number of my mess; and, another thing, my heart isn't altogether set toward living. Sam, here, he give me an order; what, didn't ye hear him? 'I'll lie to outside the bar,' says he, 'till you come out.' He expects me to come out in his wake. Don't ye, Sam—that was?" and he laid his hand gently on the remains.

"Now, sir, I shall ax the lady and you a favor. I want to lie alongside Sam. But, if you bury him in the sea, and me ashore why, d—n my eyes if I sha'n't be a thousand years or so before I can find my own messmate. Eternity is a nation big place, I'm told, a hundred times as big as both oceans. No, sir; you'll make land, by Sam's reckoning to-morrow or next day, wind and tide permitting.

"I'll take care of Sam's hull till then, and we'll lie together till the angel blows that there trumpet; and then we'll go aloft together, and, as soon as ever we have made our scrape to our betters, we'll both speak a good word for you and the lady, a very pretty lady she is, and a good-hearted, and the best plucked one I ever did see in any distressed craft; now don't ye cry, miss, don't ye cry, your trouble is pretty near over; he said you was not a hundred miles from land: I don't know how he knew that; but say it he did, and that is enough, for he was a man as never told a lie, nor wasted a word."

What could Hazel reply? The judgment is sometimes ashamed to contradict the heart with cold reasons.

He only said, with a sigh, that he saw no signs of land, and believed they had gone on a wrong course, and were in the heart of the Pacific.

Welch made no answer, but a look of good-natured contempt. The idea of this parson contradicting Sam Cooper!

The sun broke, and revealed the illimitable ocean; themselves a tiny speck on it.

Mr. Hazel whispered Miss Rolleston that Cooper *must* be buried to-day.

At 10 P. M. they passed through more sea-weed; but this time they had to eat the sea spinach raw, and there was very little of it.

At noon, the sea was green in places.

Welch told them this was a sign they were nearing land.

At 4 P. M. a bird, about the size and color of a woodpecker, settled on the boat's mast.

Their glittering eyes fastened on it; and Welch said, "Come, there's a supper for you as can eat it."

"No, poor thing!" said Helen Rolleston.

"You are right," said Hazel, with a certain effort of self-restraint. "Let our sufferings make us gentle, not savage: that poor bird is lost like us upon this ocean. It is a land-bird."

"How do you know?"

"Water-birds have webbed feet—to swim with." The bird, having rested, flew to the northwest.

Helen, by one of those inspired impulses her sex have, altered the boat's course directly, and followed the bird.

Half an hour before sunset, Helen Rolleston, whose vision was very keen, said she saw something at the verge of the horizon, like a hair standing upright.

Hazel looked, but could see nothing.

In ten minutes more, Helen Rolleston pointed it out again; and then Hazel did see a vertical line, more like a ship's mast than anything else one could expect to see there.

Their eyes were now strained to make it out, and, as the boat advanced, it became more and more palpable, though it was hard to say exactly what it was.

Five minutes before the sun set, the

air being clearer than ever, it stood out clean against the sky. A tree—a lofty, solitary tree; with a tall stem, like a column, and branches only at the top.

A palm tree—in the middle of the Pacific.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AND but for the land-bird which rested on their mast, and for their own mercy in sparing it, they would have passed to the eastward, and never seen that giant palm tree in mid-ocean.

"Oh, let us put out all our sails, and fly to it!" cried Helen.

Welch smiled and said, "No, miss, ye mustn't. Lord love ye; what! run on to a land ye don't know, happy go lucky, in the dark, like that? Lay her head for the tree, and welcome, but you must lower the mainsel, and treble-reef the foresel; and so creep on a couple of knots an hour, and, by daybreak, you'll find the island close under your lee. Then you can look out for a safe landing-place."

"The island, Mr. Welch!" said Helen. "There is no island, or I should have seen it."

"Oh, the island was hull down. Why, you don't think as palm trees grow in the water? You do as I say, or you'll get wrecked on some thundering reef or other."

Upon this Mr. Hazel and Miss Rolleston set to work, and, with considerable difficulty, lowered the mainsail, and treble-reefed the foresail.

"That is right," said Welch. "Tomorrow you'll land in safety, and bury my messmate and me."

"Oh, no!" cried Helen Rolleston. "We must bury him, but we mean to cure you." They obeyed Welch's instructions, and so crept on all night; and, so well had this able seaman calculated distance and rate of sailing, that, when the sun rose, sure enough there was an island under their lee, distant about a league, though it looked much less. But the palm tree was more than twice that distance. Owing to wind and current they had made leeway all night, and that tree stood on the most westerly point of the island.

Hazel and Miss Rolleston stood up and hurrahed for joy; then fell on their

knees in silent gratitude. Welch only smiled.

But the breeze had freshened, and, though there were no great waves at sea, yet breakers, formidable to such a craft as theirs, were seen foaming over long disjointed reefs ahead, that grinned black and dangerous here and there.

They then consulted Welch, and he told them they must tack directly, and make a circuit of the island; he had to show them how to tack; and, the sea rising, they got thoroughly wetted, and Miss Rolleston rather frightened; for here was a peril they had wonderfully escaped hitherto.

However, before eleven o'clock, they had stood out to sea, and coasted the whole south side of the island: they then put the boat before the wind, and soon ran past the east coast, which was very narrow—in fact, a sort of bluff head—and got on the north side of the island. Here the water was comparatively smooth, and the air warm and balmy. They ranged along the coast at about a mile's distance, looking out for a good landing.

Here was no longer an unbroken line of cliffs, but an undulating coast, with bulging rocks, and lines of reef. After a mile or two of that the coast ran out seaward, and they passed close to a most extraordinary phenomenon of vegetation.

Great tangled woods crowned the shore and the landward slopes, and their grand foliage seemed to flow over into the sea; for here was a broad, rocky flat, intersected with a thousand little channels of the sea; and the thousand little islets so formed were crowded, covered, and hidden with luxuriant vegetation.

Huge succulent leaves of the richest hue hung over the water, and some of the most adventurous showed, by the crystals that sparkled on their green surface, that the waves had actually been kissing them at high tide. This ceased, and they passed under a cliff, wooded nearly to the point.

This cliff was broad and irregular, and in one of its cavities a cascade of pure fresh water came sparkling, leaping, and tumbling down to the foot of the rock. There it had formed a great basin of water, cool, deep, transparent, which trickled over on to a tongue of pink sand,

and went in two crystal gutters to the sea.

Great and keen was the rapture this sight caused our poor parched voyagers; and eager their desire to land at once, if possible, and plunge their burning lips, and swelling throats, and fevered hands, into that heavenly liquid; but the next moment they were diverted from that purpose by the scene that burst on them.

This wooded cliff, with its wonderful cascade, was the very gate of paradise. They passed it, and in one moment were in a bay—a sudden bay, wonderfully deep for its extent, and sheltered on three sides. Broad sands with rainbow tints, all sparkling, and dotted with birds, some white as snow, some gorgeous.

A peaceful sea of exquisite blue kissing these lovely sands with myriad dimples; and, from the land side, soft emerald slopes, embroidered with silver threads of water, came to the very edge of the sands: so that, from all those glorious hues, that flecked the prismatic and sparkling sands, the eye of the voyagers passed at once to the vivid, yet sweet and soothing, green of Nature; and over this paradise the breeze they could no longer feel wafted spicy but delicate odors from unseen trees.

Even Welch raised himself in the boat, and sniffed the heavenly air, and smiled at the heavenly spot. "Here's a blessed haven!" said he. "Down sail, and row her ashore."

CHAPTER XXV.

THEY had landed in paradise.

Even Welch yielded to that universal longing men have to embrace the land after perils at sea, and was putting his leg slowly over the gunwale, when Hazel came back to his assistance. He got ashore, but was contented to sit down with his eyes on the dimpled sea and the boat, waiting quietly till the tide should float his friend to his feet again.

The sea-birds walked quietly about him, and minded him not.

Miss Rolleston ascended a green slope very slowly, for her limbs were cramped, and was lost to view.

Hazel now went up the beach, and took a more minute survey of the neighborhood.

On the land above the cliffs he found a tangled jungle of tropical shrubs, into which he did not penetrate, but skirted it, and, walking eastward, came out upon a delicious down or grassy slope, that faced the center of the bay. It was a gentleman's lawn of a thousand acres, with an extremely gentle slope from the center of the island down to the sea.

A river flowing from some distant source ran eastward through this down, but at its verge, and almost encircled it. Hazel traversed the lawn until this river, taking a sudden turn toward the sea, intercepted him at a spot which he immediately fixed on as Helen Rolleston's future residence.

Four short, thick, umbrageous trees stood close to the stream on this side, and on the eastern side was a grove of gigantic palm trees, at whose very ankles the river ran. Indeed, it had undermined one of these palm trees, and that giant at this moment lay across the stream, leaving a gap through which Hazel's eye could pierce to a great depth among those grand columns; for they stood wide apart, and there was not a vestige of brushwood, jungle, or even grass, below their enormous crowns. He christened the place St. Helen's on the spot.

He now dipped his baler into the stream, and found it pure and tolerably cool.

He followed the bend of the stream; it evaded the slope and took him by its own milder descent to the sands; over these it flowed smooth as glass into the sea.

Hazel ran to Welch to tell him all he had discovered, and to give him his first water from the island.

He found a roan-colored pigeon, with a purplish neck, perched on the sick man's foot. The bird shone like a rainbow, and cocked a saucy eye at Hazel, and flew up into the air a few yards, but it soon appeared that fear had little to do with this movement; for, after an airy circle or two, he fanned Hazel's cheek with his fast-flapping wings, and lighted on the very edge of the baler, and was for sipping.

"Oh, look here, Welch!" cried Hazel, in an ecstasy of delight.

"Aye, sir," said he. "Poor things, they hain't a found us out yet."

The talking puzzled the bird, if it did not alarm him, and he flew up to the nearest tree, and, perching there, inspected these new and noisy bipeds at his leisure.

Hazel now laid his hand on Welch's shoulder and reminded him gently they had a sad duty to perform, which could not be postponed.

"Right you are, sir," said Welch, "and very kind of you to let me have my way with him. Poor Sam!"

"I have found a place," said Hazel, in a low voice. "We can take the boat close to it. But where is Miss Rolleston?"

"Oh, she is not far off; she was here just now, and brought me this here little cocoanut, and patted me on the back, she did, then off again on a cruise. Bless her little heart!"

Hazel and Welch then got into the boat, and pushed off without much difficulty, and punted across the bay. It was now nearly high water, and they moored the boat close under a cleft Hazel selected.

Then they both got out and went up to the extremity of the cleft, and there, with the ax and with pieces of wood, they scraped out a resting-place for Cooper. This was light work; for it was all stones, shells, fragments of coral, and dried sea-weed, lying loosely together. But now came a hard task in which Welch could not assist.

Hazel unshipped a thwart, and laid the body on it: then by great effort staggered with the burden up to the grave and deposited it. He was exhausted by the exertion, and had to sit down panting for some time. As soon as he recovered, he told Welch to stand at the head of the grave, and he stood at the foot, bareheaded, and then, from memory, he repeated the service of the Church of England, hardly missing or displacing a word.

This was no tame recital; the scene, the circumstances, the very absence of the book, made it tender and solemn. And then Welch repeated those beautiful words after Hazel, and Hazel let him. And how did he repeat them? In such a hearty, loving tone, as became one who was about to follow, and all this but a short leave-taking. So uttered, for the living as well as the dead,

those immortal words had a strange significance and beauty.

And presently a tender, silvery voice came down to mingle with the deep and solemn tones of the male mourners. It was Helen Rolleston. She had watched most of their movements, unseen herself, and now, standing at the edge of the ravine, and looking down on them, uttered a soft but thrilling amen to every prayer. When it was over, and the men prepared to fill in the grave, she spoke to Welch in an undertone, and begged leave to pay her tribute first; and, with this, she detached her apron and held it out to them. Hazel easily climbed up to her, and found her apron was full of sweet-smelling bark and aromatic leaves, whose fragrance filled the air.

"I want you to strew these over his poor remains," she said. "Oh, not common earth! He saved our lives. And his last words were, 'I love you, Tom.' Oh, dear! oh, dear! oh, dear!" And with that she gave him the apron, and turned her head away to hide her tears.

Hazel blessed her for the thought, which, indeed, none but a lady would have had; and Welch and he, with the tears in their eyes, strewed the spicy leaves first; and soon a ridge of shingle neatly bound with sea-weed marked the sailor's grave.

Hazel's next anxiety, and that a pressing one, was to provide shelter for the delicate girl and the sick man, whom circumstances had placed under his care. He told Miss Rolleston Welch and he were going across the bay again, and would she be good enough to meet them at the bend of the river where she would find four trees? She nodded her head and took that road accordingly. Hazel rowed eastward across the bay, where they got ashore; Miss Rolleston was standing at the four trees. He went to her and said enthusiastically, "This is to be your house. Is it not a beautiful site?"

"Yes, it is a beautiful site, but—forgive me—I really don't see the house," was her reply.

"But you see the frame-work."

Helen looked all about, and then said ruefully, "I suppose I am blind, sir, or else you are dreaming, for I see nothing at all."

"Why, here's a roof ready made, and the frame of a wall. We have only to wattle a screen between these four up-rights."

"Only to wattle a screen! But I don't know what wattling a screen is."

"Why, you get some of the canes that grow a little farther up the river, and a certain long, wiry grass I have marked down, and then you fix and weave till you make a screen from tree to tree; this could be patched with wet clay; I know where there is plenty of that. Meantime see what is done to our hands."

"The crown of this great palm tree lies at the southern aperture of your house, and blocks it entirely up: that will keep off the only cold wind, the south wind, from you to-night. Then look at these long, spiky leaves interlaced over your head. (These trees are screw pines.) There is a roof ready made. You must have another roof underneath that, but it will do for a day or two."

"Well," said Welch, who had joined them, "landsmen are queer folk, the best of 'em. Why, miss, it would take him a week to screen you with rushes and reeds, and them sort of weeds; and I'd do it in half an hour, if I was the Tom Welch I used to be. Why, there's spare canvas enough in the boat to go between these four trees breast high, and then there's the foresel besides; the mainsel is all you and me shall want, sir."

"Oh, excuse me," said Miss Rolleston, "I will not be sheltered at the expense of my friends."

"Welch, you are a trump," said Hazel, and ran off for the spare canvas. He brought it and the carpenter's basket of tools. They went to work, and Miss Rolleston insisted on taking part in it. Finding her so disposed, Hazel said that they had better divide their labors, since the time was short. Accordingly he took the ax and chopped off a great many scales of the palm tree, and lighted a great fire between the trees, while the other two worked on the canvas.

"This is to dry the soil as well as cook our provisions," said he; "and now I must go and find food. Is there anything you fancy?" He turned his head from the fire he was lighting and addressed this question both to Welch and Miss Rolleston.

Miss Rolleston stared at this question, then smiled, and, in the true spirit of a lady, said, "I think I should like a good large cocoanut, if you can find one." She felt sure there was no other eatable thing in the whole island.

"I wants a cabbage," said Welch, in a loud voice.

"Oh, Mr. Welch, we are not at home," said Miss Rolleston, blushing at the preposterous demand.

"No, miss, in Capericorn. Whereby we sha'n't have to pay nothing for this here cabbage. I'll tell ye, miss: when a sailor comes ashore he always goes in for green vegetables, for why, he has eaten so much junk and biscuit, nature sings out for greens."

"Don't ye go to think, because I'm sick, and the lady and you is so kind to me, and to him that is awaiting outside them there shoals for me, as I'm onreasonable; turmots I wish you both, and plenty of 'em, when some whaler gets driven out of her course and picks you up, and carries you into northern latitudes where turmots grow; but cabbage is my right, cabbage is my due, being paid off in a manner; for the ship is foundered and I'm ashore: cabbage I ask for, as a seaman that has done his duty, and a man that won't live to eat many more of 'em and" (losing his temper) "if you are the man I take you for, you'll run and fetch me a cabbage fresh from the tree" (recovering his temper). "I know I didn't ought to ax a parson to shin up a tree for me: but, Lord bless you, there ain't no sarcy little boys a-looking on, and here's a poor fellow mostly dying for it."

Miss Rolleston looked at Mr. Hazel with alarm in every feature; and whispered. "Cabbage from the tree? Is he wandering?"

Hazel smiled. "No," said he. "He has picked up a fable of these seas, that there is a tree which grows cabbages."

Welch heard him and said, with due warmth, "Of course there is a tree on all these islands that grows cabbage; that was known a hundred years before you was born, and shipmates of mine have eaten them."

"Excuse me, what those old admirals and buccaneers, that set the legend

afloat, were so absurd as to call a cabbage, and your shipmates may have eaten for one, is nothing on earth but the last year's growth of the palm tree."

"Palm tree be——" said Welch; and thereupon ensued a hot argument, which Helen's good sense cut short.

"Mr. Hazel," said she, "can you by any possibility get our poor friend the *thing* he wants?"

"Oh, *that* is quite within the bounds of possibility," said Hazel dryly.

"Well, then, suppose you begin by getting him the *thing*. Then I will boil the *thing*, and he will eat the *thing*; and after all that it will be time to argue about the *name* we shall give to the *thing*."

The good sense of this struck Mr. Hazel forcibly. He started off at once, armed with the ax, and a net bag Welch had made since he became unfit for heavy labor: he called back to them as he went to put the pots on.

Welch and Miss Rolleston complied; and then the sailor showed the lady how to sew sailor-wise, driving the large needle with the palm of the hand, guarded by a piece of leather. They had nailed two breadths of canvas to the trees on the north and west sides, and run the breadths rapidly together, and the water was boiling and bubbling in the balers, when Miss Rolleston uttered a scream, for Hazel came running over the prostrate palm tree as if it was a proper bridge, and lighted in the midst of them.

"Lot one," said he cheerfully, and produced from his net some limes, two cocoanuts, and a land-turtle; from this last esculent Miss Rolleston withdrew with undisguised horror, and it was in vain he assured her it was a great delicacy.

"No matter: it is a reptile. Oh, please send it away."

"The Queen of the Island reprieves you," said he, and put down the terrapin, which went off very leisurely for a reprieved reptile.

Then Hazel produced a fine bream, which he had found struggling in a rock-pool, the tide having turned, and three sea crayfish, bigger than any lobster. He chopped their heads off outside, and threw their tails into the pots; he stuck a piece of pointed wood through the

bream, and gave it to Welch to toast; but Welch waved it aside.

"I see no cabbage," said he grimly.

"Oh, I forgot; but that is soon found," said Hazel. "Here, give me the fish, and you take the saw, and examine the head of this palm tree, which lies at Miss Rolleston's door. Saw away the succulent part of last year's growth, and bring it here."

Welch got up slowly.

"I'll go with you, Mr. Welch," said Miss Rolleston.

"She will not be alone with me for a moment, if she can help it," thought Hazel, and sat moodily by the fire. But he shook off his sadness, and forced on a cheerful look the moment they came back. They brought with them a vegetable very like the heart of a cabbage, only longer and whiter.

"There," said Welch, "what d'ye call that?"

"The last year's growth of the palm," said Hazel calmly.

This vegetable was cut in two and put into the pots.

"There, take the toasting-fork again," said Hazel to Welch, and drew out from his net three huge scallop-shells. "Soup-plates," said he, and washed them in the running stream; then put them before the fire to dry.

While the fish and vegetable were cooking, he went and cut off some of the leafy, pinnated branches of the palm tree, and fastened them horizontally above the strips of canvas. Each palm branch traversed a whole side of the bower. This closed the northern and western sides.

On the southern side, the prostrate palm tree, on striking the ground, had so crushed its boughs and leaves together as to make a thick wall of foliage.

Then he took to making forks; and primitive ones they were. He selected a bough the size of a thick walking stick; sawed it off the tree: sawed a piece six inches long off it, peeled that, split it in four, and, with his knife, gave each piece three points by merely tapering off and serrating one end; and so he made a fork a minute.

Then he brought all the rugs and things from the boat, and the ground being now thoroughly dried by the fire,

placed them for seats; gave each person a large leaf for a plate besides a scallop-shell; and served out supper. It was eaten with rare appetite; the palm tree vegetable in particular was delicious, tasting between a cabbage and a cocoanut.

When they had supped, Hazel removed the plates and went to the boat. He returned, dragging the foremast and foresail, which were small, and called Welch out. They agreed to rig the mainsail tarpaulin-wise and sleep in the boat.

Accordingly they made themselves very busy screening the east side of Miss Rolleston's new abode with the foresail, and fastened a loop and drove a nail into the tree, and looped the sail to it, then suddenly bade her good night in cheerful tones, and were gone in a moment, leaving her to her repose, as they imagined.

Hazel, in particular, having used all his ingenuity to secure her personal comfort, was now too bent on showing her the most delicate respect and forbearance to think of anything else. But, justly counting on the delicacy, he had forgotten the timidity, of her sex, and her first night in the island was a terribly trying one.

Thrice she opened her mouth to call Welch and Hazel back, but could not. Yet, when their footsteps were out of hearing, she would have given the world to have them between her and the perils with which she felt herself surrounded.

Tigers, snakes, scorpions, savages! What would become of her during the long night?

She sat and cowered before the hot embers. She listened to what seemed the angry roar of the sea. What with the stillness of the night and her sharpened senses she heard it all round the island. She seemed environed with peril, and yet surrounded by desolation. No one at hand to save her in time from a wild beast. No one anywhere near except a sick sailor and one she would almost rather die than call singly to her aid, for he had once told her he loved her.

"Oh, papa! Oh, Arthur!" she cried, "are you praying for your poor Helen?" Then she wept and prayed; and half nerved herself to bear the worst. Finally, her vague fears completely overmastered

her. Then she had recourse to a stratagem that belongs to her sex—she hid herself from the danger, and the danger from her: she covered herself, face and all, and so lay trembling, and longing for the day.

At the first streak of dawn she fled from her place of torture, and after plunging her face and hands in the river, which did her a world of good, she went off, and entered the jungle, and searched it closely, so far as she could penetrate it. Soon she heard "Miss Rolleston" called in anxious tones. But she tossed her little head, and revenged herself for her night of agony by not replying.

However, Nature took her in hand; imperious hunger drew her back to her late place of torture; and there she found a fire and Hazel cooking crayfish. She ate the crayfish heartily, and drank cocoanut milk out of half a cocoanut, which the ingenious Hazel had already sawn, polished, and mounted for her.

After that, Hazel's whole day was occupied in stripping a tree that stood on the high western promontory of the bay, and building up the materials of a bonfire a few yards from it, that, if any whaler should stray that way, they might not be at a loss for means to attract her attention.

Welch was very ill all day, and Miss Rolleston nursed him. He got about toward evening, and Miss Rolleston asked him, rather timidly, if he could put her up a bell rope.

"Why, yes, miss," said Welch, "that is easy enough; but I don't see no bell."

Oh, she did not want a bell—she only wanted a bell rope.

Hazel came up during this conversation, and she then gave her reason.

"Because, then, if Mr. Welch is ill in the night, and wants me, I could come to him. Or——" finding herself getting near the real reason she stopped short.

"Or what?" inquired Hazel eagerly.

She replied to Welch. "When tigers and things come to me, I can let you know, Mr. Welch, if you have any curiosity about the result of their visit."

"Tigers!" said Hazel, in answer to this side slap; "there are no tigers here; no large animals of prey exist in the Pacific."

"What makes you think that?"

"It is notorious: naturalists are agreed."

"But I am not. I heard noises all night. And little I expected that anything of me would be left this morning, except, *perhaps*, my back hair. Mr. Welch, you are clever at rigging things—that is what you call it—and so please rig me a bell rope; then I shall not be eaten alive without creating some *little* disturbance."

"I'll do it, miss," said Welch, "this very night."

Hazel said nothing, but pondered. Accordingly, that very evening a piece of stout twine, with a stone at the end of it, hung down from the roof of Helen's house; and this twine clove the air, until it reached a ring upon the mainmast of the cutter; thence it descended, and was to be made fast to something or somebody.

The young lady inquired no further. The very sight of this bell rope was a great comfort to her; it reunited her to civilized life.

That night she lay down, and quaked considerably less. Yet she woke several times; and an hour before daylight she heard distinctly a noise that made her flesh creep. It was like the snoring of some great animals. This horrible sound was faint and distant; but she heard it between the roll of the waves, and that showed it was not the sea roaring; she hid herself in her rugs, and covered till daybreak.

Next morning, at daybreak, Hazel met her just issuing from her hut, and pointing to his net told her he was going to forage; and would she be good enough to make the fire and have boiling water ready? He was sorry to trouble her; but poor Welch was worse this morning. Miss Rolleston cut short his excuses. "Pray, do not take me for a child; of course I will light the fire, and boil the water. Only I have no lucifer matches."

"Here are two," said he. "I carry the box, wrapped in oil-skin: for if anything happens to *them*, heaven help us."

He crossed the prostrate palm tree, and dived into the wood.

He gathered a few cocoanuts that had burst out of their ripe pods and fallen to the ground; and ran on till he reached a belt of trees and shrubs that bounded

the palm forest. Here his progress was no longer easy: but he found trees covered with a small fruit resembling quinces in every particular of look, taste, and smell, and that made him persevere, since it was most important to learn the useful products of the island.

Presently he burst through some brushwood into a swampy bottom surrounded by low trees, and instantly a dozen large birds of the osprey kind rose flapping into the air like windmills rising. He was quite startled by the whirling and flapping, and not a little amazed at the appearance of the place.

Here was a very charnel-house; so thick lay the shells, skeletons, and loose bones of fish. Here too he found three terrapin killed but not eaten: and also some fish, more or less pecked. "Aha! my worthy executioners, much obliged," said he: "you have saved me that job." And into the bag went the terrapin, and two plump fish, but slightly mutilated.

Before he had gone many yards, back came the sailing wings, and the birds settled again before his eyes. The rest of the low wood was but thin, and he soon emerged upon the open country; but it was most unpromising; and fitter for geese than men. At the end of this lake and swamp, which all together formed a triangle, was a barren hill without a blade of vegetation on it, and a sort of jagged summit, volcanic! Hazel did not at all like the look of it.

Guiding himself due west by his pocket-compass, he got down to the shore, where he found scallops and crayfish in incredible abundance. He ran to the pots with his miscellaneous bag, and was not received according to his deserts. Miss Rolleston told him, a little severely, the water had been boiling a long time. Then he produced his provender, by way of excuse.

"Tortoises again!" said she, and shuddered visibly.

But the quinces and cocoanuts were graciously received. Welch, however, cried out for cabbage.

"What am I to do?" said Hazel. "For every such cabbage a king must die."

"Goodness me!"

"A monarch of the grove."

"Oh, a King Log. Why, then down

with them all, of course, sooner than dear Mr. Welch shall go without his cabbage."

He cast a look of admiration on her, which she avoided, and very soon his ax was heard ringing in the wood hard by. Then came a loud crash. Then another. Hazel came running with the cabbage, and a cocoa-pod. "There," said he, "and there are a hundred more about. While you cook that for Welch, I will store them." Accordingly he returned to the wood with his net, and soon came back with five pods in it, each as big as a large pumpkin.

He chucked these one at a time across the river, and then went for more. It took him all the afternoon to get all the pods across the river. He was obliged to sit down and rest.

But a suggestion of Helen's soon set him to work again.

"You were kind enough to say you would store these for me. Could you not store them so as to wall out those terrible beasts with them?"

"What terrible beasts?"

"That roar so all night, and don't eat us, only because they have not found out we are here yet. But they will."

"I deny their existence," said Hazel. "But I'll wall them out all the same," said he.

"Pray do," said Helen. "Wall them out first, and disprove them afterward; I shall be better able to believe they don't exist when they are well walled out—much."

Hazel went to work, and with her assistance laid cocoa-pods two wide and three deep outside the northern and western sides of her leafy bower, and he promised to complete the walls by the same means in two days more.

They all then supped together, and, to oblige him, she ate a little of the terrapin, and when they parted for the night, she thanked him, and said, with a deep blush, "You have been a good friend to me—of late."

That night, what with her bell rope and her little bit of a wall, she was somewhat less timorous, and went to sleep early.

But even in sleep she was watchful, and she was awakened by a slight sound in the neighborhood of the boat.

She lay watching, but did not stir.

Presently she heard a footstep.

With a stifled cry she bounded up, and her first impulse was to rush out of the tent. But she conquered this, and, gliding to the south side of her bower, she peered through the palm leaves, and the first thing she saw was the figure of a man standing between her and the boat.

She drew her breath hard. The outline of the man was somewhat indistinct. But it was not a savage: the man was clothed; and his stature betrayed him.

He stood still for some time. "He is listening to see if I am awake," said Helen to herself.

The figure moved toward her bower.

Then all in a moment she became another woman. She did not rely on her bell rope; she felt it was fast to nothing that could help her. She looked round for no weapon; she trusted to herself. She drew herself hastily up, and folded her arms; her bosom panted, but her cheek never paled. Her modesty was alarmed; her blood was up, and life or death were nothing to her.

The footsteps came nearer; they stopped at her door; they went north; they came back south. They kept her in this high-wrought attitude for half an hour. Then they retired softly; and, when they were gone, she gave way, and fell on her knees, and began to cry hysterically. Then she got calmer, and then she wondered and puzzled herself; but she slept no more that night.

In the morning she found that the fire was lighted on a sort of shelf close to the boat. Mr. Hazel had cut the shelf and lighted the fire there for Welch's sake, who had complained of cold in the night.

While Hazel was gone for the crayfish, Welch asked Helen to go for her prayer-book. She brought it directly, and turned the leaves to find the prayers for the sick. But she was soon undeceived as to his intention.

"Sam had it wrote down how the Proserpine was foundered, and I should like to lie alongside my messmate on that there paper, as well as in t'other place" (meaning the grave). "Begin as Sam did, that this is my last word."

"Oh, I hope not. Oh, Mr. Welch, pray do not leave me!"

"Well, well, then, never mind that, but just put down as I heard Sam; and his dying words, that the parson took down, were the truth."

"I have written that."

"And that the two holes was on her port-side, and seven foot from her stern-post; and I say them very augers that is in our cutter made them holes. Set down that."

"It is down."

"Then I'll put my mark under it; and you are my witness."

Helen, anxious to please him in everything, showed him where to put his mark. He did so; and she signed her name as his witness.

"And now, Mr. Welch," said she, "do not you fret about the loss of the ship; you should rather think how good Providence has been to us in saving us three out of so many that sailed in that poor ship. That Wylie was a wicked man; but he is drowned, or starved, no doubt, and there is an end of him. You are alive, and we are all three to see Old England again. But to live, you must eat; and so now do pray make a good breakfast to-day. Tell me what you can fancy. A cabbage?"

"No, miss, not this morning. What I wants this morning very bad, indeed, it is—I wants a drink made of the sweet-smelling leaves, like as you strewed over my messmate—the Lord in heaven bless you for it."

"Oh, Mr. Welch, that is a curious fancy; but you shall not ask me twice for anything; the jungle is full of them, and I'll fetch you some in five minutes. So you must boil the water."

She scudded away to the jungle, and soon returned with some aromatic leaves. While they were infusing, Hazel came up, and, on being informed of Welch's fancy, made no opposition; but, on the contrary, said that such men had sometimes very happy inspirations. He tasted it, however, and said the smell was the best part of it in his opinion. He then put it aside to cool for the sick man's use.

They ate their usual breakfast, and then Welch sipped his spiced tea, as he called it. Morning and afternoon he drank copious drafts of it, and seemed to get suddenly better, and told them not

to hang about him any longer; but to go to their work: he was all right now.

To humor him they went off in different directions; Hazel with his ax to level cocoanut trees; and Helen to search for fruits in the jungle.

She came back in about an hour, very proud of some pods she had found with nutmegs inside of them. She ran to Welch. He was not in the boat. She saw his waistcoat, however, folded and lying on the thwart; so she knew he could not be far off and concluded he was in her bower. But he was not there; and she called to Mr. Hazel.

Hazel came directly. And they both began to run anxiously to every part whence they could command a view to any distance.

They could not see him anywhere, and met with blank faces at the bower.

Then Helen made a discovery.

This very day, while hanging about the place, Hazel had torn up from the edge of the river an old trunk, whose roots had been loosened by the water washing away the earth that held them, and this stump he had set up in her bower for a table, after sawing the roots down into legs. Well, on the smooth part of this table lay a little pile of money, a ring with a large pearl in it, and two gold earrings Helen had often noticed in Welch's ears.

She pointed at these and turned pale. Then, suddenly waving her hand to Hazel to follow her, she darted out of the bower, and, in a moment, she was at the boat.

There she found, beside his waistcoat, his knife, and a little pile of money, placed carefully on the thwart; and, underneath it, his jacket rolled up, and his shoes and sailor's cap, all put neatly and in order.

Hazel found her looking at them. He began to have vague misgivings. "What does this mean?" he said faintly.

"What does it mean!" cried Helen in agony. "Don't you see? A legacy! The poor thing has divided his little all. Oh, my heart! What has become of him?" Then, with one of those inspirations her sex have, she cried, "Ah. Cooper's grave!"

Hazel, though not so quick as she was, caught her meaning at a word, and flew

down the slope to the seashore. The tide was out: a long, irregular track of foot-steps indented the sand. He stopped a moment and looked at them. They pointed toward that cleft where the grave was. He followed them all across the sand. They entered the cleft, and did not return. Full of heavy foreboding he rushed into the cleft.

Yes; his arms hanging on each side of the grave, and his cheek laid gently on it, there lay Tom Welch, with a loving smile on his dead face. Only a man; yet faithful as a dog.

Hazel went back slowly, and crying. Of all men living, he could best appreciate Fidelity, and mourn its fate.

But, as he drew near Helen, he dried his eyes; for it was his duty to comfort her.

She had at first endeavored to follow him; but after a few steps her knees smote together, and she was fain to sit down on the grassy slope that overlooked the sea.

The sun was setting huge and red over that vast and peaceful sea.

She put her hands to her head, and, sick at heart, looked heavily at that glorious and peaceful sight. Hazel came up to her. She looked at his face, and that look was enough for her.

"Yes," said he, in a broken voice: "he is there—quite dead."

He sat gently down by her side, and looked at that setting sun and illimitable ocean, and his heart felt deadly sad. "He is gone—and we are alone—on this island."

The man said this in one sense only; but the woman heard it in more than one.

ALONE.

She glanced timidly round at him, and, without rising, edged a little away from him, and wept in silence.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AFTER a long silence, Hazel asked her in a low voice if she could be there in half an hour. She said yes, in the same tone, but without turning her head. On reaching the graves, she found that Hazel had spared her a sad sight; nothing remained but to perform the service. When it was over she went slowly away, in deep distress on more accounts than one.

In due course Hazel came to her bower, but she was not there. Then he lighted the fire, and prepared everything for supper; and he was so busy, and her foot so light, he did not hear her come. But by and by, lifting his head, he saw her looking wistfully at him, as if she would read his soul in his minutest actions. He started and brightened all over with pleasure at the sudden sight of her, and said eagerly, "Your supper is quite ready."

"Thank you, sir," said she, sadly and coldly (she had noted that expression of joy), "I have no appetite; do not wait for me." And soon after strolled away again.

Hazel was dumfounded. There was no mistaking her manner; it was chilly and reserved all of a sudden. It wounded him; but he behaved like a man. "What! I keep her out of her own house, do I?" said he to himself. He started up, took a fish out of the pot, wrapped it in a leaf, and stalked off to his boat. Then he ate a little of the fish, threw the rest away, and went down upon the sands and paced them in a sad and bitter mood.

But the night calmed him, and some hours of tranquil thought brought him fortitude, patience, and a clear understanding. He went to his boat, elevated by generous and delicate resolutions. Now worthy resolves are tranquilizing, and he slept profoundly.

Not so she, whose sudden but very natural change of demeanor had hurt him. When she returned and found he was gone for the night, she began to be alarmed at having offended him.

For this and other reasons she passed the night in sore perplexity, and did not sleep till morning; and so she overslept her usual time. However, when she was up, she determined to find her own breakfast; she felt it would not do to be too dependent, and on a person of uncertain humor; such for the moment she chose to pretend to herself was Hazel. Accordingly, she crossed the sand, took off her shoes, and paddled through the river, and, having put on her shoes again, was about to walk up through some rank grass to the big wood, when she heard a voice behind her, and it was Mr. Hazel. She bit her

lip (it was broad daylight now), and prepared quietly to discourage this excessive assiduity. He came up to her, panting a little, and, taking off his hat, said, with marked respect, "I beg your pardon, Miss Rolleston, but I know you hate reptiles. Now there are a few snakes in that long grass; not poisonous ones."

"Snakes!" cried Helen; "let me get home. There! I'll go without my breakfast."

"Oh, I hope not," said Hazel ruefully. "Why, I have been rather fortunate this morning, and it is all ready."

"That is a different thing," said Helen graciously; "you must not have your trouble for nothing, I suppose."

Directly after breakfast, Hazel took his ax and some rope from the boat, and went off in a great hurry to the jungle. In half an hour or so he returned, dragging a large conical shrub, armed with spikes for leaves, incredibly dense and prickly.

"There," said he, "there's a vegetable porcupine for you. This is your best defense against that roaring Bugbear."

"That little tree!" said Helen; "the tiger would soon jump over that."

"Aye, but not over this and sixty more; a wall of stilettos. Don't touch it, please."

He worked very hard all day, and brought twelve of these prickly trees to the bower by sunset. He was very dissatisfied with his day's work; seemed quite mortified.

"This comes of beginning at the wrong end," he said; "I went to work like a fool. I should have begun by making a cart."

"But you can't do that," said Helen soothingly; "no gentleman can make a cart."

"Oh, surely anybody can make a cart, by a little thinking," said he.

"I wish," said Helen listlessly, "you would think of something for *me* to do; I begin to be ashamed of not helping."

"Hum! you can plait?"

"Yes, as far as seven strands."

"Then you need never be unemployed. We want ropes, and shall want large mats for the rainy weather."

He went to the place where he had warned her of the snakes, and cut a

great bundle of long, silky grass, surprisingly tough, yet neither harsh nor juicy. He brought it to her and said he should be very glad of a hundred yards of light cord, three ply and five ply.

She was charmed with the grass, and the very next morning she came to breakfast with it nicely prepared, and a good deal of cord made and hanging round her neck. She found some preparations for carpenter's work lying about.

"Is that great log for the cart?" said she.

"Yes! it is a section of a sago tree."

"What, our sago?"

"The basis. See, in the center it is all soft pith." He got from the boat one of the augers that had scuttled the Proserpine, and soon turned the pith out. "They pound that pith in water, and run it through linen; then set the water in the sun to evaporate. The sediment is the sago of commerce, and sad, insipid stuff it is."

"Oh, please don't call anything *names* one has eaten in England," said Helen sorrowfully.

After a hasty meal, she and Mr. Hazel worked for a wager. Her taper fingers went like the wind, and though she watched him, and asked questions, she never stopped plaiting. Mr. Hazel was no carpenter, he was merely Brains spurred on by Necessity. He went to work and sawed off four short disks of the sago log.

"Now, what are those, pray?" asked Helen.

"The wheels: primeval wheels. And here are the linchpins, made of hard wood; I wattled them at odd times."

He then produced two young lime-trees he had rooted up that morning, and sawed them into poles in a minute. Then he bored two holes in each pole, about four inches from either extremity, and fitted his linchpins; then he drew out his linchpins, passed each pole first through one disk, and then through another, and fastened his linchpins. Then he ran to the boat, and came back with the stern and midship thwarts.

He drilled with his center-bit three rows of holes in these, two inches from the edge: and now Helen's work came in; her grass rope bound the thwarts

tight to the horizontal poles, leaving the disks room to play easily between the thwarts and the linchpins; but there was an open space thirteen inches broad between the thwarts; this space Hazel herring-boned over with some of Helen's rope drawn as tight as possible. The cart was now made. Time occupied in its production, three hours and forty minutes.

The coachmaker was very hot; and Helen asked him timidly whether he had not better rest and eat. "No time for that," said he. "The day is not half long enough for what I have to do." He drank copiously from the stream; put the carpenter's basket into the cart; got the tow-rope from the boat and fastened it to the cart in this shape A, putting himself in the center. So now the coachmaker was the horse, and off they went, rattling and creaking, to the jungle.

Helen turned her stool and watched this pageant enter the jungle. She plaited on, but not so merrily. Hazel's companionship and bustling way somehow kept her spirits up.

But whenever she was left alone, she gazed on the blank ocean, and her heart died within her. At last she strolled pensively toward the jungle, plaiting busily as she went, and hanging the rope round her neck as fast as she made it.

At the edge of the jungle she found Hazel in a difficulty. He had cut down a wagon-load of prickly trees, and wanted to get all this mass of *noli me tangere* on to that wretched little cart, but had not rope enough to keep it together. She gave him plenty of new line, and, partly by fastening a small rope to the big rope and so making the big rope a receptacle, partly by artful trying, they dragged home an incredible load. To be sure some of it dragged half along the ground: and came after, like a peacock's tail.

He made six trips, and then the sun was low; so he began to build. He raised a rampart of these prickly trees, a rampart three feet wide and eight feet high; but it only went round two sides and a half of the bower. So then he said he had failed again; and lay down worn out by fatigue.

Helen Rolleston, though dejected her-

self, could not help pitying him for his exhaustion in her service, and for his bleeding hands. She undertook the cooking, and urged him kindly to eat of every dish; and, when he rose to go, she thanked him with as much feeling as modesty for the great pains he had taken to lessen those fears of hers which she saw he did not share.

These kind words more than repaid him. He went to his little den in a glow of spirits; and the next morning went off in a violent hurry, and, for once, seemed glad to get away from her.

"Poor Mr. Hazel," she said softly, and watched him out of sight. Then she got her plait, and went to the high point where he had barked a tree; and looked far and wide for a sail. The air was wonderfully clear; the whole ocean seemed in sight; but it was blank.

A great awe fell upon her, and sickness of heart; and then first she began to fear she was out of the known world, and might die on that island; or never be found by the present generation: and this sickening fear lurked in her from that hour, and led to consequences that will be related shortly.

She did not return for a long while, and, when she did, she found Hazel had completed her fortifications. He invited her to explore the western part of the island, but she declined.

"Thank you," said she; "not to-day; there is something to be done at home. I have been comparing my abode with yours, and the contrast makes me uncomfortable, if it doesn't you. Oblige me by building yourself a house."

"What, in an afternoon?"

"Why not? You made a cart in a forenoon. How can I tell your limits? You are quite out of my poor little depth. Well, at all events, you must roof the boat, or something. Come, be good for once, and think a little of yourself. There, I'll sit by and—what shall I do while you are working, to oblige me?"

"Make a fishing-net of cocoanut fiber, four feet deep. Here's plenty of material all prepared."

"Why, Mr. Hazel, you must work in your sleep."

"No; but of course I am not idle when I am alone; and luckily I have

made a spade out of hard wood at odd hours, or all the afternoon would go in making that."

"A spade! You are going to dig a hole in the ground and call it a house. That will not do for me."

"You will see," said Hazel.

The boat lay in a little triangular creek; the surrounding earth was alluvial clay; a sort of black, cheesy mold, stiff, but kindly to work with the spade. Hazel cut and chiseled it out at a grand rate, and, throwing it to the sides, raised by degrees two mud banks, one on each side of the boat; and at last he dug so deep that he was enabled to draw the boat another yard inland.

As Helen sat by, netting and forcing a smile now and then, though sad at heart, he was on his mettle, and the mud walls he raised in four hours were really wonderful. He squared their inner sides with the spade. When he had done, the boat lay in a hollow, the walls of which, half natural, half artificial, were five feet above her gunwale, and, of course, eight feet above her bottom, in which Hazel used to lie at night.

He then made another little wall at the boat's stern, and laid palm branches over all, and a few huge banana leaves from the jungle; got a dozen large stones out of the river, tied four yard-lengths of Helen's grass rope from stone to stone, and so, passing the ropes over the roof, confined it, otherwise a sudden gust of wind might lift it.

"There," said he; "am I not as well off as you? I, a great tough man. Abominable waste of time, I call it."

"Hum!" said Helen doubtfully. "All this is very clever; but I doubt whether it will keep out much rain."

"More than yours will," said Hazel, "and that is a very serious thing. I am afraid you little know how serious. But, to-morrow, if you please, I will examine our resources, and lay our whole situation before you, and ask your advice. As to your Bugbear, let him roar his heart out, his reign is over. Will you not come and see your wooden walls?"

He then took Helen and showed her the tremendous nature of her fortification, and assured her that no beast of prey could face it, nor even smell at

it, with impunity. And as to the door, here the defense was double and treble; but attached to four grass cords; two passed into the abode round each of the screw pine trees at the east side, and were kept in their places by pegs driven into the trees.

"When you are up," said Hazel, "you pull these four cords steadily, and your four guards will draw back right and left, with all their bayonets, and you can come out."

Helen was very much pleased with this arrangement, and did not disguise her gratitude. She slept in peace and comfort that night.

The next morning he kept his word, and laid their case before her.

He said: "We are here on an island that has probably been seen and disregarded by a few whalers, but is not known to navigators nor down on any chart. There is a wide range of vegetation, proving a delightful climate on the whole, and one particularly suited to you, whose lungs are delicate. But then, comparing the beds of the rivers with the banks, a tremendous fall of rain is indicated.

"The rainy months (in these latitudes) are at hand, and if these rains catch us in our present condition, it will be a calamity. You have walls, but no roof to keep it out. I tremble when I think of it. This is my main anxiety. My next is about our sustenance during the rains. We have no stores under cover; no fuel; no provisions but a few cocoanuts. We use two lucifer matches a day; and what is to become of us at that rate? In theory, fire can be got by rubbing two pieces of wood together; Selkirk is said to have so obtained it from pimento wood on Juan Fernandez; but, in fact, I believe the art is confined to savages.

"I never met a civilized man who could do it, and I have questioned scores of voyagers. As for my weapons, they consist of a boat-hook and an ax; no gun, no harpoon, no bow, no lance.

"My tools are a blunt saw, a blunter ax, a wooden spade, two great augers, that I believe had a hand in bringing us here, but have not been any use to us since, a center-bit, two planes, a hammer, a pair of pincers, two brad-awls,

three gimlets, two scrapers, a plumblead and a line, a large pair of scissors, and you have a small pair, two gages, a screw-driver, five clasp-knives, a few screws and nails of various sizes, two small barrels, two bags, two tin bowls, two wooden bowls, and the shell of this turtle, and that is a very good soup-tureen, only we have no meat to make soup with."

"Well, sir," said Miss Rolleston resignedly, "we can but kneel down and die."

"That would be cutting the gordian knot, indeed," said Hazel. "What, die to shirk a few difficulties? No. I propose an amendment to that. After the words 'kneel down' insert the words 'and get up again, trusting in that merciful Providence which has saved us so far, but expects us to exert ourselves too.'"

"It is good and pious advice," said Helen, "and let us follow it this moment."

"Now," said Hazel, "I have three propositions to lay before you. First, that I hereby give up walking and take to running, time is so precious; second, that we both work by night as well as day; third, that we each tell the other our principal wants, so that there may be four eyes on the lookout, as we go, instead of two."

"I consent," said Helen; "pray what are your wants?"

"Iron, oil, salt, tar, a bellows, a pick-ax, planks, thread, nets, light matting for roofs, bricks, chimney-pots, jars, glass, animal food, some variety of vegetable food, and so on. I'll write down the entire list for you."

"You will be puzzled to do that without ink or paper."

"Not in the least. I shall engrave it in *alto-relievo*, make the words with pebbles on the turf just above high-water mark. Now tell me *your* wants."

"Well, I want—impossibilities."

"Enumerate them,"

"What is the use?"

"It is the method we have agreed upon."

"Oh, very well, then. I want—a sponge."

"Good. What next?"

"I have broken my comb."

"Good."

"I'm glad you think so. I want—oh, Mr. Hazel, what *is* the use—well, I should like a mattress to lie on."

"Hair or wool?"

"I don't care which. And it is a shame to ask you for either."

"Go on."

"I want a looking-glass."

"Great heaven! What for?"

"Oh, never mind. I want one; and some more towels, and some soap, and a few hair-pins; and some elastic bands; and some pens, ink, and paper, to write my feelings down in this island for nobody ever to see."

When she began Hazel looked bright, but the list was like a wasp, its sting lay in its tail. However, he put a good face on it. "I'll try and get you all of those things: only give me time. Do you know I am writing a dictionary on a novel method."

"That means on the sand."

"No; the work is suspended for the present. But two of the definitions in it are: DIFFICULTIES—things to be subdued; IMPOSSIBILITIES—things to be trampled on."

"Well, subdue mine. Trample on—a sponge for me."

"That is just what I was going to do," said he; opened a clasp-knife and jumped coolly into the river.

Helen screamed faintly, but after all the water was only up to his knees.

He soon cut a large sponge off a piece of slimy rock, and held it up to her. "There," said he, "why, there are a score of them at your very door, and you never saw them!"

"Oh, excuse me, I did see them and shuddered; I thought they were reptiles; dormant, and biding their time."

When he was out of the river again, she thought a little, and asked him whether *old* iron would be of any use to him.

"Oh, certainly," said he, "what do you know of any?"

"I think I saw some one day. I'll go and look for it."

She took the way of the shore; and he got his cart and spade, and went post-haste to his clay pit.

He made a quantity of bricks, and brought them home, and put them to

dry in the sun. He also cut great pieces of the turtle, and wrapped them in fresh banana leaves, and enclosed them in clay. He then tried to make a large narrow-necked vessel, and failed utterly; so he made the clay into a great rude platter like a shallow milk-pan. Then he peeled the sago log, off which he had cut his wheels, and rubbed it with turtle fat, and, using it as a form, produced two clay cylinders.

These he set in the sun, with bricks round them to keep them from falling. Leaving all these to dry and set before he baked them, he went off to the marsh for fern leaves. The soil being so damp, the trees were covered with a brownish-red substance, scarce distinguishable from wool. This he had counted on.

But he also found in the same neighborhood a long cypress-haired moss that seemed to him very promising. He made several trips, and raised quite a stack of fern leaves. By this time the sun had operated on his thinner pottery; so he laid down six of his large thick tiles, and lighted a fire with them with dry banana leaves, and cocoanut, etc., and such light combustibles, until he had heated and hardened the clay; then he put the ashes on one side, and swept the clay clean; then he put the fire on again, and made it hotter and hotter, till the clay began to redden.

While he was thus occupied, Miss Rolleston came from the jungle radiant, carrying some long yellow pods, with red specks, something like a very large banana.

"Ah," said Hazel, delighted; "these are plantains, and the greatest find we have made yet. The fruit is meat, the wood is thread, and the leaf is shelter and clothes. The fruit is good raw, and better baked, as you shall see, and I believe this is the first time the dinner and the dish were both baked together."

He cleared the now heated hearth, put the meat and fruit on it, then placed his great platter over it, and heaped fire round the platter and light combustibles over it. While this was going on, Helen took him to her bower, and showed him three rusty iron hoops, and a piece of rotten wood with a rusty nail, and the marks where others had been. "There," said she; "that is all I could find."

"Why, it is a treasure," cried he; "you will see. I have found something, too."

He then showed her the vegetable wool and vegetable hair he had collected, and told her where they grew. She owned they were wonderful imitations, and would do as well as the real things; and, ere they had done comparing notes, the platter and the dinner under it were both baked.

Hazel removed the platter or milk-pan, and served the dinner in it.

Then a change took place in her; she let her work fall, and brooded. She spoke sometimes sharply to Mr. Hazel, and sometimes with strained civility. She wandered away from him, and from his labors for her comfort, and passed hours at Telegraph Point, eying the illimitable ocean. She was a riddle. All sweetness at times, but at others irritable, moody, and scarce mistress of herself. Hazel was sorry and perplexed, and often expressed a fear she was ill. The answer was always in the negative. He did not press her, but worked on for her, hoping the mood would pass. And so it would, no doubt, if the cause had not remained.

Matters were still in this uncomfortable and mysterious state when Hazel put his finishing stroke to her abode.

He was in high spirits that evening: for he had made a discovery; he had at last found time for a walk, and followed the river to its source, a very remarkable lake in a hilly basin.

Near this was a pond, the water of which he had tasted and found it highly bituminous; and, making further researches, he had found at the bottom of a rocky ravine a very wonderful thing—a dark resinous fluid bubbling up in quite a fountain, which, however, fell down again as it rose, and hardly any overflowed. It was like thin pitch.

Of course, in another hour he was back there with a great pot, and half filled it. It was not like water: it did not bubble so high when some had been taken; so he just took what he could get. Pursuing his researches a little farther, he found a range of rocks with snowy summits apparently; but the snow was the guano of centuries.

He got to the western extremity of

the island, saw another deep bay or rather branch of the sea, and on the other side of it a tongue of high land running out to sea: on that promontory stood a gigantic palm tree. He recognized that with a certain thrill, but was in a great hurry to get home with his pot of pitch; for it was in truth a very remarkable discovery, though not without a parallel.

He could not wait till morning, so with embers and cocoanut he made a fire in the bower, and melted his pitch, which had become nearly solid, and proceeded to smear the inside of the matting in places, to make it thoroughly water-tight.

Helen treated the discovery at first with mortifying indifference; but he hoped she would appreciate Nature's bounty more when she saw the practical use of this extraordinary production. He endeavored to lead her to that view. She shook her head sorrowfully. He persisted. She met him with silence. He thought this peevish, and ungrateful to heaven; we have all different measures of the wonderful; and to him a fountain of pitch was a thing to admire greatly and thank God for; he said as much.

To Helen it was nasty stuff, and who cares where it came from? She conveyed as much by a shrug of the shoulders, and then gave a sigh that told her mind was far away.

He was mortified, and showed it.

One word led to another, and at last what had been long fermenting came out.

"Mr. Hazel," said she, "you and I are at cross purposes. You mean to live here. I do not."

Hazel left off working and looked greatly perplexed, the attack was so sudden in its form, though it had been a long time threatening. He found nothing to say, and she was impatient now to speak her mind.

"You are making yourself at home here. You are contented. Contented? You are happy in this horrible prison."

"And why not?" said Hazel. But he looked rather guilty. "Here are no traitors; no murderers. The animals are my friends, and the one human being I see makes me better to look at her."

"Mr. Hazel, I am in a state of mind that romantic nonsense jars on me. Be honest with me, and talk to me like a man. I say that you beam all over with happiness and content, and that you—now answer me one question: why have you never lighted the bonfire on Telegraph Point?"

"Indeed, I don't know," said he submissively. "I have been so occupied."

"You have, and how? Not in trying to deliver us both from this dreadful situation, but to reconcile me to it. Yes, sir, under pretence (that is a harsh word, but I can't help it) of keeping out the rain. Your rain is a bugbear; it never rains, it never will rain. You are killing yourself almost to make me comfortable in this place. Comfortable?" She began to tremble all over with excitement long restrained. "And do you really suppose you can make me live on like this, by building me a nice hut? Do you think I am all body and no soul, that shelter and warmth and enough to eat can keep my heart from breaking, and my cheeks from blushing night and day? When I wake in the morning I find myself blushing to my fingers' ends."

Then she walked away from him. Then she walked back. "Oh, my dear father, why did I ever leave you! Keep me here? make me live months and years on this island? Have you sisters? Have you a mother? Ask yourself, is it likely? No; if you will not help me, and they don't love me enough to come and find me and take me home, I'll go to another home without your help or any man's." Then she rose suddenly to her feet. "I'll tie my clothes tight round me, and fling myself down from that point on to the sharp rocks below. I'll find a way from this place to heaven, if there's no way from it to those I love on earth."

Then she sank down and rocked herself and sobbed hard.

The strong passion of this hitherto gentle creature quite frightened her unhappy friend, who knew more of books than women. He longed to soothe her and comfort her; but what could he say? He cried out in despair, "My God, can I do nothing for her?"

She turned on him like lightning. "You can do anything: everything. You can restore us both to our friends. You

can save my life, my reason. For that will go first, I think. What *had* I done? what had I *ever* done since I was born, to be so brought down? Was ever an English lady— And when I have such an irritation on my skin, all over me. I sometimes wish the tiger would come and tear me all to pieces; yes, all to pieces." And with that her white teeth clicked together convulsively. "Do?" said she, darting back to the point as swiftly as she had gushed away from it. "Why, put down that nasty stuff; and leave off inventing fifty little trumpery things for me, and do one great thing instead. Oh, do not fritter that great mind of yours away in painting and patching my prison; but bring it all to bear on getting me *out* of my prison. Call sea and land to our rescue. Let them know a poor girl is here in unheard-of, unfathomable misery: here, in the middle of this awful ocean."

Hazel sighed deeply. "No ships seem to pass within sight of us," he muttered.

"What does that matter to *you*? You

(To be continued.)

are not a common man; you are an inventor. Rouse all the powers of your mind. There must be some way. Think for me. THINK! THINK! or my blood will be on your head."

Hysterical sobs cut her short here, and Hazel, whose loving heart she had almost torn out of his body, could only falter out in a broken voice, that he would obey her. "I'll work no more for you at present," said he, "sweet as it has been. I will think instead. I will go this moment beneath the stars and think all night."

The young woman was now leaning her head languidly back against one of the trees, weak as water after her passion. He cast a look of ineffable love and pity on her, and withdrew slowly to think beneath the tranquil stars.

Love has set men hard tasks in his time. Whether this was a light one our reader shall decide.

TO DIFFUSE INTELLIGENCE FROM A FIXED ISLAND OVER A HUNDRED LEAGUES OF OCEAN.

DENNISON.

By Henry A. Horwood.

A STORY of courage; the sort that comes to men who are weary of the placid civil life.

"DON'T think we shall need your services any longer, Dennison. The cashier will pay you what is owing."

There was no surprise on the dismissed clerk's face when he heard the words; he was used to them. He had expected it as a matter of course; he took it as part of his lot. In a dull voice, half contempt, he said, "All right."

That night, after he had drawn his pay, he felt better. The great wide city was his field; he hated an office, he hated routine and everything that kept him confined.

He bought a cigar to celebrate his freedom. To-morrow was a day of glorious dawn to him, it always was so.

He wanted no friends; he hated his lot, and wanted to roam about free. He had the spirit of the soldier of fortune—the kind you read about in novels; he wanted to fight and do great things. He wanted to show that pen-pushing crowd that he wasn't to be laughed at.

He hated the sight of his boyhood friends who went to business every morning, content to sit on a stool, and draw their pay, those friends who would ask him, with a sarcastic smile, how he was getting along.

He had always been a failure in their eyes; in his own, he had wandered over the earth doing great deeds. His controlling motive was to do something that that bunch of quill-drivers, as he called them, would read about in the

papers and stop their pens long enough to say: "Why, I know Dennison."

In fancy he saw them come to him, and slap him on the back, and say that they always knew he was of the right stuff. He thought it out so often; he was to look at them quietly as if he had never doubted himself. That was his glorious moment—he would say, in his best, long practised, sarcasm, "You never understood me, my friends."

He didn't go back to his little furnished room; he wandered about the streets, in the theater district, and imagined it was Paris, and thought of all those other wonders that persons like himself are so familiar with in their vague dreams. When he tired of that he bought a scalper's ticket and went into one of the theaters.

The play was about war, and the hero just the kind of fellow that Dennison pictured himself to be, while he was being paid to keep books in an office downtown. Dennison's soul was touched.

"This is a fine show," he said to his neighbor.

"Aw, this ain't the kind of show I like; too much fool work," said the neighbor. Dennison turned away in disgust. "Another pen-pusher," he said to himself.

When he got home the play kept running in his head. Mechanically he began to undress for bed. Then he recollected. "Hey, I don't have to get up early," he said, and a happy smile came over his face. He ceased disrobing, and sat in a chair.

"Gee, if I could only get a chance of doing the things that the fellow in the play does," he said to himself, "that's the life, all right. No office stool there; that's the thing for me."

He paced up and down the room. He was a stocky, well-built fellow, who took pride in the size of his biceps, and the number of miles he could walk on a Sunday.

Suddenly he recalled that there was a war going on in South Africa.

"I think I will cut out for that. It is better than quill-driving by a long shot. Ah, won't that crowd get groggy when they read of me in the papers, doing stunts down there?"

He said many more things like that

to himself. He was so busy killing the enemy, and resting under wonderful trees, rescuing pretty girls, and acting superhumanly brave, that he could not sleep until the dawn began to creep in at the window.

Awakening somewhere about noon—the proper hour for a man of leisure—his startled thought was that he was late for work; then he remembered, and was so happy that he threw his pillow across the room in sheer delight.

He lay in bed for a long time revolving the plan of the night before—yet subconsciously fancying himself in one of those oriental palaces where one gets up when one chooses. If a slave had come in with a dainty breakfast on a tray he would not have been at all surprised.

Breakfast! He was aroused by the thought. After dressing and hastily eating he went down to South Street, in search of a cattle ship. He thought cattle ships the best kind of boats to travel on; for there seemed something adventurous about them.

Dennison finally secured the address of a cattle steamer office. He sniffed at the romance of the thing as a dog sniffs at sight of game. He saw a new world peeping through the fog that had held him a prisoner.

For the first time in his life he felt really happy. He loved the open life—yes, he knew he would love work—even roughness and dirt would not phase him, if it was in the open, because he had wanted it years ago, and could never get it. It grew to be a mania with him; a tenet in his life.

He passed the salty denizens of the East River front, and felt thrilled at the joy of it, because he was to be one of them now, only of course he was much better, for he was going to be a soldier of fortune, or some other kind of a soldier, that all the people would be talking about, and think brave and mighty.

None of that bunch of clerks had ever been in this kind of a world; they would stand aghast at sights like these. He felt with delight that things were being evened up at last, that he was taking the place that belonged to him—and it was a place, higher to him by far than the top of a bookkeeper's stool.

He had no difficulty in getting a job

on the cattle boat. He went back to his little furnished room and disposed of his things. There were not many. He sold his clothes at a second-hand shop and bought others more suited to his wants.

There was no one to say good-by to; he had no relatives. But he could not resist the temptation of meeting a few of his old mates before he left. He knew their routes and he waited for them.

He had the air of one who has had bequeathed to him a large section of the earth and its goods. "Hello, Deny," said one, "what are you doing now?"

"Ah, I am going to the war." He said it with the grace of a captain of the French guard.

"Going to the war; what war?" Dennison was getting the respect he had longed for.

"Why, the war in South Africa; what did you think; the pen-pushers' debate?"

Dennison majestically walked down the street, and in his mind's eye he saw the astonished clerk looking after him with the awe that a great man should receive. It was balm.

Next day he was on the ship. And he went for the work, with a vim that would have made him a steel magnate or a pork packer. There was not a man on the ship could outdo him. The more he worked, the happier he became. He was in the open now—that world he had dreamed of and longed for.

As the steamer chug-chugged down the river and into the bay Dennison cast a happy glance at the city growing rapidly smaller in the distance. He was free! Free of its brick and mortar, and its grinding office work; no one now to stop him playing the part he was best suited for in life.

He leaned over the rail and smiled. "Ah, that bunch," he said to himself. "Next time they hear of Dennison they will take their hats off. A long good-by to you——"

"Hey, there you! Get your head in here and feed these horses," came a voice that awakened Dennison to the realities of life. But it was not the city manager's voice, so he obeyed without a grumble. It was different.

He got into a fight, on the way over,

with a little fat fellow. Dennison put him out in short order, and was accepted as part of the gang. It was heaven to him.

The smell of a ship full of horses tickled his nostrils; he thought it was fine because of its very awfulness. He was in the right sphere now; the sphere where men live, and he could prove to any of them that he was as good as the best.

When they reached London he left the ship, and started to walk to Portsmouth. It is not a short walk, even if England does look like a fly speck on the map. It was not an easy walk, either; but Dennison was free, with a little money in his pockets, and life had a relish in it that it never had before. He was free to look at the beautiful scenery as he tramped along, and the fine estates; and his mind was not continually recurring to the fact that he had to go to work the next day. That was the trouble with his Sunday walks at home.

He had some vague idea that if he could get to Portsmouth or Southampton he could get on a ship for the Cape. He did not know very clearly what he would do when he reached there; but that did not matter. It was something to be a tramp, and have a mission at the same time. Dennison was not devoid of good; it was not work that he had run away from, it was the kind of work.

It was not so hard making the distance between London and Southampton, even though he had so little money, and the trade of tramping in England is not profitable. But he finally reached there, and found that it was not necessary to go on to Portsmouth.

He was given a job on one of the Castle line steamers, in the stoke hole. That kind of work was all right. If, in the old days, father had asked him to carry up a pail of coal, it would have been all wrong; but this was different; there was a future to this.

The life was hard, and he liked it. He was at the place where the world bumps, and he was enough of a philosopher to appreciate it. Those fellows in New York only felt the vapid air. He began to burrow his head into the murk of the world; for, as we have said, Dennison was not exactly a dunce. His

head was all right, only it was not built on the usual equilibrium; it needed change and plenty of it.

He liked the smell that came out of the world's dust heap. Stokers have a species of knowledge in them, and Dennison was just enough above them to know that he was getting information that spectacled sociologists talk about and think about, and never really understand.

Of course the work was hard; Dennison's arms grew mighty muscles; but then he was going to leave, at the Cape, and it was new, and the paint was not rubbed off yet. Besides, it tickled a fellow of his make-up to squeeze our philosophy, and to have adventures that the boys back in New York would sit up to listen to.

This was life, Dennison would think; and he would whistle and sing—the cheeriest man on the ship.

As he had intended, he left at the Cape, and struck out up country. He began the real life now; saw the flowers and heard the birds sing. He whistled tunes to himself as he walked.

It is pretty fine to walk in a big country like the Cape Colony, and feel that you are as big a man as the man who rules it. The world began to shrink and he to swell; he could see both sides of the earth now. He, a little atom in New York, was a pretty big fellow out here.

He was happy. Somewhere off there ahead was the English army and mighty near them were the Boers. He did not know much about the cause of the trouble, was not up in the intricacies of finance, and did not see the mine owners behind the curtain in London.

He guessed he would join the Boers; they were the under dog, and anyway it would be pretty hard to get in the English army; they were too independent and self-contained.

It was slow walking through the country; but Dennison was at his best in places like this. He began to get on the trail of war now. He had gotten out of Cape Colony and into Orange Free State. He saw a burned house and a grave or two, and his heart beat fast.

He reached the trail of the army—that long, narrow line that joins the

army, with the little railroad junction. He felt he had to be pretty clever now, or he would be taken for a spy. There would be no glory in that.

So he waited his chance to find out where the Boers were. He thought of getting a job in the commissariat, but the stolid independence of the English froze that idea before it was old enough to care for itself.

He waited patiently for the opportunity and the man, and when they coincided he stepped forth and got his information. As we have said, Dennison had a pretty good head. He waited for a North of England man and talked South of England to him. "The Boers were off there yesterday," he was told, "and they were off *there* to-day, and where they will be to-morrow God only knows."

That is not much data to go on, but six months of life cures those defects. Dennison worked out a circle fifty miles in radius and started to get on the outside of it and then make for the Boers.

He saw lots of burned houses and ruined fields and white crosses now. It was a dismal country, and there was some danger in it; but that is what Dennison had been wanting for years, and he whistled the harder and walked the faster on his way.

He came upon a band of men. He hoped they were Boers, but he was clever. He would not commit himself until he knew, and he was taken off under escort to somewhere in the rear. On the way he found out he was really with the Boers. This was fine; Dennison was as happy as a child. He whistled all the way to headquarters.

When he got there he saw resolute soldiers walking about; old men and young. A horrible earnestness was in their faces. It was all more or less like a play to Dennison yet, and the gulp that he gave was only transient.

He was taken to a tent in which sat a few officers. He pleaded to be allowed to join the army. There must have been something terribly convincing in the boy's expression, for, after a thorough examination, he was given a place in one of the companies.

It was only a small section of the Boer army that he was with. Dennison

did not know that. He could not see the perspective very clearly now; little, distant objects were huge lumps at his feet; a man was a regiment and a dozen of them an army.

He was free for a while, so he stood and gazed at the soldiers as they passed, their faces drawn and terrible. Their desperation took hold of him; there was something haunting about their manner. His little world experienced a tornado; he tried to think, and could not. He tried to realize where he was, but his mind refused to move. He tried to forget the fear that was tugging at his heart, but it clung to him like a vulture over a corpse.

He tried to laugh it off; he whistled a tune, but it dried up in the middle. He tried to build up an air castle bravely, but all of the castle that he could see were the back stairways and the cellar. He thought of the crowd at home and for a moment he was better.

He heard some firing off in the distance, and he gave a start, and his blood ran cold. He had listened to the bang of cannon in his sleep, and always he was brave and fearless; this was the first time he had ever heard cannon that meant something more than a Fourth of July celebration.

He heard officers give orders, and he saw the fierce looking men rushing about, and Dennison turned marble. He was bumped into, and he was too stupefied to move. He became panic-stricken. He was about to make a run for the rear—then he thought again of the crowd at home.

For an instant he wished he was in the office, then shame came over him. "What would they say, what would they say?" He kept saying it over and over again. "They would laugh; they would jeer as they always did," he repeated as often, while he stood there paralyzed and dumb.

"Hell!" he said aloud, and he rushed off in the direction the men had taken. He picked up a gun he saw lying on the ground near a tent and a cartridge belt that was near it.

It was a guerrilla fight; there were no tactics that one learns in books. Dennison would not have heeded them if there had been. He saw a line of sol-

diers, and then a cloud of smoke, very faint like thin mist, rise up as out of the ground. Dennison looked wildly for shelter, and fell upon the ground, shaking from head to foot. "What would they say, what would they say?" he thought again.

He saw the quiet office and the clerks sitting on their stools, and it looked good to him. Then shame came over him. He tried to make excuses for himself. "You're a coward," he said, "a coward." He picked up his rifle and fired wildly; a tenderness came over him. What was the use of killing those fellows, anyway?

Then he called himself names again, and aimed low at the line in the distance. He saw no one drop. He was firing at the enemy. It was war; he was fighting! A smile came over his face; his blood was hot. He was a soldier; he was the real thing now; his brain cleared. Yet—he thought again of the crowd at home.

Dennison laughed a little hysterically. He was happy at the thought that he was doing something real—at last—yet was this real or only a dream fight? Ha—that was the ping of a bullet—that was real enough. He would fight like mad, and perhaps his officer would praise him; he had never been praised in all his life.

He fired as fast as he could now. He kept crawling up nearer and nearer the enemy. He had not a ghost of an idea of what kind of a fight he was in. He never thought of it. He saw a line of soldiers and he was possessed with the idea of killing them off. That was war; that was what he must do.

Had he looked back, he would have seen the little band that he belonged to slowly retreating, drawing the English on, making a short stand, and keeping them off, and then repeating the strategy of a careful retreat. They forgot Dennison; he never remembered them.

He was talking to himself as he fired. "Ah, this is life, all right. Gee, those nice pen-pushers; they will take off their hats to Dennison, all right. Take that, you Britisher; I'll bet you never got up against the real thing in the fight line before. You are falling back a little, I see; I guess I will have to push along

a bit. This is great; I will drive the whole British army into the river and walk over their bodies."

He was smiling to himself. A bullet pierced his body, but he hardly noticed it. He kept on shooting for awhile. Then the sound of the firing grew fainter in his ears. He guessed he would put down his gun for a minute.

He rolled over on a little hillock, his face toward the heavens. A smile was still on it, and he was talking to himself.

When the English came up he was laughing softly. "Oh, my, but they will look funny when they see me," they heard him say.

"That's the fellow who popped off a 'arf dozen of us, sir," Dennison heard, as in a dream.

"He is either the biggest d—n fool or the bravest man I have ever seen," he heard the officer say.

The smile on Dennison's face broadened. He tried to get up; but he fell back—"that—bunch—at—home——"

They gave him a good burial for an enemy. If Dennison had had his choice, it would have been the kind he would have chosen. The correspondents got the story, and it was sent to New York, and Dennison's name was mentioned; so this story is not to be taken as a tragedy; Dennison, no doubt, was satisfied.

THE CHARGE OF DARGAI GAP.

By Richard Mansfield.

BULLDOGS, hark! Did your courage fail?

Bulldogs, hark! Did your glory pale?
What of the slander that says "Decayed!"
And "Gone to the dogs since the Light Brigade!"

For the blood and bone that humbled Nap,
'Twas there again, boys, in the Dargai Gap!

Did you hear the swish of the flying shot?
The roll of the drum and the rattle pot?
The music that rose clear o'er that yell
And thrilled thro' the ranks and stirred up hell!

Come, Highland laddie, head up, step forth!

A crown of glory! "Cock of the North!"
You "Cock of the North," aye, pipe away!
With both stumps gone, and you won the day!

You may lean your backs against comrades now,

They'll moisten your lips and they'll kiss your brow,

For they fought like men, and a man may weep

When he lays a man to his last long sleep.
Bulldogs who sleep on the Dargai Ridge,
Fall in! Quick, march! and over the bridge!

The piper's ahead, and the same old air,
To pipe you to heaven and veterans there!
And you'll tell the bullies who humbled Nap,

The glorious story of Dargai Gap.

A GIFT FROM MARS.*

By William Wallace Cook.

An astronomical wonder story that does not get all its plot from the stars.

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

A METEOR falls in Coon Hollow, from the middle of which Professor Spriggs, a phrenologist, lately arrived and of eccentric demeanor, extracts a small black stone.

Unfortunately the professor's keepers, from an asylum, having discovered his new abiding place, appear at this point and remove him from the scene.

The professor turns the stone over to Jethro Mydus, who, he has foretold, will be a Napoleon of Finance. Jethro does not fulfil the prediction immediately, for, having sold a gold brick to Deacon Cotter, in order to elope with Luella Easley, the latter project is defeated, and the deacon arrests him as a swindler. Jethro, in court, says he thought the brick was gold, as his Uncle Ezra sent it from Montana. The brick is brought into court, and to the general surprise a second test proves that it is gold.

This is not true, but Uncle Ezra, who has unexpectedly appeared, corroborates Jethro's statement that it was a gift from him and boasts of his fabulous wealth. Later, Jethro discovers that Uncle Ezra's financial magnitude is pure bluff, but realizing the advantages of a fictitious source offers him an interest in his rôle as Napoleon of Finance, no questions answered.

With his unexpected wealth, Jethro develops many grasping and cold-blooded traits of character, and, although visited by a delegation, continues to throw upon the market large quantities of gold, into which, in an old foundry, by means of his philosopher's stone, he has converted tons of scrap iron.

The commercial nations become panic stricken, and beg him to desist. At last an armed mob gathers. With his secretary, Mabel Perkins, Jethro flees to safety in his automobile, with the pleasing knowledge that Uncle Ezra, irritated beyond endurance by his nephew's avariciousness, has stolen the philosopher's stone.

CHAPTER XI.

FLIGHT OF THE "YELLOW FIEND."

A LIMITED liability is an excellent thing in theory, but there is a liability that sweeps beyond the power of human control and laughs at every attempt to restrain it. Such a liability followed as a natural corollary from the operations of Mydus & Mydus.

Uncle Ez began his flight almost twenty-four hours before Jethro and Miss Perkins undertook theirs. Before daylight of that fateful Thursday he surreptitiously visited the foundry—perhaps, for the purpose of trying his own hand as a bullion maker. Lingered there rather longer than he should, when he tried to leave he found the building

surrounded by a constantly growing crowd of townspeople.

The people were in such a temper that Uncle Ez dared not show himself. As the day wore on the crowd continued to grow. Toward nightfall the foundry was fired and Uncle Ez attempted to make a run of it and escape in the darkness.

His attempt failed, and he was captured and roughly handled—managing, however, to keep safe grip on the Gift from Mars. The rashest of the mob suggested a telegraph pole and a rope as fit punishment, but cooler counsel prevailed and the prisoner was locked in a cell of the county jail.

Next morning when the turnkey appeared before the grated door with the prisoner's breakfast the cell was empty.

*Began May All-Story Magazine. Single copies, 10 cents.

Investigation revealed a peculiar state of affairs.

The outer window of the little room had been laced and interlaced with iron bars. The bars were still there, but they were *yellow bars*, and so twisted and bent that the prisoner had been able to wriggle past them to freedom.

An astounding thing, this, and one that drew the attention of the entire community. Whereas the bars had been of iron, they were now of pure gold—a fact duly attested by Mr. Barkins, the local jeweler.

The change from the harder to the softer metal had enabled the prisoner to bend the bars with his bare hands. But in what manner had this transmutation been accomplished?

While metal workers, professors, and reporters theorized and propounded, Uncle Ez evaded effectually every effort to recapture him. The sheriff of the county claimed the gold bars as a perquisite of his office, and, out of his own pocket, paid for replacing them with a suitable network of iron.

Jethro's flight was dramatic and came within one of being tragic. Bud Brackett was waiting beside the "Yellow Fiend"—as Uncle Ez had dubbed the motor car—and he clasped Jethro's hand and wished him well.

"This is kind of you, Bud," said Jethro, assisting Miss Perkins into the car.

"I realize," returned Bud with feeling, "both of us were at fault in our former differences. You have set me on my feet again, and I hope we shall always be friends."

"I have set you on your feet only to involve you in the general disaster."

"Things will right themselves; the country can't go to the bow-wows entirely. Take the Rocky Run road, Jethro, and—hurry!"

Bud pointed along the pike in the direction of Shelbyville. Over the hill, back of Cy Lepper's, they could see a tangle of blazing torches, and faintly down to them came a hooting and shouting as of men enraged.

"The mob!" gasped Miss Perkins, clutching Jethro's arm. "Oh, make haste, Mr. Mydus, make haste."

Still Jethro did not start the car.

"The entire country is in arms against me," said he, "and I go into untold dangers. Brackett, won't you give Miss Perkins a haven of refuge in your home? Perhaps Mrs. Brackett can shield her——"

"No, no, no!" murmured the girl. "I am your secretary, and my place is by your side."

"But think a moment, and——"

"There is no time to think!" and, leaning over, the secretary herself started the car.

Before they had left Main Street the "Yellow Fiend" had been discovered by a citizen, who fired upon it from a second-story window. The bullet whistled in front of them, so close that Miss Perkins gave a little scream and crouched against Jethro.

In that hour the discredited young Cræsus was coolness itself. He spoke reassuringly to his companion and sought to dispel her fears.

"You are brave, Mr. Mydus," she whispered as they flew along. "I always felt that you would be equal to such an emergency as this."

"Who could not be brave with you at his side?" breathed Jethro. "You are an inspiration, Miss Perkins."

"And then, too," he added, "I am facing the responsibilities of my own short-sightedness. A man should do that, I think. If necessary, he should pay the penalty without flinching."

They swept on in the light of the stars and of a slip of a moon. Presently they passed the disused cattle-sheds and the little house on Jethro's "forty."

He sighed. The only true happiness he had known in life, so far, had come to him while he was clearing his land and planning for a home for himself and Luella.

Now Luella was out of the equation. With Miss Perkins he could have been happy had this storm not broken above his devoted head.

Three miles out a new source of danger was detected in advance of them. From Hank's Corners another mob was marching, armed with scythes and shot-guns and lighting the way with lanterns.

Miss Perkins clasped her hands convulsively.

"They have not seen us yet!" said

she. "We must put out the lamps and go back. After all, Mr. Mydus, the Shelbyville road is our only safe course."

He extinguished the lamps, turned cautiously, and started to retrace the road they had just covered. Then it was found that another mob was pursuing the car from Coon Hollow.

Miss Perkins was disappointed but not discouraged. Suddenly she cast aside her fears and arose straight and calm in the seat beside Jethro.

"We are between two fires," said she, "and must try a ruse. Back the car into these bushes at the roadside, Mr. Mydus. When the men from Hank's Corners have passed, and before they have joined forces with those from Coon Hollow, we can come out and take to the road again."

"Well thought of!" exclaimed Jethro, and backed the car into the undergrowth.

The Hank's Corners men came on, whooping furiously and making wild boasts of what they would do if chance threw Jethro or Uncle Ez in their power.

Trailing away with their lanterns and their rattling weapons, they came finally within sight of the other mob advancing from Coon Hollow.

The Hank's Corners men halted in startled wonder, barely a hundred yards from where the "Yellow Fiend" was lurking.

"We must try it now," whispered Miss Perkins. "They will see us, or hear us, but that cannot be helped. Our superior speed will leave them behind."

The *chug, chug-chug* of the starting car did reach the ears of the Hank's Corners contingent, and, looking back, they saw a blot gliding into the road and away. Intuitively they grasped the situation, a fierce yell went up and they gave pursuit.

Some of their number were mounted, and these plied whip and spur in an attempt to overtake the car.

Jethro gave the vehicle the utmost speed. The pursuers were distanced, but Fortune was still frowning. A tire exploded, the machine wobbled with slackening speed, swerved from the road, and smashed into a stump.

The jolt of the sudden stop was terrific. Jethro was hurled over the front

of the car, clearing stump and all and alighting on his shoulders.

He was not severely hurt, but he had frantic fears on Miss Perkins' account. As luck would have it, his fears were not realized. The secretary had fallen sidewise from the machine, the sword at the roadside breaking her fall.

She and Jethro met as each was running to find how the other had fared.

"Mabel—Miss Perkins!" gasped Jethro. "Were you hurt?"

"No," she returned reassuringly. "And you?"

"I came out of the accident better than I deserved."

"Then look to the car. Oh, I hope—I *do* hope—it is not so badly injured as to be beyond use."

Investigation proved that the car was half-wrecked and could not be started.

Away off a thump of hoofs was borne to them on the faint night wind.

"This is the end, I fear," said Jethro philosophically. "Even if the motor was in a condition for use, the bursted tire would hamper us and lead to our capture."

"But you need not be involved, Miss Perkins. Leave me. Once I am taken, the mob will not think of looking for you."

"This is *not* the end!" cried the girl. "Come, Mr. Mydus; we will both leave the road. I know where we are, and know of some one who will give us shelter. Come!"

Her courage was the soldierly kind that shows itself to best advantage in the last trench. Electrified by her resolute manner, Jethro sprang to her side and, hand in hand, they crossed the road and were well into a neighboring field when the mob reached the wrecked car.

CHAPTER XII.

OUT OF THE NET.

EVEN a millionaire's bread, when cast upon the waters, may return after many days.

Miss Perkins was not speaking idly when she said she knew of some one who would give them shelter; for they were close to Farmer Higgins' home, and there they made port.

The farmer's right arm was useless, but he gave Jethro his left hand in friendly greeting. Nor was Mrs. Higgins backward in welcoming their guests.

The farmer and his wife had been in bed, but had hastily dressed when Jethro beat a summons on the front door. As Miss Perkins seemed to be much more popular with the Higginses than Jethro, he left her to do the talking.

The situation was briefly explained; after which an anxious hour was passed waiting to see whether the mob would trace the fugitives to the farmhouse.

A few stragglers did come that way, but as there were no lights showing about the place, they exchanged a few comments under the sitting-room window and then left.

These comments, plainly audible to the Higginses, Miss Perkins, and Jethro, were somewhat embarrassing.

"Any use rousin' the Higgins tribe?" queried a voice.

"Ye don't think fer a minit Mydus 'u'd come here, do ye?" demanded another. "Why, he smashed ole Higgins inter a cocked hat an' then paid him some'r's 'round two hundred dollars ter settle."

"He gave 'im more arterwards."

"It was the gal that did that. Don't you worry none 'bout Higgins takin' Mydus in. Le's go on to'rds Hank's Corners."

The passing of the stragglers was an immense relief to Jethro. Here, at the very moment when he must look to Farmer Higgins for relief, such talk was unpleasant, to say the least.

To the credit of the farmer and his wife, be it said that they endeavored, by an extremely amiable manner, to assure the millionaire that any confidence he might repose in them would not be misplaced.

"Mebby it would be well fer ye to stay here all night, Mr. Mydus," said Farmer Higgins. "By termorrer things ort to sort o' quiet down so'st it'll be safe for ye to show yerself."

"I don't know whether it will ever be safe for me to show myself again," answered Jethro morosely.

"Certainly it will!" declared the secretary. "But I do not think it advisable

for us to remain here a moment longer than necessary."

"Ye're welcome to stay as long as ye please," put in Mrs. Higgins, "and we'll do all we can for the two o' ye. But act accordin' to yer lights, an' count on us to do all we can."

"If ye want," said the farmer, "I'll hitch to the democrat wagon an' take ye to Shelbyville. They's a Boston train pulls through there about 4:30 in the mornin'. It ain't so late but what ye could ketch that."

"Shelbyville is out of the question," said Miss Perkins decisively.

"And Boston, too," added Jethro.

"No," went on the secretary, "I think Boston is the very place for you to go, Mr. Mydus. However, we can determine that point later. What time does that morning train reach Jonesboro, Mr. Higgins?"

"Long about five."

"Could you get us to Jonesboro in time to take it?"

"I'd have to look sharp, if I did. Think ye want to go that way?"

Jethro nodded.

"All right. Ma, you help me on with my coat, then come out to the stable with me an' help hitch. Ye see," he added, turning to Jethro, "since my arm went back on me ma has to do the heft o' the work."

"Mrs. Higgins needn't go," said Jethro, rising. "I'll help you."

When Higgins had got into his coat, he and Jethro went out to the barn with a lantern. In a quarter of an hour they were ready for the road.

Mrs. Higgins insisted that Miss Perkins should put an old shawl over her head, and that Jethro should wear an old overcoat and a much-worn felt hat.

"Jest to give ye a diff'rent look, ye know," said she. "Good-by, now, an' good luck," she added. "I hope ye'll come out all right, Mr. Mydus, and I don't guess this to-do is goin' to last a great while."

"Good-by, Miss Perkins! Ye're an angel o' comfort, you are, an' I guess us folks ort to know."

And so they were off, leaving the temporary security of the farmer's home for the untried fortunes of the road. Perils by the way all concentrated into one

great fright, which passed almost before they had time to realize what was upon them.

An abrupt turn in the woods brought them upon a number of horsemen riding in the opposite direction.

The horsemen pulled rein, barring the way.

"Who's that?" cried one of their number, peering through the gloom.

"Higgins an' wife an' son Alec," replied the farmer readily.

"Where ye goin' this time in the mornin'?"

"Jonesboro, to see my wife's sister, Mirandy, who's had another o' her spells. Don't block the road an' hold us back—we're in a hurry."

"Sho!" exclaimed the horseman commiseratingly, "that's too bad 'bout Mirandy Peters. We're lookin' fer Jethro Mydus. Seen 'im passin' along this way, Higgins?"

"No, ain't seen him passin' at all."

With that Farmer Higgins clucked to the horses and jerked at the bits, and they passed the night riders.

"That's what ye might call a tight squeak," muttered Higgins, looking back as the horsemen clattered out of hearing. "Right thoughtful o' ma to think o' makin' ye put on them extry fixin's over yer own clothes. Couldn't 'a' fooled them fellers if it hadn't been for that."

Jonesboro was a very small place, and Jethro and Miss Perkins were set down at the little station with barely time to buy their tickets before the train whistled.

In the pocket of the overcoat which Jethro removed and threw into the wagon he placed a fifty-dollar banknote.

There was no one about the station aside from the night man in the ticket office; and he was in a state of somnolence that precluded anything more than a passing glance at the departing passengers.

So far as Jethro could see there was no one from Shelbyville in the car they boarded, and they sank wearily into a seat.

"An eventful night, Mr. Mydus," murmured the secretary. "Are you very tired?"

"I am a man and can stand these things," he replied; "but you——"

"Think of yourself, now, sir. You have far more cause to distrust the future than I."

"This is a big country," he sighed, "and wherever money is used there you will find people up in arms against me. Really, I have no idea where I can go to be safe."

"For hiding oneself away," said she, "there is no wilderness half so effective as a large city. So I suggest Boston."

"I am in your hands," he answered resignedly. "You have already done much for me, and I feel——"

"No more than a faithful secretary should do for her employer," she interrupted hastily.

He looked at her doubtfully, shook his head as though perplexed, and then sank into a reflective mood.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN OLD FRIEND REAPPEARS.

GUIDED by Miss Perkins, Jethro proceeded straight to Boston, crossed the Charles River bridge, and found asylum in a little house in Spring Street, East Cambridge.

Here lived Mrs. Perkins, the widow, and Robert and Harriet Perkins, Mabel's brother and sister.

Through Miss Mabel's intercession the refugee was given a home; and from that home he watched, with rapt attention, the collapse of the monetary system of the country.

Robert had been a bookkeeper. The firm had failed and Robert was stranded.

Miss Harriet had worked for a loan and renting concern. The agency had drawn leases and mortgages payable in gold coin, and then, when the unit of value began to shrink, the resources of the agency shrunk with it.

The thrifty Mrs. Perkins had hoarded some double-eagles against a rainy day. The government's stamp should have made the coins worth face value, but such was the tension that they could only be passed for the value of the gold that was in them.

The government legislated and threatened in vain. People took their gold to the sub-treasuries and demanded sil-

ver and silver certificates; and when the government could no longer make the exchange there was no use trying to force the people to do so among themselves.

All through these dark days Uncle Ez was working overtime with the Gift from Mars, seeking malevolently to finish the work so well begun by Jethro. Breaking out at widely divergent spots on the map, invariably he left behind him a few tons of gold as a reminder of his visit.

Sometimes he sold the gold for what he could get, sometimes he exchanged a pound of it for a week's board or a dozen silver spoons, and sometimes he gave it away. Everybody had the yellow metal and nobody knew what to do with it.

Yet at no time did that mysterious syndicate cease from purchasing gold mines. There was something uncanny about the syndicate's calm persistence in the face of such adverse conditions.

Sore days were these for Jethro. As the stream of commerce steadily dropped away from its yellow water-mark, a flood of another sort swelled its banks in Jethro's bosom.

He had thought his heart was dead; that his love had marched down to the altar with Miss Easley and passed out of his life when she became Mrs. Brackett.

But that was before Miss Perkins spoke his piratical bark; before her gentle hand hauled down his skull-and-cross-bones and replaced it with the banner of generosity and good will.

Yes, he was in love with Miss Perkins. He saw now why it had been so easy for him to sell the cows back to the farmers (at a slight advance) and make no stipulations that they should ignore the Coon Hollow creamery in disposing of their milk.

Although Miss Harriet, bitter because of the wrecking of the Loan and Renting Agency, would scarcely notice Jethro, and although Robert, for his own personal reasons, showed him little kindness, Miss Mabel's consideration and loyalty to her former employer seemed to grow as his fortunes ebbed.

Some two weeks after the young Napoleon of Finance went into seclusion in East Cambridge, a man came to the

door of the Perkins home and inquired for him. Miss Mabel, who answered the bell, showed her confusion and astonishment.

Jethro's presence in the house had been carefully hidden from the neighbors; nor did he ever venture abroad, for fear of being recognized from printed portraits which the daily press had spread broadcast.

"Do not deny that he is here," said the gentleman on the doorstep, "and do not fear that I am calling upon him in a hostile spirit.

"Pray admit me, and leave Mr. Mydus and myself alone together. The matter that brings me is of great importance and will undoubtedly minister to the young man's peace of mind."

A reassuring smile overspread the cadaverous face.

Greatly troubled, Miss Mabel suffered the gentleman to enter, showed him to the sitting-room where Jethro was reading a paper, then withdrew and awaited, with wildly beating heart the result of the interview.

Jethro looked up casually as the door opened. Another moment and he was on his feet, the paper dropping from his limp hands, his eyes wide and staring.

"Professor Spriggs!" he gasped.

Urbanity was the key-note of the professor's bearing. He closed the door, fluttered toward Jethro, and caught his hand.

"Call me Clawson," he answered. "It is no longer necessary for me to sail under false colors. I was sent to an insane asylum because my efforts at publicity were not liked—particularly by my heirs.

"The wave of commercial depression, threatening my vast estate, bore me out of the asylum. No one could save the fortune so well as the man who made it. My heirs had sense enough to realize this," he added dryly.

"How did you find me?" inquired Jethro.

"How did I know you were to become a Napoleon of Finance?" was the oracular reply. "How did I know that meteor was to fall in the vicinity of Coon Hollow? Those are things, young man, about which you need not concern yourself."

"If you have come for the stone," said Jethro, realizing that he might as well have the matter out with Mr. Clawson first as last, "I must confess to you that——"

"That you haven't it," broke in Mr. Clawson, with a wave of the hand. "I am glad you haven't. Uncle Ez is filling the bill in pretty good shape."

"What do you mean, sir?" queried Jethro.

"My card," and Mr. Clawson presented a piece of beveled pasteboard, and Jethro read:

ASSOCIATED GOLD MINES CO.

Capital, one billion dollars; owning or controlling every producing gold mine in the world.

THOS. CLAWSON, President.

"Your operations, Mr. Mydus," said Mr. Clawson, "have made this gigantic combination possible."

"But of what use is the combination? If gold continues to depreciate——"

"It won't," Mr. Clawson chuckled and waved his hand deprecatingly.

"Why not?"

"You'll soon discover that, if you have a little patience. As you are, perhaps, aware, a few weeks ago some ten men owned the country; in a few weeks to come I shall whip them into their corners and take the country for my own."

"But what about the people whose cause you were championing?" demanded Jethro; "the dear people whose little craft you are struggling to help to safe harbors?"

Mr. Clawson's smile grew bland and large.

"I strangle the piratical system, my good youth, and replace it with an improved system of my own."

"But," he added briskly, "all this is beside the question. Fearing you might be in need, I have brought you a few thousands in silver certificates. Remain here as you are, watch events, and rest secure in the thought that when I have come into my own you will be well taken care of."

As he finished speaking, he laid a bundle of currency on the table at Jethro's elbow.

"Mr. Clawson," cried Jethro, "how is the distracted condition of financial affairs to be pacified?"

The benevolent gentleman had grasped his hat and laid hand on the door knob.

"The Gift from Mars is its own antidote," said he; "the very cause of the evil is presently to prove an effective cure. Your Uncle Ezra will discover the reason of this—and undoubtedly before you are able to do so. The stone is now at work in Montana, but it will not be at work long."

Another moment and Clawson was gone, an eery laugh echoing after him.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW THE CURE SPREAD.

UNCLE Ez was running amuck with the Gift from Mars, constantly intensifying a situation already far beyond the bounds of endurance. As Jethro gave more and more thought to this phase of the question he began to think it a duty to corral Uncle Ez and put a bar on further proceedings.

He arrived at this conclusion in the very face of Clawson's complacent confidence in the ultimate outcome. But while he was still pondering the matter, a sporadic evidence of the "cure" that was setting in showed itself in the Perkins home.

Jethro, at first, did not understand that it was the "cure" beginning to assert itself—had no idea it was the "antidote" pulsing through the veins of trade and speculation.

Mention has been made of the fact that Mrs. Perkins had wisely laid by a few double-eagles against the proverbial rainy day. The rainy day having arrived, she went to her trunk and brought out her little store of savings.

Jethro and Miss Mabel were in the parlor when a wild scream from the widow drew them hurriedly to the sitting-room. The elder woman stood by the table, her hands clasped, a strange mingling of grief, amazement, and consternation in her face.

Under her gaze lay a dozen disks—seven of them yellow and bright, and the other five a *lusterless black*.

"Mother!" cried Mabel apprehensively. "What has happened?"

"Look!" gasped the widow, turning her bewildered eyes on the girl and Jethro, "look at my gold pieces!"

Jethro picked up one of the black pieces, weighed it in his hand and tried to cut into it with his knife.

"Madam," said he, "it looks very much as though you had been the dupe of counterfeiters. Base metal, washed with gold, has been palmed off upon you. The gold plating has worn off—"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Mrs. Perkins. "I got every one of those coins from the bank. Besides, the black ones are heavier than the others. How queer it all is! Why, I was frightened almost out of my wits. Haven't you any other explanation, Mr. Mydus?"

Jethro examined the black coins and found that each had been minted during the current year. On looking at the others he discovered that they had been coined several years before.

He could not explain the phenomenon. In fact, he knew not what to think.

"I have lost \$100," wailed Mrs. Perkins; "lost it without knowing when or how; lost it right out of my trunk while the coins have been lying there undisturbed! Am I mad? • How can such a thing be?"

Jethro was unable to enlighten her. A thief might have got at the trunk, taken five of the coins and replaced them with a base replica.

If so, the thief was considerate in not taking all the coins, and had gone to a good deal of trouble in molding counterfeiters for no particular reason.

Jethro went to his room that night as usual, but the following morning he did not appear at the breakfast table. After waiting a half hour for him, Robert went up to his chamber to ascertain the cause of the delay.

In a few moments he came bounding down the stairs, some Government notes in one hand and a letter in the other.

"He isn't in his room," cried Robert, "and his bed hasn't been slept in. This money—all silver certificates—

and this letter lay on the dresser. The letter is addressed to you, sis," and he handed it to Miss Mabel.

The secretary's hands trembled as she tore open the envelope. Here is what she read:

MY DEAR MABEL:

I am writing to you out of the fullness of my heart, and at the very beginning of my letter my love for you slips from my pen in spite of me. I can tell you how dear you are to me when it is quite possible you will never see me again.

I leave your hospitable home during the night for the purpose of finding Uncle Ez and halting him in his mad career of gold-making. Every day, every hour, that unreasonable uncle of mine is adding to the already grievous burden of this devoted country. My own responsibility is written large on the face of events, and I feel a call to run Uncle Ez to earth and halt his operations.

I realize, as you must, the peril that confronts Jethro Mydus in venturing abroad at a time like this; but I also believe, and think you will agree with me, that Jethro Mydus is bound to give himself little consideration, if he can go forth and do even a little toward stemming this tide of demoralization.

So, still relying on your sympathy and more than sure of your commendation, I leave Spring Street and East Cambridge—like a thief in the night, but nevertheless an honest man with an honest purpose. Devotedly yours,

JETHRO.

The following clippings, found among Jethro's papers, will show how the "cure" penetrated to the very heart of affairs:

The cotillion dinner at Curry's, given in honor of Miss Hortense de Blivens, cannot be spoken of as an unqualified success.

Papa de Blivens, it may be recalled, swooped down on New York a few months since, fresh from his native West, and took possession of a million-dollar rookery on the Avenue—an architectural feat resembling a mosque from one side, a Japanese tea-house from the other, and a frescoed butte from the front.

De Blivens, *pere* and *mere*, backed by a million in cattle, or mines, or something, began an insistent knocking at the portal of the Four Hundred. Some success attended their persistency and, from the point of outlay, the function

at Curry's was to be the *ne plus ultra* of its kind.

Miss de Blivens, her regal loveliness amply seconded by a Worth gown and a profusion of jewelry, filled her central position with a naivete that was most captivating—up to a certain point.

That point arrived while the dinner was being served, when Mama de Blivens, after a wild look at her daughter, arose with a shriek and swooned in the arms of the French consul.

The cause of the lady's excitement was soon disclosed, for the pure gold wherein Miss de Blivens' jewels were set was found, upon examination, to have turned to iron—and the commonest kind of iron, at that.

As soon as Miss de Blivens realized what had taken place, her own nerves succumbed and she became hysterical.

Then, quickly, it was discovered that misfortune had not visited Miss de Blivens alone, for every guest about the board who had recently acquired ornaments of the precious metal found that said ornaments had undergone a similar transmutation.

Cigarette and cigar cases, match cases, watch fobs, and even the watches were found to have suffered a change; bracelets became as manacles on the wrists of the fair, and finger rings were suddenly such as a Hottentot might prize, or a machinist might use for washers in supplying the needs of his trade.

This being the twentieth century, such a thing as medieval witchcraft cannot be credited; yet how, in the name of science or magic, could thousands be waited out of the personal property of guests at the De Blivens dinner, and all in less time than it takes to bat an eye, or gasp with the wonder of it?

Old gold appeared immune: only that recently acquired suffered in this remarkable disaster.

Nor does the De Blivens function seem to have had a monopoly of the mind-shattering phenomenon. From everywhere about the city reports are coming of a like visitation. A personal loss has even afflicted the present scribe, for his cigar clipper—presented to him by society reporters for the other morning papers—resembles the handiwork of a locksmith.

The public, therefore, while sorrowing with the De Blivenses, will have considerable cause for mourning on its own account.—From the *New York Morning Intelligencer*.

The gold service of twenty pieces, presented to Kaiser Wilhelm by the United States Government and brought already from New York by the American man-of-war Chickasaw,

was yesterday unpacked in the throne room of the palace.

Imagine yet the injured dignity, the tremendous consternation, the awful and most just wrath of our noble sovereign when, as the box was opened, the pieces were found to be not one of gold but all of iron!

The American minister has been tendered his passports, the army is being mobilized, and work is proceeding night and day at the ship-yards. This heinous insult must be avenged!—From the *Berliner Teufelblatt*.

This morning, as the clerks in Neidermeister's jewelry establishment were opening the shop doors, a wild-eyed young man dashed into the place and inquired frantically for Mr. Neidermeister. The proprietor, quite naturally, was not around at that early hour, but the head salesman conducted the young man into a private room and inquired the cause of his excitement.

The young man had bought a solitaire ring there the day before, and had bestowed it to his entire satisfaction during the evening; but about 5 A. M. of the following day he had been aroused by a special messenger returning the ring and bringing a curt note that had a vital bearing on the young man's future.

The ring had changed from an appropriate yellow to a dull black, and the "18K" still stamped on its inner surface represented its purity as pig iron. The head salesman, believing the wild young man to be a swindler, was on the point of telephoning the police. Before he could do so, however, a party of white-faced clerks charged in on him and dragged him out into the store.

Fully one-third of Mr. Neidermeister's stock-in-trade should have been on the shelves of a hardware dealer. At a late hour Mr. Neidermeister was prostrated and could not be seen.—From the *Philadelphia Clarion-Herald*.

Thousands of volumes might be filled with similar extracts from the daily press, for not one paper in the entire country, metropolitan or provincial, daily or weekly, but had its own particular tale of woe to recount for the benefit of its readers; and few, very few, were the readers who could not supplement the account with stories of personal loss.

Over the reason-defying phenomenon brooded impenetrable mystery. No explanation was forthcoming from the seats of learning toward which some ninety millions of people turned their baffled eyes.

As returns from outlying districts came in, and were collated, a slow stupor benumbed the public mind. A comprehensive *something* had happened, and in its black shadow the brightest intellects were paralyzed and powerless.

A strange and heretofore unknown law of the material universe had been strikingly exemplified; and before its weird workings no man's wealth seemed safe.

A panic followed the universal torpor, and in the midst of the panic reason awoke and began to analyze and classify even if it could not explain.

Only gold that was recently coined and articles of use and ornament recently fabricated had proved amenable to the new law of widespread transmutation.

From this point the reasoners carried their differentiation to the result that the Mydus gold alone had been subject to the change.

Of this gold the Government had bought heavily, and every ounce of Mydus bullion in the treasury vaults had reverted to its original form, side by side with other gold that had experienced no change.

The people, when made acquainted with these deductions, began to breathe and to feel more secure. And the only explanation that ever cropped out—previous to the publication of this chronicle, which lays bare the cause no less than the effect and the attending circumstances—was this:

The Wizard of Shelbyville and Coon Hollow was a hypnotist of unheard-of powers. He had hypnotized Government and people into believing that his pig-iron was gold; then, stricken with remorse because of the far-reaching nature of the calamity he had caused, with a few passes in the air he had awakened the public and dissolved the spell!

CHAPTER XV.

AN INTERRUPTED NECKTIE PARTY.

BULLET BEND—consisting of one post-office, three general stores, six saloons, and a dozen houses—lies snugly in a basin of the Rockies, near enough to civilization for marketing the output

of its silver mines and far enough away for its people to be a law unto themselves.

On a certain morning in October the stage from Helena let a solitary passenger down in front of the post-office. The postmaster was also the tavern-keeper, and the one building served a double purpose.

An unwonted quiet hovered over the town. Two or three dogs were in evidence, and a barefooted urchin in tattered clothes, but otherwise not a living thing was in sight—excepting, of course, the stage-driver and his team and the solitary passenger.

"Blame queer," muttered the stage-driver, Luke Ponsonby by name, taking a searching view in all directions. "Blame queer. Can't ye git in?"

The stranger had tried the one door leading into the post-office and the tavern waiting-room. It resisted his efforts.

"No," he answered, turning around and walking back to the stage. "What do you suppose has happened?"

"I pass," replied Ponsonby. "Town looks mighty nigh as dead as it did when the purchasin' clause o' the Sherman act was wiped out. *Then* you couldn't even see a dog on Royal Av'noo, which is the only street an' the one we're on at the present speakin'."

"It's a silver camp, is it?"

"That's what; nothin' but silver. Since gold's got so plentiful an' silver has come to the front, Bullet Bend's pickin' up an' the miners aire gittin' rich. Mines that haven't been touched in years aire bein' reopened an' the outlook is real promisin'. Say, bu!"

The last words were thrown at the boy who was sitting on the post-office steps, drowsing in the sun.

"Uh, huh," he answered passively.

"What's become of the people hereabouts?"

"Got a hangin' on. Ma wouldn't le'me go."

"Gee, whiz, ye don't say!" exclaimed the driver. "Quite a spell since they had a hangin' here," he added, to the stranger.

"You don't mean to say the people have left town for the purpose of hanging a man?" queried the stranger.

"Wall, yes, if the kid has got it right."

"It seems to me that's a rather high-handed proceeding."

"The people are purty square, neighbor; they don't us'ally string up a man less'n he needs it. Bub!"

"Uh, huh," answered the boy.

"Who they lynchin', an' what fer?"

"Lynchin' a feller fer beatin' Ham Fosdick out of a hoss. Name's Mydus, Ezry Mydus; he useter hang 'round here a spell ago, an'——"

"What!" cried the stranger. "Do you mean to say they're lynching Ezra Mydus? Why, that man's my uncle!"

The boy looked startled.

"Sh-h-h!" warned the stage-driver. "If that's so, I wouldn't say anythin' about it. It don't do, in these parts, ter claim relationship with a man that's got people down on him."

"But, good heavens!" cried Jethro, "I must stop this." He turned wildly to the boy. "How long since the mob left town?"

"Mob?" came the boy's indignant response. "It wasn't no mob. Some o' the best people in town helped take the feller out."

"When was this?"

"'Bout half an hour ago."

"Where are they? Hurry! You must tell me!"

"There's only one place where the Bullet Bend folks do things o' that kind," interjected the stage-driver, "an' that's about half a mile out on the Windy Gulch trail. I'm fer Windy Gulch now, an', if you like, ye can hop in an' I'll land ye right in the midst o' the excitement."

"Whip up your horses," urged Jethro. "I'm sure there must be some mistake. Uncle Ez wouldn't swindle anybody, or——"

Jethro's words faded into silence. His knowledge of Uncle Ez, and his own experience with him, did not warrant the remark.

Jethro had not come blindly from Boston to Bullet Bend. Mr. Clawson had said that Uncle Ez was operating in Montana, and that had afforded a clue.

Jethro had recalled that Bullet Bend was the place to which his uncle had

gone on leaving Coon Hollow with the deacon's horse; and it was the place from whence he had come on returning to his native town.

On this head Jethro had abundant testimony from his uncle's own lips. Therefore his arrival in Bullet Bend was not a coincidence, though it *was* a coincidence that he had arrived there at such a time.

Ponsonby put his horses to a good pace, and in a few minutes drew rein abreast of a group of men at the roadside. The instant the stage halted Jethro was out of it and hastening toward the crowd.

It was not a large crowd; nor was it at all demonstrative. Its proceedings were being conducted with determination as well as with a decent regard for the solemnity of the occasion.

There were, perhaps, fifteen men in the throng. The central point of the scene was a large oak tree, under a branch of which Uncle Ez was standing.

Uncle Ezra's hands were bound at his back and a hempen noose was about his throat.

From his throat the rope rose slackly to the limb, crossed it and descended to the hands of fourteen of the men. The fifteenth man stood well to the fore, face to face with the intended victim of frontier justice.

"Howdy, Luke?" this man called to the stage-driver.

"Howdy, Jim Reeves?" replied Ponsonby, leaning back in his seat with a leisurely air. "Doin's on hand this mornin', eh?"

"Jest a few," answered Reeves. "You got here barely in time to see the thing pulled off. Who's this other man?"

Jethro, somewhat at a loss how best to proceed, had come to a halt midway between the stage and Mr. Reeves. Uncle Ez, up to this moment, had kept his head bowed; now he lifted his eyes and they grew wide with amazement as they rested on Jethro.

"My boy, my boy!" he cried frantically, the moment the power of speech broke the thrall of surprise.

He and Jethro started toward each other simultaneously; but the fourteen, taking up the slack in the rope, stran-

gled Uncle Ez ever so slightly and discouraged his forward movement, while Mr. Reeves, catching Jethro's arm, warned him away in no uncertain tone.

"Who are you?" demanded Mr. Reeves, as Jethro, pale with excitement, stood silently in front of him.

Jethro answered the question.

"Related to the pris'ner?" continued Mr. Reeves.

"He's—he's my uncle," faltered Jethro.

"Too bad ye come, sir; hate to harrer up a relative with such a sight. We'll postpone it till you get farther along the road, if you want."

"This must be postponed indefinitely!" declared Jethro, regaining control of himself. "You have no right to take the law into your own hands."

"Idees differ on that point," returned Mr. Reeves gravely. "You're only one with that idee, while there are fifteen of us with the other—not countin' Ponsonby. Jest come?"

"I have just arrived from Helena."

"Lookin' for your uncle?"

"Yes."

"Sorry you find him like this, but it's his fault. Jest to relieve your mind I'll go over the ground like, so's you'll understand."

"Ez Mydus used to live in Bullet Bend when the camp wasn't so prosperous as it is now, but his actions at that time didn't elevate him very high in the opinions o' the rest of us. He wouldn't dig, like an honest man, but preferred to deal monte."

"A couple of weeks ago he comes lopin' back to the old diggin's, hangs around for a spell and then 'lows he'd like to buy a horse Ham Fosdick owns. He shows Ham a lump o' gold—leastways he said it was gold, and Ham believed him. Then Ez offered to trade the gold for Ham's horse."

"Well, gold not bein' worth what it was, Ham had to do some figurin'. Finally he decided that if he took the bar he'd be gettin' about twicet what the horse was worth, so he made the dicker."

"The mornin' after, Ham goes to show his gold to the boys in town and finds Ez had shifted the cut on him somehow, 'cause the bar wasn't gold at all—just iron."

"Ez was caught up Windy Gulch way and brought back and put in a log cabin for overnight. This mornin' we brought him out here to let justice take its course."

"No justice about it!" shouted Uncle Ez, who had overheard Mr. Reeves' remarks. "Somebody else changed the bar—it wasn't me!"

"Now, stop!" said Mr. Reeves, facing Uncle Ez and shaking a finger at him. "Such talk don't help you any."

"There is one point you gentlemen have overlooked," observed Jethro, gathering his wits to meet the crisis.

"What's that?" queried Mr. Reeves, while the other fourteen, as well as Uncle Ez and Ponsonby, gave their close attention.

"Why," went on Jethro, "in part, at least, you owe your present prosperity to Ezra Mydus. You are giving him a very poor return for it."

Derisive exclamations came from the fourteen. Mr. Reeves raised his hands to compel silence.

"Explain," said he.

"You are owners of silver mines, are you not?" asked Jethro.

"Every man of us," averred Mr. Reeves.

"You are running your silver mines at an enormous profit?"

"We'll admit that."

"How do you explain it?"

"Too much gold on the market—silver's worth more."

"Ah! Do you know who put that gold on the market? Ezra Mydus and myself. Our business card, Mr. Reeves."

Mr. Reeves took the card Jethro extended toward him.

"What!" he exclaimed, "are *you* the Cræsus of Coon Hollow?"

"I am," replied Jethro with dignity.

Ponsonby stirred excitedly in his seat on the stage. The rest of the crowd were likewise deeply impressed.

"You are rather young to have achieved such a position in the world, it strikes me," murmured Mr. Reeves incredulously. "If you are what you say you are, and Ezra is what he is, undoubtedly the prisoner is entitled to clemency. But what proof have you to offer?"

One of the fourteen released his hold on the rope and came forward.

"I got somethin' here that'll settle the question," said he, "and the stranger won't have to say a word."

Thereupon he drew a newspaper from his pocket. The paper contained Jethro's picture and from that alone he was identified.

Mr. Reeves caught Jethro's hand in a fervent clasp.

"Sir," said he, "as one of the leading citizens of Bullet Bend I welcome you to our little town—a town whose prosperity you have made possible. Had your uncle laid the matter before us as you have done——"

"You wouldn't have believed me," spoke up Uncle Ez, overjoyed at the turn events were taking, but inclined to stand on his dignity. "You don't believe me when I tell you I didn't fool Fosdick with that bar o' gold."

Mr. Reeves paid little attention to Uncle Ez.

"Boys," says he, addressing the fourteen, "what is your will in this matter?"

"Let Ezra go!" was the verdict. "We ought to make some concession to a man who has helped to put us silver miners on our feet."

And so it fell out that Uncle Ez was saved—saved in his hour of need by a happy thought of Jethro's.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. CLAWSON AGAIN.

THE return of the fifteen was the signal for Bullet Bend to open its doors and resume business. Mr. Reeves, in addition to his mining interests, was postmaster and proprietor of the tavern.

Jethro was invited to partake of his hospitality as long as he saw fit to remain in the town, and not a "red" would he be allowed to pay. This invitation was likewise extended to Uncle Ez.

Honors were few in that community, but such as they were they were heaped upon the newcomer. It was only after an hour or more of felicitation that Jethro was able to withdraw to a quiet corner of the tavern office and hold a private interview with his worthy relative.

"I know what you are going to say,

my boy," murmured Uncle Ez, "and in the sorrow of my heart, I admit that I deserve your reproaches. Yes, I discovered how you made use of that black stone, and I discovered where you kept it. In a moment of weakness I blew open the safe, removed the stone, and fled——"

"And I thank you for it," interjected Jethro with emotion.

Uncle Ez leaned back and brushed a trembling hand across his forehead. He thought his ears had deceived him.

"What's that?" he queried.

"I say that I am under obligations to you for taking the Gift from Mars," went on Jethro.

"Then you haven't pursued me for the purpose of getting it back?"

"That is exactly what I have done."

Uncle Ez was puzzled.

"If you are glad I took it, why are you so anxious to recover it?"

"When you stole it——"

"Stole is a harsh term, Jethro," said Uncle Ez plaintively. "Surely, knowing me as you do, you cannot think I intended to *keep* the stone? Why, I borrowed it! On my word, lad, I intended to return it."

"Well," proceeded Jethro with a dry smile, "when you borrowed it you saved me from doing further injury to the country—and for that I am grateful; but when you set about making such wholesale use of it, then it became necessary for me to follow you and recover a thing that had become a curse instead of a benefit."

It was difficult for Uncle Ez, not being fully informed, to follow his nephew minutely.

"What do you intend to do with it?" he asked.

"Bury it—throw it into some lake or river—anything to get it out of the way for all time. Have you the stone about you?"

"No. When Reeves and the rest took me from the cabin where I was held a prisoner last night, I hid it under a loose plank in the cabin floor. But, Jethro! I wouldn't be hasty in disposing of so valuable an object."

"It has ceased to be of any value!" declared Jethro. "In fact, the stone never had any real value."

"I—I don't understand," said Uncle Ez.

"I hardly thought you would," was the reply.

"I have been touching things up pretty lively since I—er—borrowed the Gift," averred Uncle Ez, "and it hasn't made a failure, not one.

"I've been, among other things, a sort of fairy godmother," and Uncle Ez beamed benevolently, "scattering yellow remembrances with lavish hand in the huts of the lowly. Little ones' knives and forks have come within the scope of my operations—jackstones, savings' across iron teething rings?"

"Where under the canopy did you run across iron teething-rings?"

"In the very shadow of the multi-millionaire's palace! The coo of the child with the iron rattle-box almost mingled with that of the cherub in the solid-gold crib.

"It was my delight, nephew, to flit about the haunts of poverty, touching aimlessly whatever happened to get in the way. Ah, but I have had a varied experience!

"I have fared afoot along country roads, begged a piece of pie at a farmer's door, and left a golden ax lying by his woodpile; I have assuaged my thirst at a rural pump, and out of gratitude have turned the pump into yellow metal and made the owner of the well independent; I have slept in a straw stack, and when the farmer would have prodded me out I have paralyzed him by turning his fork-tines into gold, and——"

"Your experience certainly has been varied," interrupted Jethro, "nearly as varied as my own. While you have been busy with teething rings, pumps, and pitchforks, overloading the country and debasing the currency, I have been bearing the brunt of it. However, we will let that pass——"

"Just a moment," interposed Uncle Ez. "I want you to understand, Jethro, that I have pursued a strictly honorable course. I found a railroad spike, made it yellow and precious, and gave it to Fosdick for his horse. He was not cold-decked—by me. If any one shifted the cut on him, it was some one else."

"When did you do this, Uncle Ez?"

"It was some days ago."

"Haven't you done anything with the Gift for several days?"

"Not a thing. The spike was my last performance."

"Have you examined the Gift recently?"

"Not since the Fosdick incident. It has been secure in its little wooden box, and——" A thought flashed through Uncle Ezra's brain that seemed to worry him. "Say, you haven't any idea that something has happened to the stone, have you?"

"You have been in the backwoods for some time?" persisted Jethro.

"For quite a while, yes."

"And the doings of the outside world have scarcely reached you?"

"I haven't seen a paper since I struck the Rockies."

"That accounts for it," muttered Jethro.

"Accounts for what?" demanded Uncle Ez.

Apprehension, like a devil-fish, was winding its tentacles about his complacency—dragging his hopes downward into a sea of foreboding.

"Suppose," said Jethro, "we repair to the jail and take a look at the stone?"

Uncle Ez was more than willing: he was anxious. Together they left the tavern, traversed the main street, and gained a small log structure on the outskirts of the settlement.

The door of the cabin was open. The furnishings of the place were meager, but sufficient; and while Jethro seated himself on a bench and waited, Uncle Ez pried up a board and recovered the little square box which contained the Gift.

His hands trembled and a miserly glitter grew in his eyes as he approached a table near which Jethro was sitting.

"This," he said tremulously, holding up the box, "has saved my life at least twice. Once a Mexican would have knifed me—the stone was in my hand at the time; we struggled, the Gift met the blade and the blade doubled like so much lead just over my heart.

"Again, a revolver in the hands of an irate cowboy would have finished me. I hurled the stone, it struck the revolver, and in the general transmutation that followed, the temper of the steel spring

that worked the revolver's mechanism was lost—and I was preserved.

"Jethro," and Uncle Ez leaned toward his nephew, "I cannot destroy a thing that has served me so well. My boy, my boy, you would not have me——"

"Don't grow melodramatic, Uncle Ez," cut in Jethro. "Open the box."

Uncle Ez drew the sliding cover and turned the box upside down over the table. A small handful of powder dropped upon the table-top.

A stricken yell burst from Uncle Ez, and he fell back with both hands to his head.

"What has happened to the stone?" he cried. "Who smashed it up like that? Who——"

"It was the philosopher's stone, gentlemen. It has disintegrated and all but vanished, but let us hope that its philosophy has been left behind for our profit!"

Jethro and Uncle Ez turned their startled eyes toward the door. And there, of all men, stood Mr. Clawson!

CHAPTER XVI.

EXPLANATIONS BY ONE WHO KNEW.

MR. CLAWSON was as bland and self-sufficient as ever. Entering urbanely, he stood by the table surveying the remains of the Gift with a quizzical eye.

"Who are you?" demanded Uncle Ez, with some show of hostility.

"Primarily," answered Mr. Clawson, "the man who is responsible."

"Responsible for the wreck of the Gift?" proceeded Uncle Ez, his hostility increasing.

"Tell him who I am, my lad," said Mr. Clawson to Jethro.

Jethro explained briefly.

"If you know so much about meteors," said Uncle Ez, "perhaps you will tell us when the next one is going to fall, and where."

"I cannot do that," returned Mr. Clawson. "My knowledge extended only to the aerolite containing the Gift; no other that has fallen, or is to fall, has borne, or will bear, a duplicate of the philosopher's stone."

"Mars signalled me with her three

triangular lights—declared a fiery messenger would bring the Gift and land it in the vicinity of Coon Hollow.

"The people of the Red Star were true to their word. But they could not foresee, as I did, that the sordid and grasping conditions of Earth had so infected our atmosphere that no self-respecting philosopher's stone could live in it and do business. The stone worked well, for a time——"

"Very well indeed," interjected Jethro. "One touch exerted its power over a radius of two cubic feet of iron, and was instantaneous in its action."

"Precisely," smiled Mr. Clawson. "The gold it made was exceptionally pure, but—and here is the vital point—the enduring nature of the transmutation remained potential in the stone."

"Had our atmospheric conditions been like those of Mars, the stone would have remained intact for all time, and the gold of its making would have continued to be gold indefinitely."

Mr. Clawson wiped away a furtive tear.

"There is something pathetic," he proceeded, on recovering from his momentary lapse, "in the fight the philosopher's stone made against the mercenary conditions with which our atmosphere has become impregnated."

"Picture to yourselves, gentlemen, the noble struggle that devoted Gift made in the face of avarice and inhumanity as exemplified among the Earthly. At last it could stand the strain no longer. It let go suddenly, fell apart in worthless powder; and every grain of the precious metal it had made returned to the base and original metal."

"I know of nothing, in the whole domain of physics, so engrossing to the reflective mind as the battle waged by the philosopher's stone for the right to exist among us. So far from reproaching it for giving up the fight, we should admire it for withstanding adverse conditions as long as it did."

Silence fell over the group.

"You knew this all along?" queried Uncle Ez finally.

"I did," answered Mr. Clawson.

"Then why didn't you tell us?" cried Uncle Ez reproachfully. "Why didn't you give us a chance to turn the gold

into something else before the stone petered out? We could have got out of the country, and——"

"The spirit you manifest," said Mr. Clawson gravely, "is one of the conditions the stone had to combat. Yet," he went on, brightening, "while among us the stone served a good and useful purpose."

"Through covetousness it was overworked. Too much gold was made, and the value of the metal tumbled. Gold mines could not compete with the Gift, and were thrown on the market in dozen lots. Foreseeing the waning of the stone's power, I bought gold mines everywhere, and now, when the yellow metal is looking up, the people will have to come to Clawson for it."

"Yes," said Uncle Ez bitterly, "and you can talk about covetousness, and graft, and greed——"

"It was a stroke of business policy," interrupted Mr. Clawson, "and engineered in the interests of the whole people. After the money-changers are lashed from the temple, and I have become paramount, I shall present the people with the gold mines, reserving only one of them to supply my own frugal needs."

"It was a startling *coup* and already the papers are full of it. A Moses to lead the masses clear of this era of industrial depression is needed. Perhaps," he finished diffidently, "I can play the rôle."

"What is to become of us?" wailed Uncle Ez.

"So far as you are concerned," said Mr. Clawson, "I cannot speak with confidence; but I shall look after Jethro's welfare, and, perhaps, you can induce him to give you an allowance."

Uncle Ez wilted. An allowance such as he had had before would not now keep him in cigars.

"I would suggest something for your consideration," continued Mr. Clawson, "something, perhaps, you have both overlooked. Just now the people of Bullet Bend feel very amiable toward you, and I would hint that you take your departure while this feeling exists."

"When the news of what is going on outside drifts into these hills, the sentiment of the silver miners is bound to

change. You will grasp this idea, I think, without any further explanation on my part."

"I am a very busy man, these days, and cannot remain with you any longer. I will keep in touch with you, Jethro, and in due course you will hear from me in a most substantial manner."

"Naturally," he added as he started for the door, "your vast fortune, founded on the powers of the Gift, has passed away. However, you have benefited in current funds as you went along; so that, of course, is to your credit."

"Yes," muttered Uncle Ez, "benefited to the extent of \$2.16 a day. Personally, that was about all he got out of it."

"I am fain to believe that he got much more out of it," answered Mr. Clawson. "In addition to what I shall give him, his soul should be soothed with a gentle yet potent philosophy."

"If the stone has touched and transformed his nature, contentment will remain while the stone itself is only a memory. Good day, gentlemen!" And Mr. Clawson took his departure.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCERNING JETHRO'S PAPERS.

JETHRO'S papers, the most of which were saved by Mr. Bud Brackett from the ravages of the Shelbyville mob, were in a rather chaotic condition. From these the chronicler has been compelled to select the material for a connected narrative.

The papers have been referred to as "memoirs." The reason for this will presently appear.

Jethro's diary ceases at the moment of his flight from Coon Hollow. Subsequent events have been determined by personal and persistent investigation on the part of the chronicler.

Thanks are due Mr. Brackett for much effective aid; also the public is in debt to Farmer Higgins, Mrs. Perkins, and various gentlemen in Bullet Bend for further light.

Mr. Reeves, it appears, had appointed Mr. Ham Fosdick a committee of one to keep the Myduses under his eye; so

it chanced that Mr. Fosdick, at a chink in the log wall of the cabin, overheard the conversation between Jethro and his uncle, and the one that followed wherein Mr. Clawson bore a part.

Being blessed with a retentive memory, Mr. Fosdick went into the details very thoroughly. But for him the interview in the cabin, with the important facts developed, would have been utterly lost.

Jethro and Uncle Ez, it is known, departed hurriedly from Bullet Bend—getting away, in fact, while Mr. Fosdick was telling Mr. Reeves how unsubstantial was the silver men's prosperity if what Mr. Clawson said was true.

Mrs. Perkins describes the interesting ceremony which took place in her humble home, about Christmas time, when

(The End.)

her daughter became Mrs. Mydus. Immediately after that event, Jethro and his wife vanished and have never since been heard of.

Uncle Ez likewise disappeared. It is not to be supposed that he accompanied his nephew, but it is to be supposed—and correctly, no doubt—that his future had been provided for by Jethro.

So Jethro's papers are entitled to the name usually appended to the written reminiscences of great men. Wherever he is, it is safe to assume that he is happy, and that Mr. Clawson will see to it that no wolf prowls about his domestic door.

As for Mr. Clawson, he is very much in evidence. He has not yet presented his gold mines to the people, but while there is life there is always hope.

TRELAWNEY'S SACRIFICE.

By Charles Edward Rich.

IN which it is shown that there is no friendship like that which costs another's honor. ❀

YES, gentlemen, this raiment is a little gay for a police court lawyer, but since I drank mine host's excellent ale with you last month I have delved deep into a thrilling romance, made a trip to Europe, won a remarkable case, and to-night attended a quiet wedding in the Little Church Around the Corner that wound up a tragic love story involving war, death, and the unselfish friendship of man for man.

One night, more than a year ago, I was called at a late hour by the surgeon here to set down in legal form the last words and wishes of a dying man. You undoubtedly recall the case, doctor, although it developed nothing of interest or importance at the time, and you will probably be as much astonished as I have been at the sequel.

I immediately responded to the call,

and was met at the door by a beautiful woman. Weeping bitterly, she told me that I was too late, that my services could not avail, as her husband was dead. Of course there was nothing but to go away. I thought no more of the case until, two days afterward, I learned that the dead man was Arthur Trelawney, and that he had shot himself.

Arthur Trelawney had been a dear friend of mine. We were students together at Heidelberg. He was an Englishman with an independent fortune. After I returned to America we corresponded for some time, and then his letters ceased entirely, and at the time of his death I had not heard from him for several years.

I at once hastened to the house to tender my services to his stricken widow. Again I was too late. The body had been removed to an undertaker's and the woman had gone without leaving any address. As the couple had lived in the house only a few weeks the landlady took no interest in their affairs beyond what was absolutely necessary.

Once more I met disappointment at the undertaker's. The body had been

removed a few hours before, and the widow had paid the bill and gone away, leaving no information regarding her movements. The newspaper accounts of the suicide were brief—I do not think our able reporter's facile pen dipped into that case.

The motive was given as ill health. The man was described as an Englishman who had been in this country only a short time. There were the usual vague hints of wealthy and perhaps titled relatives. And so the case dropped from the public eye and little by little became but an occasional memory to me.

You can now understand my amazement when about a month ago my office boy one morning handed me a card bearing the name "Arthur Trelawney." Dumfounded, I gazed at the card as if it were a message from the dead. Then I noticed some small letters in the lower corner. They read: "Formerly Captain Paul Thornton, Her Majesty's Ninth Volunteers."

What did the mystery mean? It was some minutes before I recovered enough to tell the boy to show the man in, confident of course that I was to meet an impostor. The door swung open and a big, bronzed, heavily bearded man strode into the room. I gasped with astonishment as he advanced toward me smiling, his hands outstretched in warm greeting. Despite the changes made by time and beard, I knew him for Trelawney. Before he could utter the words that were on his tongue I cried out:

"Trelawney—Trelawney, alive?"

"Yes, very much alive," he answered as he wrung my hands.

"But what is this mystery? You are believed to have killed yourself—and this card—what does it all mean, Trelawney?"

"That's just what I have come to tell you about. I want your aid in unraveling a very tangled skein."

And then, after he had insisted on hearing a brief account of my doings from the time we lost touch with each other, he told me his strange story, and here it is:

After I left Heidelberg Trelawney became much attached to a fellow student, also an Englishman, named Paul Thornton. They were soon inseparable

friends, bound by a common tie, as neither of them had any relatives living.

Thornton had a very small patrimony, just sufficient to enable him to pursue his studies by great economy in living. Trelawney, in order to be near his friend, and desiring that the difference in their financial standing should be less noticeable, took up his lodgings with the old German with whom Thornton had always made his home in Heidelberg.

That was the beginning of a romance that ended in a tragedy—that and the fact that Thornton failed to disclose to his friend in time a little love affair that became the turning point in both their lives.

Max Braun, or Professor Max as he was called in Heidelberg, was a dried-up little man, a student and a scientist, poor as a church mouse and eking out an existence by boarding university students and a little tutoring.

The professor's house was always well filled. Whether this was due to the fact that he had a very beautiful daughter, or to the excellent, though modest, meals she provided for the student boarders, was a question that was decided in favor of the daughter by the keepers of less popular houses, though the students blushing insisted that it was the cuisine alone.

Gretchen Braun was certainly fair to look upon, but notwithstanding the violent sieges laid to her heart, year after year, by romantic students, she laughed at them all until Paul Thornton entered the narrow circle of her life. He fell in love with the girl without delay and she promptly repented to his passionate protestations.

But there was one great obstacle to their love, and that was the professor. Absorbed though he was in his books and his studies, he still kept a sharp eye on his daughter, who was the only human creature in the world he had left to love, his wife having died when the child was an infant.

The one worry of his life was that Gretchen might fall in love, marry, and leave him, and he many times had pleaded with her to choose no husband until he was gone. The girl, heart-free, had found it easy to promise.

So it was that when Paul and Gretchen plighted their troth, which was just before Trelawney went to live at the professor's, it became necessary for them to conceal their love. So successful were they that even Trelawney was ignorant of his friend's romance, for Thornton, in deference to the wishes of his betrothed, refrained from disclosing his happiness to his friend, although the secret sorely tried him.

It would have been far better for all if the truth had not been concealed, for Trelawney had not lodged at the professor's longer than a week before he was desperately in love with Gretchen. Strong, frank, and confident, he paid her marked attentions.

Although the betrothed of another, Gretchen could not reveal the truth, nor could she repulse Trelawney without doing so, and her only refuge was in avoiding him.

At first Gretchen concealed the truth from Thornton, who had failed to see his friend's infatuation, but at last Trelawney became so importunate that she was forced to tell her lover.

Naturally Thornton was pained and shocked. For two days the matter lay heavily upon his mind. Then he decided that, hurt both as it might, the only fair thing to his friend was to tell him all. That night, as they were sitting together in their common study, Thornton turning over in his mind the best way to open the subject, Trelawney unexpectedly spoke first.

"Paul, I'm in love," he said abruptly, and Thornton started as he realized that the cloud of unhappiness was at last descending on their friendship.

"Yes, I know, Arthur," was the only reply he could make.

"Know?" said Trelawney in surprise; then laughing happily. "I must go around like a schoolboy with my heart on my sleeve. But, pshaw! man, what do I care if the whole world knows—if I could only be sure that I shall win her love."

"You will not."

"Don't be so sure, my plodding student," said Trelawney. "Because all others have failed is no reason why I should. By the way, how did you guess my secret?"

"She told me."

Thornton could not seem to bring himself to thrust the iron into his friend's heart, but his tone caught the sensitive ear of Trelawney, and the significance of the words came to him.

"She—Gretchen told you?"

Thornton nodded.

"Why—why should she tell you of my love when I had not even told you myself?"

"Because we are engaged, Arthur," said Thornton in a low tone. "It was before—before you came here."

Trelawney did not stir as the blow fell except to clench his hands spasmodically. At length he broke a long silence.

"It would have been far better, Paul, if you had told me," he said impassionately.

Thornton silently acquiesced, and Trelawney knocked the ashes out of his pipe, rose to his feet, and held out his hand to Thornton.

"Paul," he said, "let this make no difference in our friendship, but I must go away. I can get over it better alone."

Thornton, knowing that the parting was for the best, made no effort to deter him, and the next day Trelawney left Heidelberg. This blow saddened the lovers, but the lesson it taught them made it clear that further concealment might bring about other unpleasant complications. So it was decided that the news must be broken to the professor.

Greatly to their surprise, he accepted the situation with grim resignation, insisting, however, that the young couple should be married at once and make their home with him. The wedding was a quiet one, and Thornton and his bride settled down to a simple, happy existence in the old town, Thornton pursuing his studies and his wife attending to the comfort of the student boarders, for it was necessary to continue the routine of the household, since the family income was in no way augmented by the marriage. Trelawney was the first to congratulate them. He wrote a cheery letter, but the happy couple could read the pain behind the earnest well wishes.

Several years went by without incident until the aged professor passed away. This break in their quiet life aroused a

spark of slumbering ambition in Thornton, and as soon as practicable he took his wife to London.

From the start ill fortune attended him. He was unable to find employment for which he was fitted, and his small income went only a short way in London. Matters grew worse and worse until they were compelled to take one room in a cheap lodging-house, where they cooked their own scanty meals and hoped against hope that something would turn up. Something did, just at the psychological moment, in the shape of Trelawney.

When the Thorntons went to London they had at once written to Trelawney, who was then traveling in Switzerland, telling him of their plans. For a time their correspondence was unbroken until, as they began to go down-hill, Thornton's pride forbade taking his friend into his confidence and he ceased to write, although Trelawney's letters, forwarded from one lodging to another, continued to reach them. At first he upbraided Thornton good naturedly for his carelessness in not replying, but finally his letters ceased to come.

One night Thornton went home staggering under a blow harder than any he had been called upon to bear. The little clerkship that they had depended on, even for their meager living, was to be taken from him in a month because of a reduction in the office force and simultaneously he had been called upon to bear arms in South Africa.

His face was pale and haggard as he entered the little room, which was almost in darkness. As he hesitated on the threshold a hearty voice from the gloom cut him to the heart.

"Hello, Paul, old man. I've tracked you at last. Thought you could shake me, didn't you?"

It was Trelawney, and before Thornton realized it he was sobbing like a child on his friend's shoulder.

"Arthur, God bless you! I hoped you would never know how far down-hill I have been sliding."

"That fool pride of yours—I know. Well, I meant to find you and I have. Now the only thing for a man to do who is sliding down-hill is to dig his toes in deep and begin to climb back again."

"But I slipped pretty close to the bottom—to-day," replied Thornton, and then he told Trelawney and his wife of the untoward events of the day. Gretchen gave a sharp cry and buried her face in her hands. Trelawney turned to her quickly, his lips setting into a hard line. He sat silent while the woman wept softly, and then, shaking himself as if aroused from a dream, he said:

"Come, I see a way clearly out of this. We will lay it all over until to-morrow."

The next night Trelawney was in high spirits when he entered Thornton's room.

"Congratulate me, Paul and Gretchen," he cried. "I am going to South Africa."

"To South Africa!" repeated Thornton, a great light breaking in on him. "What for, Arthur?"

"What does anybody go to South Africa for nowadays except to fight. I have been meaning to go for some time and to-day I made up my mind."

"Then we shall be comrades," said Thornton slowly.

"No," laughed Trelawney, "I shall be sorry not to have your company, but you are not going. Gretchen here needs you more than does John Bull."

"Trelawney, do you mean that you have enlisted as my substitute and without my consent?"

"Substitute? No, Paul, it will never be said that Paul Thornton sent another to the front for him; for I know you would not have it so."

"What is this enigma, Arthur?"

"Let me introduce myself—Mr. Paul Thornton, of Her Majesty's Ninth Volunteers."

"You have taken my name!" gasped Thornton.

"No, only made a fair exchange. Having left you without identity I had to supply one for you, so I have decided to loan you mine while I am away."

"You shall not do this thing, Trelawney," exclaimed Thornton indignantly. "I am not a child nor a coward. I will not permit this sacrifice."

"Now listen to me, Paul," said Trelawney. "I am making no sacrifice. It all fits in perfectly with my plans for the future."

"But I shall stop you. I shall go to the War Office and——"

"That will be useless. The War Office will not be open until to-morrow, and by midnight I shall be out of London. Paul, nothing can be more to my liking. Pray do not try to block a plan which will give me more pleasure than, perhaps, I shall ever enjoy again in my life. I have no ties, no responsibilities."

"Take now your own case: What would Gretchen do in a strange country without friends or means of support while you were away? Instead of that it pleases me—and you must not try to rob me of this gratification—that Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Trelawney sail within the week for America—in fact, their passage is already booked on the *Lucania*. The agent sent them the tickets by me."

Trelawney took an envelope from his pocket and placed it on the table, continuing before Thornton could interrupt him:

"And Trelawney's solicitor has been instructed to send to him in America only a portion of his income and he has obtained a letter of credit and the necessary credentials."

Trelawney placed another envelope on the table.

"Arthur, I say you shall not do this," broke out Thornton.

Gretchen, who was clinging to her husband's arm, was staring in amazement through her tears at Trelawney, who approached her and placed his hand gently on her head as he might on that of a child.

"Paul," he said slowly, "surely you will not deny me the great happiness I shall take in doing this thing for—for Gretchen?"

They both looked into his eyes and saw the pleading, and they both knew that it was for the woman he loved that he wished to make the sacrifice.

Little remains to be told, gentlemen, except the tragedy. The new Mr. and Mrs. Trelawney came to America and the new Thornton went to Africa. But Thornton's soul was seared. He felt that he had sold his manhood. He became discontented and irritable. Soon his studies were neglected and he took to

drink and morphine. The allowance that was regularly remitted from London was large and they were able to live comfortably until little by little Thornton began to give up all attempts to establish himself by his own efforts.

Gretchen watched the change in him with fear. At first her influence held him somewhat in check, but at last even his love for her was deadened by his excesses. He constantly feared exposure, as if he were guilty of some great crime, until—well, I have told you the end.

After the close of the war, Trelawney remained in South Africa, and only recently returned to London, where he startled his solicitor much as he startled me. It was only then that he learned of Thornton's death under his name. He started at once for America.

His first purpose was to find the widow, who, he knew, must be either in want or struggling to earn her own support, for Gretchen had made no claim as the widow of the supposed Trelawney, and, as no relatives turned up, the estate had been taken under the care of the crown.

It therefore became necessary for Trelawney to prove that he was himself in order to regain possession of his own. This was no easy task, as English War Office records are stubborn things when disputed, and they knew Trelawney only as Paul Thornton, volunteer.

To the newspaper sagacity of my friend the reporter I am indebted for the finding of Gretchen. He began with the suicide, and after much work succeeded in finding the cabman who drove the widowed woman from the house and the expressman who moved the trunks. Then step by step he traced her until he located her in a small room on the East Side.

She was working as a saleswoman in a dry-goods store and had managed to support herself comfortably. Our newspaper brother disclaims any credit for his share in bringing the romance to a happy ending, for he says that it was only one of the every-day tricks of his trade.

I succeeded in establishing my friend's claim through the testimony of myself, Gretchen, and the solicitor, as well as various lodging-house keepers.

You may think that the marriage of Trelawney and his friend's widow was a little sudden. But Trelawney is an impetuous fellow, and women are peculiar. I can't help thinking that at the time

Trelawney revealed his great, unselfish love for Gretchen, when he pleaded with Paul to sanction his sacrifice, her heart was badly wrenched, and Paul's later conduct did little to heal it.

THE MAN IN HIS SHIRT SLEEVES.*

By Charles Edward Barns.

A serial of the sea and the strange adventures that befell a coatless hero.

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

ACCORDING to the papers, Lieut. Daniel Mountjoy, after forty minutes' tardiness, deserts his bride, Marcia Van Brunt, in the middle of the marriage ceremony, and disappears.

As it chanced, an unexpected turn in the market had delayed Mountjoy, who was obliged to dress for the wedding in a cab as he drove from Brooklyn Heights to Gramercy Park.

A few days after the catastrophe Marcia is visited by Haydon Barr, who tells a remarkable story. Barr, an old friend of Mountjoy's, in severe straits, had come to New York to find him; not succeeding, he tried to commit suicide on Brooklyn Bridge. As he grasped a cable he suddenly heard his name called, as a half-dressed man rushed from a cab, stopped by a block in traffic, and attempted to seize him, failed, and shot over the bridge.

Barr got into the cab, put on the clothes he found, and waited to see what would happen, arriving presently at the church, where he was hailed as the bridegroom. He dared not carry the deception to a conclusion, but departed in haste, and after a severe mental shock awoke to find himself ensconced in luxurious hotel apartments. He found too that he had some stock certificates and sufficient memoranda to use them intelligently, and that the man whose place he had usurped was his old friend Mountjoy.

He read an account of the desertion in the paper, and also of a wireless message which is confusing the government, but which he thinks is from Mountjoy, whose life is apparently in jeopardy.

He convinces Marcia that there is some hope and goes to Washington, where he explains the situation to the Secretary of the Navy, informing him that he believes Mountjoy to have fallen upon the vessel of a band of filibusters. This indeed is the case, and the chance which rescued Mountjoy from a watery grave nearly cost him a violent death. Seeking to escape attack he shuts himself into the box containing the wireless apparatus, for which there is no operator, and then discovers that the guard who is set to watch him has been under his former command. Together they devise a miraculous expedient for escape.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHAT A MAN CAN DO UNDER PRESSURE.

THE sea, as we approach the tropical regions, is very capricious. One hour there may be every prospect of a blow, the next of a calm, and neither may eventuate.

But when the barometer combines with the temperatures of both sea and

air to forecast certain results, though they may be deferred, even for days, the prophecy is generally sooner or later fulfilled.

The prisoner on the Ariel chafed under restraint. This was natural, but more than ever did his impatience increase in that the tidings from the decks above, combined with the increasing violence of the tossing which the ship sus-

*Began May All-Story Magazine. Single copies, 10 cents.

tained, boded ill for the common seamen and more than all for the shackled man in his shirt sleeves.

"What a death-trap would this accursed cabin be in a storm!" he muttered, loneliness and depression bearing down upon his ever-buoyant courage. "Would they not leave me to perish like the rats in the hull?"

But the expected typhoon evidently swerved from its course, or else lost its violence like a scattered army which had mistaken its bearings, for the vessel ran into a smoother sea. The night wore away, and at the breakfast hour his jailer returned with bread and water. The man in his shirt sleeves regarded him contemptuously without speaking.

"Señor," said the insurgent through the window, "you deserve better treatment than this, even if it is true that you are a spy."

"Thank you," responded the prisoner.

"Indeed, señor, I think that I can persuade our commander in your behalf, if you will allow me——"

"Allow you? A prisoner allow his jailer to do anything? You mock me, sir."

"You do not understand. The general perceives that you are a man of culture and ability, far above the calling of a *muochard*—an informer."

"He is observing."

"If you will consult your own interests, you will not cross swords with him, even in words."

"I will cross swords with him in fact, my feet still shackled and one arm bound behind me, if he will accept," challenged the accused imperiously.

"Bah! you speak like a man either bereft of senses or not possessing tact. Do you not know, señor, that it is all the chief can do to keep his men from running you through for the insults you have offered him?"

"Well, what then? He would be held responsible by my government, as would all in league with him."

"But who would know?" queried the guard.

"Leave that to Uncle Sam, señor. He has a way of discovering crimes against his people, and of avenging them properly, too. Does any one in the West Indian latitudes need to be told that?"

"You are impossible to-day, señor," responded the other, glowering, yet conscious of the stab to the heart of his pride. "You will not see me again for twenty-four hours."

"Thank you."

"By that time, you may have come to your better self—if nothing worse intervenes for you. As to that, mark you, I cannot swear."

"You oblige me not to swear, since I could not believe you under oath."

"Pah! Spy, traitor, informer!"

"At least I am no coward."

"Worse; you are a fool!"

"My compliments, señor," said the prisoner, with obsequious irony.

"To the devil with you!" growled the other, turning his back and striding away.

"Good riddance," thought the solitary, as he again settled down to his plans and projects. "If they will only let me alone for a day or two, Uncle Sam will hear something to his interest, and these mountebanks will hear something to their peril."

Once more that long watch. It seemed interminable. Indeed, save the pattering of the sailors' naked feet along the decks, and the measured beat of the ship's bell tolling the dismal hours, the monotony of the swishing and splashing of waves over the great beams of the brigantine was unbroken. The sea had quite calmed once more.

At midnight, true to his word, the former deserter from the ranks of Fort Donaldson, now a friend indeed, approached the little window.

"Ho, lieutenant! Are you there?"

"Alas! yes. Would that it were otherwise," was the answer.

"Keep up your courage. Here—here is another flask of wine."

"A saving grace," cried the captive, reaching upward and seizing the welcome draft.

"And here are some delicacies done up in parcels that can be easily hidden away down there—biscuits, fish, chocolate, some dried fruit, and other comforts."

"Comforts? Life-savers, rather," observed the lieutenant, seizing them eagerly and storing them within groping distance in the darkness.

"And now for the material which you asked for. You will have to hide them in some obscure nook, and so I have brought you a few rolls of old canvas, rags, and tatters."

"The very things, Tom. Excellent!"

"Well, here are the candles and the matches."

"More glory to you, Tom!"

"And the tools—hatchet, saw, chisel, files—everything."

"Excellent! Everything comes my way, Tom. Within twenty-four hours I shall have the whole Western Hemisphere guessing."

"Not quite that, lieutenant; but all the same, I think you know what you are talking about. Hush! I hear a step."

The prisoner paused breathlessly, but there was no sound. A moment later he called out in a hoarse whisper, "Tom, still there?" But there was no answer.

"He has resumed guard, but he will return in due time," the lieutenant decided and, lighting a candle, he spread out the little packages before him on the grimy floor of his dungeon, his eyes glowing like a street Arab's at a Christmas feast.

The lieutenant had dined at the great tables of the world and had known the cookery of the most noted chefs; but here at midnight in the dismal gloom of a rocking ship he experienced what it was to have a hunger which regarded the simplest viand as a precious balm from on high.

"I begin to live again—thank God! I live again!" he murmured aloud as he drank the wine to the last drop, then fell to the bounties vouchsafed him from the larder of the common sailors, whose fare seemed now indeed fit for princes.

Eating his fill, the diner concealed the remainder of the feast under the canvas rags toward the port side of his prison-house.

All that remained of the dark hours were consumed in labor under great difficulties by the man in his shirt sleeves, who, for all his trials, was nevertheless a man of fertile invention.

It is an easy thing for a trained electrician to make or fit together parts of electrical instruments when given the tools, the materials, and all the para-

phernalia necessary, supplemented with the knowledge how to put the constructed parts together for active operation. But it is a rare genius who can take poor expedients and turn them to account in a dire extremity.

Thus Napoleon's engineer found it hard to estimate the breadth of a river without instruments, but nevertheless was compelled to do it by the aid of a walking-stick and a notch in the rim of his military cap.

When a man is fighting his way to freedom, to the salvation of his honor and to the accomplishment of a great deed in the interest of his country, he is likely to disregard slight obstacles and to regard big ones as easily overcome.

The indignation displayed by the insurgent when he came with his usual cup of water and crust of bread on the morrow did not abate. It was plain that he had received instructions to "let the Yankee pig rot there in his dungeon" until completely humbled.

In silence the captive's custodian came, and in silence he left again, giving his charge a savage leer which at once forbade parley. The fact is that the lieutenant was more than satisfied to maintain these cool relations.

It was several nights before the sailor-guard succeeded in communicating once more with the lieutenant, for on every occasion when he approached the place some prowler came within range, and detection of the fact that they were in league was to be feared as death itself. However, at the midnight hour at last, Tom, loaded with good cheer and comfort, stole back to the little window.

"Ho, lieutenant! All well?"

"Ah, thank heaven! I feared that you had been put into the brig or compelled to walk the plank," said the prisoner, in unfeigned joy at the meeting.

"Never fear; I am too wise to cross my superiors when I have a great object in view. Here is food and drink——"

"Thanks, from the bottom of my heart. But first, to the great task. The machine is working perfectly, so far as I am able to test it. Now for the secret out!"

"Ah, the secret out!" echoed the mariner, mystified, but made enthusiastic by the other's excited voice and manner.

"Are you ready, Tom?"

"For anything—anything under the heavens that you command me. But—I do not understand, lieutenant. What is the meaning of all this?"

"I made a discovery in my prison-house here almost the first hour of my coming, Tom."

"A discovery?"

"A most valuable one. Among these boxes here I saw one that looked familiar. I broke it open with the tools you gave me."

"And it contained what?"

"A complete plant for the establishment of a wireless communication between points on land after the expedition has arrived at Santo Morro."

"Well, what of that? You cannot make use of it here——"

"Showing how little you know of the situation and of the tools at hand, to say nothing of my ingenuity."

"The plant is incomplete—there are parts missing, probably concealed elsewhere. But there is a series of powerful batteries, the necessary induction coil, keys, the 'antennæ,' and in fact everything necessary to transmit a message over the sea for hundreds of miles, although the receiving apparatus is not complete, since there is no coherer."

"Now you understand, do you not?"

"No more than before, lieutenant."

Later the faithful friend stole back to quarters with a prayer upon his lips. It was for the success of the man in his shirt sleeves.

The solitary prisoner for the first time since his awakening seemed to feel himself in communication with the real world—home, friends—and dearest of all, Marcia.

How the thought thrilled him! With one electrode thrown into the sea through the narrow barred porthole, and the other hanging aloft on the pennant spar, the lieutenant was holding converse with the world, as it were, although it was as a deaf man who calls aloud through the silence and darkness, giving tidings without knowing whether they are heard or not, yet convinced of his powers of speech, maintaining his confidence through all the trying ordeal.

Spark! spark! spark! the talk was hurled in little shocks far over the wa-

ters, over the bend of the horizon, winging its way hundreds of miles. The message was repeated over and over again through the gray dawn, and as long as the sender had the strength.

This was the fateful message received at Roanoke, three hundred miles away, which mystified Washington, and which in its completeness read as follows:

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, WASHINGTON.

Send help at once! Brigantine Ariel cleared for Bath, Maine, headed for Santo Morro with five field guns, three thousand stand of arms, four million rounds of ammunition and other implements of war, under the leadership of the rebel chief Roderiguez, to capture garrison of Monti Vesta and move on to the capital, kill president and overthrow the government. One hundred and sixty insurgents aboard, and two thousand awaiting expedition in the jungles north. I am a prisoner on board. Fell from Brooklyn Bridge into ship's sails as she passed under it in dense fog. Mistaken for spy. Will be executed on arrival at Santo Morro unless rescue comes. Send gunboat at once to save bloodshed. Tell Marcia Wan Brunt, if I die, I die like a man. Good-by all!

LIEUTENANT DANIEL MOUNTJOY.

Only at the sound of eight bells, the breakfast hour, did the man in his shirt sleeves cease repeating this message over and over again, calling with that silent, far-reaching voice to the wide world, trusting to God that there might be somewhere one patient and believing listener.

At that hour, however, the lieutenant desisted for the time being, knowing that his insurgent would soon come with the modest morning meal. Soon the noisy tramp of feet sounded. To his consternation, when the figure of the guard loomed up through the little window, the prisoner saw that he was not alone, and what was more disquieting, he perceived that it was the chief in uniform accompanying him.

"Ah, it is all up!" he moaned in the sickness of his heart. "I am discovered."

But the general approached with a certain display of compassion, if still with great gravity, as he said, "Good morning, señor."

The prisoner could not very well

thrust his hands behind him, so he held out two fingers frigidly and awaited the sentence, doubtful whether this meant treachery or a truce.

"I am greatly displeased to be informed of your continued obduracy," said the insurgent leader, "and to discover that even the hardship of being confined in this foul den and fed on bread and water does not break your spirit and lead you to a confession."

The prisoner, secretly overjoyed, perceiving his ignorance of affairs, grew in turn dignified.

"It is my nature, sir, when I am in the right," said he. "Having confessed all, what more is left for me as a gentleman and an American soldier? You might torture more out of me, but it would all be lies."

"Come, come!" said the leader, testily. "I have heard that talk before, and I tell you now, it will not do. It is at your peril. I come to you with a twig of truce, and how do you receive me? With scorn, sir—with scorn! I tell you, it is shameful—insulting, and for you, I swear by heavens above! it is extremely dangerous."

He tapped the hilt of his sword as he spoke the closing words.

"What would you have me do? I am open to conviction," said the accused calmly.

"Just this. Prove that you are not a spy——"

"And how prove it more than I have?" asked the other.

"By joining our ranks and becoming one of us."

"I thank you, general," was the frigid reply, "but that is a matter which requires some thought. I had not believed that such an honor was in store for me."

The sarcasm of the retort was not lost on the insurgent. He caught its significance.

"Well," said he, impatient of further parleying, "it amounts to this. I will give you till to-morrow morning to decide. I perceive you to be a man of spirit, even of fortitude under adversities. I also trust that you are a man of sense.

"Remember, twenty-four hours to choose your alternative. You will either

consent to take our oath, going through the ceremonies incident to that high honor, or on reaching our destination you will be taken out and burned alive at the stake, for it is thus we deal with spies. Señor—do you understand? the most horrible death known—burned—at—the—stake!"

He paused in his fury. "Come; what have you to say?"

"As I informed you, general," said the other, bowing, "it is a grave undertaking, and yet what will not a man do to save his own life? Nevertheless, I require time either to accept this offer of a place in your ranks, or to make my peace with God. That is all, general."

"Very well. I leave you to decide your fate. Remember, no quarter to spies—none, none!"

The guard thrust the bread and water to the prisoner, gave him a glance of mingled compassion and wonder at his resistance and retreated in silence.

Then the man in his shirt sleeves went back to his task again, calling, calling, calling—afar.

"Some one will hear me, some one, some one!" he cried aloud in the gloom.

All that day he kept up the frantic appeal over the waters, resolved to continue throughout the night. Near midnight he was forced to desist through sheer exhaustion. The ship meanwhile was tossing frightfully.

There were the usual greetings when Tom returned to guard duty, and the usual rations were passed in the window.

"Lieutenant," said the seaman, "your wires are still up to the masthead, but I don't think they will stay much longer. The barometer is cutting capers again. I think it means business this time, and no fooling about it."

"What's the mater, Tom?" asked the other weakly.

"That long-predicted hurricane is running up from the Caribbean. She's about off the Bahamas now, and by day-break she will be on us so that you'll think the roof of the heavens is falling in."

"Let her come," answered the prisoner, finishing his midnight meal and resuming his rest. "I am ready for anything now, my message is home."

"What's that? How do you know?"

"I don't know, save by an inner conviction. If it isn't home now, Tom, it never will be, that's all. Good night, God bless you!"

"Good night! If things get too bad I'll look out for you. If the sailors don't mutiny, I think we can weather the blast all right. Lord, but we are getting a tossing though. Steady, steady, old girl! Keep up your pluck, lieutenant. You're the right sort, and never fear. Good night!" And he was gone.

Little did either foresee the tragic circumstances of their next meeting.

CHAPTER XIV.

A NIGHT OF TERRORS.

THERE was something awful in the hush of premonition over all the sea and high in the heavens, where the clouds seemed to stand still like restless steeds expectant of a lash, ready to plunge at the bidding of some omnipotent power. Then the barometer took a drop that widened the skipper's eyes. The sailor forgot his oaths, viewing the quivering sails with ominous gravity.

The man in his shirt sleeves, though a prisoner, seemed to receive telepathic intelligence that there was trouble brewing—seemed to feel the common thrill that ran through ocean and air and made every living creature alive to a sense of self-preservation.

Even the waves beating against the hull and the responding creak of the garboard timbers and the straining masts gave forth a new, strange sound, as if two inanimate things, suddenly grown animate, were calling one to the other, "It's coming, it's coming! Make ready! Beware!"

And the answer groaned back, but not without a misgiving shudder for all its bravado: "Let it come, let it come! We have met that black enemy before and survived the battle: why not again?"

Solitude, hunger, sleeplessness, and suffering had sharpened the senses of the man in his shirt sleeves. Now, as he perceived that there was some likelihood of going down into the marine underworld in shackles, he was seized with a despair that kindled a desire to make

ready to meet a new emergency. A rat scampered over his foot. "Ah, even the rat knows its way to freedom on a sinking ship," mused the prisoner, rising unsteadily to his feet.

"How much less equipped am I for such an emergency. But I must face the problem free-handed and unfettered," he cried aloud.

One by one he drew the tools toward him, chisel, ax, and files. Then he sat down, folding his legs in Turk fashion, laying one "bracelet" over his knee, while with the file he began the slow severing of his bonds. Soon he managed to turn the band aside sufficiently to free one hand. Then he unshackled his other.

He now proceeded to the ankle chains. It was a long and tedious labor, but men who are fighting their way to freedom forget weariness and physical suffering, sustained by the hope of the great end in view. By the time he was rid of his bonds the ship was tossing wildly. "Now for the door!" he cried.

It was a hard hour's battle, for Rodriguez had had heavy planks nailed across the outer side of the doorway. But at last he chopped through and sank down to breathe; a moment's rest and he was again ready for action.

Cautiously he peered down the decks. A threatening sight greeted his eyes.

Here and there stood groups of men. Their caps were drawn down over their eyes as if the force of the wind stung them. They were murmuring together in curt monosyllables, and answering one another only with still more curt shrugs and nods. At first the watcher thought that their actions might be due to terror inspired by the swift-advancing hurricane. However, there was a deeper terror in their hearts than fear of the storm, as will soon be seen.

It was now the full hour of dawn. Here and there the clouds in the east were rimmed with scarlet, as if dipped in blood, and the sea took on the abhorrent tint whenever the wave threw up a crest that looked like a monster of the deep frothing at the mouth with gathering rage.

But the dread spectacle right over against the great ship's prow, and toward which she was endeavoring to keep her

course, defied description. Here the sky and sea met without one defining line of demarcation, blended in a pall of such immensity and might as it advanced that it seemed to be slowly blotting out the universe.

A great semicircular arch of ghostly whiteness edged the black veil, frowning majestically toward the vessel, which seemed to be fluttering down, down into the maw of eternity, the merest bubble on the brim of oceans.

"Jehovah! is this indeed the end of ends?" the man in his shirt sleeves cried out above the moaning of the sea. Then came the practical query: Would the ship stand this onslaught, and if not, where were they all? Had Providence decreed for him a death like this? Was he saved from one awful fate, only to meet and succumb to another?

Suddenly he was startled by a hoarse command that rang through the shrouds:

"Ho, all hands to the tops'ls! Ho, man th' tops'l clewlines! Round in the weather braces! Settle away the tops'l halyards!"

Then came the unexpected answer to the summons aloft that never before had been disobeyed. Not a sailor moved! Here and there they stood, arms hanging limp through the shrouds and stays, bareheaded and with faces staring defiance into the eyes of their commander and his rebel charges. It was mutiny.

A man rushed below—one of the conspirators—and when he came back he brought the chief in uniform and a score of his aides. With flaming countenances they ran up to the ship's captain, who was cursing and bellowing impotently.

The leader of the rebels began gesticulating, expounding, charging, threatening. The captain merely pointing alternately to his dumb-mouthed challengers, and then at the great arch of advancing whiteness. It was plain that he was utterly powerless, and that without the instant action of the sailors, the ship was doomed.

At that instant the chief of the rebel band, losing all control of himself, strode up to the tallest of the sailors in sight, a giant in stature, and formidable of mien, and asked him a question in a low tone. What the man answered

could not be heard by the nearest bystander, but the expression on his face told the story.

The rebel chief stepped back, drew a pair of pistols, and shoved their muzzles full into the face of the seaman. Again that demand. Without flinching, the sailor repeated his reply, emphasizing with a shake of the head, his face colorless, his eyes staring out of their sockets, his mouth agape with an expression of challenge mingled with irony.

There was a moment of awful hesitancy. The chief was counting. Still the man of iron did not wince. Suddenly the strain broke. Leaping upon his adversary as if he would rend him to pieces, they grappled. Then came the simultaneous report of two pistols. The man in the blue blouse clapped his hands over his bosom, his head dropped forward, and he fluttered to the deck like a sail that has broken its halyards. The shots, accidental or otherwise, were the signal for a general upheaval.

From everywhere the rioters seemed to burst—sane men suddenly maddened by the sight of bloodshed—and into the melee sailors and conspirators plunged to battle, the seamen struggling to wrest the weapons from the armed adversaries, the latter firing wildly, shrieking, howling, cursing like savages, as often wounding their own men as the mutineers.

Crack! crack! crack! sounded the pistol shots.

Then of a sudden the heavens seemed to burst asunder, the rack of the hurricane descended, striking the ship as a lion's paw might clap down upon a rat.

The transformation from semi-daylight to utter darkness was almost instantaneous. The noise was deafening. The vessel lay on her beam's end first to starboard, then to port, then dived headforemost into the hell of waters, only to be thrust forth again and pitched high.

Then the blast struck down once more amid terrorizing thunders and dazzling lightnings. Suddenly the foremast, with all her set sails, gave way before the blast, and came crashing down against the main, whipping the decks with tangled shreds and tatters of sails and rope, beating the helpless vessel.

The passions of men were now forgotten in the fury of the whirlwind. There was no master, no slave, no commander, no follower. It was a grim brotherhood of the doomed.

In other crises man will stand up and fight and strain and struggle, playing perhaps for the admiration of his fellows, perhaps even for posterity; but against the fury of the subtropic storm-blast he raises not a hand, knowing how futile it is, how vain, even blasphemous. He simply cowers like a beaten stag surrounded by a hundred hounds.

And so was it with the man in his shirt sleeves. He was tossed about, bruised and bleeding. Finally, with one frightful dive of the vessel, the cabin was wrenched from its moorings and disgorged its wounded tenant, dumping him straight out upon the decks, and the flap of the riven sail lashed him till he lay limp and helpless.

This, however, was the tempest's last paroxysm; for, with the righting of the ship, now listed to port, helpless in the trough of the sea, the wind abated, though the darkness continued.

"Merciful God!" cried the man in his shirt sleeves, no longer fearing any human being after this greater artillery of the heavens. "Do I still live? Does the vessel still float? Then the age of miracles has returned again."

Along the decks he strained his eyes, but no living thing greeted his gaze. Painfully he arose, stretched his battered limbs and started on down the open space, picking his way over tangling coils, splintered spars and yard-arms, and shattered lifeboats, right down into the scene of the mutiny but a few minutes, though it seemed many hours, before.

A horrible sight confronted him. Two men lay dead in the wreckage, two more lay by the starboard shrouds, their hands clenching the tarred ropes in the grip of death. Pistols and swords lay where they had been thrown in the confusion of flight below decks.

As the man in his shirt sleeves hurried past the cabin skylight he heard voices. Peering down, he saw a hundred men on their knees in attitudes of prayer. The chief of the rebel band was reading dolefully out of a prayer-book, his swart

features distorted and eloquent of terror in the light of the swaying lamp.

"Ah!" thought the watcher, as he eyed the devout penitents, who saw in the wrath of heaven the penalty for their crimes, "what a difference between what you are now and what you were but an hour gone! You can slaughter unarmed sailors in mutiny, but you cannot face the anger of a greater foe."

The man in his shirt sleeves hurried on over the decks, and came upon a shape jammed in between the mainmast and the pumps, pinned down by a fallen yard-arm from the foremast, which lay straight across his breast.

"Tom, Tom!" he exclaimed, tugging at the insensible shape. Then, seeing that Tom was pinioned fast, he seized a splintered spar and pried the sailor free, dragging him bodily out of harm's way. Then he tore open the sailor's blouse and laid his hand over the stricken man's heart. The seaman opened his eyes. "Is that you, lieutenant?" he moaned. "What has happened?"

"Happened? Oh, nothing much. Just a mutiny aboard, a typhoon or two and a hurricane. Are you hurt?"

"I don't know—I can't think." Then after a pause he gasped as if in agony. "Take me below. Brandy—kit—under bunk—quick!"

Weakened as he was by his own sufferings, it required all the strength of the man in his shirt sleeves to drag his comrade step by step forward to the crew's hatchway, but after many a pause he accomplished it.

Half way down the hatchway he met some of the sailors who were advancing, as they thought, against a member of the rebel gang, seeing the stranger for the first time. But when they recognized his burden, the weapons with which they had provided themselves—clubs, the cook's knives, axes—any sort of available implement—were lowered, and they fell back.

"Boys," said the newcomer, "give me help. Tom's hurt."

"Who are you?" demanded one.

"Never mind who I am. Give me some help here."

"Are you one of them?" demanded another with a threatening gesture.

"One of whom?"

"Of them mulatto devils in the aft of the ship—they murderous, treacherous, lyin'——"

"Not for a minute. Don't stand there looking at me as if I were a fiend dropped out of the hurricane. I'm just a plain American, that's all; and what's more, I'm Tom's friend—that's who and what I am.

"If you are half as much of a friend of his as I am, you are my friends, too, and you will show me where Tom's bunk is so I can get some brandy out of his kit and save his life. Come; will no one help me?"

"I will, I will!" cried one rough seaman, throwing aside a monster butcher-knife and rushing forward to seize the limp form to save it from sliding from the stranger's arms and rolling down the gangway. "He's all right, boys, whoever he is. Come on, boys!"

One by one the crew came forward and lent a hand, finally depositing the wounded sailor in his bunk, pouring a saving draft down his throat and watching him return to life again.

The man in his shirt sleeves turned and faced the crew.

"What are you standing about with fool weapons of that kind for, when you can go on deck and find a whole abandoned arsenal?"

"And those yellow-faced demons?"

"Oh, they're down in their quarters aft, praying," said the man in his shirt sleeves. "Go on deck, quick! Bring down every pistol and sword in sight—there are dozens of them."

The sailormen started to the deck, all save one, who suspected a trap.

"Who the h—l are you, anyway?" he demanded, a half appeal in the harsh query.

"A little time ago I was a stowaway. Now I am a friend in distress," said the newcomer.

"But don't you worry about me," he added, addressing the suspicious seaman. "You'll have enough to worry you before we lay a foot to land, any of us. Eh, Tom? How is it with you, old comrade?"

"Gettin' to rights, lieutenant," answered the weak voice that rang still with true pluck. "They haven't got me out o' fightin' form yet, by a long shot."

The man in his shirt sleeves looked about at the strange confusion and said, "These chaps here seem to have some doubt about me, Tom. Just tell 'em I'm O. K., will you?"

The wounded man struggled up.

"O. K., is it?" he answered, facing the remnants of the crew. "Why, hang y' all for horse-stealers, that man is Lieutenant Dan Mountjoy, of New York an' Idaho, and he's all gold clean through to the marrows. He's the one ace in the whole deck, he is. Hello, what's here?"

The return procession of the sailors was staggering down the gangway, which creaked and groaned under their weight. The forward three bore the limp and pulseless form of the gray-beard captain.

"Dead?" asked Tom, in a strangely solemn voice.

"Dead," said the leader of the burden-bearers.

"Better him than you—better one than a score," interposed the newcomer daringly.

"What do you mean?" demanded one of the unenlightened crew.

"I mean that that man, for ten thousand dollars in hand paid, sold you all into certain death, and before I get much further on, I shall prove it," was the hard answer, which nevertheless bore the brand of conviction. "But here, boys, this is no time for talk. We've got to barricade ourselves at once, or it is all up with us, every one."

"Explain!"

"In other words, at the present moment we are at the mercy of the insurgents in the cabin aft, exactly as they are at the mercy of the hurricane, which they are weathering so badly. They hold the key to the situation. They can murder us at will, if they please, unless——"

"Unless what?" called out a hoarse voice from the rear.

"Unless we can get into the hold, drag up a machine-gun or two and train it on the cabin aft. Then the balance of power is in our hands and will remain there to the end.

"Come; don't stand there like capstans bolted to the deck. Do you want to be spiked down in your galley like rats? Come; who will lead the

way down to the stores? I know a field-gun from a Gatling—it used to be my business. Say, now! Who'll lead the way? I'll follow. Give me that ax yonder."

Still the crew hesitated, suspecting some sort of a trap. The wounded Tom, half upraised, called out:

"Lads, that man I know. He's one of us. What he says is worth your listenin' to."

"He was my superior officer in the regulars for two years, and the whole regiment swore by him. I guess you can afford to do the same, boys; but if you don't, mark my words! we'll all be in Hades before noon to-day and the sky clears. The time to work is now, now! Do you understand?"

"Come, boys, lead! I'll follow!" said the man in his shirt sleeves.

"And I—and I—and I!" ran along through the crew in a redoubling chorus.

One of the more deeply impressed started toward the port leading down into the ship's underworld. He seized a crowbar on the way. Another with a whale-oil lantern above his head thrust out his elbows to steady himself in the plunging ship, the others lumbering on in speechless quandary.

Down through the lower hold they passed, then the blows of the ax resounded. A few minutes later a dozen determined men had dragged the parts of a Nordenfeld machine-gun and a field-piece to the upper deck, slammed them together, loaded them for action, and rushed them along over the chaos left in the wake of the whirlwind, training them straight away on the aft cabin. Clambering over the wreckage, the man in his shirt sleeves looked over his newly sworn crew and cried out, "Are you ready?"

"Ready!" came the answer, in a chorus.

"At the command, boys, fire, and shoot to kill; and heaven have mercy on their souls!"

The lieutenant advanced on the closed and barred door of the aft cabin. Raising the handle of his revolver, he gave three loud raps.

The door was opened guardedly.

"Who's there?" cried a voice in Spanish.

"Open!" was the answering command.

"What do you want?" inquired a voice in English.

"Open!" repeated the command, still louder.

The bolts slid back and the port swung half way. The newcomer gazed down upon a sea of white faces. A shot rang out and the lieutenant felt the zipp of the bullet as it barely grazed him.

"*Dio!* It is the spy—the informer!"

"*C'est impossible!*" came a falsetto scream in French.

"Behold him, señor!"

"Yes; take a good look at me, for I'm your man," said the man in his shirt sleeves, facing them without flinching.

"Where is your general?"

"Here, here! *Señor Presidente!*"

"Ho, what is the meaning of all this?" bellowed a hoarse voice from beyond as the man in disheveled uniform hurriedly advanced.

"Your prisoner has escaped——"

"*Es verdad?* No!"

"Yes, general, I have come to report."

"*Onde?*" The insurgent's face was the picture of wonder and despair.

"I have come to say that I have concluded to refuse your proposition of yesterday. I cannot join your ranks, general."

"What do you mean?" The chief clutched his sword in one hand, with the other reaching for his pistol.

"Come out here and look. Do you see those guns, manned ready for action? Well, within thirty seconds we can riddle this cabin and all within it with cold lead. More than that, we have a fuse to the arsenal below, and a man ready with a torch. At a signal from me, you will be blown to atoms. Come out, I say—all, all of you! Surrender, or perish!"

CHAPTER XV.

A MID-OCEAN MEETING IN THE NICK OF TIME.

THE general turned to his men and began a despairing harangue. The speech was long and impassioned. He was listened to with deepest respect.

"Enough!" cried the man in his shirt sleeves. "File your men out of that hole and order them to lay down their arms. If you do not, at once, we will cut you into ribbons! Come out of that, I say!"

Still the insurgent band hesitated. One by one they ran to the mouth of their burrow, stared blankly at the muzzles of those death-dealers, saw the look of determination upon the faces of the ready men at the levers, and their supposed spy now clenching in his grasp, as it were, the whip-end of the situation. They slunk back, gesticulating wildly.

The chief faced his former prisoner.

"What do you wish to do, señor?" he said with his first note of deference. "I am a man of peace——"

"Yes, after the fortunes of war turn against you. I tell you now, it has been all I could do to keep the crew from slaughtering you all for murdering their comrade. You have me to thank that you live, general."

"It was an accident, señor, an accident!" protested the chief. "Again, I say," he continued, steadying himself against the pitching of the vessel, "what would you have us do?"

"Surrender at once!"

"Señor, we surrender," he answered meekly, glancing with terror at those gunners across the littered deck.

"In token of which you will file out of that cockpit one by one, laying your arms in a heap right under the muzzles of those machine-guns, then form in rank."

"I will command them to do so, señor. But if they do not obey me?"

"Then they will me; and if not me, then those guns yonder. This is not jest; no sparring for delays. You outnumber us, but we have the balance of power. In ten seconds, on my command, we can blow you to eternity, and the secret of the Ariel will go down with you."

"And you?"

"Oh, we have provided for all that. Give us no concern, *Señor Presidente*. Look out for your own safety. I wish to see no more bloodshed—there need be no more if you will but be reasonable. Consult only your own interests. You have committed a crime—you have mur-

dered one of the crew, and the captain——"

"The captain!"

"He got a stray bullet and is done for. You were a fool to start the riot——"

"It was an accident. They mutinied. Was I not supreme commander of this ship?"

"I do not know as to that; I know that you are not now, and therefore this talk is useless. It is worse than useless—it is criminal. Come; our men are waiting for the answer. For you it is surrender or death. I will give you ten seconds to decide——"

"But I have decided."

"Then in token of that surrender, let your men file forth and lay down their arms, taking their place in the ranks along the port rail. If you do, we shall proceed toward Santo Morro and you may go your way; if you do not, it is death for you all, understand. Come; choose!"

During all this parley there was the greatest confusion within the cabin. The band was divided against itself, uncertain whether to fight or surrender. Some of the cooler ones, however, pleaded self-restraint and the spirit of "follow your leader."

"Suppose we do make an onslaught upon the crew," said a graybeard in tones of authority as well as dispassionate logic, "what will become of us, lying here in a wrecked vessel in the trough of the sea? We shall perish, for there is not a sailor among us."

"Of a truth, we could never reach any shore, to say nothing of our beloved fatherland, where our friends await us. We will therefore follow our chief, as we have before, even to the bitter end. What says our president?"

"We are in the hands of the enemy," said the chief of the insurgents. "at least for the time being," he added in a whisper, as if he contemplated a stratagem which he could not then reveal.

"Let us surrender our arms and trust to the good God and the ability of the crew to bring us safe to Santo Morro."

"Will they do so?"

"Their leader has so promised, and I believe him. Once on land we can join our comrades and with their help save

the precious cargo. It is our only hope. At least, let us pretend to submit. Then we can watch for opportunities. If we do not, we shall be blown to atoms. Come; do you agree?"

"I agree!" called out a voice sullenly.

Then came another gruff assent, and another, till the growling chorus shook the cabin. With haggard faces and averted glances the discomfited band filed out. At the command of the man in his shirt sleeves each laid his weapon on the heap in the center of the deck, doggedly and not without many a muttered oath, submitting to the ordeal of standing in line along the port rail. It was a crushing, humiliating surrender.

"Lads!" called out the man in his shirt sleeves in the direction of the crews' quarters, from which part of the ship there sprang instantly at his command a round dozen armed men, by prearranged signal, "take these swords and firearms back to the lockers below, and leave a guard over them till further orders.

"We are progressing," he added cheerily to seaman Tom, his friend in need, as the latter came hobbling up from below, bandaged clumsily and weak from the loss of blood. "Remain with me and help gather together these tangled shreds. We aren't out of the maelstrom yet." He turned to the chief.

"*Señor Presidente*," he said calmly, "you may dismiss your men to quarters. There is no use humiliating them further. I need not charge you to respect the compact of surrender—that you shall not violate the agreement in any way."

The chief bowed.

"I understand, sir," he said with sullen humility that aped politeness.

"You will keep your quarters and give no orders that do not directly and strictly concern yourself and your men."

"*Si, señor*," answered the other through his shut teeth.

"Remember, these guns here will be manned night and day till we reach land, and there will be a man with a torch at the end of the fuse leading to the magazine, just as there is now."

"*Bien!*" murmured the insurgent, rolling his eyes till the whites appeared.

"Because you have surrendered your

arms, do not think that we shall relax our vigilance. If possible, we will redouble it. Just at present, however, we spare all men possible from guard duty to readjust this chaos, trim the ship again and head her toward her destination. That will take two days."

"Ah!" said the leader.

"We are somewhere off Eleuthera, of the Bahamas. If all goes well, we can cut through Crooked Island passage within three days more, then down to the southeast to Santo Morro."

"I perceive," responded the insurgent with a grunt.

"I have promised the sailors, each and all, the sum of one hundred dollars in gold when we shall have reached land —"

"You?" said the chief, widening his eyes. "Why you?"

"I am more anxious to set foot on *terra firma* than you are—at least as much, and for private reasons. I shall expect you to pay these men what is due them before you leave the ship—pay them in gold, señor."

"But we have already paid the captain."

"When?"

"When the vessel cleared."

"Then the money is on shipboard. Well, it will be turned to good account. Oh, never fear, señor; we shall find it, and, if I mistake not, it is a good round sum. Well, these sailors are poor men."

The rebel chief glared. Then he grew tearful.

"I should like to pay my respects to my dead friend," he said pleadingly.

"You may," was the answer, "after we have paid ours first." He gave the chief an inscrutable look. "You need not fear that the ship's late commander will take any of his blood-money with him where he cannot possibly have use for it," he added significantly. "His crew will see to that."

"Come, general, your men are on the verge of mutiny themselves, I should judge from the confusion in that cockpit yonder. They are your children and you must discipline them. Besides, we must get the vessel to rights or she will pound to pieces in the trough of the sea. Ho, lads; ho! Lay in, lay in!"

Then to the wounded comrade:

"Tom, you must give orders now. I bid you good morning for the present, *Señor Presidente!*"

The insurgent chief, with a despairing glance, made an apology for a salute, then joined his disorganized ranks below, for they were storming and howling like dervishes in the crowded cabin, where the wine was flowing freely to soothe their wounded pride—but likewist to inflame their passions.

Three days of hard work were required to complete the work of reconstruction. With all the resources at hand, with all the extra emergency sails below decks, it seemed an interminable task for the sailors to gather the tangled shrouds and stays, readjust new yards and spars, and dump the wreckage overboard.

The mainmast had withstood the pounding of the hurricane, being somewhat sheltered by the foremast and sails, for the pilot had kept the vessel well into the teeth of the gale; but the decks were in frightful confusion.

However, as the sun went down in comparatively serene weather on the night of the third eventful day, the Ariel was winging her way with broken pinions to the southward through the passage.

During all this time the man in his shirt sleeves never left the deck. Night and day he sat there, sometimes asleep, but with one eye open, as it were, with the faithful gunners still beside their levers ready for any onslaught, the man with the torch that never dimmed down by the fuse which led to the arsenal.

Now and then a white face would peer out of the cockpit aft and survey the scene, but the spy evidently reported the fortress still manned, and ready for action, for never once was there an effort to retake the ship.

At midnight of the fifth day, when off Columbus Banks, the lookout gave a shrill call from the vessel's prow—a call that roused the crew on deck and brought every man to his post. Then a sailor came pattering up to the man in his shirt sleeves, his face very anxious in the starlight.

"Sir, there is a vessel crossing our bow and signaling us."

"What does she look like?"

"I can't just make out, sir. Twice she has thrown a searchlight upon us to find our colors, signaling repeatedly."

A streak of white light struck the vessel, then vanished again. It was like a meteor's glow out of the clear heavens. It was the searchlight afar.

"It is a man-of-war," said the lieutenant. "There is trouble brewing. Go quick! Pound with all your might upon that door yonder. Rouse the rebels. Call for the general. Make haste!"

By this time the whole crew, not knowing but that the insurgents had broken loose and were doing murder again, rushed to the decks, each man armed to the teeth.

"Open, open!" cried the seaman, battering at the cabin hatchway with his heavy fists.

"General, come out at once! There is something wrong here! Ho, general, general!"

Instantly the port was unbolted and thrown wide. A score of disheveled shapes belched from the cockpit like jackals smoked from their lairs. The insurgent leader was in the van.

"What's up?" he screamed.

"Nothing. That's the trouble. They're looking for them and they are not there."

"What?"

"The colors."

"The colors? Who is looking for the colors? What do you mean?"

"See, yonder! That vessel just crossed our bows. She is signaling for our colors. She evidently is searching for some one, and suspects us. There it is again—do you see the searchlight?"

The amazed insurgent grasped the starboard rail, his eyes bulging. "*Por Dio!* What is that devil yonder?" he gasped. "Can you make out?"

"Not clearly," said the man in his shirt sleeves. "But I may say, señor," he added significantly, "it looks very like an American man-of-war."

The chief leaped clean from the deck with a wild oath. Clenching his fists, he raised them to heaven, advancing toward the man in his shirt sleeves, shrieking out like a wounded tiger: "You—you—spy—traitor—informer! You have betrayed us!"

"Betrayed you! Never!" was the

answer. "You have betrayed yourselves. See! there it is again. They are signaling. Stand back! Not a step beyond that line, or I give the word and this ship and all on board go down. Back!"

He turned to the men at the guns. "Stand by ready for the word, lads! We don't know what these madmen may do next in their fury. Hark! what was that?"

A double boom-boom reverberated over the waters.

"Colors!" cried the lookout. "Colors, or we'll get a solid shot next!"

The insurgent chief was beside himself. He raged and fumed about the deck, cursing, pleading, praying, gesticulating in helpless rage and terror, then dived into the cabin and was out again in a flash.

"Here!" he cried to one of his aides. "Up the shrouds with that. Wave it aloft—wave it, wave it!"

"What! 'Old Glory'? You shall never wave the Stars and Stripes from this accursed pirate bark while I command her!" broke in the man in his shirt sleeves, drawing his pistols.

"Higher, higher!" commanded the leader in Spanish.

"How dare you unfurl that flag on this renegade bark?" called out the lieutenant, flourishing his weapon and making a menacing gesture which went unheeded.

"Higher!" screamed the insurgent chief. "Unfurl it, unfurl it!"

"Drop it!" rang out the counter-command. "Down with it or I shoot—"

"Shoot, señor, and I shall not be accountable for my men. There will be bloodshed—"

"Then it will be your blood, not ours," was the response. "Back of the line, I tell you, or up goes the ship!" Then to the rebel aloft the lieutenant called out: "Drop that flag—drop it, or I shoot!"

Either unconscious of the command, or else ignoring it, the man aloft unfurled the ensign, holding up by the strands, and awaited the glare of the searchlight from afar. As the betraying ray of white struck the ship and disclosed the Stars and Stripes, two shots rang out.

The flag was clipped from the uppoised hands, fluttered in air and was lost to view over the starlit waves. The astonished aide gave a cry and came lumbering down to the deck, as if it were he who had been pierced by the sure bullets of the trained marksman. There was a threatening pause.

Now was the supreme moment of the crisis.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE REWARD OF PLUCK AND PERSEVERANCE.

WHAT might have been the result of this clash is difficult to imagine. But just at that crucial pass, a shot belched forth from the starboard side of the gunboat bearing down upon the beleaguered ship, the six-pounder shrieking straight over the splintered bowsprit.

"The white flag!" cried the lieutenant to the rebel chief, "it is the white flag of surrender or the next solid shot sends us to the bottom."

"Surrender? Never!" cried the general. "Death first," he screamed above the uproar of the decks.

The general gathered his men together at the starboard rail. What he said to them will never be known, but the sincerity of his plea was evident. They cried, "Long live the Republic!" "Long live the Fatherland!" and then embraced one another like men upon the scaffold in the time of the Terror. The general turned and faced the man in his shirt sleeves.

"Señor, we have sworn!" he cried decisively.

"So be it!" said the lieutenant, folding his arms.

"We shall never surrender the ship—never!"

"The penalty then—you know the penalty."

"We are brave men, señor. We are prepared."

Another solid shot crashed over the prow.

"As you command," said the lieutenant.

"No, as God wills!" answered the general, retreating and joining his comrades, who seemed to be preparing for the last.

The man in his shirt sleeves turned to his crew.

"Lower the boats!" he called out. Then toward the war-ship he waved a white shred of sail snatched up from the littered deck.

"Lower the boats!" he repeated. "We will abandon the ship at once!"

The boats were lowered. Still uncertain what move the insurgents might make, and keeping their weapons alert, the crew filed one by one into the lifeboats.

Another shot crashed through the rigging.

"Make haste, lads! It's the last call!"

Then, waving the white rag on high, the man in his shirt sleeves was the last to leave the ship. As the two lifeboats moved over the waters, the lieutenant for the first time lowered his weapon, for, instead of being fired upon over the port rail, he saw the insurgent band kneeling as if in prayer amidships. Then one of the number left the ghastly crew and hurried forward, carrying a firebrand made of twisted sail.

"Oh, they are going to fire the ship! At least they have the courage of their convictions," the lieutenant called out to his men.

"Ahoy, there!" called a voice over the waters.

The man in his shirt sleeves turned. A small boat, lowered from the man-of-war, which stood to the westward, was bearing down upon the refugees. A tall figure stood in the bow, beside him a man in the uniform of an American naval lieutenant. Even in the light of the stars and the phosphorescent sea Lieuten-

ant Mountjoy recognized the uncovered head and the two hands upraised in a sign of fraternal welcome.

"Ho, Danny!" shrieked out a familiar voice as the boats shot over the waves toward each other, "is that you?"

"Yes, Haydon, thank God!" came the answer. "Your hand, old comrade!" he added as the boats slipped up alongside of each other and the men who had parted in the frozen Klondike in the winter of 'ninety-eight now met in the sub-tropic sea after three years of hardship and vicissitude.

Suddenly there was a chorus of shouts from the other lifeboat. The man in his shirt sleeves turned just in time to see the strangest sight that had ever met his gaze. The great brigantine lying in the trough of the sea seemed to have been lifted bodily out of the water, fairly bursting asunder, sending into the heavens a tongue of blinding flame, filling the air with wreckage and human figures, then falling back a useless hulk, sinking lower and lower, till a great white wave obscured it from human sight.

"After all," commented the man in his shirt sleeves when the spectacle faded in the darkness, "after all, they died heroically in a bad cause. We'll give them credit for that, Haydon."

"Yes, and went to a fitting grave," was the answer. "Come, let us go back to the gunboat and send a wireless message homeward at once and tell them that all is well."

"Thank heaven that we may!" said the man in his shirt sleeves. He was thinking of Marcia.

(The End.)

THE WHIRLIGIG OF TIME.

Anonymous.

MARY had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow,
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go.

Its fleece is still as white as snow,
But Mary's lamb has grown,
And now she'd rather walk three miles
Than face that lamb alone.

BAGLEY'S AUTOMATIC GRASSHOPPER.

By Howard Dwight Smiley.

NOW you see it and now you don't, but in the meanwhile something quite exciting occurs.

SMITH and I drove back from town one day and found Bagley sitting on the piazza, holding a big grasshopper between his forefinger and thumb and looking speculative.

"Friends," says he, "did you ever stop to think of the vast possibilities based on the construction of these little insects?"

"I've observed the vast results, based on the destruction of things vegetable and otherwise by those little insects, if that is what you mean," answered Smith.

"Which it ain't," replied Bag. "What I mean is, supposing that this grasshopper was as large as a horse and as strong in proportion; just think of the terrific speed that could be obtained from such a creature; why, mounted on such a beast, one could outdistance the fastest locomotive in the world. The idea is wonderful, friends, wonderful."

"William," says Smith to me sorrowfully, "he wants to cross a grasshopper with a horse and ride the result. That is the limit. Will you throw him down and sit on him while I ride to town and wire the asylum to send attendants out after him? It's an awful way to use a partner, but a man ain't safe running at large with such ideas as that in his head."

"That's just the way," growled Bag. "This is what comes of a man of brains associating with such ditch diggers as you two. You can go to blazes, and I will prove the feasibility of my idea if it takes every cent I've got." And off he went, mad as a wet cat.

He wouldn't have another thing to do with us, and the next morning he packed his satchel and was off to town without so much as a word.

Later in the day Smith and I drove

down and found out from the ticket agent that he had purchased a ticket to St. Louis. He had informed the agent that he might be gone for several weeks, and that was all we could learn as to his whereabouts and intentions.

"You don't suppose he's quit us, do you?" I asked Smith that night while we were eating supper.

"I'm not supposing," he answered. "This is a notion, and when Bag gets started on one of his notions, a wise man knows that it is time to pack the carpet-bag and start for parts remote from Kansas. You just be patient; he'll turn up again all right, and mark my word, there'll be something doing when he does."

It was a month before Bag returned. He came down the road one day in the lead of a dozen wagons, loaded with lumber and a lot of packing boxes; with him were several carpenters and a slim, cadaverous man!

They unloaded the wagons down back of the barn, and Bag immediately put the carpenters to work building what turned out to be a shed-like structure, about sixty by forty feet square. When this was finished the packing boxes were moved inside, and Bag and the slim fellow got busy.

The way they ignored Smith and me was scandalous; we might just as well have been in Idaho, so far as they were concerned.

They spent the days in their shop, hammering and pounding away, and nights they would retire to the kitchen, where they would work and study over mysterious maps and charts until midnight.

All Smith and I could do was to look on; we were obviously out of the game.

Another month rolled by, and then, one day, the big front doors of the shop were thrown open and out of it crawled an object that caused the top of my head to give a first-class imitation of a cat on a fence-post talking to a dog.

If Smith and I hadn't been prepared, in a way, for what was coming, I don't doubt but that both of us would have stampeded, for if I ever saw a grasshopper, that was one.

It was all of twenty-five feet long, with eyes two feet wide, and it looked so natural that I honestly thought it was alive.

Waddling into the front yard, it stopped. A little door in its side opened and Bag stuck his head out.

"Are you gentlemen still of the opinion that I am a fit subject for an insane asylum?" he inquired sarcastically.

Think of asking a man if he had an opinion in such a contingency as that! Neither of us had one, and we would have been incapable of expressing it if we had. We were at a loss for words.

Bag didn't wait for us to recover, but closed the door, and a moment later the grasshopper gathered its legs under it and jumped.

It rose into the air as gracefully as a bird, and shot off across the fields like a bullet.

When it lit it was a mile away; it immediately rose again, and in six jumps disappeared below the horizon.

Smith and I looked at each other and solemnly shook our heads. We were still at a loss for words.

Pretty soon it came sailing back, about two miles to the south of us, and disappeared in the east. For an hour we watched it come and go from all directions, until finally it came shooting back from the direction in which it first started and, landing squarely in front of the shop door, crawled in.

Bag was the happiest man alive. He had forgotten all about his grouch, and came skipping up to the house as frisky as a two-year-old.

"Friends," says he, "allow me to introduce you to Professor Albertus Etheridge, the foremost scientist and inventor in these United States or any other country.

"It is with his assistance that I have succeeded in perfecting this most wonderful achievement of human genius: Bagley's Automatic Grasshopper and Marine Waterbug!"

"It's wonderful, Bag!" says I humbly. "What's it made of?"

"Aluminum," he answered. "Built in exact proportion to the ordinary grasshopper, even to weight and strength; propelled by a ten thousand horse-power engine, invention of the professor's. With one barrel of gasoline we can encompass the earth."

And so he rattled on, explaining details, while Smith and I sat back and humbly listened.

While he was talking a crowd of about fifty very excited farmers, armed with shotguns, horse-pistols, and pitchforks, came galloping up.

"Did you see 'em?" they yelled.

"See what?" answered Bag. "What's the matter with you folks?"

"Grasshoppers!" answered one. "Grasshoppers as big as barns! They are loose in Kansas! We must run 'em down and kill 'em, or they'll ruin us all! They are eatin' up cows and horses and everything! Get your guns and come on!"

"Well!" said Bag as they galloped off, "I didn't figure that we would stir up such a scare as this.

"If they're calculating to exterminate that grasshopper with horses and shotguns, they're going to be mightily disappointed. There ain't a thing that moves on legs, wheels, or wings that can catch my machine."

Next morning we prepared to take another trip, for Smith and I were just as enthusiastic as the others by then. We all went out to the shed together and entered the machine.

The interior was mostly filled with machinery. There was an open space about ten by six feet square at the forward end, and a table, covered with levers and switches, stood in the center of this.

The professor took up his position in front of this table and pushed over one of the levers, and the machine moved out into the yard. Then he shoved over another one, and away we went.

Smith and I stood forward, looking out of the eyes, which were filled with heavy plate glass. The sensation was much the same as one experiences on board a ship in a heavy sea, only more regular and steady.

We would alight with an almost imperceptible jar and immediately rise again, covering fully a mile at each jump.

"Ain't we going a little fast?" I asked the professor.

"My, no," he answered. "We're just ambling along now; wait until I let her out and we'll show you what fast traveling is." And he pushed the lever over a few notches.

I looked out the window and, my, how we were going it!

We passed over four towns in as many seconds, and all in one jump. Things were beginning to get interesting.

"How fast are we going now?" I asked.

"Twenty-five miles a jump," answered the professor. "And now I am going to double that." And he pushed the lever over some more.

I turned to the window again, but now the earth below was nothing but a blur; we were traveling so fast that we would be miles past an object before the eye could catch it.

And just then we hit something. It might have been a tree or a church—we were going too fast to see—but, whatever it was, we went right through it like a bullet through a pine board.

It gave us a terrific jar though, and Smith, Bag, and I went down all in a heap in the nose of the grasshopper, while the professor slammed into the table and over that went.

We all jumped up and righted the table as soon as we could, but the controlling apparatus was all in a tangle and we seemed to be going faster than ever.

"Stop it!" yelled Smith. "I want to get out."

But we couldn't stop. When the shock came the professor had his hand on the speed switch and had jammed it over to full speed and broken the lever off short.

About ten minutes passed, during which Bag and the professor worked frantically, trying to stop the machinery. Then came a tremendous splash and we dove into a lake or something.

We came quickly to the surface again, and then how that grasshopper did swim! It went through the water like an express train, throwing up a spray in front of it so we couldn't see out of the windows. In about two minutes we were on dry land again, jumping along as fast as ever.

"Can't you stop it?" yelled Smith. "I want to get out I tell you."

"Stop it yourself then," yelled back the professor, seeming a little exasperated.

Smith took him at his word, and, grabbing a crowbar, he smashed it into the machinery. This proved effectual, for with one more bound the grasshopper stopped.

"Phew!" says I, a little excited myself, "here's where I walk."

"Same here," says Smith. "Where are we?"

Before I could answer, some one started shooting from the outside, and we all made a jump for the door and looked out cautiously.

There were six men, dressed from head to feet in furs, and standing knee deep in snow! And this, mind you, happened on the twenty-fourth of July.

"Who're you shooting at?" yelled Bag.

The men looked surprised and came up alongside.

"I beg your pardon," says one of them. "I thought this thing was alive and indigenous to this region."

"Well, it couldn't act any worse if it was," says Smith. "Who are you?"

"I'm Stellman," says he, "and I want you to understand that I got here first."

"That so?" says Smith. "Well, that ain't any sign that we didn't hurry along as fast as we could. Hope we haven't kept you waiting."

"Seeing that I wasn't expecting you, I can't say that you have," answered Stellman. "Did you get here in that thing?"

"We did."

"Where'd you start from?"

"Kansas."

"Kansas! How did you ever get across the Arctic Ocean?"

"I wasn't aware that we had crossed it. Have we?"

"Why, you must have. Don't you know where you are?"

"I wish I did," says Smith wistfully.

"Would you mind telling us?"

"This is the north pole," says Stellman.

I looked at my watch. Just fifty minutes had elapsed since we left Kansas.

"Gosh!" says I. "Gosh!" And now

I wonder that I was able to express myself that much.

Then we all got together and explained things.

Mr. Stellman, who represented the Chicago *Boomerang*, had discovered the north pole in an airship. Having discovered it, he was preparing to return, and as the machinery in the grasshopper was hopelessly ruined, he kindly offered to give us a lift as far as Spitzbergen.

It almost broke Bag's heart because he had to leave his grasshopper behind.

He wanted Stellman to take it along in the airship, which he wouldn't do.

We had had enough of grasshoppers.

At Spitzbergen we caught a trading vessel bound for Halifax, from which port we finally arrived home, none the worse for the racket.

Bag mentioned something about building another grasshopper one day, but he only mentioned it once, for Smith and I opened up and made remarks that caused him to abandon the idea.

There's a limit to all things, you know.

LOVE'S AUCTION.

By James King Duffy.

WHO will buy a sonnet sweet,
Rondeau bright, or virelay?
Who will purchase verses neat?
Hasten, lovers, while ye may.
Come and scan my tender ware
Writ by me for Phyllis' eyes—
Praising Phyllis, slender, fair;
Lauding Phyllis to the skies.
When to sing them would I fain,
Longing thus to charm her ear,
Turning from me in disdain,
Flouting Phyllis would not hear.
Going! Going!

So do I, in vengeful mood,
On the market fling my song;
Short on maids who would be wooed,
Still on verses I am long.
Swains enamored, won't you try
Distichs to your languid fair?
Whether blue or brown her eye—
What the color of her hair—
Change the praises as you may,
Still the rhythm flows along.
Must I give my wares away?
Can't I sell them for a song?
Going! Going! Bidders none.

Lovers ye, who scorn my rhymes,
Let me learn your wooing rule.
Am I far behind the times?
Must I go again to school?
Gone, you say, the golden days,
When in verse sweet love was told?
Maids are won in other ways;
These are days of naught but gold!
Hear I your replies aright,
I will drop my rhyming neat,
And instead, to her indite
Copies of my balance sheet.

BUGLES AND BUTTERFLIES.*

By J. Aubrey Tyson.

A story of army life wherein Love and War march to the music of battles.

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

LIEUTENANT FORBES, of the 23d U. S. Cavalry, in Manila, and his friend Captain Longaker, are leading an expedition to bring in Pacheco, a Filipino leader, who is hiding farther down the coast.

Longaker has previously received an appointment to General Purdy's staff, which has been withdrawn to give him this hazardous command. He feels that some inimical personal motive is behind it, as his colonel, Secor, disapproves of his friendship with Miss Secor, and an old enemy of his, Florence Endicott, has lately made her appearance.

On the transport bearing them down the coast, Forbes and Longaker learn that Lieutenant Tappan a few weeks previously had landed a similar expedition, thirty of the 79th Cavalry, under Forrester, and that the detachment is supposed to have been destroyed. Hardly has he made this explanation when they intercept a heliograph, apparently from Forrester, with a warning to beware of Devoges, who is to be their guide, and the information that Miss Secor and another lady are prisoners of Pacheco.

Longaker examines his orders and concludes that they have been tampered with, as there is an injunction to report to Carrero, the head of a native constabulary, which he does not think genuine.

Longaker informs Devoges and his subordinate, Perigo, that the transport, contrary to custom, will remain in the bay until the expedition returns. Forbes learns of a plan to blow up the vessel and arranges a fake explosion during the night, to mislead the Filipinos. He, with the remainder of the soldiers, returns to shore to find that Longaker and his companions have left with Devoges. By chance, Forbes overhears the latter's instructions to Perigo, which corroborate their fears of treachery. Gathering his men together, he captures Perigo's camp, and then starts on the trail of Longaker. On the way he falls in with Sanchez, a messenger from Forrester, and under his guidance they make for Carrero's headquarters, overtaking Longaker and making prisoners of Devoges and his companions.

Meanwhile, Carrero, believing that the American detachment is in his power, seeks out Mrs. Endicott and Harriet Secor, his prisoners, and announces that, on the following day, they will become the wives of himself and Pacheco.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHERE TWO ROADS MEET.

FIFTEEN minutes after Devoges, having succumbed to the inevitable, confessed himself a prisoner, the Americans, led by Longaker, Forbes and Sanchez, were riding, single file, along a path that led through a dense forest. This path brought them to a wider road, where the detail halted while Sanchez rode off alone. Soon afterward he reappeared with the buffalo and its blue-jacketed custodians.

Once again the march through the

forest was resumed, and in the course of that journey Longaker and Forbes learned from Sanchez many of the particulars concerning the vicissitudes of Major Forrester's expedition and also much that they had never suspected of the secret power exercised by Carrero.

According to the story told by Sanchez, Forrester and his men, after landing from the Bojeador, were met by three Tagalogs who were believed to be friendly. By these he was informed that Pacheco was encamped in the interior about a half-day's journey from the landing place.

*Began April All-Story Magazine. Single copies, 10 cents.

The party marched only about three hours, however, when the three guides mysteriously disappeared. Their desertion had scarcely been discovered when a withering fire from all directions was poured into the ranks of the Americans, who at once recognized that they had been led into an ambushade.

Fortunately, however, the concealed foes were poor marksmen. Two of the Americans were killed and five were more or less seriously wounded. The others promptly charged into the surrounding thickets and the natives were soon put to flight, many of them throwing aside their weapons as they ran.

The dead were then buried by the roadside and the wounded were placed in two of the supply carts that accompanied the expedition. Then it was that Forrester and Sanchez had met.

Sanchez, who had spent all his life on the coast, had accumulated a small fortune as a trader. He had been a district agent for several German and British firms, and, at the time of the outbreak of the last insurrection against Spain, he had just relinquished his business connections and was entering upon the life of ease to which he believed his long years of toil and frugality entitled him.

But when the insurgents of the district began making efforts to raise funds for the purchase of munitions of war, the hoard of honest Sanchez, exaggerated by his neighbors, commended itself to the leaders. Sanchez, the old trader, was sufficiently astute to keep it out of their grasp, however.

Then Carrero became a power in the land, and by his orders Sanchez was arrested, cast into prison, and tortured until the secret of the hiding place of his treasure was wrung from his agonized lips. When the old man was released he found himself no better off in the world's goods than were his neighbors whose lives had been characterized by shiftlessness and improvidence.

From Sanchez, then, Forrester learned that Carrero, the renegade Spaniard, had for many years enjoyed the distinction of being the best swordsman, most reckless gambler and most unscrupulous adventurer in the army of Spain and that by reason of his undoubted military talents and his power to rally around him

and retain able lieutenants, he had come to be regarded as the soul of the Filipino insurrection. Pacheco and Devoges were mere tools in his hands.

Before Forrester had time to profit by the information that he had received from Sanchez, however, the strong arms of Carrero's forest battalions had him and his little force in their grip.

In that grip Forrester did not allow himself to be crushed. He fought his way first toward the shore, and then toward El Spirito, a lofty hill, with three sides so precipitous that no man had ever been known to scale them. The fourth side, though sloping easily into the forest, was only a few hundred feet in width, and the little band of Americans had little difficulty at first in keeping their assailants at bay. At length, however, their ceaseless vigils began to rob them of the strength that they now sorely needed for hand-to-hand encounters, for, owing to the fact that their ammunition was nearly exhausted, most of their defensive work had to be done with the saber.

Supported by the hope that an expedition would be sent to their relief, Forrester and his men, subsisting only on the fruits that were to be found in the forest, doggedly held their position. For two weeks preceding the arrival of the Freda, the Filipinos were themselves only scantily supplied with arms and ammunition. Most of their attacks then assumed the nature of night surprises by detachments of bolomen—attacks which became more and more vigorous as the desperate plight of the nerve-racked Americans grew more apparent.

At length Forrester, already suffering from two grievous wounds, was stricken with malarial fever. For hours at a time he was almost delirious, but, despite his enfeebled condition, each attack of bolomen found him at the head of the remnant of his force. This consisted now, according to Sanchez, of fifteen men, of whom scarcely more than eight were really fit for service.

All approaches to the hill were guarded by Filipinos, whose investure of the place was designed to prevent the members of the little band from getting to the sea, rather than to guard against the advance of a relief expedition.

Forbes at once assumed that the heliograph message had been sent by Forrester, but this belief was shattered by Sanchez, who said that Forrester had in his possession no such instrument as Forbes and Longaker described.

"We are almost at the foot of the hill, señors," said Sanchez, at last. "The path along which we have been making our way is unknown to the enemy, most of whom come from the interior. Ahead of us, however, Carrero's men are strung out in a line which extends right and left from the main road to Bongabon."

A few minutes later the party found that the path that they had been traversing ended abruptly in a mass of young trees.

"I planted these, señors, a month ago, to conceal the road," Sanchez explained. "The vines which I trained toward them grew quickly, so we must cut our way through. On both sides of this path the forest is almost impenetrable."

That the efforts of Sanchez to screen the secret road were successful was demonstrated by the labor which was required during the next fifteen minutes to effect a means of egress for the men and horses. It was decided to leave the buffalo and two bluejackets where they stood.

Upon emerging from the secret road, the Americans found themselves in a small grove of palms. The ground was level, firm and comparatively free from the low tropical tangle that constitutes the bane of the American soldier in the wilder parts of the Philippines. Then, with Sanchez riding at their head, the cavalymen and three bluejackets set off at a lively pace.

They had not proceeded far when a shrill cry, followed by a rustling in the bushes, apprised them of the fact that they had been discovered. That an alarm would soon be given was apparent to all. No effort to overtake the fleeing Filipino was made, however, and the only effect the cry had on the company was to cause each man to redouble his vigilance and urge his steed to greater haste.

At length the ground ahead of them began to slope upward.

"We are ascending the hill," Sanchez

muttered, and as he spoke Forbes and Longaker observed that his features wore an expression of grave anxiety.

"Why is it that neither the enemy nor one of Forrester's sentinels has stopped us?" Forbes asked.

Sanchez shrugged his shoulders.

"It is very quiet, señors," was all he said.

A few minutes later the Americans were at the top of the hill. Around them, on the ground, lay pots, pans, tin cans, discolored canvas, and other evidences of the fact that they were on the site of Forrester's camp. But no evidence of human life had come to their eyes or ears since they heard the cry of the surprised Filipino and the rustling that he made in the course of his flight through the brushwood.

Near the camp rose one of the strange, high-rooted trees from which Sanchez had evoked such strange sounds a few minutes before his meeting with Forbes. The Tagalog quickly threw himself from the back of his pony and, running to the tree, took from beneath the roots a short thick club, similar to the one he had used earlier in the night.

With this he struck one of the larger roots a series of quick heavy blows, and, as he did so, there rose again the singular booming sounds that the Americans had heard shortly after the capture of Devoges and the release of Longaker and his men had been effected.

Devoges, sitting on the back of a Timor pony and closely guarded by the cavalymen, watched and listened with manifest interest.

At length Sanchez ceased, and as the sound of the last stroke died away the silence that fell on the woodland was unbroken even by a whisper from any member of Longaker's company. The stillness lasted for several minutes, then to the ears of the wondering group came a succession of faint sounds that seemed like echoes of those Sanchez had produced. When these grew still, Sanchez turned to Longaker, who, with Forbes, had approached him quietly.

"They are taken," the old Tagalog sighed.

"It is no longer a friend, but an enemy that replies to my messages now. Major Forrester and the nine of his men

who have survived, are being led to the camp of Carrero, where they will be executed at sunrise."

"Do you know which way they have been taken?" Forbes demanded.

Sanchez shook his head mournfully.

"There are two roads. One is scarcely shorter than the other. I cannot tell."

"That means, I presume, that we are to divide the detail again in order that there may be a division for each road, captain," said Forbes, stroking his mustache, and looking hard at Longaker.

Longaker hesitated; then, after a glance at Sanchez, he turned again to Forbes.

"Who will guide you?" he asked.

"Señor Devoges will take that trouble, I am sure," Forbes replied. The mestizo, who overheard the words, gave a sudden start.

Longaker nodded.

"Take Yost and ten of the boys," he said.

Once more Forbes turned to Sanchez.

"How long have the prisoners been on the road?" he asked.

"It cannot have been long, señor, for I was in communication with him immediately after your victory over Señor Devoges."

"You told him of our coming?"

"Yes, señor. I told him also that you had triumphed. He was expecting you."

"But, surely, Major Forrester doesn't understand the language of your talking trees."

"Ah, no, señor—not the major, indeed. But in his camp, tree messages were sent and received by my nephew, Taldo, who was with him."

"The capture has been effected in the last half hour, then."

"Not more, señor. They cannot have gone far, for all of Carrero's men who engaged in the assaults were on foot."

"By which road will you lead Captain Longaker?"

"The southern of the two. They run in the same direction, and though in some places they are scarcely more than a mile apart, they sometimes are separated by as much as a mile and a half of forest."

"Then let us go," suggested Forbes, turning to Longaker.

"Stop!" said the captain. "How are we to come together again?"

Forbes, again caressing his mustache, straightened himself and looked at Longaker with an expression of mild reproach as he said:

"There can be no question of that, lad, when each of us heads a file of men from the Twenty-Third Cavalry and both roads lead to Carrero!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN INTERRUPTED CEREMONY.

BEFORE the two little columns set out on their march toward the camp of Carrero, Sanchez made a careful search around the site of the abandoned camp for evidences of the struggle that had resulted in the capture of Forrester and his men.

Signs were not wanting. Blood-flecked leaves, an abandoned rifle, broken branches and, last of all, a patch of newly turned soil, showed too conclusively that the Americans had made a grim fight of it before they succumbed to exhaustion and the press of numbers.

That the newly turned earth covered the bodies of victims was not to be doubted, but, under the circumstances, an examination of the rude grave was out of the question.

Led by the sullen Devoges, Forbes, Yost, and nine men of Longaker's detail descended the hill and, finding a rough mountain road, turned the heads of their steeds toward the west.

Twice or thrice in the course of the first quarter of an hour, Devoges, mounted on a Timor pony, showed a disposition to abate the pace of his steed. On each occasion, however, a sharply expressed warning from Forbes caused him to accelerate his speed. The last caution was not without its effect on the mestizo.

"Understand, señor, that you are held as hostage for the safety of Forrester and the men now with him," said Forbes. "If Carrero carries out his design to execute them at sunrise, noon will find you on a longer journey than this."

At the end of the first half hour, the horses were covered with lather. The men, riding by twos, were well together.

Thus far no trace of Forrester's men or their captors had been discovered.

"If they had come by the road we should have overtaken them by now," Forbes muttered to Yost, who was riding beside him. Then, raising his voice, he addressed Devoges.

"How far are we from the camp of Carrero?" he asked.

"We shall be there in fifteen minutes, señor," the mestizo replied, and there was a slight ring of exultation in his tone.

Forbes, turning in his saddle, glanced toward the hills through which his party had come. Above them long lines of gray and gold were beginning to appear.

"The dawn has beat us out, señor," Forbes said brusquely.

"We will be in time," Devoges answered.

It was at this moment that Carrero closed the door of the nipa shack in which he had just informed Harriet Secor and Flora Endicott that Longaker had been taken and would die at their feet if they refused to accompany Pacheco and himself to the altar.

The brow of Carrero was calm as he returned to the hut in which he had left Oppas, the messenger sent to him by Devoges. Arriving there, he directed Oppas to tell Pacheco that he desired to see him.

Oppas had been gone less than five minutes when the door of Carrero's hut was opened by a short, wiry Tagalog with boyish features. He had scarcely more than closed the door behind him when Carrero spoke.

"Well, Pacheco, another hour will find the women and the priest in readiness," he said.

The face of the Tagalog brightened.

"You have seen her—the colonel's daughter?"

"Yes. You will find her ready to do our will. Her lover, Captain Longaker, has been captured with his command. Devoges is now bringing him hither. It is well, perhaps, to have an American or two sign as witnesses of the ceremony."

Pacheco gasped with astonishment.

"Devoges has taken Longaker!" he exclaimed.

"Horse, foot, and dragoons," laughed Carrero. "He has come to seek an introduction to you, Señor Pacheco, and we will now give him that pleasure."

"Your good news has completely eclipsed mine, señor," Pacheco said, with a smile. "When I met your messenger, I was on my way here to tell you that Forrester and eight of his men are here."

Carrero nodded gravely.

"We'll line them up with Longaker and his men," he said. Then, after a pause, he added: "Martinez was not with them, I suppose."

"Alas, no, señor!"

Carrero rose impatiently.

"Where the devil can the fellow be?" he muttered. "The only person of whom we knew who was able to reveal his whereabouts was Candolida, who died under the torture, rather than give us the knowledge that we sought. If we could locate Martinez and cause him to be informed that his sister is here, his pride and hot temper might once again get the better of him and make him sufficiently reckless to fall into our hands."

"With Martinez in our grip we can make our peace with Spain. I have a long score to settle with him, and I think I am in a fair way to wipe out a part of it in the next few hours. Have the trees been talking to-night?"

An expression of profound gravity overspread the usually lively features of Pacheco.

"Yes," he answered thoughtfully. "My men report that twice within the hour that preceded the capture of Forrester messages went to him out of the forest."

"And some of your men were able to understand the signals?"

"Alas, no, señor. The signals are those that are used by the natives of Mindanao."

"Who can be sending them?" Carrero mused.

"Some of my men from the coast say that old Sanchez——"

"The devil take him!" Carrero exclaimed. "Little did I think when I had the old fool in my power that he had it in him to make us so much trouble."

"It is said that he was in Mindanao in his youth."

"Devoges understands the signals, I believe."

"Yes."

"Ah, well, he will soon be here. Perhaps he, too, has heard them while coming from the coast. If——"

He stopped as a sudden change came over the face of Pacheco. The figure of the Tagalog grew rigid, then, with a little cry, he turned and ran out of the door.

Carrero, following him, saw him halt a few paces distant from the shack. He appeared to be listening attentively.

Then the Spaniard heard it too—a low, booming sound that rolled along the valley.

"What is it?" the Spaniard demanded impatiently as the sounds died away.

Pacheco shook his head gravely.

"It is a Tagalog message, señor, and it says: 'Carrero, beware. All the foreign devils are loose!'"

Despite his many faults, Juan Carrero possessed in full measure the quality of physical courage. When his destiny led him in pleasant places he was often distinguished by the violence of his temper, but when the faces of others blanched in the presence of some great danger Carrero invariably grew calm.

At such times his eyes were always brightest and every movement was marked by deliberation. Though he thought quickly, his speech and gestures appeared slower than at other times.

And so it was that when Pacheco, laboring under great excitement, repeated the message that he had received, Carrero quietly drew out his watch, glanced at its face thoughtfully, then returned it to his pocket before he spoke.

"Who sends the message?" he asked quietly.

"Alas, señor, I do not know."

"From what direction did it come?"

"From the northeast."

"Devoges is coming from the southeast."

"Yes, señor. It was from the northeast that Forrester was brought in."

Carrero, puffing his cigar, leaned against the table and gazed meditatively at the floor. After a pause that lasted several minutes he said:

"Pacheco, I said that in an hour you

and I should have brides. We will have them now. Go to Señor Fernandez and bid him have the women and the priest in readiness. Wait for me there. I will be with you in five minutes. On your way out send Oppas to me."

Pacheco left the room, and a few moments later Oppas entered it.

"Go to the quarters of Señor Banquil and tell him to get our whole force under arms," Carrero commanded. "Tell him also to have three companies mounted and equipped for a long pursuit."

Oppas went out. Carrero lighted a fresh cigar, then followed him. By the time the Spaniard arrived at the hut in which the two American women were detained as prisoners, the whole camp was astir. At the door of the hut Carrero was joined by Pacheco.

"Where are Forrester and his men?" Carrero asked.

"In the pen by the river."

"Tell Banquil to have them brought here at once and lined up in front of this shack. Let their guards be armed with rifles and sharp bolos."

Pacheco nodded, then disappeared. Carrero entered the hut, in the center of the room stood a Spanish friar. Despite the fact that he was only about forty years of age, his skin was as yellow as old parchment. His black, deep-set eyes gleamed like burning coals under his corrugated forehead. In one corner of the hut stood Harriet Secor and Flora Endicott. Both were colorless and in their eyes shone the light of a great fear.

Carrero, removing his hat, smiled as he bowed to the two women. Then turning to the priest he said:

"I regret, Señor Padre, that I have been compelled to summon you so abruptly. I am informed, however, that the enemy is making some movement that will necessitate my departure from the camp. For this reason I am obliged to hasten the ceremony of which I spoke to you this afternoon."

The priest made no reply, and for several moments the stillness of the room was unbroken. Then the door opened and Pacheco appeared.

"Are the prisoners outside?" Carrero asked.

"Not yet, señor. Some minutes must pass before they are brought from the pen."

Carrero nodded and again turned to the priest.

"We are ready, Señor Padre," he said. "Señor Pacheco and myself are known to you. Señora Flora Endicott will honor me by becoming my wife. Señorita——"

"Stop!" commanded Mrs. Endicott, in a low, tense voice.

The tall priest, whose hands, clasped in front of him, were moving nervously, bowed abruptly and stepped back.

Carrero turned to Mrs. Endicott, and said calmly:

"Were circumstances more favorable, my dear señora, I should be prepared to listen to your protestations and submit my arguments against them. But now we will have to postpone such a discussion until after the ceremony.

"Major Forrester and eight of his men are on their way here to sign as witnesses to the two marriages which the Señor Padre has come here to celebrate. These signatures will win their freedom. When they are obtained, we will send the nine men to the coast and set them at liberty. If their signatures are not appended to the two marriage certificates in the next ten minutes, the nine men will die, knowing that they owe their deaths to you."

Harriet suffered a little cry of horror to escape her, and drew closer to Mrs. Endicott. Carrero went on:

"Captain Longaker and his detail also are our prisoners, and will be here in a few minutes. If they arrive before the completion of the ceremony they, too, will meet the fate to which you condemn Major Forrester and his comrades."

Harriet gave a little gasp and, reeling, would have fallen had not the right arm of Mrs. Endicott supported her.

"And, señora, there is one thing more. Your brother——"

The warm blood surged to Mrs. Endicott's face and neck, and her eyes flashed ominously as she exclaimed:

"My brother! Oh, you lying coward! Do you think that if my brother knew how you had led me into the snare that you have spread out for me, he would

not have found a way to take me from your hands?

"You made me believe that you had him in your power—that his heart had failed him and that he was willing to have me purchase his liberty. But you lied to me. He is free, and, despite your reputation for courage, you tremble at the very mention of his name. You——"

Carrero shrugged his shoulders.

"All that has been said, señora," he said, with an affectation of weariness.

"But time presses. The priest is here, and the two marriage certificates are duly drawn up and only await the ceremony to receive their signatures. Delay longer and the blood of every American in Central Luzon shall be upon your heads. Come, Señor Padre, let us——"

The saffron-faced priest shook his head.

"You forget, señor, that while a brigand may hold up and rob a priest of his gold, no miscreant, however devoid he may be of Christian feeling, may rob the church of any of her sacred offices," he said.

"This is neither a time nor place for the performance of the ceremony of marriage, and it is also apparent that these two women do not seek such a celebration. I cannot compel you to allow them to go their way in peace, but——"

The face of Carrero grew livid. He was about to speak when the priest, raising a protesting hand, went on:

"But I can pronounce and write the words that will keep from every Catholic altar a bandit who would make the Holy Church a party to his crimes."

A crimson flush overspread Carrero's face, and his eyes fell before the stern gaze of the indignant friar. Then, with a shrug of his shoulders, he turned to Mrs. Endicott.

"As you please, then, señora," he said, smiling faintly. "Since you have persuaded the good Señor Padre to withhold the offices of the church, you shall have your way. But Señor Pacheco and I will not be denied our brides.

"Your friends shall die at once, but before the sun goes down to-night the civil law shall have performed that office which the church withholds. And

now, señora and señorita, I go to take your message to your friends."

"Wait—in God's name, wait!" cried Harriet, pale and trembling.

As the words were spoken, Carrero, with an expression of eagerness which he did not attempt to disguise, turned toward Harriet's companion.

"No," Mrs. Endicott murmured softly, as she drew the colonel's daughter closer to her. "It is useless to plead with him for mercy. It is better that he should go. No American soldier would willingly retain life that has been purchased by a woman's honor."

"So be it, then, señora," Carrero answered. "Perhaps when——"

He stopped suddenly. With a crash, the door swung inward, and Devoges, bareheaded and with blood streaming over his face, staggered across the threshold. As he tottered forward, Pacheco grasped him by the arm.

"In the name of the saints, what has happened?" demanded Carrero.

"Hell has opened its gates and all the white devils are out," Devoges gasped. "We took Longaker—others fell on us—massacred my men and released the prisoners. The trees are talking. They say Perigo is dead—that the forest is full of white devils from ships—that Forrester—that Forrester—that——"

As he lurched forward, Pacheco caught him, then laid the inert body on the floor.

"Dead," said Pacheco, as he turned his agitated face toward Carrero.

But Carrero, standing as motionless as a statue, was staring at a figure that stood on the threshold—the figure of a sturdy man in khaki—a man with bronzed features, a drooping sandy mustache and a pair of cold blue eyes that looked into his over the gun-metal barrel of a United States Army revolver.

"Hands up, Señor Carrero!" commanded the intruder.

There was a flash of fire from the right pocket of Carrero's coat.

Lieutenant Crosby Forbes felt a dull, stinging pain in that part of his body that lay under his left upper arm.

"Well done!" he muttered, then he drew back the finger that trembled on the trigger of his revolver, and Carrero went down.

Turning quickly toward the door, Forbes raised a bugle to his lips, and while the notes of "Boots and Saddles" were melting into the forest he saw nine gaunt white men, with heavily bearded faces, halt suddenly in front of the hut. Around them forty or fifty armed Tagalogs stood as if rooted to the ground, staring at him with eyes that fairly bulged with wonder.

As Forbes removed the bugle from his lips he heard behind him the startled cry of a woman.

Then, turning abruptly, he saw a panic-stricken Filipino standing beside the body of Devoges. The two women were gazing toward an open window.

Juan Antonio Carrero was gone!

CHAPTER XIX.

"THE KING OF DEVILS."

IN order that none of the details of this adventure of Lieutenant Crosby Forbes be wanting, it will be necessary to return to the point of the narrative where we left him with Devoges, Yost, and the nine men of his detail, just as dawn began to break over the hills.

It will be remembered that at this time Devoges had assured Forbes that another quarter of an hour would find the little party at the camp of Carrero.

This assurance had scarcely been given when Forbes, Devoges, and Yost, rounding a curve in the road, saw something that caused them to rein in their mounts.

A tall, haggard man, dressed in a ragged and badly soiled white suit and mounted on a Timor pony, suddenly loomed up ahead of them. The stranger was unmistakably a Caucasian. As he faced Forbes and his companions, the shadowy figures of six or eight Tagalogs, also mounted, were to be seen at a little distance behind him.

The stranger, dropping his bridle-rein, raised both hands in a manner that indicated pacific intentions. He opened his lips and was about to speak when Devoges, leaning toward Forbes, said softly:

"Señor Carrero!"

In a moment Forbes' revolver was out of its holster and was leveled at the stranger's breast.

"A friend—a friend to all Americans," cried the man with the upraised hands.

"Señor Carrero, I believe," said Forbes, still holding his revolver as before.

"No—in God's name, no!" the other answered, as his hands fell to his sides.

Suddenly the face of the speaker changed.

"Stop him—stop!" he cried wildly. "There—your man is gone!"

And as he spoke, Devoges, who had leaped from his pony, crashed through the bushes.

Yost was the first to send a shot after the fugitive, then two or three of the men discharged their weapons into the brushwood.

"Look to him," Forbes shouted, as, waving an arm toward the stranger, he threw himself from his horse and plunged into the tangle through which Devoges had fled.

"Ride on," he cried as he disappeared from the view of his followers.

Ahead of him Forbes heard the crackling of sticks—a muttered curse in Spanish, then all was still. He came to a little clearing, but in the circling brushwood he saw no opening that revealed the direction taken by the fugitive. He hesitated only a moment, then plunged blindly on, through the mass of vines and branches.

For nearly five minutes the American fought his way through the shrubbery. Briers and the sharp points of rebounding branches had torn his hands and face. At length the tangle became so formidable that it seemed almost impenetrable, and, realizing that he had lost all trace of the fugitive, Forbes had about decided to return to the road when, scarcely more than fifty yards in front of him, he heard the strokes of a club falling on the roots of one of the "talking trees."

Were the sounds being produced by Sanchez or Devoges?

Once more he resumed his fight with the jungle growth, and just as the sounds ceased, he found himself again on clear ground. Then, in the light of the early dawn, he saw the white-clad figure of a native who was running with jaded, uncertain steps. The fugitive, turning to look behind him, revealed his features.

It was Devoges!

The mestizo, perceiving that he was followed, quickened his pace. Forbes, still strong in wind, was content to keep the same distance between them. Down the slope of a little hill they ran and came to a valley where, near the bank of a stream, the American saw a cluster of nipa shacks. The pursuer now began to gain perceptibly on the pursued. Twice Devoges stumbled, but he kept his feet. Then Forbes saw him throw open the door of the largest of the huts and disappear from view.

As he continued to run on, Forbes saw a group of white men, surrounded by armed Filipinos, moving toward the hut in which Devoges had disappeared. He knew they were Forrester's men and their guards. But he gave them no heed.

"All roads lead to Carrero," he had said to Longaker, and he was now at the end of one of them. The boys in khaki were traversing two others, and would be here soon. Dead or alive, Carrero must be here to meet them! Something within him made him confident that it was to Carrero that Devoges had been fleeing. It mattered not to Crosby Forbes how many of the Spanish renegade's adherents were in his camp. He would meet him face to face. Longaker and the boys would see to the rest.

The scene that followed the appearance of Devoges in the hut has already been described.

After sounding the bugle and turning to find that Carrero, whom he had believed to be either dead or grievously wounded, had escaped, Forbes, with an oath, rushed from the shack. Before him stood the astonished Filipinos and their prisoners. The window through which Carrero had plunged was on the other side of the hut, and—well, psychological moments are only moments after all.

Carrero was gone. His prisoners, still helpless, were there, but their guards had not yet recovered from the confusion that had been caused by this grim, lone, bugle-breathing warrior in the center of their camp.

With his right hand still grasping his revolver, and with the bugle dangling at his left side, Forbes moved deliberately toward the guards who surrounded the prisoners.

"Surrender or we fire!" he commanded, as his left hand pointed toward the fringe of forest from which he had issued at the heels of Devoges scarcely a minute before.

Several rifles and bolos fell clattering to the ground, and some of the guards, assuming crouching attitudes, started toward the stream.

"Fools—fools, can't you see he is alone!"

The voice was Carrero's, and as Forbes turned quickly he saw the Spaniard in the act of mounting a large, powerfully built white horse in the rear of the shack.

But the cry came too late. With one of the bolos that had been thrown away, Forbes had cut the ropes that bound the arms of one of the captives. Before the hesitating guards recovered their wits the nine prisoners were free and armed.

With an oath, Carrero thrust his spurs into the sides of his steed and charged. Forbes, having finished with Forrester and his men, turned suddenly and fired. Carrero's mount stumbled, and just as its rider's revolver was discharged in the air the animal fell.

Forbes rushed toward where Carrero was extricating himself from his stirrups, but as the lieutenant ran, a lithe, boyish figure leaped before him and the blade of a bolo flashed before the American's eyes. He dodged the stroke as it fell, but as he fired at his assailant, a company of Filipinos suddenly hid Carrero from his view.

Behind him the sounds of rifles and American oaths assured him that Forrester and his men had found themselves again; then, all unmindful of the numbers of the men who now surrounded Carrero, Forbes again pressed forward, firing as he ran. At last the hammer of his revolver fell on an empty shell.

He seized a bolo, and as he dealt out vigorous blows to left and right he saw, in the crush that surrounded him, the head and shoulders of Carrero. The natives, hampered in their action by the press of their own men around their intended victim and awed by the terrible effects of the sweep of the long arm and its merciless bolo, began to give way.

"It is the king of devils!" shouted the voice of a native.

Carrero leaped forward, and his drawn sword rattled against the American's bolo.

The end of the American's weapon was blunt; that of Carrero came to a point which twice or thrice was dangerously near the breast of Forbes. But despite his girth of chest and massive limbs, the stocky American had the agility of a panther, and he handled his rude, inferior weapon with a skill that a *maitre d'arms* might well have envied.

The duel occupied only a few seconds. The ground of that Luzon valley was not the floor of a fencing school, and the days of chivalry were gone.

It was a bolo in the hand of the wounded Pacheco that brought the single combat to an end—a bolo that smote Forbes on the right temple and sent him to the ground. It was Carrero, however, who leaped forward to finish the fallen man with a sword thrust.

The blow he meditated was never dealt. In the heat of the combat in which he had been engaged, Carrero, confident that his men were reducing their former prisoners, did not suffer the sounds of their struggle to divert him from his duel. Accordingly he had failed to hear sturdy American cheers issue from another direction, and it was not until he advanced to thrust his blade into the breast of the unconscious Forbes that he saw that four mounted men, attired in khaki uniforms, were riding toward him at a furious pace.

As the revolvers of the newcomers flashed out their jets of fire, Carrero's bodyguard gave way. One "white devil" had been sufficient to inspire them with respect. These four, riding shoulder to shoulder, overwhelmed them with fear, and they fled.

Carrero, finding himself deserted, did not stay. A riderless horse was standing near him. He seized the bridle and was about to leap into the saddle when Forbes, raising himself to a sitting posture, grasped a fallen rifle, and as he fired the steed went down.

The Spaniard flashed one dark look upon the grim-faced man he had intended to slay, then as Forbes again pulled the trigger of the rifle, Carrero plunged into the waters of the stream.

As Forbes made a desperate effort to

regain his feet, he heard hoofbeats hammering the turf around him. He turned his bloodstained face toward one of the riders and pointed to the figure of a man, who was up to his armpits in water.

"At him—at him, Yost—it's Carrero!" he cried.

The rifle fell from his hands; he lurched forward and lay with his face resting on the torn ground.

"Carrero!"

The speaker was the mysterious stranger whose sudden appearance had enabled Devoges to escape.

"On, on! It is Carrero!"

Yost and his three companions, who had involuntarily drawn rein as they saw the plight of Forbes, now thrust their spurs into the sides of their mounts and sped on after the stranger. But his steed was fresher than theirs. When they had forded the stream, the stranger had disappeared in the forest.

A few moments later two shots rang out of the depths of the wilderness. Yost and his three men, now compelled to abandon their horses as they entered the woodland tangle, pressed on. At last they came to a little clearing. Here the stranger lay upon the ground.

Realizing that further pursuit of the Spaniard would be useless, Yost decided to proceed no further. Then, kneeling down beside the fallen man, Yost saw that he had been shot in the breast, but that, though dying, he still was conscious.

"So he's winged you, comrade," said Yost, with the rough sympathy of a man to whom a sight of this sort was neither new nor strange.

The dying man nodded faintly.

"Yes," he answered in a voice that was scarcely louder than a whisper. "For the first time in his life Carrero has kept a promise that he has made to me—the only sort of promise that he never breaks. Alonzo Martinez will trouble him no more."

CHAPTER XX.

THE BURIED HATCHET.

"YES," said Crosby Forbes, stroking his long mustache and elevating his brows in a manner that was peculiar to

him when he was inclined to be skeptical. "Yes, Yost, it explains many things, but it does not make them clear."

Forbes and Yost were standing together on the beach where their expedition had been landed. It was the afternoon of the day following that on which Carrero's force was routed. A few hundred yards off shore the Bojeador, white, spick and span, was riding lazily on the long, broad land swells as it lay at anchor.

The twenty-four hours that followed the conflict in the little valley found the Americans with much to talk about and little to do. In the fight two of Longaker's men were slain, and five were wounded, thus leaving him with Forbes, Yost, and thirteen cavalymen and five bluejackets. Two of Forrester's men were killed a few moments after they recovered their liberty, and the others, exhausted by their privations were unfit for further service.

Forrester was delirious as a result of wounds and fever, and, unable to ride, was borne to the sea in a buffalo cart. More than this, confidential talks with Sanchez and the priest whom Carrero had taken showed that owing to the misrepresentations made to the military department by Devoges, its belief that small expeditions, supported by friendly natives, would be effective in Central Luzon had no foundation in fact.

The "Native Constabulary" in that part of the island was an altogether mythical institution. Carrero thus far had been the uncontested master of all. What effect the late rout of the leader would have upon the inhabitants was uncertain.

In view of the fact that Major Forrester was in no condition either to assume command of the expedition or to discuss plans for a continuation of its work, the decision lay with Longaker. He, after a long conference with Forbes, decided that, under the circumstances, a pursuit of Carrero would be impracticable.

The original purpose of the expedition had been accomplished. Pacheco had been recognized by Forrester, who, with his own hands, had taken him prisoner. The duplicity of Devoges had been proved, and the mestizo had fallen

a victim to one of the bullets fired at him while he was escaping from Forbes.

Miss Secor and Mrs. Endicott had been rescued, and though both showed the effects of the severe mental strain of the ordeal through which they had passed, physically they were little the worse for their experience.

The dead were buried; the wounded had been sent to the Bojeador, where the ship's surgeon awaited them, and there seemed to be nothing more that the commander of the expedition could reasonably expect to accomplish with his small force. Accordingly it was decided to return to Manila.

In the huts from which Carrero and his supporters were driven so unceremoniously, the Americans found an unexpected amount of spoil. In the Spaniard's shack was a box containing Spanish and American coins and bank-notes—not in large quantities, but of an amount sufficient to give satisfaction to the American troopers, among whom it was equitably divided. Of this the faithful Sanchez received a share. Besides, there were several cases of rifles and ammunition which apparently had arrived on the Freda and had not been distributed.

During their brief stay at the scene of the late battle, Longaker and Forbes occupied Carrero's hut. While they were discussing their future plans in the place left vacant by the Spaniard, Forbes observed that an end of one of the floor planks had less dust at its junction with the wall than had the others. It was not until Longaker, going to make one of his numerous calls on Miss Secor, had left him alone, that the old campaigner made an investigation.

Under the board he found a badly battered black tin despatch box. The lock was broken, so he raised the lid. He had glanced at only two or three of the papers, however, when a dark flush came to his face and a muttered oath fell from his lips. He quickly replaced the papers which he had started to examine, and closed the cover of the box deliberately.

He tapped the box thoughtfully for several minutes. As he heard the sound of approaching footsteps, he quickly returned it to the place from which he had taken it. The footsteps passed the hut

and their sound finally died away in the distance. Forbes continued to commune with his conscience.

"I daresay I should report the finding of these to the commander of the expedition," he soliloquized, "but the lad is young, and there are many things in the service he doesn't understand as well as does one Crosby Forbes.

"The papers may be departmental in their nature, but I guess old Purdy won't harbor a grudge against me when I give them to him with the assurance that no other eyes than mine have fallen on them since they came into my hands."

Among the effects abandoned by Carrero in his flight was a handsome silver-mounted bridle. Forbes asked to be allowed to keep this as a souvenir of the expedition, and Longaker laughingly gave assent. Forbes, in Longaker's presence, placed the bridle in a small packing box, but when the captain went out the bridle was thrust under the loose board in the floor, and the black despatch box was placed in the little packing case.

This done, Forbes nailed on the cover and marked it with his name. In this manner it was transported to the Bojeador. There in accordance with his instructions, the box was placed under the berth appropriated to his use.

The finding of these papers led Forbes to infer that their loss would be a severe blow to Carrero, who, doubtless, would go to any possible length to regain possession of them.

Accordingly, he counseled Longaker to return to the shore with as much expedition as was practicable, giving as his reason for such advice the belief that as soon as scouts reported to Carrero that he had been put to flight by a mere handful of men he would make an attempt to cut off their retreat.

Being now responsible for the safety of the two women, Longaker, who still was loth to abandon the pursuit of Carrero, decided to go to the gunboat.

Since the action with Carrero, Forbes, weakened by the blow he had received on the head—a blow which though sufficiently serious to put him out of action for the time being was really nothing more than an exceedingly severe scalp wound—kept to the hut. He had seen Yost for only a few moments, and it was

not until they stood together on the beach that he learned from Yost the circumstances attending the death of Martinez.

It was not until Yost mentioned the name of the stranger that Forbes displayed any evidence of more than ordinary interest. Then, however, he gave a perceptible start.

"Martinez!" he exclaimed.

The effect produced on the lieutenant by the pronouncing of that name was not lost on the wondering Yost.

"Did you know him?" the corporal asked.

"No—no," drawled Forbes as he stroked his mustache. "No. I did not know him, but——"

He stopped abruptly.

"I had a talk with one of Forrester's men to-day," Yost went on. "He told me that Forrester and this Martinez had been in communication, but had never met. It seems that Martinez, like Carrero, was at one time in the Spanish army."

"I believe so," Forbes said shortly.

Yost looked at the lieutenant curiously, then in an apologetic tone he murmured:

"I thought that perhaps the fact that Martinez had been in communication with Forrester might explain that mysterious heliograph message you got just before we landed from the Bojeador."

"Yes," said Forbes. "Yes, Yost, it explains many things, but it does not make them clear." He paused for a few moments, then he added: "Don't do too much talking on this subject to the boys."

Longaker approached.

"This is the last boat, Forbes," he said, as he pointed to a white ship's boat that awaited them on the beach.

The three men quickly embarked on the little craft, which was then pushed off from the shore. The surf was light and in a few minutes they were aboard the Bojeador.

The anchor was already up and as soon as the officers of the expedition were aboard, the screw of the gunboat began to churn the water and the trim little vessel was started on its voyage to the south.

After the escape of Carrero, and prior to the sailing of the Bojeador, Forbes

was only twice in the presence of the two women who had been the Spaniard's prisoners.

Three or four hours after the battle they, accompanied by Longaker, came to the shack in which he was lying and, in words apparently as sincere as few, had expressed to him the gratitude they felt toward him for his bold exploit.

The attitude of Mrs. Endicott caused him considerable surprise. Though her manner was reserved, it revealed no trace of the dislike, almost amounting to vindictiveness, with which Longaker had inspired her in the past.

She was very pale and, as Forbes watched her closely, he fancied that he detected in her manner something that indicated mental preoccupation allied to nervous apprehension.

Twice or thrice she looked at him with a curious, searching expression, then, when he returned her gaze he saw her glance uneasily about the rude apartment in which he lay. It was while reflecting on these strange, searching glances, that he chanced to discover the loose board under which he afterward discovered the tin despatch box.

He did not see her again until she and Harriet Secor were seated in the buffalo cart which was to take them to the coast. He was looking at her when she first became aware of the fact that he was in the act of passing. Her face flushed suddenly, and once again the searching expression came into her eyes.

Then, smiling slightly, she bowed in response to his respectful salute, and in her rich, soft voice, she asked him whether he still felt any ill effects from his recent wound.

When he replied, Miss Secor, turning from Longaker, joined in the brief conversation.

Seeing that Longaker was now spending with the two women all the time that he was able to spare from the responsibilities incident to his command, Forbes several times questioned him concerning the changed attitude of the woman who, in former years, had made no attempt to conceal her hatred of him.

"It looks as if she had buried the hatchet so deeply that it is not likely to be dug up again, Forbes," Longaker answered laughingly.

"I dare say, however, that some day when she is able to get me off my guard that hatchet and my hapless head will come in conjunction, but, as I see her now, I find myself wondering how I came to be possessed of sufficient control to resist her in those days when she deluded me into believing that she was making love to me."

Forbes, stroking his mustache, shook his head dubiously.

"Better watch the hatchet, lad," said he.

On board the *Bojeador*, Lieutenant Tappan, the commander of the gunboat, placed his cabin at the service of the ladies, and, at their request, orders were given to the Japanese steward to serve their meals there. Longaker and Forbes shared a two-berth stateroom, and under one of the berths the box supposed to contain Carrero's bridle was placed.

The *Bojeador* was scarcely more than under way when the men who had come from the shore, worn out by the fatigue and lack of sleep incident to their thirty-six hours' campaign, cast themselves into the hammocks the sympathetic blue-jackets had slung for them.

The two women, who had retired to their cabin as soon as they came aboard, partook of a light luncheon, then lay down and slept for the first time since they had landed from the *Freda*.

Longaker spent the rest of the afternoon in his berth. After receiving the ministrations of the ship's surgeon, who dressed his wound, Forbes seated himself by the side of the sleeping captain and smoked for more than three hours.

A sharp rap on the door dispelled the lieutenant's reverie and roused the captain from his sleep. Forbes opened the door and there found a steward who informed him that dinner would be served in a quarter of an hour.

When the officers had slapped some of the dust from their khaki, washed their faces and hands and brushed their hair, their dinner toilets were complete.

Forbes was the first to leave the room. When he returned at the expiration of about five minutes, Longaker was still there. The lieutenant thrust a key into his friend's hands.

"Lock up, this room whenever you go out, lad," he said shortly.

Longaker smiled as he glanced around the room.

"We have nothing to lose, old man, so far as I can see," he replied.

"No," said Forbes. "But we may succeed in preserving the self-respect of some one who may think we have, and so be tempted to investigate."

Longaker paled slightly and darted a quick look toward the imperturbable face of the lieutenant.

"You still suspect that Mrs. Endicott is in some measure responsible for the sending of our expedition," he said thoughtfully. "I think, however, you are wrong. She is a woman——"

"Yes," drawled Forbes, "she is all of that. And so I think we'd better use the keys."

CHAPTER XXI.

OVERHEARD BY THE CAPSTAN.

FORBES, pipe in mouth, his hands thrust into the pockets of his trousers, was leaning against the capstan on the forward deck of the *Bojeador*, and gazing meditatively across the moonlit waters toward the thin, dark coast-line of Luzon.

Three hours had passed since dinner. Refreshed by their afternoon sleep and reinvigorated by their dinner, the men of Longaker's command, lounging near the bow, were again fraternizing with the bluejackets, who were listening to their accounts of the expedition.

The head of Forbes was aching as a result of his wound. His hat was off, and from time to time he raised his hand and pressed the bandage that covered the cut inflicted by the bolo of Pacheco.

But despite these occasional and almost involuntary movements, it was not of his wound that he was thinking—it was of the story that Longaker had told him concerning the manner in which Miss Secor and Mrs. Endicott had been taken aboard the *Freda*.

Señora Lamores, the wife of one of the wealthiest of the Spanish merchants of Manila, gave a ball to which certain American officers and their wives and daughters were invited. Colonel Secor, who was a widower, cared little for society, and, moreover, on the evening of the ball he was engaged with General

Purdy in a conference that had to do with sending the expedition against Pacheco. Mrs. Endicott had accepted as her escort Lopez Pacol, the representative in the Philippines of a large Spanish commercial company, and it had been arranged that Miss Secor should accompany them.

The ball was still at its height when Mrs. Endicott and Miss Secor decided to return to their hotel. Pacol called a carriage, and the three entered the vehicle together. They had proceeded only a little way, however, when the native driver reined in his horses in response to a cry from some one on the sidewalk of the Escolta, through which they were passing.

Pacol quickly leaped out and after exchanging a few hurried words with a Spaniard who had run toward them, he, in a low voice, gave to the driver instructions which the women in the carriage were unable to hear.

As Pacol took his seat, he turned to the two women, and in an excited manner informed them that there was a revolt in the city, and that orders had been issued to send all American women to ships in the harbor, without delay.

"The uprising is not serious and will soon be put down," Pacol explained. "But, in the meantime, the American officers want all their women relatives out of the town."

The horses attached to the carriage were now advancing at a full gallop toward the harbor. The fact that they were being deceived did not occur to either of the women, who, convinced by the agitated words addressed to them by Pacol, placed themselves entirely under his protection. It was not until they were aboard the *Freda* that they were undeceived—that they realized that they were in the hands of friends of Carrero.

The name of the renegade Spaniard was unknown to Miss Secor. Mrs. Endicott, however, knew all.

The two women were treated with the greatest possible consideration during the voyage, but were at a loss to understand Carrero's motive in taking them prisoners. It was not until they met him face to face, after their landing, that they knew.

Within thirty-six hours after their

meeting with Carrero, Forbes appeared, and they were free.

This was the story that Longaker, on the authority of the two women, had told to Forbes. The lieutenant had heard it without venturing any comment. Longaker, somewhat taken aback by his old friend's apparent lack of interest, had not referred to the subject afterward.

On this evening, however, Longaker sought out Forbes, shortly after dinner, and invited him to join the little party which, consisting of the two women, Lieutenant Tappan, and himself, was seated on camp-chairs at the stern of the boat. But Forbes declined.

"My head is aching a bit to-night," he explained. "The breeze is better up forward, and by and by, when I get enough of it, I'll turn in."

"Anyhow, I'm no woman's man, lad. Tappan likes the game better than I do, and doubtless will be willing to entertain the widow while you and Miss Secor plan your life campaign together."

So Longaker, turning on his heel, went aft, leaving Forbes to nurse his bandaged head in whatever manner seemed most conducive to his peace of mind.

Forbes had just decided to turn in for the night, and was knocking the ashes out of his pipe, preparatory to going below, when he became conscious of the fact that Mrs. Endicott was approaching him. He bowed stiffly, and slipped his pipe into one of his pockets.

"Captain Longaker tells me that your wound is bothering you to-night," said Mrs. Endicott, giving him a glance that bespoke womanly sympathy.

"A little headache—that is all," Forbes answered, smiling faintly. "A crack like that on the head is always at its worst the day after it is given."

Mrs. Endicott glanced significantly toward three or four folded camp-chairs that were piled on a low hatchway a couple of paces from where he stood. The suggestion expressed by the glance was calmly ignored by the lieutenant.

There were a few moments of embarrassment, then Mrs. Endicott, laughing a little nervously, said:

"Lieutenant, there are some chairs behind you. Let us sit down."

Forbes bowed, and with perfect de-

liberation unfolded two of the chairs and placed them in such a manner that the occupants should be facing each other. For several moments Forbes and Mrs. Endicott sat in silence. The woman was the first to speak.

"It is several years since we last met," she said.

"Seven," Forbes replied, as he thoughtfully stroked his tawny mustache.

"Seven!" repeated Mrs. Endicott, with an expression of surprise. "I should have said it was nearer ten."

"It is ten years since you last did me the honor to address me at Fort Myer—ten years since you became the wife of Endicott. But it is seven since I met you at Governor's Island one fine morning. I saluted you, but you did not reply."

"True—I remember now," she said softly. Then, after a pause, she added:

"You will not deny, however, that you had done me a wrong that it would be difficult for any woman to forgive."

Forbes shrugged his shoulders slightly as he answered:

"I never took that view of it, I'm afraid. It was not a woman's matter. Unlike most non-commissioned officers, I enjoyed a large measure of the confidence of my colonel. I had every reason to believe that, taking advantage of your friendship with Captain Endicott, your brother, an attaché of the Spanish Legation, was engaged in the making of maps and the collection of data relating to the military defenses of Washington. Accordingly I so reported."

"You knew that I was engaged to Captain Endicott, and that such a charge might have resulted in the severance of our relations."

"I knew you were a Spanish woman who, naturally, had little interest in the honor of our military service. Captain Endicott was an officer in the United States Army, and it appeared to me that—well, that your brother was engaged in work that might cost Captain Endicott his commission and dishonor the service."

"You are satisfied that that service has nothing to fear from me now."

"Oh, yes."

The words were spoken so quickly, and with such cheerful assurance, that

Mrs. Endicott gave a little start and glanced quickly toward the lieutenant. She now realized that in placing the chairs Forbes had been careful that her face should be turned toward the moonlight and that his should be in the shadow.

"Captain Longaker is a sort of protégé of yours, I believe," Mrs. Endicott said, after a pause.

"We have been very good friends for several years."

"You knew him when he was serving under my husband—at the time Major Endicott was attached to the Commissary Department?"

"Yes."

Mrs. Endicott hesitated.

"Would it be improper for me to ask whether he ever confided to you any secret concerning the administration of my husband's department?" she asked.

"It might not be improper for you to ask such a question, perhaps," Forbes replied, "but I think you will admit that it would be manifestly improper for me to answer it."

"And why?"

"Because, if he had revealed to me any such secret at a time when he was more or less guided by my advice, it would be a breach of confidence for me to tell you so."

"Ah, he was guided by your advice, then!" exclaimed Mrs. Endicott in a voice that was scarcely louder than a murmur.

"To tell the truth, he seldom needed it," Forbes went on. "Harry Longaker is the soul of honor, and he has the courage of his convictions. Believe me, madam, in the years that are to come he will reflect more credit on the service than any other man I know."

Mrs. Endicott sighed.

"No one has ever doubted your fidelity to those whom you called your friends," she murmured.

Forbes, stroking his mustache, sat straighter in his chair.

"These tropical nights are very beautiful, madam, are they not?" he said.

"I dare say one who is not compelled to think of other things may find them so."

"But, surely, you have nothing dis-

quieting to occupy your mind, now that we are on our way to Manila!" Forbes exclaimed.

"Can you give me your assurance that my troubles are over?"

"I—I, madam? Why, when I met you yesterday I had not seen you for seven years—I had not spoken with you for ten! How, then, should I know the nature of any trouble that you may be so unfortunate as to have?"

There was a pause; then Mrs. Endicott, leaning toward him, said, in a low, trembling voice:

"You might have acquired that knowledge by an examination of the papers contained in the despatch box which you took from the place in which you left Señor Carrero's bridle."

There was a spasmodic movement of the sun-browned hand that had been caressing the tawny mustache. Forbes coughed slightly.

"Oh, indeed!" he said.

CHAPTER XXII.

A MODERN CLEOPATRA.

FORBES fumbled in one of the pockets of his coat and drew out a cheroot.

"May I smoke?"

"Certainly," assented Mrs. Endicott faintly, as she leaned back in her chair.

Forbes lighted the cheroot with a steady hand.

"And so you found the bridle, eh?" he asked in the tone of a man who feels himself called upon to interpolate a few words in a conversation that is indifferent to him.

"Yes."

"Does Longaker know?"

"Have you not told him?"

Forbes, looking at her coldly, saw that she was leaning toward him and that there was a suddenly awakened expression of eagerness on her features.

"No—not yet," he answered.

"Nor have I," said Mrs. Endicott, and as she once more settled herself back in her chair she allowed a sigh of relief to escape her.

"Well?" asked Forbes.

"Well, since you have acquired these papers, you must know that my fate is in your hands." And once more there

was a suggestion of tremulousness in her voice.

"I do not know it."

"You have not read them then?"

Forbes, tugging at his mustache, hesitated.

"I haven't had time to read them all," he answered.

"You know, however, that some of them have to do with me."

"I had suspected as much."

"You had suspected! Why?"

"Because at the time we started from Manila I fancied I saw your hand in the working-out of the plan that resulted in the despatch of this expedition under Longaker."

Mrs. Endicott started, then looked at Forbes with an expression of bewilderment.

"My hand in the sending out of this expedition!" she exclaimed. "Why, what in all the world should I have had to do with it?"

"I dare say the papers will explain," Forbes answered coldly.

Mrs. Endicott appeared to be fairly gasping with astonishment.

"They will not explain that, for it is untrue," she said.

Forbes made no reply.

"What possible motive could I have had for the despatch of the expedition?" she demanded breathlessly.

"Well, it seemed like a sort of forlorn hope, didn't it? And you had little love for Longaker."

There was a little pause, in the course of which Mrs. Endicott again fell back in her chair.

"Ah, I understand you now," she answered. "You believed that hatred for Harry Longaker caused me to have him sent up here to meet his death."

"I do not know, of course. I have said that I had only suspected that you were responsible for his assignment."

"You think, then, that General Purdy is the sort of man who would allow the advice of a woman to influence him in the formation of his military plans."

"General Purdy is a brave officer and an honest gentleman," said Forbes.

"But you think he is weak so far as the influence of my sex is concerned."

"I have not said so. I should be loath to believe it. Taking advantage

of your knowledge of the enemy's plans, it is just possible that you have succeeded in an attempt to win his confidence."

"For the purpose of compassing the death of Captain Longaker?"

"I have said it was just possible."

"Oh!" Mrs. Endicott exclaimed in a tone that was expressive of anger, indignation, and impatience.

She rose quickly and walking to the starboard rail of the vessel, she gazed for several moments toward the distant coast line. Then, with a little shrug of her shoulders, she returned to her chair.

"It is apparent that Captain Longaker has told you of his experience with Major Endicott and myself at the time—well, at the time certain discrepancies were discovered," she said.

He did not answer, and she went on:

"At that time I did what many another faithful wife would do to save her husband's reputation. I was foolish enough, however, to misjudge the man whom I regarded as my husband's enemy. I thought him weak. I found him strong. I liked him less for his strength of character; I respected him the more.

"I humiliated myself in order to try to prevent him from doing his duty. I saw that my effort was vain. Then my husband died by his own hand.

"Harry Longaker and I did not meet again until he entered the camp of Carrero in which I was a prisoner. I had never meditated a vengeful—even an unkind act toward him. Can you not believe this?"

"I will try," said Forbes.

"I knew him to be a man of honor. I felt confident that he would not reveal to any person, except such superior officers who were in a position to demand the knowledge, any of the unfortunate circumstances attending that affair. He has told them to you, and——"

"At that time Longaker, a ranker, had few friends. I was the only person who had his confidence. When he needed the advice of an older man, he was wont to come to me. He knew that what he told me under such circumstances would go no farther."

"He could not seek a worthier mentor," Mrs. Endicott answered softly. "When I mentioned the fact that he had

told you of my misfortune, I did not mean to reproach him. I recognize the fact that a soldier who is so scrupulously faithful to his duty as is Harry Longaker, will never be responsible for making the misfortune of a woman the subject of idle gossip."

"Madam, you are right," Forbes said simply.

"You will believe me, then, when I tell you that I am in no way responsible for the despatch of the expedition that has been led by Captain Longaker?"

"Pardon me, madam, if, in this connection, I recall to your mind what you have said concerning the papers which you mentioned a few minutes ago."

"I have told you they have nothing to do with Captain Longaker."

"Or with the kidnaping of Miss Secor, whom he hopes to make his wife? The circumstances were rather peculiar, were they not?"

A little cry fell from Mrs. Endicott's lips.

"The kidnaping of Miss Secor!" she repeated. "In heaven's name, with what act of baseness are you going to charge me next?"

"This Pacol, who was your escort on that occasion, was an agent of Carrero's, was he not?"

"Circumstances have proved him to be so, certainly," Mrs. Endicott replied. "But I did not suspect it then. He enjoyed an excellent reputation in Spanish society in Manila, and it was at a ball given by one of the best known Spanish social leaders that I met him."

She had been speaking quickly, and now paused for breath. Forbes, smoking placidly, was silent.

"Under the circumstances it is best that I should tell you frankly of the papers which, it is apparent, you have not read. If you had read them, I doubt not that all your suspicions concerning my alleged persecution of Captain Longaker and the kidnaping of Miss Secor would have been promptly set at rest."

"I should be glad to learn how you came to know that the papers were kept by Carrero under the floor of the hut."

"In my presence he drew out the box and referred to some of the documents on the afternoon of the day I was taken to his camp."

"You saw him take the box from under the floor?"

"Yes."

"Good. And now you may tell me, if you will, how it happened that you came to learn that I had substituted the bridle for the box."

"Because while you were out of the hut I went in to take from the box certain documents which, being of a personal nature, I desired to obtain and destroy."

"And so you found the bridle?"

"Yes. From Captain Longaker I learned that you had said you would retain the bridle as a souvenir."

"You did not tell him that you had found it, then?"

"No. I inferred that you intended to take the box to Manila—as a bridle."

"Then you looked for something that you thought might contain the missing box?"

"Yes. I subsequently discovered that a wooden box, supposed to contain the bridle, had been taken to your state-room."

"Ah! And you have not abandoned your intention to get the contents of the box, if you can?"

"No. What is more, I am confident of my ability to get them."

"So? And may I ask you in what manner?"

"By an appeal to your sense of chivalry."

Forbes, turning slowly toward the beautiful woman who, speaking in soft, pleading accents, had laid a hand upon his arm, felt a strange thrill pass through him as he met her eyes.

The moonlight shone full on her face—a face which only a few years before had been acknowledged to be the fairest among those of the wives, sisters, and daughters of the officers in the United States Army—a face that still retained all the freshness of youth.

At length, with a grave shake of the head, Forbes turned away.

"It was Cleopatra's appeal to Mark Antony's sense of chivalry that led him to betray the cause of Rome," he said.

Mrs. Endicott's hand fell from his arm.

"The documents to which I refer have nothing to do with military or gov-

ernment affairs," she explained. "What others there are in the box I do not know. The papers to which I refer consist of letters written by me to Carrero, and are altogether personal in their nature."

Forbes started visibly.

"Ah! while in Manila you were in communication with Carrero, then?"

"Yes."

"The arch-enemy of the United States in the Philippines!"

"Despite this fact, the subject to which the letters related was of a distinctly personal nature."

"I dare say," muttered Forbes shortly.

"Carrero had given me to understand that my brother, an officer in the military secret service of Spain, was a prisoner in his hands."

"Ah—Alonzo—Alonzo Martinez."

"Yes—the same whom, ten years ago, you suspected of taking advantage of my friendship with Captain Endicott in order that he might study the defenses of Washington."

"I remember him. It was Alonzo, then, who was——"

He stopped abruptly.

"Killed yesterday while pursuing Carrero—yes."

"Ah, then, you know."

"Yes. I have not told Captain Longaker of our relationship, however."

There was a long pause. Then Forbes asked:

"What was your brother doing in Luzon?"

"He came here before the Spanish-American War, and has since remained in the Philippines. In accordance with instructions from the Spanish Government he collected a mass of evidence against Carrero—evidence which resulted in Carrero's disgrace in the army. He was ordered to take Carrero, dead or alive.

"For many months Carrero has been trying to run him down, but my brother eluded him. He was the only man in all the world Carrero feared. At length Carrero, writing to me, told me that Alonzo was a prisoner.

"He offered to set him free if I would send to him certain documents which he believed that my brother had entrusted to my care. These I had never seen,

but Carrero would not believe me when I told him so.

"Then he threatened to make it appear that it was through me that he obtained American army secrets of which I could not possibly have had any knowledge. Thus he led me further and further into his snare. He had no intention of kidnaping Miss Secor, who was taken only because she was with me on that night. He took my letters from the despatch box to read to me certain extracts from them and to boldly show me others that he had forged and which bore my signature.

"Finding that I still denied any knowledge of the papers he sought, he planned to get my brother into his power by reason of his love for me. He proposed to make me his wife, in order that my brother might, in a fit of ungovernable anger, lose his discretion, and leave his hiding place to effect my rescue."

"You have been in communication with your brother since you came to the Philippines?"

"No. He had learned that I was here."

"How did he come by a knowledge of the heliograph code of the United States Army?"

Mrs. Endicott shook her head.

"I do not know," she answered sadly. "As a member of the Spanish secret service it was his duty to obtain all such information whenever he had an opportunity to do so. The United States government employs officers for this purpose. The army respects them, does it not?"

Forbes smoked gravely and in silence for several moments.

"Yes," he answered. "I suppose the practise is one of those things that are regarded as fair in war. It is a time-honored maxim that 'all is fair in love and war,' but—well, in time of peace some of us think differently."

"In time of peace we can afford to be merciful," Mrs. Endicott said, smiling sadly, "and since I have assured you that Flora Endicott is not at war with the United States, I feel sure that you will not deny me the favor I ask."

"You mean you wish me to return to you the letters written by you to Carrero?"

"Yes. I have told you that among the letters that bear my signature are several forgeries. Those who do not know me will not believe this. But you—you——"

Leaning quickly toward him, she seized one of his hands and held it in both her own. Her features were working with emotion; the light of her beautiful dark eyes was flashing into his. He attempted to disengage his hand from her grasp, to avoid her gaze, but she would not have it so. He rose, and she was standing by his side.

"You know that I have spoken truth," she went on tremulously. "Others will suspect me of other motives, as you have done, but they will never know that they were wrong. You have my honor in your hands. You——"

Her grasp tightened on the hand she held, and as she looked into his eyes, he felt on his face the warm breath that issued from her red pleading lips.

"You will give them to me?"

Forbes shook his head.

"I cannot. The documents in the box are of such a nature that only General Purdy is qualified to examine them. A mere glance sufficed to show me that. I saw no more. I did not see the papers to which you refer, and do not know that they are there."

"But——"

"General Purdy must receive the box intact. Despite the fact that Longaker is the commander of this expedition, I have not told him what I am taking back. General Purdy, and no other, must assume the responsibility of opening the box, for that little battered shell of painted tin holds the honor of our army in the Philippines."

"If General Purdy sees the letters I have written——"

A little sob choked her words.

"He will not read them," Forbes said quietly.

An expression of astonishment drove from her face all the anguish that had been upon it.

"He will not read them!" she repeated wonderingly. "Why, if——"

As she looked into his eyes, she saw something that seemed to inspire her with new alarm. She tried to withdraw her hands, but Forbes held them firmly.

"Because I have believed you," the lieutenant said in a voice that was husky with emotion. "And because I do believe you, I feel that you have made a fool of me, who, for more than a score of years, has been proof against a woman's wiles."

"I am prepared to learn that I've been deceived, but—but may God pity you, Flora Endicott, if you have that sin to answer for. For twenty years I've fought to win these shoulder straps I'm wearing now. They are dearer to me than my life, but I'll tear them from me and never look upon the old flag again, if I learn that, by making a woman's fool of Crosby Forbes, you've caused him to bring discredit on the service!"

"You—you will give the papers to me?" Mrs. Endicott faltered.

"No—no! God forbid that I should

go so far as that! But I'll stake my honor that you shall receive them, unread, from General Purdy. You have told me that your honor was in my hands. It is you who hold mine now. All may be fair in love and——"

He stopped and dropped her hands. Pale and trembling, though never suffering her gaze to fall from his, she retreated until her back was against a deckhouse.

Then she saw that he, too, was trembling, and that there was an expression of bewilderment on his face. Suddenly his gaze fell; then, turning slowly, he walked toward a companionway, seemingly oblivious of her presence.

As he passed her she heard him mutter to himself:

"And so, after all these years, it's come to Crosby Forbes at last!"

(To be continued.)

A MATE FOR VALERIA.

By Alice Garland Steele.

A LOVE game played on the chessboard of fate in which the bishop's move ended the issue.

MRS. STUYVESANT BELKNAP loosened her furs irritably.

"Dear me, I never was more perplexed in my life! I plan and worry to get you all suitably fixed and married, and you don't help me a bit. Have you the smelling-salts, Molly?"

Molly obediently handed her mother the tiny silver bottle they were always obliged to have "handy," and then sat back again in the Sleepy-Hollow chair. "But, mother dear, Valeria is quite old enough——"

"She's not; she never will be!" Mrs. Belknap spoke with an air of conviction. "Girls are never old enough to decide such things for themselves; you weren't, Molly; you'd have married that Tom Somebody-or-other without a pen-

ny, if I hadn't stepped in and told Mr. Bennet to go ahead."

Molly sighed reminiscently.

"And you'd have lived in a flat and been miserable—instead of having your own brougham and a house at Lenox!"

"But about Valeria"—Molly interrupted quickly—"you say the bishop has asked her?"

Mrs. Belknap drew a long breath. "Yes; yesterday. I was so thankful!"

There was a short pause.

"The bishop is quite old," ventured Molly. "Hasn't he a daughter——"

"Of course he has a daughter. How you talk, Molly! As if that made any difference!"

Molly sighed again. "What did Valeria say?" she asked in afterthought.

"Nothing; positively nothing! That is, nothing definite. She knows how much I wish it, and she *likes* the bishop—why, he *confirmed* her—but she had just come in from walking with that young professor, and I have such a feeling that it made a difference—that she wouldn't decide because——"

Molly smiled. "You mean Professor Morton?"

"Yes, he follows her like a shadow, though I never let her ask him to dinner. Sometimes I think he wants to put Valeria in the glass case with his blue beetles—a sort of dried specimen! Valeria is so dense!"

Molly laughed. "Don't worry, mother. Tell Valeria to come and see me. Let's see, you say the bishop is coming to-night? Tell her to get around some time to-morrow."

Mrs. Belknap rose gracefully. "Yes, I will. I wish you *would* talk to her, Molly. Flo lives so far away, and Beatrice is so flighty—she's always off at some *matinée*—but Valeria would listen to you, and, being married and all that, it would have such weight!"

She paused at the door. "Good-by, Molly. I wish I could afford a brougham like yours. I've got to take the street cars, and it's so dreadful, sitting next to all sorts of persons full of lime and mortar and such things!"

"If only Valeria will marry the bishop I might plan a sort of standing order with Carr's Livery. But I cannot possibly do it *yet*!" With Mrs. Belknap there was always a hopeful future—she never spoke in entire negative.

She waved her hand to Molly, at the window of the great house, and walked rapidly away.

When she got home she found Valeria putting on her hat. "Wherever are you going at this hour, Valeria?"

Valeria lifted her pretty, short-sighted eyes. She was very tall and slender, and had a faculty for treating everything in a grave and serious manner. There was no "fun" in Valeria.

"I'm going to the museum," she said placidly. "Professor Morton wishes me to see some of the new Herculanean relics."

"Valeria!" Mrs. Belknap flushed with excitement. "How *can* you, when we expect the bishop for dinner, and he's coming——"

"I'll be back in time for dinner." Valeria put another pin through and drew her furs around her shoulders.

"But, Valeria, it's highly improper—when you've got to decide such a—such a *momentous* question—to go walking

with another man! You ought to be praying over it—at least, I mean thinking!"

"I shall think," said Valeria decidedly, "on the way."

"I shall snub that Professor Morton the very next time I see him!" Mrs. Belknap spoke savagely.

"Then I shall snub the bishop to-night," said Valeria mildly; and that settled it.

The professor was waiting in the music-room when she came down. He wore glasses which gave him an intellectual air, and he carried, though he was still a young man, a gold-headed cane. He was a most perfect product of a university—the pedagogical course—with a great fund of knowledge of a certain nature, *not* human nature! His eyes lighted as Valeria appeared.

"Well," he said, "are you ready? Shall we go at once? I've been looking up the data in connection with our discussion on the Stone Age, and I find——"

"Yes," said Valeria quickly, "let us go. You can tell me on the way."

At the museum they wandered about among the yellow-white specimens of an ancient and forgotten city. The professor explained satisfactorily, and Valeria listened.

He was like a boy. His face flushed and his smile quickened as he pointed out the characteristics of an art swept away in the tide of the centuries, and she, looking at him, thought how simple he was, and how good—and that nobody half appreciated or understood him!

After a time they sat down to rest in the shadow of a pillar, and then, in a quick little voice, she spoke:

"I want your advice about something."

"My advice, Valeria?"

"Yes," she said hurriedly. "You know the bishop? I think his daughter was at the class day exercises."

"Yes," he said, "I know the bishop."

She seemed suddenly at a loss. "He has asked me——" she said faintly. "That is, he wants me——"

He looked at her mildly. "I shouldn't give him any more than you can afford, Valeria, though I know——"

"It isn't that," she said quickly, "you misunderstand. He doesn't want money. He wants—me!"

"You? What for? To teach?"

"He wishes me to marry him!" Valeria looked away—where through the glass door she caught a glimpse of blue sky and figures walking.

The professor sat up very straight, staring at the grotesque shadows the statues cast on the polished flooring.

"Well," said Valeria sharply, "what ought I to do?"

He started and took off his glasses, clearing his throat. "What do you want to do?" he asked. His voice was a bit shaky. "Do you—like him?"

Valeria considered. She was the soul of truth. "Yes," she admitted, "I—like him!"

The professor rose suddenly. "Then," he said, "there is only one thing to do. He is good and he is rich. Marry him. Come—shall we go now?"

Valeria rose. She shivered a little and drew her furs closer. It was so drafty!

"Yes," she said, "I was forgetting. We expect the bishop to dinner. I must get home."

He looked steadily away from her. They went out, and down the long flight of stone steps.

The late sunlight touched Valeria's hair, and caught the gold rims of the professor's glasses; they must have hurt his eyes, for he took them off once or twice, and sighed as he put them on again.

"We have been—very good friends," he said heavily.

"Yes," said Valeria.

"You have helped me so much—in my work."

"Have I?" said Valeria. "I am glad of that!" They walked on in dull silence.

"And I suppose, of course, it must all end, *now*." The professor's mild voice was quite gruff.

"I suppose so," said Valeria, with just a lingering note of sadness for what had gone by.

At the gate they paused; some children were playing about it, and the clang of the electric cars sounded shrilly from the street outside.

"You are sure," he said—"quite sure—that you like him?"

Valeria knit her brows painfully and considered again. "Oh, yes," she said, "certainly, I like him."

"Come," said the professor, "there's our car!"

When Valeria reached home her mother was talking to the bishop in the library. Valeria passed quickly through the hall and went up-stairs to dress. She took off her hat and cloak and sat down for a moment by the window.

"Yes," she said slowly, "of course I like him. I couldn't tell a lie!"

"Valeria!" called her mother's voice. She was standing in the doorway, her black spangles flashing under the gas-light.

"Valeria—put on your gray gown. I ran up to tell you—and hurry."

"Yes, mother," she said.

When she came down the bishop looked up admiringly. She was like a gentle gray nun, this girl with the quiet eyes; she would make an excellent wife!

She would never get out of temper, and she could manage the Girls' Club, and help him out with the School for Friendless Children—and be with him at all the dinners and receptions they were forever giving in his honor! He had known her always—from the time she was a little child.

It was an excellent dinner, but Valeria ate little. After it was over her mother remembered a very pressing note that she must write. Would they excuse her—for just a little while? And the bishop answered gracefully. As she passed Valeria she whispered: "For my sake, daughter!" and Valeria understood.

They were alone in the library. Valeria sat very still in a corner, and the bishop leaned comfortably back in his favorite leather chair. His face was certainly very kind and benevolent—and not so dreadfully old.

"Well," he said, "my dear, have you decided to let me make you happy?"

It was very prettily put; the bishop always said things in just the right way.

Valeria didn't answer at once; she kept her eyes down, and her lips trembled a little. The bishop rose and went over to her, taking her hand gently.

"I will do my best," he said, "Valeria—and we can do so much good together!"

Valeria looked up at him. "Are you quite, *quite* sure," she murmured, "that it will be best—that you want me?"

"There is no question about that," he said. "I think we were meant for each other. Some marriages are made in heaven. Ours must be that kind, Valeria!"

And so it was settled.

The bishop sat back in his easy chair. There was one thing about an older man, he didn't need eternal love-making, and Valeria, her hands in her lap, was wishing that her mother would come down, and wondering if she had done what she ought to do.

"And I have plenty, Valerie," the bishop was saying. "I can give you everything. It's such a mistake to marry on nothing. Only the other day at the class day exercises a young man asked me if I thought it was honorable to—eh—to take a girl from a beautiful home to less, much less. I told him it was distinctly wrong, and he seemed impressed. I don't think he'll ask her—yet. They mean to do right, these young men."

"Yes," said Valeria, "I suppose so." She looked up with evident relief as her mother came in. The bishop rose.

"Mrs. Belknap—Valeria has promised me—Valeria has taken pity on my loneliness and consented to become my wife!"

Mrs. Belknap lifted her eyes to the ceiling in a duly impressive manner. Her face was flushed, and her eyes held real tears. She pressed the bishop's hand, and then she came over to Valeria.

"Kiss me," she said. "My dear child, I am glad above *all* things! You have made me so happy!"

That night Valeria pondered deeply upon the perfect state—to the uninitiated marriage is the perfect state. She wondered if it wouldn't have been better to become a nun? She thought of her mother's delight and turned wearily on her pillow.

To make others happy—that was surely right! It was more than right; it was a duty! But duty was always horrid. It was only after one did it that it became beautiful!

She rose early and sat down at her writing-desk, with her white prayer-book, that the bishop had given her at confirmation, where she could turn to it in case of need.

She took out a little bundle of letters, some bearing a date away back, stamped with the name of a college town; some quite recent; one only a few days old.

She took out the last and read it.

MY DEAR VALERIA:

About that scarab I picked up the other day. I find it is a treasure over three thousand years old, found in a mummy-case near Abydos. I am having it set in a pin for you. May I bring it Thursday afternoon?

Yours.

RICHARD MORTON.

She fingered it awhile thoughtfully; then she sighed heavily.

"I wonder if it would be wrong," she said, "to keep just one? I wonder if the bishop would mind?" The letters seemed suddenly dear to her, now that she must part with them!

She sighed again, and lighting a candle quickly, before she should lose courage, she held them one by one in the flame, watching the charred ends drop in crisp black fragments on the silver tray.

One she held so long that it burnt her fingers, but she didn't know it! After it was all over she took up a sheet of paper and a pen and wrote:

DEAR FRIEND:

I have done what I hope is right. I have promised the bishop to be his wife. I wanted you to know first of all; we have spent so many pleasant hours together! I would like to keep the scarab, but I am sending it back to you because—because it is a treasure—too great for me.

VALERIA.

After it was sealed and addressed and the pin put back in its satin-lined case, she went down-stairs to breakfast. Her mother was not yet up. She sat at the table alone, trying to eat. As she got up her mother came in.

"Where are you going, Valeria, with your hat on? I have so much to talk to you about."

Valeria paused at the door. "It will keep, mother."

"Yes, of course. But there is so much to decide. If you are to be married be-

fore Lent, there are only three months to do everything! I thought I'd go down to Slade's to-day and order the wedding-dress. It must come from the other side.

"You will need dozens of things. Your outfit must be very rich and quiet. You might wait and discuss it with me, Valeria!"

"Mother," Valeria spoke rapidly, "I can't wait—I must go."

"Oh, well, all right. Stop in at Molly's. I told her you would, and she'll want to hear the news!"

"As if I were the town-crier," thought Valeria hotly as she hurried out. She posted her letter and package, dropping them in the box with a strange reluctance. Then she walked slowly to her sister's.

As the butler let her in Molly came out of the dining-room. "Oh," she said, "it's you, Val. Come in here and let's be comfy!"

Valeria sat down abstractedly.

Molly smiled wisely. "Well," she said, "of course you refused him!"

"He didn't ask me," murmured Valeria, her eyes were far away.

"Why, Valeria, he did! Mother was here yesterday; she said that he had asked you, and you were to give him your answer last night!"

"Oh," said Valeria, "yes, the bishop—I told him I would."

"You would what? Are you sure you're awake, Val?"

"I told him I'd marry him," said Valeria. She turned with sudden anxiety. "Oh, Molly, Molly, it was so hard! I didn't know—do you think I did right?"

Molly caught the pain in her sister's voice. She tapped her foot impatiently on the rug. "Valeria," she said, "you are a dear, silly little fool!"

Valeria stared ahead of her.

"You don't love that man, Valeria—the bishop!"

Valeria started.

"Valeria, do you love him?"

"No!"

For a moment neither spoke; then Molly went over, in a strained little way, and put a chair straight.

"Once," she said, "there was a girl—a very flighty girl—who was in love with

a poor young man, but her mother stepped in and married her to some one—who was rich, and she had a brougham, and a house at Lenox, yet she knew that she had missed——" her voice broke and she covered her face.

Valeria stood up. "Oh," she said, "Molly!"

Molly wiped her eyes.

"It's all so silly, Val dear. But don't, *don't* marry the bishop!"

"I must," said Valeria sharply. "I have promised."

"Then break it," cried Molly. "It's the only way!"

Valeria turned to the door. "I can't," she said. "I have given my word—and it doesn't make—any difference! Good-by, Molly."

She went out into the sunshine, and Molly looked after her silently till she turned the corner, then went up-stairs and put on her hat.

Valeria walked blindly down the street. Her head throbbed painfully.

"It is all wrong," she said, "all wrong. And yet it *seems* right!" There was some one walking behind her, and she quickened her pace.

"Valeria," said a voice. "Valeria!"

She drew up sharply. It was the professor.

"I was just going," he said, "to see you. There is something— Shall we walk in the park awhile?" He spoke hurriedly, as if he had been running.

"Oh, no," she said, "I mustn't." But they turned that way.

He helped her across the curb, and they went through the great gate. It was crisp and cold, and the birds were singing.

"I have been thinking," he said, "over what—you asked me yesterday—about the bishop!"

"Yes?" said Valeria faintly.

"Valeria—I—I didn't tell you to marry him, did I?"

"I am afraid," she said, "you did!"

They turned down a little green path-way. "There is something I must tell you," he said, "before you decide. Are you listening, Valeria?"

"Yes," she said, "go on."

"You gave me to understand—Valeria—that is, you told me that you cared for him. But I can't let you go without

knowing that I care, too—that I have cared a long while—for you! Ever since I was at college—and I thought—till yesterday I dared to think you might—O Valeria, I love you! What else can I say?"

She was biting her lips to keep back the tears. "There is nothing else," she said, "necessary. I have promised to marry the bishop!"

He stopped. "When," he said huskily, "did it happen?"

"Last night."

She kept her face averted, that he might not read it too plainly.

"Oh," he said, "Valeria!"

She sat down on a bench, sobbing. He stood over her, his face quite pale. "What," he said, "are you crying for, Valeria?"

She shook her head.

"Is it because—I have been too late?"

She didn't try to answer. He sat down beside her.

"Listen, dear—I am slow to see things—I have made a mistake, don't let me make another. You are not happy?"

"I am miserable," she cried—"miserable!"

"Valeria, is it because you care—for me?"

She sat up. "It is because," she said quiveringly, "the bishop is good and kind, and I have promised—but I care—for you!"

"Come," said the professor, "let us go!"

He had turned away quickly. She got up and followed him out of the great gate into the noisy street. She put her veil down—the tears were blinding her.

"Richard," she said, "I must go home!"

"I know," he said, "afterward. First let us walk this way."

They walked silently. She kept her eyes down, conscious of only one thing, that he was by her side. Presently he stopped.

"This is the house," he said. "Come, Valeria."

She looked up in sudden alarm. They were in front of the bishop's home.

"Richard, what are you going to do? Richard! I must go home!"

He led her up the steps and rang the

doorbell firmly. A man came to the door. Yes, the bishop was in his library. Would they walk in?

She leaned on his arm helplessly. Her brain refused to act—to think! He led her into the parlor, and then he went into the library—alone!

She waited breathlessly, as the minutes dragged by. Suddenly she could bear it no longer. She rose and went down the wide hallway, standing before the closed door. She could hear nothing!

She drew a deep breath, steadying herself, and pushed it open; then she stopped! The professor was in the bay window, and the bishop was close beside him, with his hand on the young man's shoulder.

"Valeria," the bishop said, "Valeria!"

She came in hurriedly, going straight to the bishop. "I will marry you," she sobbed, "I want to keep my word—I will marry you—to-day!"

She stood before them, her breath coming quickly, her eyes wide and strained.

The bishop held out his hand. "My dear," he said, "why didn't you tell me—before?"

She shook her head. "I didn't know," she said, "before!"

The bishop smiled. He could be very unworldly sometimes. Just now he looked like some old St. John, whose gospel was love.

"Valeria," he said, "it is all right; don't worry!"

She caught his hand. "You are good and kind," she said, "but that isn't it—I must keep my word!"

The professor stood apart, watching them. The bishop paused.

"You are very young, Valeria, and I am quite—quite old! It would be a sort of December and May—and December might blight—all the flowers. That would not be right! Listen. This young man loves you—had I known it before—do you love him, Valeria?"

She bent her head.

"Oh, yes," she said. "I have loved him a long time—but I didn't find it out till to-day."

The bishop sighed. "He is anxious to marry you—now."

"Now?" said Valeria.

"Yes, my dear—now. And what is the use of wasting time? Let me feel that I can make two people happy. That will be a good day's work, Valeria!"

"Now!" she whispered, "now!"

She looked over at the professor; through his gold-rimmed glasses she saw his slow, kind eyes.

"Valeria," he said, "let it be now!"

The bishop was looking with dim eyes at a little book on the table. He took it up in his hand.

"Very well," said Valeria, "I am ready."

"And now those whom God hath joined," said the bishop steadily. Through long use the words had grown familiar—it made it easier, for the lines blurred as he read—and then it was all over!

They went out again into the sunshine, hand in hand, like two children. Valeria spoke once on the way. "And I burned your letters," she said, "this morning!"

"But I have yours," said the professor, "every one!"

As they opened the door of her mother's home the professor paused. "There is a little house," he said, "that I know of—and when we come back from our trip, Valeria——"

Mrs. Belknap and Molly were in the hall. Molly's eyes were red.

"Mother," said Valeria, "the bishop married me this morning——"

"What!" cried the mother.

"To Professor Morton—and I am so happy!"

"Molly!" gasped Mrs. Belknap. "hurry—the smelling salts!"

O'MALLON'S THRILL.

By H. C. Frederic.

ONE of those real sensation makers built to order and calculated to get results. ❀ ❀

THE little semi-patio at Mustang had more than its complement of loungers one morning in June.

The red mud that was pouring out of the Rio Grande down-shore, had drifted up the coast, perhaps on the edge of the Gulf Stream, and had put a stop to tarpon fishing, and four or five anglers were lying in hammocks and steamer chairs, looking at the gleaming scales nailed to the wall that told a series of stories which in cold print would not have been accepted as the truth by the average man or woman, though a child, fed on geni and unrealities, would, doubtless, have entertained them in detail.

Mustang was on the edge of the world—out in the Mexican Gulf, where the wind and sea piled in on low sandy shores with a weird and solemn moan.

Few anglers found their way there, and at this time four old friends had met by arrangement.

O'Mallon was a well-known rohu angler. He had lived in India, and, as Randler said, was forced to fish; so he embalmed the ugly catfishes of India in an amber of picturesque nomenclature and took them with rod and "winch."

Randler was an expert swordfish manipulator, while Cordry was the man who killed a sea-bat from a small boat, and Caldwell had earned fame in California as a subduer of tunas and the gamy Japanese haranga.

Time and again the men, bronzed and reddened in tropical suns, had gone over their catches, compared the great game, its leaps, and its varied peculiarities, and Randler had just claimed for a certain big amber-jack all the game qualities of the tribe of fish when O'Mallon sat up, lighted his pipe and punched into shape the pillows that lay behind him in the canvas hammock.

"Out with it," said Randler. "You look as though you have something on your mind."

"So I have," was the reply. "Your mention of the amber-jack brought up an old memory—quite a yarn in a way. I have had all sorts of 'thrills,' but the amber-jack was the cause of my having one that I shall never forget."

"Old man, you've saved my life," groaned Caldwell. "A new fish story! It's just what my system is pining for. Have a little B. and S. to keep you going. It's 97 degrees."

"No," said O'Mallon, "I'm hot enough—too hot, in fact—to talk about anything exciting; but it was something like this:

"Back in the seventies I was attached to Her Majesty's 41st and stationed at Bermuda, where, you may be sure, I caught everything that was catchable. There was a legend that amber-jacks came in there once in a while, but I fished for two years and never saw one; then I took a six-weeks' leave, hired a schooner from a Nassau Conch and went on a still hunt for the game.

"We followed the islands down, trying for amber-jacks at nearly all the points the men could think of. One hot day in September we came to anchor in a little cove off the beach of a long sandy key.

"The skipper said that on the other side of the key a narrow channel broke through the surf and amber-fish were sometimes caught there. I was rather tired of being aboard ship so long, and had the captain put me ashore on the key and started with my rod and gaff to walk to the opposite side.

"The men told me that the island was not inhabited, but when I got half way over I ran into a hut, or shack, made of whitewashed boards, and around about were the appurtenances of a wrecker—boats, ropes, rigging, an old figurehead, and a thousand and one things that you wouldn't expect to see.

"Near the shack was the cabin of an old ship, raised on piles and boarded in. A big topmast had been raised as a flag-staff; old anchors were strewn about, chains, cabin furniture—in fact every possible thing you could think of. All this suggested a man—a beach-comber—but around the houses, running or trained upon strings, were various kinds of vines and plants."

"Ah, I see," interrupted Randler. "the beautiful maiden is about to appear."

"You are not far from right," replied O'Mallon, laughing. "She did appear. I had stumbled on to the place—in fact, was at the back door when two or three dogs made a leap for me, and I was fighting them off with the gaff when the maiden appeared. There always is a maiden."

"I've noticed that myself," echoed Caldwell.

"This was the real thing," continued O'Mallon. "She drove the dogs away, apologized for them, then invited me into the cabin. I followed her, and right here I want to tell you that the woman who spoke to me was one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen. I told her that my men had said the island was deserted, no one living on it, and that I had started across anywhere, walking into her place without knowing it.

"'You are excusable,' she said, smiling. 'I only regret that my father is not here, but he will be back soon.'

"I thanked my luck that the old gentleman was away," said O'Mallon. "Imagine a tall, slender woman—a sort of Venus of the sandbanks—every tone cultivated and tuned, a woman who could have graced a court, standing garbed in a ten-cent calico dress, her hair in a big rope down to her knees, and, ye gods! barefooted.

"I am not generally easily embarrassed, but I was here.

"The shack was as neat as a pin, the curtains immaculate, the furniture—from, I should say, numerous wrecks—poor and cheap, but in one corner, glistening, was a splendid harp, a blaze of golden light. It must have cost two thousand dollars. It fairly dazzled me.

"As I stood there some one darkened the door behind me, and I turned and faced a man quite as striking in his way. If looks could have laid me out his would have done it.

"He was over six feet tall, red-faced, full-bearded, a face changed and worn by exposure, but the face of a gentleman of a commanding type. You could not mistake it.

"The girl turned quickly and said:

"'This gentleman stumbled upon us

when he was going fishing, father, and I invited him to stop, knowing you would return soon.'

"The man's expression thawed out and he extended his hand and bade me welcome; but I had the feeling that he would throw me out of the door if he did as he wished. The girl placed some chairs on the little porch and we sat down, the giant and I, and he asked me all about my trip, where the schooner was, and so on.

"'It's good you are in the harbor,' he said. 'Why? Look at that,' and he pointed to an old ship's barometer. 'I never have seen it so low as that but once, and then we were nearly blown into the air. I've been down to make things snug.'

"I could not believe a storm was brewing. There was not a cloud in sight, the sun shone brightly, and the wind was soft and gentle. The fisherman—that was what he claimed to be, though that wrecking was a part of his business there was no doubt—told me that I had struck the right place for amber-jack, and that as soon as the weather settled he would show me where they were.

"I was invited in to dinner, and the master of the place brought out some Chablis and port that might have been made when the world began, and he supplemented these with some excellent cigars.

"I don't think—and I say this advisedly—that I have ever listened to a more interesting talker. The man was at home on any subject, and he spoke not only learnedly, but charmingly. What would you think to have a fisherman open up a conversation on the difference between the various translations of the Iliad?

"Then it was painting. Had I seen such a painting, which I knew was in a famous London gallery? And then he gave a thoroughly technical dissertation on the evolution of the Impressionist school and called attention to the artists of all old schools who suggested or anticipated.

"After dinner, this barefooted philosopher and his daughter took me again into the living-room, and the young woman played upon the harp gloriously. Then I looked over their handful of

books, and in four or five I noticed a book-plate which bore the ducal crest of a famous old English family. Perhaps they came from some wreck, as doubtless everything else did; again, when I looked at the wrecker's face, when I could not see his bare feet and ragged blue apologies for trousers, I could easily connect him with a family bearing arms."

"O'Mallon, you ought to be a writer; you see the possible romance in everything," said Caldwell.

"Don't interrupt the man," growled Randler, knocking his pipe on the floor. "Give him a run for his money. He'll be married to the girl if you'll only give him a fighting show."

O'Mallon flushed at this, and all hands laughed.

"I might have done worse," he said; "but I did not marry her, and I don't believe she would have had me had I asked her."

"Barefooted Venus sounds like Stevenson," put in Caldwell. "He went barefooted and dressed like the natives; but they didn't like it."

"To get back to the yarn, the wrecker, who said his name was Smith," continued O'Mallon, ignoring Caldwell's remark, "induced me to stay with him all night. We all walked over to the yacht to tell the skipper, who evidently had been looking at the barometer, as he had hauled her into the bight, for he had run out another anchor and made everything snug.

"We sat up late and smoked, while I listened and Smith talked. He had a marvelous memory, and the intimate way of telling about people that would have been impossible anywhere else, without knowing them.

"He often seemed to forget where he was, and his rich, sonorous voice rolled out fact, philosophy, critique in a splendid fashion. I wanted to ask where he came from, but there was something in the man's eye that discouraged anything of the kind, so I said nothing, asked nothing.

"About midnight, it began to thicken up and then to blow. It came on in fitful puffs, with a strange moaning sound, and increased so rapidly that I slept but little. Finally, about four

o'clock, I got up, believing that the shack would blow away into the bush.

"I found that my host had gone down to the beach, and I followed. He was standing with another man, looking at the sea, which beyond the reef and harbor was a mass of foam, while the lead-colored clouds ran low, as if torn from some great bank. We lay down on the sand and watched it, and there the girl joined us later.

"You have all, doubtless, seen a hurricane. So have I, but never anything quite like this, and I imagined it might look in this way when the end of all things came.

"The wind almost lifted us, and Smith threw his arm over the girl to hold her down when the big gusts came. I saw her cover her eyes to shut out the awful sight.

"I don't know how long we had been there when suddenly down the wind came a '*boom*.' Smith leaped to his feet. I can see him now, his big form facing the wind, his shirt open, showing his broad, hairy breast, his eyes flashing—whether with joy or sorrow God knows. Again came the '*boom*,' and a third time, and then Smith showed his colors."

"A blooming wrecking pirate," said Caldwell.

"Not on your life," retorted O'Mallon, swinging to his feet excitedly.

"Do you hear that?" shouted Smith; "that means help. Is she ready, Bill?" turning to the other man, who had not opened his mouth.

"The latter nodded, and the two started down the beach, the girl bounding after them.

"Not in this gale, father," I heard her cry; "not in this gale. You can't reach her!"

"If I was out there wanting a pilot, would you have the men lie on the beach and not attempt to help me?" asked her father. "No, no, girl. That gun means a pilot, and we are pilots. Eh, Bill?"

"Aye, sir," answered the latter, "we're pilots," and those were the first and last words I ever heard Bill say.

"We all went down on the beach on the run and found a dingey lifeboat which we soon ran down to the water.

"You want a steersman?" I asked, looking at the waves.

"We do," replied Smith. "She's going."

"Not while I am here," I said.

"Smith looked at me a second, then nodded and the girl fell back. The men took their places at the oars, and as a wave caught the boat I shoved her out, fell in, and, taking the long steering-oar, I fitted it into the scullhole.

"With long sweeping strokes the men sent the boat over the shallow lagoon, heading for the awful sea that came piling over the barrier reef.

"Keep her stern to that cocoanut and keep the tree on a line with the house—so! That heads her for the six fathom channel, the way we go out. It's about twenty feet wide," were Smith's orders.

"There was a show for our lives, and after half an hour's pulling we came to the place. I noticed that while the sea was frightful it did not break so much here, and waiting for an opening the men sent the boat flying at the breach.

"A big wave caught us, and for a moment I thought we would be tossed end over end, but she dropped and up the next we went, and by a special dispensation we cleared the reef and reached open water.

"Almost any boat would have filled in less time than it takes to tell it, but this marvelous craft, made of iron, fitted with air tanks, floated, and under the powerful oars of the men it surged ahead.

"Again came the boom of a gun, and after a struggle which tested these men of iron, we sighted a ship under storm staysails lying up in the wind and slowly drifting in.

"If we can reach her soon we can bring her in," shouted Smith. "Send it to her; give way—strong now, Bill," and with such and other terms and snatches of chanties, Smith spurred his companion on to desperate endeavor, while I kept the boat in the lee of the ship and saw that we were slowly creeping up on her, she drifting down on us, lying over with her main yards in the water every time she rolled and pitched, bow under.

"The wrecker sang out to me to get her under the quarter if possible. In a few moments we were there, and I could see the men aboard of her were getting ready to lower a ladder from the

spanker boom. As we swept by they dropped the ladder into the boat; the wrecker grasped it and threw the painter through it, then he shot up into the air as the vessel plunged.

"As the ship came down, Bill caught the ladder, and the next moment I had my legs through it and the dingey fell away. How many times we went down under water as those awful seas rose up to meet us I can never tell, but we were finally hauled up.

"The captain—an Englishman—seized Smith's hand and shouted:

"'Pilot, can you get us into the harbor?'

"A dozen or more passengers, white and terrified, clinging to life lines strung fore and aft, crept toward us.

"What Smith replied, I don't know; but the look on his face pretty nearly sent the blood to my head. It was demonized, and his eyes were staring. Turning in the direction of his glance, I saw among the passengers a tall soldierly looking man, who was as pale as death could have made him.

"Smith made a leap at him and down they went to the deck together. The wrecker had the man by the throat, and would have killed him had not the skipper—the first to come to his senses—with the aid of the mate hauled him off.

"'What does this mean?' shouted the skipper, placing himself in front of Smith, with a six-shooter pushed against his brawny breast.

"'What does it mean?' echoed Smith. 'Ask that thing!' pointing to the passenger who had struggled to his feet. 'Ask him!'

"But the man covered his face with his hands, as though to shut out the awful spectacle, while several sailors stepped before him.

"'Send everybody below,' ordered the captain, and as the tall man and the other passengers disappeared down the companionway and a sailor took his station there, he turned to me.

"'Is the man crazy?' he asked. 'Can he take this ship into the cove or not?' Then addressing Smith, he said: 'If you try any monkey business with me or my passengers I'll blow a hole through you!'

"Smith was evidently trying to control himself, but he had the appearance of a madman. I turned to Bill and asked him what it all meant, but he merely shook his head.

"'Well,' shouted the captain, 'are you going to take hold or not?'

"Smith glanced at the reef, then sprang forward and into the mizzen rigging. The wind was from the southeast and the ship was hauled close in the port tack, and the reef was a mile to the leeward—a long line of foam—and beyond the harbor and the low key.

"To reach the real entrance, the ship would have to make another tack, and even I could see that was impossible, as the wind was rising every minute and blowing in a way to demoralize any man.

"You have heard the weird playing of cyclone fingers through the rigging of a ship, but death was using those shrouds as a harp. I felt it down at the bottom of my heart.

"Looking up to windward I saw a low, peculiar white cloud coming down, and called the attention of the skipper to it. He ordered all hands to lash themselves, and it was a good thing he did so, for spoodrift, salt water, spume, and scud struck her and formed a sort of canopy overhead.

"The ship heeled over so that half the deck was under and the galley broke loose and went through the starboard rail. She trembled, rose, and then for the first time Smith took action. He sprang down on deck and shouted to the skipper:

"'There's one chance. I can put her through the 'five fathom' perhaps. It's your only chance!'

"'Do you mean take these seas?' asked the skipper, pointing to the reef. 'Aye,' said Smith; 'there's a thirty-foot channel there; I've put a ship through in good weather. It's that or——'

"The skipper saw what we did, that it *was* that or nothing, so he nodded his head and Smith went into the rigging again, taking a turn about his waist, while I swung up just below him. It appeared to me about the best place to jump from if the ship struck.

"'Break out the jib and foresail. Get her around before it and jam on all she will stand,' shouted Smith.

"The mate passed the orders and the men sprang to the halyards. The first square foot of jib that showed was torn from the gaskets and went off into the air. Next they tried a staysail, which held; and the big ship fell away and seemed to gather herself for an effort; then they shook out the close-reefed foresail and she gathered way.

"I had glanced at the barometer that was lashed near the binnacle. It registered 27-20. No one could stand with safety. The men crouched on the deck, and the awful waves that came up behind looked like racing mountain ranges. They had long ago rigged in the stunsail booms, but with the first roll the vessel made, the fore and main topmast stunsail-yards went under and snapped off with a crash.

"As the ship went to port the galley, wedged in the rail, broke away and went across, breaking the port-rail and disappearing. A wave lifted the stern in air, then dropped out from under the bow so quickly that the fore topgallant mast was literally jerked out and fell into the sea.

"I noticed that Smith now had the ship headed for the reef and was demanding more sail. The wind seemed to blow the orders back into the captain's trumpet as he repeated them. He had gotten the close-reefed mainsail on, but it blew from the gaskets in a few seconds; then he called for the main topsail, and as that bellied out, with a report like a gun, I fully expected to see the mast go.

"I had the bearings of the six-fathom channel and suddenly it flashed through my mind that Smith was heading the ship half a mile above it and for a part of the reef that did not have five feet of water over it.

"I tried to sing out to him, and once he turned as he called for the main topsail, and if I live a hundred years I never hope to see an expression like his on a human face! Rage and satisfaction, murder and sudden death were all reflected in the bloodshot eyes.

"I saw his object in an instant. It was to send the man in the cabin to the bottom if he sacrificed all hands to do it.

"I sprang to the deck, crawled to the wheel, and pushing the man aside, tried

to wear the vessel around. But the mate struck me a savage blow and, with the captain, hauled me off. They thought me mad, and left me to carry out some new order from the real madman in the rigging.

"I made my way to Bill, who sat like a statue, his eyes glued on the terrible figure in the rigging, who, as though to free himself from all encumbrance, had torn his shirt away, and the wind had fairly whipped it into shreds.

"The ship was now in the back water of the reef when a gust struck her, taking every furled sail from the gaskets with a sound that might have been the crack of doom. Then a big roller caught the ship, lifted her high in the air, dropped away and she went down on her beam ends. Water ten feet deep swept over her.

"I heard the captain, as brave a man as I have ever seen, give the order to cut away the weather lanyards, and in a moment the main topgallant rigging went by the board. The ship righted and braced up like a dying man at the last. At that moment the passengers came crawling up the companionway, and for a moment I saw the pale face of a man. At the same time the wrecker turned, caught sight of him, and with a peal of devilish laughter pointed to the reef.

"I stepped over the quarter and, clinging to a rope hanging from the spanker-boom, saw the sea draw back until I could see the coral heads on the bottom, then a wall of water, spoo-drift and scud struck the ship, sent her stern up into the air and literally rolled her over and over, grinding her on the teeth of the barrier reef.

"When I came to I found myself in the wrecker's shack, where I learned I had been a week or more. Two sailors and I were the only ones picked up.

"The first question the girl asked me was why her father headed the vessel so far up the coast when he got her before the wind.

"'I knew what he intended,' she said; 'he took the only chance, and could have driven the ship in through the six-fathom channel, but she struck on the worst place on the whole reef.'

"I didn't have the heart to tell her.

She had pulled me out of the water, so I said that her father had tried to, but the helm fouled.

"Then she dropped her head on the cot and cried:

"'Daddy, daddy, I'm all alone!'

"By heavens, it was tough!"

And O'Mallon turned his back and looked out of the patio.

For a few moments there was silence, then Randler broke loose.

"You mean to tell us that you didn't

marry that girl, you cold-blooded pirate?"

"No, Rad, I didn't; I had reasons," replied O'Mallon, lighting his pipe.

"Yes, he had reasons," repeated Caldwell. "That yarn's all right; I've been in a cold sweat for twenty minutes; but I suppose there didn't happen to be any girl, or any wreck, or any Smith; you never saw the reef, did you?" and finally O'Mallon confessed that the thrill was all there was in it.

THE BARBER'S CUE.

By Burke Jenkins.

THE victim wasn't exactly talked to death, but it might have been even worse. ❀ ❀

"NEXT!" I cried, pocketing the tip, shaking the last customer's neck-cloth, and indicating with customary deference the now vacant chair.

The heavily bearded man whose turn had at last arrived indifferently tossed aside the color-daubed weekly he had been lightly perusing, took off his coat, hung it up, and advanced toward me, tugging at a refractory collar button.

"Beard trimmed?" I queried in that engaging tone that comes so glibly to the lips of the artist tonsorial.

"No," he answered laconically. "Close shave and a hair-cut."

It was Saturday night and my usual rush of pre-Sunday slicking-ups was on. This bearded fellow had entered a full forty minutes before, and had complacently set himself at the end of a lengthy line.

Though busy, I had noticed him particularly, during those little passes of mine for steaming towels and irrelevant talk. And although his attitude was one of even exaggerated indifference, I could see that not a move I made was lost upon him, but he never met my eye.

Of course, my interest mounted ac-

cordingly, especially as he waved his right of turn to a later comer and thus insured his being last in line.

I kept open until eleven on these Saturday nights, but my assistant had pleaded a best girl birthday; so I had let him go this time and was correspondingly overworked.

Accordingly it was with a feeling of relief that I started to work on my last customer of the night.

The man's hair was of fine texture with a tendency toward baldness, and, as I clipped away, I remember running over vaguely in my mind the various theories as to the cause of this phenomenon, for I too had begun to brush my hair soothingly over a sparse patch.

Hair-cut completed, I mixed a generous lather and started at the heavy growth on his face.

Only from time to time, whenever a slight change of position was necessary, would he be roused from his drowsiness, but always relapsed again into stupor.

I stropped a razor, one with a strong edge, and went to work.

Little by little the man's features began to reveal themselves. There was a marked strength to them coupled with an indefinable something which was rather felt than seen. But it was only when I was putting on the finishing pats of the dampened towel that I first caught his eye, and even then the glance was not direct. His gaze and mine met in the mirror before us.

Then, little by little, there came over me that fast-strengthening realization. Now I could see why he had eluded me.

I seemed to see this man before me shadowed from a dim past. How could I have been so slow in recognizing in him the leading factor in those difficulties that had brought me to my humble vocation? I who had had so brilliant an outlook in the scientific world.

My usual passive nature rolled from me; I felt the beast surge over me with a quickening blood.

Little I had to lose; and surely here and now was my opportunity. I must at least lose none of the opportunities of this hour.

My man lay head back and throat exposed.

I stepped noiselessly toward my windows and pulled down the shades; then turned the key and pocketed it.

It was 11:30 and I noticed a slight rain had beaded the glass.

The man had dropped asleep again.

It was not a razor that I began to sharpen on the strop now. It was a shape of steel that suited me better. I thumbed the point and edge; it responded keenly.

There is a little spot anatomically situated which our friends of the Pyrenees know well. I had studied the locality. Accurately entered at that spot, four inches of steel does the trick nicely.

I was not nervous. That period had passed. But I seemed to be living the life of another man. A vagueness of surroundings coupled itself with a sharp realization of my real significance as a principal in this little scene about to be enacted. I knew my part. I was playing it well, and I remember experiencing a regret that such acting should pass without appreciative audience.

I dwelt upon the situation with all the zest of the morbid sentimentalist. But finally I raised the blade and advanced nearer the sleeper.

Have you ever lain in bed of a morning and experienced indecision as to whether to rise just that moment or not? That was my feeling of vacillation as I gazed intently over my intended victim. And so I hesitated. He was mine and I dandled his life.

Finally I leaned closer over him; then lowered my arm.

He opened his eyes sharply and gave a light laugh.

"I did not think you had the nerve to do it," he said evenly, and, although there was nothing in the words to merit it, he used an authoritative tone.

I recoiled a step in surprise and passed my left hand over my eyes to clear a seeming cloud.

"Perhaps this will compensate any inconvenience I may have caused you," he continued, still smiling. He produced a twenty-dollar bill.

"I don't understand at all," I stammered finally.

"Very simple," he explained, "and the experiment has been very satisfactory. I have cleared two doubtful points. First, suggestion can be communicated by reflection in a mirror; second, the hypnotist cannot force his subject to perform a criminal act which is foreign to his own nature."

"Do you mean to tell me," I said, "that you have put yourself in such danger merely to find that out? I assure you that I was about to end you."

"Well, you see," he replied, "it was certainly better to put myself in peril than somebody else. But, anyway, as you'll see, your weapon isn't as sharp as you imagined it a moment ago."

I looked at my right hand. I was still firmly clutching a lather-bedecked shaving brush.

"All satisfactory?" queried my customer rising and donning his togs.

"Quite so," I answered as I pocketed the twenty; but I was a long time getting to sleep that night.

FIREFLIES.

Anonymous.

THE flowers of maiden Spring are flung aside,
So fair and frail they lasted but a day;
And in their place is set this brave array
Of jewels matron Summer wears with pride.

A STOLEN CELEBRATION.

By Ruby Douglas.

HOW patriotism got the better of an American girl and what came of it. ❀ ❀

"**B**UT, mother—" A deep flush rose to the girl's temples. "It is the very least we can do," said Mrs. Hay decisively. "Lord Bertie has been so kind as to ask us on this exclusive yachting trip and we must defer to his wishes. Such frivolities annoy him."

Having delivered this ultimatum, Mrs. Hay leaned back against the luxurious cushions of her cabin and eyed her daughter with an expression of self-satisfaction.

Marian stood, tall and defiant, observing her mother's attitude.

"Mother"—her tone compelled the elder woman's attention—"until to-day I have acceded to your every wish. I have done everything you desired of me—even to coming on this detestable yacht to learn to tolerate that unbearable man—"

"Marian, my dear!" Mrs. Hay sat erect, abandoning the comfort of the cushions. "I—"

The girl raised a protesting hand.

"No; let me finish. That man's selfish devotion maddens me. I cannot endure the take-it-for-granted manner he has assumed in regard to my marrying him. I shall not marry him; furthermore, mother, I shall succumb to an unladylike desire to—to slap him, if he persists in his present tactics."

Mrs. Hay moved uncomfortably; her self-satisfaction at her management of her daughter was tottering.

The girl impatiently pushed back her hair from her forehead and looked squarely at her mother.

"And now he would go so far as to deprive us of celebrating the Fourth of July because he has nerves"—with a

gesture of disgust—"nerves! Who ever heard of a real live man with nerves and who took afternoon naps? They're for women and babies, respectively—and exclusively."

Despite her anger, a quizzical smile dodged about the corners of her mouth. Her mother would have spoken, but Marian checked the effort.

"The truth of it is, he wants to eliminate all of my Americanism for fear, when he has realized his cherished hopes and landed me in his blessed country, I'll do something shocking. Well, I won't; never fear," she finished, with pointed ambiguity.

"Aren't you a trifle unjust?" remonstrated Mrs. Hay in a perceptibly mollified tone. Never before had she seen this side of her daughter. She did not know that underneath her outward determination, the girl was struggling with an effort to choke back the sobs that threatened to be her undoing.

"Aren't you, dear?" persisted Mrs. Hay entreatingly and edging closer to her daughter.

"No," Marian argued with reinforced vigor, "I have been fair and square with him and you; but I give you fair warning now, that if he attempts further to discipline me—and that's just what he's doing, mother—I shall refuse pointblank to budge from my cabin during the remainder of the cruise.

"More than that," she went on, "he shall not put out from this harbor tonight and deprive me of even so much as the sound of a firecracker in the morning—at least, not with me aboard." She moved toward the door, her head held defiantly high.

"Wait, Marian," her mother cried, almost timidly.

The girl turned.

"You really misjudge Lord Bertie. His devotion—"

"There—that is enough. I"—her voice broke ever so slightly—"I don't

want to seem obstinate and unreasonable, but——”

She paused for a moment, unable to go on. Mrs. Hay waited, half fearful of what might follow.

“Would poor father have liked us to overlook his Fourth?” she asked very softly as two large tears tumbled down her cheeks.

In the silence that followed, Mrs. Hay plied a foolish bit of cambric to her eyes. The girl's words had brought her face to face with her husband's memory, and all else slipped away. His patriotism, his love of all that was American, his whole-souled democracy, his abhorrence of all narrow prejudices—all came back to her.

Even the time-worn bundle of flags and the old gun and knapsack he had carried through so many battles and which lay in the attic at home, seemed to come before her. Every year since his death, the old treasures had been resurrected; and now—— No; she could not blame Marian—his daughter.

“No; he wouldn't,” she said, after she had tucked her handkerchief back into her sleeve. “Dear,” with a new tenderness in her voice, “I shall speak to Lord Bertie. I know he will accede to your wishes and mine,” she added, smiling through the remaining tears.

Marian caught her mother's face impulsively between her palms and kissed her.

“I knew you would—I knew it,” she cried. Then, turning quickly, she left the cabin and ascended the companion-way.

On deck, she sought the rail to let the fresh wind dispel the traces of her emotion. The waters of the harbor tumbled about scintillating under the brilliant sunbeams, the first that had shone on them for two days. The fog had vanished and Marian began to feel that her clouds, too, were floating away.

She had been victorious in her first effort to hold to her determination against her mother's wishes. Mrs. Hay had said little, but even that had been a concession for her; she worshiped rank and toadied to the caprices of its individuals, but she had promised her daughter to beg absolution for once.

Whether or not Lord Bertie would al-

ter his plans for the Fourth, Marian did not know. She did not care; she had won the battle with her mother. Mrs. Hay would not be acquiescent to his plans of escape, and, in spite of his selfishness, the Englishman recognized the wisdom of keeping within the good graces of Marian's mother. Mrs. Hay had been sufficiently tactful to hide her eagerness to have him for a son-in-law.

The breeze whipped the color back into Marian's cheeks and one by one the cobwebs vanished. She looked out across the waters of the little bay, her usual good nature returning. She watched a speck appear in the sea just outside the mouth of the bay. It grew into a large, white, crawling mass steaming slowly as if unwillingly into the harbor. It was a battle-ship.

Marian almost danced for delight. At least there would be some Fourth of July now. She leaned eagerly over the rail and screened her eyes with her hands. The soft silken scarf knotted at the apex of her sailor collar, rose and fell rapidly with her quickened breathing.

“Miss Marian,” said a voice at her elbow—a smooth, even voice.

She started.

“Oh,” she gasped, her color deepening—why, she could not explain, save that her delight in the appearance of an American battleship had been witnessed by her host.

“There's one of our battle-ships,” she said, rather lamely.

“Fancy,” drawled Lord Bertie indifferently and looking at her instead of at the ship. “You'll be happy to know we are leaving this water to-night. There may be some obnoxious celebration to-morrow—some beastly noises, you know.”

Marian gripped the railing at her back.

“I—we Americans care a heap about our Fourth, Lord Bertie,” she said, trying to suppress her indignation at his attitude.

The Englishman took a cigarette from a monogrammed case.

“But, I say, isn't that shooting and noise and that sort of thing all rot?” he asked between puffs as he tried to light his cigarette.

Marian darted a glance at him which,

had he seen, would have distracted him from his easy-going occupation of the moment.

"'Rot?'" she echoed.

Her companion nodded.

"Lord Bertie," she said, swallowing a desire to expostulate, "suppose you and I keep off this subject. It's dangerous. I've never missed a Fourth of July celebration in my life—not since I was big enough to stand on the steps and throw torpedoes at the old brick house, and"—she tossed her head defiantly—"I'm not going to be deprived of it now."

Lord Bertie looked at her, admiring, in spite of himself. He did not fathom the depth of her emotion.

"I say, don't be so hard on me, Miss Marian. 'Pon my word, I meant no offense," he said with more animation than was his wont.

Marian did not speak, but her expression softened.

"You American girls are so peppery," he mumbled, blowing smoke rings out on the breeze. "It's this beastly place—the fog, don't you know?—that's gotten on your nerves. Jolly good thing we're going to shift."

Marian turned deliberately from him toward the ship. So he was determined to go, after all? Perhaps her mother had not spoken. Her lips tightened into a firm line: she would not leave this bay whatever happened. Of that she was certain.

She watched the great white and yellow hulk wistfully. Would it come close? Would she be able to see the officers? Would—she was afraid even to think it—would there be some one, any one aboard she knew? Could it be possible that Traynor Harvey was on that ship?

Lord Bertie interrupted her reverie to say that he was going below; it was too chilly for him. Marian was barely civil in her attitude.

"I—I'd like awfully to talk to you, Miss Marian," he said, lingering.

"Yes?" she said indifferently.

"I'm going below," he added pointedly.

"And I shall remain on deck," she returned firmly.

Lord Bertie opened his eyes and mouth

simultaneously. He had been about to remonstrate, but thought better of it.

"I say, then," he laughed oddly, "when you're finished looking at your ship, come down. I've been searching for you everywhere and you treat me as if you were jolly sorry to be disturbed."

Marian smiled after his retreating figure.

"I'll come below after a while," she called, but added mentally, "but not to talk to you—alone."

Dismissing all thought of him as he disappeared, she leaned both elbows on the rail and gazed at the battle-ship. It was five years since she had seen Traynor Harvey—then he was an ensign. Her last letter had been addressed to him as a junior lieutenant, but that had been long ago.

Somehow, after he had left the little gunboat and gone on the Galveston with the fleet to Port Said and she herself had been launched on the social sea to be tugged about hither and thither by her mother, she had lost track of him.

The night Harvey had left for his long cruise in foreign waters, she had asked him if he were glad to go. He had answered by grasping her hands so tightly she had winced and saying, "No—and yes."

What had he meant? He had ignored her reference to it in her letters, and she had almost forgotten it—until now.

They had joked over his being unable to marry—save for money. All he had was his income from Uncle Sam. His father had lost his fortune by the same wind that had blown one into the hands of Marian's father.

The girl wondered if he ever had married—if he'd married money. Her heart beat foolishly fast and she switched the train of her wanderings.

The ship drew closer. Marian could see the deck officers pacing back and forth and—yes, others were coming to the railings. The ship moved slowly, but the yacht was swayed by the big waves that rocked across the harbor toward her. Marian's eyes danced as she looked from one to the other of the erect, uniformed figures, though she could not yet distinguish features.

At last the great engines stopped throbbing and the battle-ship glided

through the water slowly. Above the railing of the quarter-deck an officer loomed tall and straight, his face toward the yacht. Marian looked up at him.

Oh, if—if only he would take off that cap! Would he? Forgetful of everything save that she recognized the familiar figure of Traynor Harvey in these strange waters, Marian leaned far over the railing and waved her hand.

The officer removed his cap and held it low before his breast a moment. Then Marian laughed half hysterically, and a dawning recognition overspread the officer's face.

Five years had made her even prettier—five years had separated them, and now he could not speak to her. He smiled and bowed and held his cap—he was an officer in the navy—until, in sheer desperation, Marian fled below.

In her cabin the girl buried her head in the pillows and cried—cried because Traynor Harvey should find her on Lord Bertie's yacht; because she could not talk to him; because she realized now how much her mother's plans had influenced her.

Had she intended to say yes to Lord Bertie—ever? Her overtaxed emotions had broken loose at the closing of a day in which one tumult had tumbled over another—indignation, anger, reminiscence, triumph, suspense—and on top of them all, a mixture of happiness and misapprehension.

* * * *

Marian was awakened by noises all about her—noises as of men about everywhere. She opened her eyes; it was just dawn. She listened—then suddenly she jumped up.

Yes. She was right. The sailors were making ready to get under way. Lord Bertie had refused to acquiesce to her wishes and her mother's.

She made ready to go on deck. As she hurried, she heard a muffled, indistinct sound outside in the harbor. Was it—could it be—some early Fourth celebrations? Her pulses quickened. Yes; it was the sound of crackers exploding and then falling, sizzling, into the water.

Careful not to disturb her mother, Lord Bertie or the other occupants of the yacht's cabins, she crept up the com-

panionway, fresh in spite of her haste, in a white linen frock with a scarlet-knotted tie and a tiny flag on her yachting cap.

The hands eyed her curiously but respectfully and she hastened to the after rail off which she could see the battleship. Sailors were astir aboard her and an officer paced the upper deck. Marian gazed eagerly across the short stretch of water.

As she looked, a loud explosion below took her attention.

"Oh, oh, oh," she screamed in delight, forgetful of the sleepers below.

In a small boat, gaily firing one large cracker after another into the air was Traynor Harvey and a brother officer.

Marian waved to them—all else forgotten. They saluted merrily and tossed a cracker toward her.

"You're steaming up," she managed to hear Harvey call.

Marian's face fell. She had forgotten her predicament. She nodded her head and then like a flash it all came to her. She beckoned them toward the side of the yacht and made them understand her intention. She had defied Lord Bertie yesterday; she would carry it out now. She would not miss her celebration.

While the officers were rowed to the side of the yacht, she solicited the aid of a deck-hand, and before she had time to realize what the outcome of it all would be, she had climbed down the side and was being lifted into the small boat by Traynor Harvey.

The "beastly noises" together with the scrambling and talking, had awakened the Englishman and Marian's mother, and just as the three young people, rowed about by a wondering jacky, were tossing crackers into the trough of the little waves and "reminiscing" generally, the two appeared, disheveled and excited, and waved frantically to the boat.

Marian laughed gaily and the officers saluted with a dignity incongruous to their occupation.

After a few wild attempts to understand, the small boat was rowed closer and Marian made her mother and Lord Bertie realize that she was in earnest.

"I shall not leave this harbor," she called.

"But, I say——" Lord Bertie began.
 "Marian, come back," cried her mother.

The girl, happy in the situation, only laughed and tossed her curls.

"I'm going to celebrate, mother, with Lieutenant Harvey——"

Mrs. Hay opened her eyes, lit by a light of recognition. She gasped.

"And if you care to wait, I'll return to the yacht to-night—for dinner, mother."

Realizing their defeat, Lord Bertie and Mrs. Hay looked at each other, then descended to their cabins.

* * * * *

"I don't care how long we remain at sea," Marian said to her mother that

night when the storm had blown over and Lord Bertie had exhibited his disposition to his disadvantage, "the Galveston won't be in the Brooklyn yard for a month yet and Traynor can't get leave until they reach that port. Then, mother, we're going to be married."

"Married?" Mrs. Hay managed to gasp.

Marian nodded.

"And Lord Bertie——"

"May escape Fourth of July celebrations to his heart's content. I've had mine—the happiest I ever had in my life."

And in spite of herself, Mrs. Hay took her daughter in her arms and embraced her lovingly.

PERILOUS HEIGHTS.

Anonymous

THE boy who lives across the way—a
 jolly little elf—

Procured a pair of poles one day, just to
 amuse himself.

He thought he wasn't tall enough. He
 fixed them nice and neat

With handles to take hold of and with
 blocks to fit his feet.

And now he's ten feet high at least. He
 proudly nods his head

And stalks around the sidewalk with a
 most uncertain tread.

He thinks he is majestic, though he's
 scarcely out of kilts,

It's fun to look at Johnny when he's walk-
 ing on his stilts.

His father was an amiable and simple-
 spoken man,

But since he got an office, he has somehow
 changed his plan.

Most everybody likes him, 'spite of this de-
 sire of his

To make us think that he's much bigger
 than he really is.

He seems a bit uneasy when he's towering
 around.

He steps as though he wasn't wholly sure
 about his ground.

He tries to be impressive, but he wobbles
 and he wilts.

He makes us think of Johnny when he's
 walking on his stilts.