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THE DIXONS



THE DIXONS

A STORY OF AMERICAN LIFE
THROUGH THREE GENERATIONS

BY

FLORENCE FINCH KELLY

AUTHOR OF "WHAT AMERICA DID," "WITH HOOPS
OF STEEL," "RHODA OF THE UNDERGROUND," ETC.



LC

NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY
681 FIFTH AVENUE

1921

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THE DIXONS

CHAPTER I

THE ORCHARD EIGHTY

WARM and vitalizing was the sun that shone on an April day in 1865 upon the prosperous farms covering the wide plains of southern central Illinois. On none did it fall with a more benignant radiance than on Benjamin Dixon's two hundred and more acres of garden and orchard, pastures and fields. The Dixon home, a two-story white house with green shutters, stood on a little knoll that rose slightly in a long swell from the flat plain. The front yard, its grass carpet freshly green, was surrounded by a fence of white palings that opened through a gate on the road.

Standing upon the front porch one could look up and down the long vistas of this road, now deep in spring mud, and in one direction see it enter a belt of timber and in the other mount a low hill and disappear in the distance. Miles beyond, it reached a town whence sometimes came to the Dixon home, on still, damp mornings, the whistle of a railway locomotive. Shrubs about the house, along the pathway to the gate and beside its posts, bore shining bark and buds of promise and in one corner of the yard a fine old apple tree spread its limbs, already betokening a coming

wealth of bloom and leafage. Across the road, and protected from it by a rail fence, was a young peach orchard in a riot of pink and fragrant bloom. Beyond the trees and well to one side of them could be seen the house and barn of Samuel Miller, between whom and Benjamin Dixon there was a bitter quarrel, now advanced to the dignity of a suit at law, as to the ownership of that thing of fairy loveliness, the young peach orchard, and the eighty acres in which it stood.

But the April sun shone down on both their houses and opened the pink chalices of hope and beauty and sent its call to the sap in the trees and the hearts in human bodies regardless of their quarrel.

Already at Appomattox the doom of slavery and rebellion had been sealed and throughout the North people had gone wild with joy. Already, too, the great War President had gone to his martyrdom, and on the Dixon farm, as everywhere in the North, sadness and anxiety had followed close upon the heels of joy. But spring was making its insistent demands upon the busy hands of the farmer and its call to the heart of youth—and the world was going on its way.

Through the radiant afternoon a young man came through the peach orchard, climbed the rail fence and started down the road. Out of the open front door of the Dixon home came suddenly the sound of a young voice, a woman's voice, singing the chorus of a song of war days, "Marching through Georgia." He checked his steps, listening, then crossed the muddy road and stood behind the lilac bushes beside the front gate. After a line or two the voice wavered into silence again. Evidently the singer was busy upon some task that demanded her attention. The boy, for he was little more, appearing scarcely twenty years old, looked hastily up



and down the road. As far as he could see it was vacant of passengers. He stepped out from behind the lilac bush and with a quick glance searched the front of the house and as much as he could see of the garden and barnyard beyond. No human being was visible.

Again came the girl's voice, rising in another line of song, and the sound seemed to inspire him with whatever courage he lacked. For as it died away again he whistled a call that might have been a meadowlark's song but for its last note. A moment he waited, smiling and watching the front door, then repeated the message.

Reward of his daring came quickly, for almost at once the young woman came out on the porch and as he stepped from behind the sheltering bush she ran down the path to the gate.

"Oh, Steve," she called softly, her voice trembling with excitement, "be very quiet! Don't let father hear you!"

She laid her hands on the gate and at once he gathered them into his own. Looking into his face, gray eyes sparkling with delight and face aglow, she went on:

"What do you want, Steve?"

He smiled at her quizzically and asked in teasing tones, "Now, Emily Dixon, what do you think I want?"

Her lips curved in a roguish smile as she looked down at his hands holding hers and said demurely, "To see father?"

Stephen sent an apprehensive glance toward the barnyard but went on gayly: "Oh, father be hanged! D'you think I'd come here and whistle to your father to come out and give me a kiss! Say, Emily, do you think he would?"

The girl had suddenly become all tender apprehension

for her lover's safety. "Oh, Steve," she begged, "do be careful! We must be very quiet! I can't stop but a minute! I'm so afraid father might see you!"

But Stephen gained courage as the moments sped. There was no sign in his manner of any thought of danger far or near as he gazed into her eyes with loving approval. "You're looking mighty sweet in that dress, Emily! Did you put it on because you thought I was coming?"

"I didn't know you were coming!" she protested with a show of indignation.

"Just thought so!" teased Stephen, bent on getting from her the expression of feeling he had learned how to evoke.

Emily bent toward him across the gate, all the hunger of her first love in her eyes. "Oh, Stephen, I'm always hoping I'll see you somewhere! I never come to the door and look out but I'm almost sure I see you down the road, or coming through the orchard, and my heart just seems to leap right up into my throat! And then it sinks way down again when it isn't you! Because it hardly ever is you, Stephen!"

"Yes, that's so, Em," said Stephen with tenderness in his voice. "We don't get to see each other very often, do we, dear?"

The tears came into Emily's eyes. "No, indeed we don't," she said sadly, and added, "and I ought not to see you at all."

"Never mind about that, dear," said Stephen cheerfully. "We're seeing each other now—and you can give me a kiss!"

He leaned quickly toward her, but she stepped back, pleading with her voice and denying with her manner: "Don't, Steve! Please don't!"

Stephen's tone was one of tender reproach: "Emily, you've never kissed me yet!"

Her eyes dropped and she half turned away, but the feeling that mastered her heart demanded utterance. It sent a wave of color to her brow as she bared her girlish love with the murmured words, "But you know it wasn't because I didn't want to!"

Impetuously Stephen tried to push the gate open, but she held it shut and when he would have leaped over it she pushed him back, exclaiming, with a half frightened look over her shoulder at the house, "No, no! You mustn't! Please don't, Steve!"

He desisted, seeing her very real apprehension, which doubtless found an echo in his own heart, and asked, with hurt resignation in his voice, "Why won't you kiss me, Emily?"

"Stephen, it's just as I've told you ever so many times! I won't kiss you, not if you ask me to a million times, unless we're going to be married, and if you want to marry me you must speak to father about it."

"And what do you suppose your parent would say if I should tell him I wanted to marry his daughter?"

The softness of Emily's eyes and the tender curves of her mouth belied the little stiffening of manner with which she replied, "The only way to find out what he'd say is to ask him."

"He'd order me off the place," said the boy with conviction. "He's so mad at Uncle Sam about that eighty over there"—with a sweep of his arm he indicated the peach orchard—"that he hates us all. You know that, Emily!"

The girl gazed wistfully at the great web of delicate color glowing in the afternoon sun. "He thinks Mr.

Miller hasn't any right to it and is trying to cheat him out of it."

"And Uncle Sam thinks your father hasn't any right to it and is trying to cheat him out of it."

"And it's all too wretched for anything," Emily grieved. "Steve, if it wasn't for their horrid old quarrel you and I could be so happy."

Stephen seized her hands and drew her nearer. "Let's be happy anyway," he coaxed. "Come on, Em, and give me a kiss!" He slipped an arm about her shoulders and tried to draw her face to his, but she turned her head away too quickly for him and with a little laugh eluded his embrace.

"But you will speak to father, won't you, Steve, darling? When he knows how much we love each other I don't believe he'll be cross about it."

"All right, dear," assented Stephen, "the first time I get a good chance I will."

But the careless ease of his agreement did not satisfy her. "Sure, Steve? You promise?"

"Sure, Em! I promise!" And there was more earnestness in his manner as he leaned toward her to see the returning glow of love drive the questioning from her eyes. "Now will you give me a kiss?"

"Oh, that makes me so happy," Emily exclaimed, returning the pressure of his hands and looking into his eyes with face aglow, seeing in them the same love-light that illumined her own being. He knew that he had won her heart, that all her innocent young love was his, and when he was with her he felt sure that he loved her also and that if it were possible he would like to marry her, some day. But when he thought seriously about the matter he did not consider marriage with Emily Dixon within the possibilities.

For he knew that Samuel Miller and his wife, both of whom loved him almost as if he had been their own son, greatly desired to bring about a marriage between him and their daughter Amy. For months they had talked about it to him and to her and he had already begun his wooing. It had not progressed well, for Amy was neither responsive nor coquettish and, while he liked her well enough in a brotherly sort of way, her serious, matter-of-fact temperament roused no fires in his breast, such as he felt for Emily Dixon—and for half a dozen other girls, when he made love to any one of them. Amy had grown up from a little girl since he came, an orphaned ten-year-old boy, to live with her family, and he knew she would make a good, capable wife, under whose management his home would thrive and himself be well aided toward prosperity. Such a marriage, he knew also, would make him virtual owner of Samuel Miller's farm the day it should take place.

But if he married Emily Dixon he knew that, because of the quarrel between the two men—a quarrel that he had done his best to make more bitter by naggings and accusations and jeers, solely because of a boyish desire to stir things up and make life more exciting—he would be cut off from all share in the rich acres of both and would have to face the future with nothing under his feet or in his hands. The prospect was not alluring and he had at once decided, when the suggestion had been made to him by Mrs Miller, that he would marry Amy. He had no doubt that she would accede to the plan, in time, and yield to the wishes of her father and mother, even if she continued to remain lukewarm to his courtship. But it had been a relief to think there was no hurry about it and that he could go on making love wherever his errant fancy might draw him until

he was ready to make matters sure as to Amy and the future. Recently, however, Mr. Miller, obsessed by the conviction that his own days were numbered and perhaps suspicious of the philandering tendencies of the young man, had urged an early end of the affair and he and his wife had redoubled their arguments and urgings and Stephen had plead his suit with all the ardor he could summon.

Notwithstanding his surety that the matter could end in only one way, and that before long, Stephen was sometimes disturbed by doubts of himself. For, young as he was, he had already learned that he could not always depend on what he had decided to do, that when the moment of action came he might be dominated by some sudden impulse arising unheralded within his breast. He so often found himself doing things he had not thought of before, or things he had decided not to do, that recently he had begun to tell himself that the sooner he tied himself up by marrying Amy Miller the better it would be for him. In the beginning of his affair with Emily he had, on the impulse of a moment, urged her to elope with him, and within an hour had thanked his lucky stars that she had refused.

On this April afternoon he had not intended to try to see her and he had intended to go straight on his errand past her house to the next farm down the road. But when he was reminded of her nearness by the sound of her voice something had moved him to stop and whistle the call that carried the message of his presence. He was not in the least sorry that he had stopped, for Emily was very sweet and charming this afternoon and it always gave him the greatest pleasure and satisfaction to draw from her admissions of her love. And if he could only induce her to give him that kiss for which

he had so often begged in vain it would be a triumph indeed. The ardor of the pursuing male, ever ready to take up the love chase and persist in it for the mere joy of the pursuit, was strong and heady in his veins as he gazed into her love-lighted eyes and felt the warm pressure of her hands held closely in his own big palms. He drew her nearer and said in coaxing, teasing tones:

"If you're so happy, Em, a kiss would prove it!"

She pushed him away again, then suddenly softened, yielded a little, and he thought he had won. But she turned her face to one side as she said: "No, I won't kiss you—until—but I do love you, Steve—and you may—kiss just my cheek—just once."

But she was alert in her guard upon the defenses she was holding in her own heart, alert and wise with the age-old wisdom of Eve's daughters, and she would yield no more, not even a second kiss upon her rosy cheek, notwithstanding his protest and pleading. "No, Steve! That's all until you speak to father and it's all right," she told him with a sweet severity that bespoke strength of character underlying her seventeen years and her budding womanhood. "I'm sure father won't object," she went on, "and we'll have a little house all our own, won't we, and be so happy! Father says everything is going to boom now that the war is over, and there'll be good times for everybody!"

"I guess that's right, Emily. Uncle Sam thinks so, too. There'll be lots of chances to make money and I don't mean to be left out! Uncle Sam and I have been talking things over and making plans!"

"Oh, have you?" said Emily, thrilled and impressed. "Tell me about them, Steve!"

"I will some day," he assured her, his manner and countenance full of the conscious importance of youth

that has been taken for the first time into the councils of its elders. From the barnyard behind the house came the full, welcoming neigh of a horse whose senses have apprised it of the approach of an absent mate.

Emily started apprehensively and looked anxiously over her shoulder. "There!" she exclaimed. "That was old Sorel and it means that father and Mark are coming home. They've been plowing over in the far cornfield beyond the sheep pasture. You must go now and I must run right in."

She took a reluctant step or two toward the house, steps that were anything but "running right in."

Stephen was not willing to give up his coveted victory and he had reached the point of recklessness at which he was ready to brave even the wrath of Benjamin Dixon, which he already knew to be no small thing, for the chance of winning that token of her love and of his dominance over her will for which he had been pleading. "Just a minute, Emily," he coaxed. "You said you'd give me a kiss before I go, didn't you?"

She made a little face at him. "No, I didn't, Stephen Miller! I said I'd kiss you two, maybe three times after you've spoken to father and he's said it's all right." Then something flashed across her memory and she turned back to the gate. "Steve, I heard something yesterday——" She hesitated and Stephen repressed sudden anxiety as he took her hands.

"What did you hear?" he asked cheerfully.

"About you and Amy, Stephen. Of course, it wasn't true?"

"Of course it wasn't," he declared, with emphasis that was sweet to her ears.

"I heard you took Amy out for a ride in your new buggy last Sunday."

"Well, what of that? She's my cousin."

"No, she isn't, because Mr. Miller isn't really your uncle, only your cousin, and you just call him uncle, and so Amy's only your second cousin."

"What's the difference?"

"There's lots of difference. Then it was true?"

"But I've taken Amy to ride lots of times since I came to live with Uncle Sam."

"But that was before you and I——"

He interrupted her with a hearty laugh and with his hands upon her shoulders gave her a little, loving shake. "Em, I do believe you're jealous! Never you mind about Amy! There's just one little girl for me and her name is Emily Dixon, and she's the nicest, sweetest girl in this whole county and she's going to give me a kiss right now!"

Boy though he was, with the insignia of manhood still young and soft upon his face, there was manifest in his manner and his countenance and in the whole seeming of him the beginning of that inscrutable charm, that personal magnetism, which sways others to compliance with the wish of whoever possesses it. He knew already that some measure of this mystic power was his, although he never asked himself what it was, or why he could sometimes feel that it was working, winning the compliance or the interest of others, and sometimes not. Just now he knew suddenly that it was active, that it was combining with Emily's love for him to give him that dominance over her will that he had suddenly begun to desire madly. "Emily," he whispered in tones warm and thrilling with love and charm, "kiss me, girl, kiss me!"

But Emily was staunch in her loyalty to the rule of conduct she had made for herself and had insisted upon

between them since the beginning of their secret love affair, now some two or three months old. She slipped out of his embrace, shook a warning finger at him and laughed happily as she said, "Remember what I told you!"

"All right," he assented. "That's just putting it off till next time!"

She laughed again, girlishly, happily, as she called back, "Maybe!" over her shoulder and ran back to the house. As she turned at the door for a last glance he threw her a kiss from his half-concealed place behind the lilac bushes and then prudently crossed to the other side of the road and, whistling, passed on upon his errand. Emily watched him for a moment with eyes that could not have enough of looking at the beloved figure and then suddenly bethought herself to find out where her mother had been during her absence at the gate. It seemed such a long time that she had a moment of apprehension, but a glance at the clock told her that it had really been but a few minutes and, reassured, she went to the cellar door and saw that Mrs. Dixon was still busy inspecting jars of preserves and cans of fruit to see if they had safely come through the winter.

"Mother!" she called. "Haven't you finished yet?"

"Almost, Emily. Have you put the sleeves in Mark's shirt?"

"Not yet. I wasn't sure how they go."

"I'll come up and show you in a minute."

Emily sat down with the hickory shirt she was making for her younger brother and began to sew. But her heart was beating so rapidly that her fingers trembled, her thoughts were so full of all that Stephen had said and the pleasures of the chance meeting, so much more precious because unexpected, were so sweet in her



THE ORCHARD EIGHTY

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memory that she made little progress. Her heart had been sick with longing for another page of her love story, and suddenly, with the call of a bird, it had summoned her; and her ten stolen minutes with Stephen at the gate, in the glory of the April sun and the pink radiance of the field of bloom, had been a great adventure. Never again in all her life would she be able to look upon a peach orchard in flower without feeling in her heart the stirrings of romance.

CHAPTER II

COLONEL DIXON

EMILY received her mother's instructions for the setting in of the shirt sleeves with an outward attention that gave no sign of her flying pulses. After she had sewed a little longer she put down her work and went to her room, whence she reappeared a few minutes later wearing a different dress whose wider skirt was distended with crinoline. Her mother, sitting by the window knitting, looked at her with surprise.

"What have you put your hoops on for, Emily?" she asked.

"Oh, nothing! I just thought I would, for a change."

Hoopskirts interfered too much with the quick and efficient dispatch of household duties for farm women to wear them on ordinary days. They were reserved for occasions of importance and comparative leisure. Emily's hour of high consequence had passed uncelebrated by her attire. But now that it was over she could do honor to it in her own heart by donning her crinoline, which inspired the feeling of festival and holiday, of being a part of unusual events and happy occasions. From the porch, where she was gazing up and down the road, her eye was presently caught by a moving figure under the peach trees, and a moment's scrutiny told her that it was Amy Miller.

Emily stepped inside eagerly demanding, "Mother! Has father come back yet? Is he in the barn?"

"Maybe so—— I don't know. Yes, I think they are at work in the barn. What do you want of him?"

Emily's eyes were dancing at the prospect of what might happen. "Why, Amy Miller is coming through the peach orchard. Do you suppose she's coming here?"

Mrs. Dixon looked up in doubting surprise, her steel needles flying and missing not a tinkle of their rapid click-click-click. Her brown hair, well sprinkled with gray, waved prettily down from its parting, a trick that Emily's had inherited, and was wound into a soft coil at the back. Her brown eyes were bright and lively with intelligence and interest and her pleasant face, lined though it was with many years of work and responsibility as a pioneer's helpmate, was still comely and pleasant and expressive and was still accustomed to break out, even on slight provocation, into engaging smiles—smiles that even yet showed remnants of dimples in her cheeks that in her youth must have played havoc with young men's hearts. "Amy Miller?" she questioned. "Why, she hasn't been here for a long time—not since the last time Mr. Miller and your father quarreled."

"I believe I'll ask her to come in!" Emily exclaimed, her cheeks flushing with excitement over her daring thought and its possibilities. "Would it make father mad?"

"You'd better not, Emily. You know he wouldn't like it."

"Well, anyway, I'm going to stop her at the gate and ask her where she's going and have a little talk. I don't care whether father likes it or not!"

"Tut, tut, child! Don't talk so sassy about your father!"

"I don't care! It's all foolishness the way he's quar-

reling all the time with the Millers!" Emily's secret indignation and resentment over this obstacle to her own happiness was making more emphatic her disapproval of the feud between the two men. "I don't have to fight with Amy," she went on with mounting spirit, "and—and Steve, just because he's mad at Mr. Miller!"

Mrs. Dixon looked at the girl's flushed cheeks, smiled at her and said quizzically, "Have you been fighting with Steve lately, Emily?"

Emily laughed, her tensity of spirit relieved by the touch of humor in her mother's question. "Oh, no, mother," she said, and stood a moment hesitating while conscience claimed its own within her heart. "Steve passed here a little while ago," she went on casually in response to its demand as she moved toward the door, "and I talked with him a few minutes at the gate."

Mrs. Dixon watched her daughter with troubled eyes as Emily sped down the walk, her crinolined skirt bobbing and swaying as she ran. Mother-heart and woman-heart combined their instincts to make her feel sure that Emily had fallen under the sway of love and to guess that Stephen Miller was the object of her affection. The outlook seemed to her dubious, freighted with possibilities of unhappiness, because of the enmity between the heads of the two houses. But, with the practical sense developed by a lifetime of meeting problems as they presented themselves, she said to herself, "I'll find out all about it from Emily and just how far it's gone before I do anything. She'll tell me."

Her gaze went on beyond her daughter to the peach orchard and her face filled with pleasure and her eyes shone as she devoured its beauty. Then she sighed and said to herself, as she had said so many times already,

“What a pity that anything so pretty should make so much trouble!”

Emily waited at the gate as Amy came through the orchard and as she noted that the other girl wore hoops she looked down with satisfaction at her own ballooning skirt and inwardly rejoiced that she had put on her crinoline. Amy was carrying a small tin pail and had difficulty managing both it and her hoopskirt as she tried to climb the fence with due regard to the safety of the contents of the pail and the demands of modesty.

“Come on over, Amy!” Emily called when the other was at last safely over the rail barrier.

Amy surveyed the road doubtfully. “It’s awful muddy,” she hesitated, “but I’ve got to cross anyway, so I will.” She picked her way across, and the two girls leaned upon the gate from opposite sides.

“Will your father be mad if he sees me?” Amy asked anxiously at once.

“Never mind about father. He’s out around the barn somewhere. Where are you going?”

“Only just down to Mrs. Smith’s. They’ve got a fresh cow but their hens aren’t laying, and we’ve got lots of eggs but no butter, yet, so I’m taking these eggs—see, I’ve got a dozen here, to trade with her for some butter. I’m glad I don’t have to climb any more fences, with these hoops on, before I get there. When I go back I’ll go around the road, the other way.”

But fate, personified in a horseman who was that moment galloping along the muddy road beyond the hill, was preparing for Amy a stern choice as to home-going that was far beyond her dreams.

Emily was looking at Amy’s dress and exclaiming her admiration. “Amy Miller, you’ve got on a new dress? My, how pretty it is! When did you get it?”

Amy, pleased, turned around and showed off her frock. "Do you like it? Do you think it looks nice? It isn't really new. I made it out of an old one that mother had before the war but hadn't worn for years because it didn't fit her any more. So I made it over for myself and helped out with an old one I used to have just like it that I'd outgrown long ago. Calico costs so much now, you know."

"Yes, it's just awful. But you're mighty smart, Amy, to do all that! It's the prettiest dress you've had in a long time! Say, Amy, I heard that Steve had you out driving in his new buggy last Sunday!" Emily watched her keenly for any sign of inward agitation this might evoke. But there was none. Amy was as unconcernedly shaking her skirt into place as if she had been speaking of her father as she replied, "Yes, we went over to Jennie Weston's to get some flower seeds."

Emily, relieved, merely said "Oh!" then suddenly decided to carry her inquiry farther and find out if Amy had any suspicion of her own secret romance. "What's Steve doing to-day?" she asked, casually.

"I don't know—plowing, I guess," was Amy's careless reply as she picked up her pail of eggs. "Well, I must go along." She took a step or two reluctantly, as if there was something still on her mind, and then asked anxiously, with the color rising in her cheeks, "When did you folks hear from Will, Emily?"

Emily stared a moment, read the sign that was mantling to the other's brow, and laughed. "When did you hear from Will, Amy Miller?"

Amy drew back shyly. "Why, Em! What makes you think I've heard from him? Do you know when

he's coming home? Does he think there'll be any more fighting?"

"He says he doesn't think so, anyway not much, but he doesn't know when he'll get to come home. He thinks he'll have to stay awhile, in camp somewhere not very far from Washington, until his regiment is mustered out. Oh, Amy! aren't you just as glad as you can be this dreadful war is over at last!"

"Yes, I am!" Amy assented, clasping her hands in the intensity of her feeling. "Everybody is! Now we can make plans and do things and not feel all the time that we're just waiting for something dreadful to happen!"

Emily gazed up the road, her eyes following its vacant, muddy track up the low rise over which it disappeared in the distance, on its way to Scott City, the railroad town which united them with the outside world. "How good it will seem to have Billy home again!" she said, and then her eyes filled with tears as she thought of the two other brothers who were lying in unknown graves, one at Andersonville and one on the field of Antietam.

"But Andy and Harry," she faltered, then choked and the tears ran down her cheeks. Harry, nearest her own age, had been her favorite of all her five brothers and they had been chums ever since she could remember, until he went away to the war, the last and youngest of the three soldier sons of the house.

Amy followed her gaze up the road and discerned something that Emily could not see for her tears. "Look, Emily!" she exclaimed, laying a friendly, sympathetic hand on the other's shoulder. "Somebody's coming over the hill! It's a man on horseback!"

Travelers were not frequent at any time upon this country road and during these busy spring days, which

kept every farmer at home, a passer-by was an event of consequence, to be gazed at and considered and discussed afterward.

Emily wiped away her tears and bent her attention to this interesting development. "It is a man on horseback," she agreed, "and how fast he's riding!"

"Yes, on the gallop, and through all this mud!"

Emily's romantic soul leaped quickly to the brightest and most exciting explanation of the phenomenon she could think of. "Amy! What if it should be Billy!" She opened the gate and stepped out beside Amy and they stood there gazing with their hearts in their eyes, tense with excitement.

"He looks as if he had on a soldier's cap!" Amy contributed to their encouragement.

"And a soldier's overcoat, too," cried Emily. "And he rides like a soldier! Oh, Amy! I believe it is Billy!"

"Isn't he a fine rider! And he does begin to look like Will!"

Mrs. Dixon came out on the porch, her knitting in her hands and her steel needles flying. "What are you girls looking at?" she called to them.

"Oh, mother!" Emily cried, seizing Amy's hand. "A soldier's coming," she went on breathlessly as they ran together to the steps of the porch, "as hard as he can ride, and we think maybe it's Billy!"

"William! I'm afraid it couldn't be, for he hasn't written he was coming!"

"I'm sure it is! Oh, if it should be Billy!" cried Emily as, still holding Amy's hand, they rushed back to the gate.

Mrs. Dixon followed them, saying anxiously, out of sad memories and always feared possibilities of four

years of war: "It might be somebody coming to tell us something has happened to William!"

"Oh, no, Mrs. Dixon," Amy protested. "Not now! The war's over now!"

The hard-riding horseman was nearing the house and Emily, gazing at him with all her eye power, began to jump up and down in a transport of joy and clap her hands as she cried out, "It is Billy! It is Billy! It is! It is!"

As she called out, "Billy! Billy!" in joyful welcome, he came dashing up, his horse on the gallop, and was off its back and had his mother in his arms almost before it had stopped. Emily threw her arms around his neck and was asking, before he had released their mother, "Oh, Billy, are you home for good?"

"Not this time, Em!" he answered, kissing her. Amy had retreated inside the gate and he put Emily aside and went in, shaking hands heartily and saying, "Amy too! This is good luck!"

William threw off his overcoat and laid it on the fence, showing a colonel's insignia. Four years of war, with the responsibilities of command the later ones had brought, and a full brown beard made him look more than his twenty-five years. He limped slightly, and knew that he always would, from a battle wound, but his tall figure was straight as an arrow and slender, but broad shouldered.

Mrs. Dixon looked at him with devouring eyes as she asked about the length of his furlough. Beloved first-born of her body, bone of her bone, blood of her blood, soul of her soul, through many an anxious night she had, in imagination, watched beside him as he lay on the ground in rain or snow, or hid in wet thickets wait-

ing for the morrow's charge, and under blazing summer suns or through winter's bitter wind she had marched with him for weary mile upon mile, and through hours and days of the smoke and flame and hell of battle she had hovered near him while men fell all around and her footprints were red with their blood. And now it was all over, at last, at last! And he was home again with only that little limp to mark him after all those years of struggle and anxiety and blood and agony! She wiped the tears of joy from her eyes, tears of joy that welled up above the pain in her heart as she thought of the two other tall sons who would never come home again.

As he told them that his furlough was a short one and that delays on the journey had already lost so much time that he would have only two days with them, Emily bethought herself of her father and brother and ran back toward the barn calling out, "Father! Mark! Billy's come!" And at once they came hurrying from their work, the elder Dixon a man of fifty, his face covered with a full, brown beard, his gray eyes, large and keen, shadowed by thick, prominent brows, and Mark a tall, sturdy boy of fifteen. Presently came running also ten-year-old Benjy, his father's namesake and the youngest of the flock, hurrying his pace home from school as he glimpsed from a distance the group in the yard and the horse beside the gate.

"Well, Bill, you have given us a surprise this time!" said his father. "How'd you get to come home now?"

"My leg has been troubling me—that bullet I got at Gettysburg, you know. And my major wanted me to attend to some business for him in St. Louis. I'll have to start back day after to-morrow."

Mrs. Dixon put her hands on his shoulders, looking

anxiously into his face. "But the war really is all over, isn't it, William? There won't be any more fighting!"

"I don't think so, mother—at least nothing of much consequence." His eyes sought out Amy, standing in the background and looking interested but uncertain and embarrassed. His father followed his glance, saw Amy for the first time and bent his heavy brows in an angry scowl. Amy saw it and shrank back timidly against the fence. She said to herself that she must take her pail of eggs and go on upon her errand—but—she would wait just a minute. For it was hard to take her eyes off of that tall, bearded figure, with its halo of long absence and dangers endured, adventure and patriotic service, and it would be harder still to go away alone, down the road, and leave him behind, separated from her by that barrier of the family quarrel. Her heart beat high with the surety that he wanted to see her—but ought she to stay, she asked herself, when her father—

Mrs. Dixon, with her hands still on his shoulders, was saying in that warm, tender voice of hers, "Just think of all the mothers who'll soon have their sons again!"

"Well," said her husband, "there'll be plenty for all of them to do!"

"You're just right, father!" William assented enthusiastically. "After four years of war—well, there'll be enough to keep busy twice as many men! I tell you, the whole country will soon be humming!"

"Well, Bill," said his father dryly, "I know one place where there's plenty to do right now! Of course, you are your own man now, but we can make some kind of a bargain about the farm. I'll rent you half of it on good terms."

William stole a glance at Amy, as if he would like to

know beforehand how she would take the thunderbolt he was about to launch at his father. Then he looked the elder Dixon straight in the eye as he said quietly: "I'm not going to farm any more, father."

The other stared at him, amazed, doubting if he had heard aright. "What! What did you say, Bill!"

"I don't intend to be a farmer. I'm going to study law."

"Huh!" Impatience and disdain beyond words were in the exclamation. "Study law and starve to death! That's a fool notion!"

"I am going to try it." William spoke quietly, but as the two men faced each other it was evident that beneath their bushy beards jaws that were very much alike were set with equal determination.

"There's too many shyster lawyers that can't earn their salt sitting around in offices already!"

"I shall not be that kind!"

Benjamin Dixon stroked his beard thoughtfully and gazed at his soldier son with contemplative eyes. Inwardly he was giving, for the first time in his life, conscious but grudging recognition to the fact that this tall, bearded man with a colonel's epaulets upon his shoulders could no longer be subjected to that stern, patriarchal rule, not to be disobeyed or questioned, which he had always imposed upon his children. As he had dominated his surroundings, and by force of muscle and of will turned them to his advantage, so he had dominated his family. A pioneer all his life and the son of a pioneer, he had wrestled with conditions that called for all his strength and all his determination; and always he had triumphed over them and made them the stepping stones to a slowly growing but ever increasing prosperity. The long struggle had weakened

neither his body nor his will and his powerful-looking shoulders at fifty were as straight and square as they had been at half that age, his legs were as solidly up-standing as a pair of his own fenceposts and the big brown hand, hairy and sinewy, with which he was stroking his beard had kept the shape of its youth. A new idea had come into his mind and he was taking a moment to consider it.

"Well, Bill," he began, more affably, but with an undertone of gruffness still in his voice, "if you don't want to stay here I'll tell you what we'll do. I'll sell this farm and we'll all go out West together! There's a man in Scott City, from York State, who's looking for a farm and he likes mine the best of all he's seen. He's been after me to buy it, but I've told him I didn't want to sell—though I didn't say I wouldn't. It's a good chance to sell," he added with the gleam of the inveterate bargainer in his eye. For Benjamin Dixon was a living disproof of the old adage that a rolling stone gathers no moss. From one farm to another he had gone for the last twenty years, improving each one, putting into it labor and intelligence, selling it for more than it had cost him, and then buying another one larger and better.

"But you don't want to sell this farm, do you? It's a fine place, and mother likes it the best of any place we've ever lived."

"It's a good chance," Dixon repeated, his enthusiasm growing as he unfolded his new plan. "My father came West from New York to Ohio, and then to Indiana, when it was all new and helped to build up that country. And then when your mother and I married we came West to Illinois while it was still as new as when God made it. Now, land is cheap and the soil is rich out

in Iowa and Kansas and Nebraska and it's worth while to go West again. I'll sell the farm and you take what you've saved and we'll all go West and buy a big lot of land together. Why, between us we could get half a county! And in ten years, I tell you, it would be worth something! What ye say, Bill? Come on, let's try it!"

"Yes, there'd be money in it, of course. But it isn't what I want to do. Why, father," and his enthusiasm began to equal that which his father was showing, "this whole country is going to be made over, developed, turned into something new and different, and I mean to have a hand in the making!"

Dixon gave an impatient snort. "You grew up on a farm, Bill, and it's all you know. The farm's where you belong and it's where you'd better stay! Law! Huh! You couldn't earn your salt at it!"

Mrs. Dixon had been listening anxiously, her sympathies all with her son, and feeling strongly that his father was unjust to him. Moreover, she knew that in the end William would carry out his purpose, for that was in the Dixon blood and he was too much like his father to allow himself, now that he had come to man's estate, to be dominated by other people's ideas and desires. And she wanted this inevitable result to come about with as little resentment and hardness of feeling as possible.

"William was always good at his studies, father," she intervened gently. "Don't you remember? And the two winters he taught school before the war, you know how well everybody liked him and said the children learned faster and did more good in school than with any other teacher! You haven't forgotten all that, have you, father?"

It was evident that Father Dixon had not forgotten any of it, that he had, indeed, treasured it all up in his heart, for pride and satisfaction were in his eye and his countenance as he glanced at his son. But he kept them out of his voice, which was still gruff with angry impatience, as he replied: "I'm not talking about that! I'm saying there's too many poor lawyers and not enough good farmers in this country already!"

"I'll be a better lawyer than I'd ever be a farmer," was William's comment.

"You don't know anything about it!" exclaimed Dixon, still obstinately holding his ground.

For his son's threatened defection from the soil was a sore disappointment. A lifetime of courtship of Mother Earth, of coaxing her favors from her, of persuading her to fruit bountifully for his benefit had deepened his conviction from year to year that a farmer's life is the best of all. Having won prosperity and enjoyment from the tilling of the soil himself he expected his sons to follow in his footsteps. He had looked forward to the return of his three soldiers from the war with long considered plans for the division of his two hundred acres in a way that would be just to them all, and would give each one a fair start. And now two of them would never come back and his eldest born wanted to fling his beloved soil back in his face. Underneath his surface anger were deep hurt and sharp disappointment. But William realized none of this and he was fast losing his patience with what he thought was his father's refusal to recognize his right to order his own life.

Emily was standing beside him and she slipped her arm into his and gave it a loving pressure. "Billy's proved that he can be something besides a farmer, father," she began with spirit. It was recognized in

the family that Emily could be more daring with their father, without reproof, than any of the others. "He went into the army a private, and he's been promoted and promoted, until now he's a colonel!"

Again satisfaction in his son's achievements asserted itself in the father's heart and he looked at the colonel's insignia with pride. Then disappointment smarted again and he scowled as he answered angrily:

"That has nothing to do with his studying law! Fighting with a gun is one thing, and fighting with your tongue is another! He knows how to farm, he's a good farmer, and he'd better stick to it! I won't give him anything for a wild-goose chase like that!"

William's patience had reached its limit and it broke with that last sentence, which struck him like the lash of a deliberate insult. "I haven't asked you for anything!" he exclaimed, turning upon his father with blazing eyes. "I shall study law, but I want you to understand that I'm not asking you for any help. I don't want any favors from you, or anybody, now or any time!"

Dixon looked at his son's erect figure, set countenance and fiery expression with a gradually softening expression. Perhaps some memory of years ago flashed across his mind with a plea for the other's cause, perhaps parental pride was winning the day. For he laughed a little under his breath and shook his head, saying more gently, "Got it all laid out, hain't you!" Then he turned to his wife with a broad grin: "He always was a plucky bugger!"

William's horse was champing its bit and tossing its head impatiently and the farmer's ingrained thoughtfulness for animals turned his attention to its need of care. He started toward the gate saying, "You think

again about that scheme of going West, Bill, and I'll put your horse up. Mother, I expect Bill's hungry, too." He unhitched the horse and disappeared with it through a large gate beyond the house-yard that led to the barn.

"Land sakes, Emily! Of course William's hungry! We must go in and get supper! Benjy, go and gather up the eggs and bring them in! Mark, go in and start the kitchen fire for me and fill up the woodbox!" She turned to William, and threw her arms around his neck and kissed him once more. "We're all so glad to see you, William, and we've talked so fast I forgot all about it. But we won't be long. Come, Emily, we must hurry! Amy, you must stay to supper, but you stay out here and visit with William till it's ready. Come with me, Emily! We'll make a custard pie—you know how William likes custard pie——" She was hurrying toward the house, her mind intent on the homecoming feast for her hero son, but looked back over her shoulder to say, "—and I've got some doughnuts—do you still like doughnuts, William?"

"Do I still like doughnuts, mother!"

There was no mistaking the tone and she laughed with happy recollection of his hungry teens as she hurried away, saying, "And we'll make biscuits and fry ham and have mashed potatoes and peach preserves——"

Emily started reluctantly to follow her mother, then ran back and gave William an ardent hug. "You just go ahead with your law plan, Billy!" she admonished him. "I know you'll succeed! And father will be as proud of you as any of us! Yes, mother, I'm coming, right away!" Amy picked up her pail of eggs and turned toward the gate.

"I must go," she faltered. "I've got to—to go—to Mrs. Smith's."

CHAPTER III

LOVE WILL HAVE ITS WAY

WILLIAM was quickly beside her, bending over her and saying tenderly, "May I kiss you now, Amy, dearest?"

"Me—I—oh—what do you mean?" she stammered, drawing back and hanging her head until her sunbonnet concealed the blushes that dyed her cheeks.

He led her toward the seat beneath the apple tree in the corner of the yard, leaning over her and speaking in that lover's tone that at once had set her pulses flying: "I've kissed my mother and my sister—now may I kiss my sweetheart, my wife to be?"

Amy was still tongue-tied with bashfulness and confusion, her mind in a whirl with the sudden necessity of decision and not a little dazed by the glory she felt descending upon her at the words of this tall, fine officer, after all his years of absence. She could only stammer, "Who—what—do you mean?"

"Don't you know? I wrote to you—didn't you get my letter?"

Her head drooped again and from beneath the ruffle of her bonnet he heard a faintly whispered, "Yes."

"That's really why I got my furlough," he went on impetuously. "The other things were just an excuse. I was afraid you wouldn't answer right away, or that something might be happening that would take you

away from me, or that maybe my letter, or your answer, might get lost in the mails. I couldn't take any risks and I couldn't wait to hear from you. Amy, dear, I hoped you would say yes, because you used to seem to like me, but so many things might have happened, and I had to know just as soon as possible. You will be my wife, won't you, Amy?"

She looked up into his face and seized upon the thought that was uppermost in her mind: "I'm so glad you came! It's so good to see you!"

"Then you do love me, Amy, darling," he exclaimed, untying her sunbonnet with trembling fingers and throwing it on the bench. He took her face between his palms and kissed her lips, then drew her down beside him on the bench, saying triumphantly, "There! That settles it!"

"But I didn't mean to let you kiss me, Will!" she exclaimed, in sudden dismay, drawing away from his encircling arm. "I forgot!"

Colonel Dixon laughed and exclaimed, "Forget again!" as he drew her again into his arm and claimed another kiss, which after a moment's reluctance she did not refuse. "Amy, sweetheart!" he whispered, "Will you marry me at once and go back to Washington with me?"

Amy gasped and moved back, staring at him in astonishment. "I—I couldn't! I haven't got a thing ready!"

"You're all right," he countered persuasively. "What's the matter with this dress? You look as sweet as a peach-blossom in it!"

Amy was secretly very proud of her dressmaking achievement and she smiled and flushed with pleasure

at his praise as she smoothed her skirt and said, looking up at him shyly, "Do you like me in it?"

A practiced coquette could not have said and done the same thing more fascinatingly, but Amy was so simply and sincerely minded that she drew back in genuine consternation as William exclaimed, "Do I like you in it!" and sprang toward her with hungry arms and love-lighted eyes.

"Oh, Will, wait a minute," and she warded him off, poised for flight, until he moved back to the end of the seat. "There are some things we must talk about first. I forgot them for a minute, and that's why I let you kiss me. There's your father—he won't want us to marry."

"What has he got to say about it? It's you and I that are doing this marrying."

"Ever since he and my father have been quarreling about that land over there—the orchard eighty—he won't speak to any of us, except to quarrel with father or Steve. I was 'most afraid to come in to-day, but I was so happy and excited when we saw you coming that I forgot everything else."

"Don't you worry about father," William assured her with confidence. "I'll talk him around if he makes any fuss. And if he's pig-headed about it we'll slide off by ourselves and get married without saying a word to anybody until it's all over!" He moved toward her as though he felt the matter to be settled, but Amy made ready for flight again as she went on hurriedly:

"That isn't all—there's my father, too."

"He won't forbid you, will he?"

"I'm afraid—yes, I know he would. And there's Stephen."

Her lover smiled at her amusedly, protectingly. "Anybody else?"

"Isn't that enough?"

"More than enough, dearest! In fact, I'd call it a whale of a lot of people to want to boss our affairs. What has Steve got to do with it?"

"Why, he—he—father—that is, Steve wants me to marry him."

"Oh, he does! But you don't want to, do you?"

Amy stared at him with wide blue eyes and countenance eloquent of the surprise that held her tongue for a moment. "Why, no! Of course not!"

"Well, then, that's of no consequence! Steve Miller! Why, I thought—well, from something Emily wrote me lately, that she said I mustn't say a word about in my letters home, I thought that he was making love to her and that they were going to be married some day."

Amy laughed. "Oh, Steve is a great flirt and he's made love, I guess, to most all the girls around here. He doesn't have to much more than look at a girl to make her lose her head about him. But I'm the one he really means to marry."

"Oh, are you?" said William stiffly, his tone belligerent.

"Yes, he and father are determined about it. I don't believe Steve really cares much about me, but he knows it will be better for him to do as father wants him to. It's father that's at the bottom of it. He lately got a notion that he isn't going to live much longer and he says he wants to see me settled, with a good husband, before he dies. He's very fond of Steve and would like him to have the farm, if it wasn't for me. But of course

he wants me to have it, and he thinks that if we marry then we'll both have it and it will be all right. So he's talked to me about it and talked to Steve and they're both trying, and mother too, to persuade me to marry Stephen very soon."

"Are you very sure you don't want to marry him?"

"Of course I am! But, oh, Will," and she clasped her hands upon her breast as if in supplication to unkind fate to deal less harshly with her, "I'm afraid it's what I ought to do!"

William looked at her with a smile that was all tenderness and love and gently took her clasped hands into his own. "My little Amy! You've always done what you thought you ought to, no matter how hard it was!"

"I always try to," she commented simply, "because it's right. But now—Will, dear, it's going to be so hard!" He took her into his enfolding arms and laid her head against his shoulder, where she drew a deep, sobbing breath or two, but in a moment she was moving away from him again.

"If I ought to marry Steve, then of course I must," she said, and he knew that in that sentence was her final decision.

He had known Amy Miller ever since his family had lived on this farm, now nearly ten years, and never had he seen her show hesitation over the performance of what she thought was her duty. It was because of this quality that he first began to like her more than he did other girls when he was a big, awkward boy and she a slender little girl with hair bobbed short around her neck. He had never known her to shirk or evade a duty, or lag in its performance, or fail to carry out a trust. As he took her hands and fondled them he remembered how he once went to her assistance when he had found

her, a child of twelve, thin and small for her age, tugging at the rope around the neck of an angry cow, trying to drive or drag her from her calf in one pasture through a gate into another. Her face was pale with fright—he could see it yet, watchful and full of her purpose for all her well-warranted fear of the cow—and she was trembling with the strain upon muscles and nerves, but not for an instant had she thought of leaving the task until it was finished.

“If it’s right I must do it, mustn’t I?” she asked his anxiously.

“It isn’t right, Amy, for you to marry Steve if you don’t love him. Do you think it would be?”

“That’s what I’ve said to myself and said to them when they’ve been talking and talking to me about it, but they just kept right on, father especially, and mother too. They’ve almost made me think I ought to marry Steve just because they want me to so much.”

“Amy, do you love me?” Colonel Dixon was preparing to take the citadel by sudden assault. He knew what she would say and do, and just how she would look, in the face of this question, but he could form no idea, he had only his lover’s hopes, of what would be her response to the ultimatum with which he meant to follow it. She looked up at him, just as he knew she would, with anxious, thoughtful, unsmiling face, but with a glow in her blue eyes that, for all their seriousness, illumined the simple, honest “Yes” with which she answered him.

“Then, Amy, dear, will you marry me this afternoon and go back to Washington with me day after to-morrow?”

She gazed at him a moment without speaking, her hands gripping each other in her lap and her troubled, serious countenance growing more tense in its expres-

sion. "Will, dear," she began slowly, her voice tender with the depth of her feeling, "I'd marry you to-day, or any day, or I'd wait ten years, or a lifetime, for you, if it wasn't for mother and father. Even if it wasn't for Steve, it would make them mad for me to marry you, because of the quarrel about that land, and they wouldn't speak to me for a long time, but they'd maybe get over it after a while. But, Will, you don't know how they've set their hearts on my marrying Steve! I'm their only child and how can I disappoint them so! It would ruin everything for them and make them unhappy all the rest of their lives! What right have I to do that?"

"What right have they to ruin all your life because they selfishly want to keep you with them for a few years longer?"

She thought for a moment. "It would ruin all my life," she assented. "I'd be unhappy always, as long as I lived. And I'd—I know I would—I'd hate Steve after a while—and I'd always—love you." Squarely facing the future for the first time, the horror of the prospect suddenly smote her. She shivered and covered her face with her hands. "Oh, it would be awful," she cried, with more abandonment to her feeling than she was wont to show. "It would be wicked to be married and love some one else!"

He waited until she uncovered her face, still flushed with shame at that glimpse of the future. "Sweetheart," he said, "I must know at once whether it's to be Steve or me. I love you, dearest; I've always loved you. Ever since I began to think of marrying some time, it's always been you that I've thought of. I've never wanted to marry any other girl. Oh, Amy, darling, I can't tell you how I hope you will decide for me! But I want you

to choose between us with a free conscience, for I know you wouldn't be happy afterwards if you didn't. But I must have your answer now."

"Couldn't we leave it until you come home for good?" she pleaded, inwardly hoping that with a little time she might soften parental determination.

"No, I will not leave you here to be nagged at and made unhappy and maybe over-persuaded and stolen away from me. You're too precious, Amy, darling, and I won't risk losing you! If I must go away alone I shall not come back here at all. For I couldn't bear to see you another man's wife."

"Oh, Will!" she cried, a look of pain striking across her face and sounding in her voice. "You don't mean that!"

"I do mean it, Amy. You must choose now, right away, whether you will stay here with your father and mother and Steve or go away with me and make us both happy for always. I don't want to make it hard for you," he added tenderly, as he saw the piteous appeal in her face, "but when people marry it is right for them to consider themselves and their future first of all."

Silently she freed her hands from his clasp and stood up beside the tree. For an instant a spasm of pain gripped his heart, for he thought she was going to leave him, and he sprang to his feet with a protest on his lips. Then he saw that she was bending all her thought to the solution of her problem and he leaned against the fence facing her and eagerly watching her countenance for sign of her decision. He longed to take her in his arms and pour into her ear arguments and persuasion and tender, loving comfortings. But he knew her better than to add anything more to what he had said already. He knew that her self-reliant soul would prefer to de-

cide the question alone and that she would be grateful to him if he did not interfere. And he knew also that no argument would have weight with her unless it dealt with the right and the wrong of the question. Understanding her so well he could easily perceive how her people, by constant appeal to her sense of duty and her tender regard for their happiness, had so swayed her toward consent to their desire.

So he waited silently, watching her as she stood beside the apple tree, her figure, hardly of medium height, looking small and slender notwithstanding her hoop-distended skirt. He loved every well-remembered line of her serious, girlish face and even the tawny freckles that powdered the bridge of her nose and strayed out into her cheeks, to be lost in their wild-rose bloom. What a lovely blue were her eyes, he thought, as he gazed with his heart in his own; and how beautiful her fair, brown hair, almost golden where the sun shone on it! His love and his longing and his wish to comfort and help were a swelling pain in his heart, that seemed ready to burst, as he waited for her to speak, hopeful, but fearful of her decision. But when he saw some tears chasing each other down her cheeks he could endure it no longer and sprang toward her crying, "Amy! Amy! Darling!"

At once she was in his arms and he was kissing away her tears while she whispered, "I love you, Will, dearest, and I'll marry you or nobody! It would be wrong for me to do anything else—I see that plainly now. Oh, Will, I am so glad you came! If you hadn't they might have made me think I ought to do—the other thing!"

"Thank God I came, without waiting another day!" he said as he led her to the bench and they sat down together again. "Now, Amy, shall we be married this

afternoon, so you can go back to Washington with me?"

"But I haven't any clothes!"

"Bother the clothes! We'll buy some in Washington."

"Could you take me with you?"

"I certainly am not going to leave you here. The wives of lots of the officers are in Washington. I'll find a place for you to live in the city and I'll go in from camp to see you as often as I can. I expect to get my discharge soon, anyway, maybe within two or three weeks. Would you like to see Washington?"

"Would I like it! Oh, Will, I've always wanted to go away and see things and do things, and I've never been anywhere but to Scott City! Oh, I'd see the White House, wouldn't I, and the Potomac River, and the Washington Monument, and maybe the President and General Grant! Oh, Will, it would be wonderful!"

"We'll do it, Amy! You shall go! It will be your first visit to Washington, sweetheart, but I don't think it will be your last!"

He said this with an air of mystery and she asked him what he meant. His answer, "Would you like to live there sometime?" made her open wide her blue eyes, starry now with happiness, as she exclaimed, "How could we do that?"

Then he told her briefly about his ambitions, wonderful and daring and splendid in her ears, how he was going to study law and how he meant, after he had won some success as a lawyer, to run for Congress. "Of course," he added, "this is just for the ears of my little wife, because all that is a long ways off yet and I'll have to do lots of work in the meantime and I don't want to go around bragging so long beforehand. But some day it will all come true and then we'll go to Washington to live!"

She stared at him as he talked, wondering, excited, her breath coming fast. "Oh, Will," she exclaimed, "it's fine! It's splendid! And I know you'll do it! I know you'll succeed, dearest Will!" Then she stopped and her face clouded with doubt as she thought of herself, sharing in all this future splendor. "But are you sure," she went on, hesitating, "are you—quite sure—you want to marry—me?"

"This very day, you darling!"

"But am I fit to be—I'm just a country girl!"

"And I'm just a country boy!"

"And I don't know very much—"

"Neither do I!"

"But—I love you—Will——"

"And I love you, Amy!"

She was in his arms again and hers were around his neck as with their kisses they sealed their love vows. But Amy had been so thrilled and awed by the glimpse he had given her of his ambition that her thoughts quickly returned to it and in a moment she was springing to her feet again and exclaiming in an eager, delighted voice, "I'm so glad you mean to do all these things! It's just splendid!"

"As I said just now, I don't want to do any bragging beforehand," he told her as he rose and stood beside her, "but I really am going to try to be somebody and do something worth while!"

"And I," she went on, still eager but serious and hesitant, "oh, I know I can't be anything much myself—but—I'll be your wife, Will!"

The pride and dignity with which she said it touched him to his innermost heart and there were tears in his eyes as he bent over and said with fervor, "And I'll be proud of you!"

She gave him a loving, grateful glance and went on, intent on confession of the purpose that had been inspired in her own heart: "I don't know hardly anything now, and I've never been anywhere, but I'll read—oh, I'll read everything you do, and I'll learn all I can, and you shall never, never be ashamed of me!"

"Amy, my darling! I'm not half good enough for you—" and he took her again into his arms and kissed her forehead—"but I love you with all my heart and if I can help it you shall never be sorry for the choice you have made this afternoon!"

At that moment the elder Dixon came out of the house and down the steps.

CHAPTER IV

YOUTH AND LOVE AND HOPE DEMAND A HEARING

BENJAMIN DIXON was looking for his son, his thoughts intent on his new scheme of going West, and hoping that the lure of it would induce William to give up his plan of studying law and remain a farmer. His mind was full of arguments and persuasions that seemed to him conclusive and so occupied had he been with them that he had even forgotten that his enemy's daughter had been at his gate that afternoon, apparently holding converse with his family. Nor would he have supposed for a moment, even if he had thought of it, that she would desire or dare to remain at his house. So, when his eyes fell upon the lovers and he saw Samuel Miller's daughter in his son's arms, her face uplifted for his kiss, it was as if a thunderbolt had struck at his feet. He stopped stock-still for a moment and then automatically, not knowing that he moved a step, went on toward the gate, his eyes staring, his mouth open in bewilderment.

"There's father," said William. "Let's go and tell him about it right now."

He took Amy's hand in his and together they moved across the emerald grass to the gate where his father was standing and staring at them. Not until he saw them thus coming toward him did the older man realize what was happening. His mouth snapped shut in a grim

line and his face went white with anger. But he waited for his son to speak.

"We're in for it," thought William as he saw with surprise his father's aspect, for he knew very little about the quarrel which had come about during his absence, and had disregarded it as a thing of little consequence. But his head went up and his lips closed in a line as determined and grim as his father's. As he thought, "I may have to take Amy behind me and go back to Scott City this afternoon," he put his arm protectingly about her shoulders.

"Father," he began in a tone as short and cold as if he had been giving a military command, "Amy and I are going to be married this afternoon, so she can go back to Washington with me day after to-morrow. She'll stay there, to be near me, until my regiment is mustered out and I get my discharge."

Father Dixon looked at them with angry eyes. "Huh!" he said with a sneer in his voice. "Amy Miller! Don't you know that her father is trying his level best to cheat me out of the orchard eighty over there?"

"What has that got to do with it?" William demanded.

The sneer in his father's face and voice grew more bitter as he asked, "Do you want to marry into that kind of a family?"

Amy would have drawn away from William's arm, but he held her close as he exclaimed, with his first show of anger, "Father, be careful! Don't you say a word against Amy!"

"That's enough about Amy!" Mr. Dixon snapped back.

"Amy is going to be my wife," his son replied, his

voice trembling with the rising anger he was trying to repress.

"Oh, Will," Amy pleaded, drawing away from him and moving toward the gate, "I can't have you quarrel with your father—I don't want to make things worse than they are! We'll have to wait!"

Colonel Dixon turned sharply to his father and asked, "What's the trouble between you and Miller? You used to like him well enough."

"That eighty over there," began the farmer truculently, "he's got no more right to it than he has to this door-yard, and he's trying to cheat me out of it!"

"But what is he doing?"

"What ain't he doing, you'd better say! I bought it and paid for it, more than it was worth, and the man I bought it from had bought and paid for it too, fair and square and above board, and I planted the peach trees and it was all coming along first rate. Then a shyster lawyer got hold of old Miller and persuaded him there was a flaw in the title—his father had owned it once—and that it ought to belong to him. Now he's got two durned shyster lawyers workin' at it and they're doing their doggoned best to steal it from me."

He stopped an instant, seeing an alluring opportunity to make a point against his son's determination to study law, and went on contemptuously: "That's what lawyers are fit for—to do other people's dirty work! That's the kind of thing you'll be making your living at if you study law!"

"A lawyer doesn't have to do dirty work unless he wants to," William threw in, and went on, before the other had time to answer his statement: "Father, it's foolish to keep on quarreling with Miller this way. You'll spend more than the land is worth before you

get through with it. Can't you come to some sort of a compromise and be friends again, as you used to be?"

Stephen Miller had been coming up the road, on his way home from his errand, and, seeing the group in the Dixon yard, had hurried his steps. He soon discerned Colonel Dixon's figure, recognized Amy also, saw his uncle's enemy, and marveled beyond words over the meaning of it. With eyes and ears alert he hurried along the paling fence, the three so intent upon their controversy that they did not notice his presence as he waited, a little beyond the gate. He had heard Mr. Dixon's account of the origin of the feud and was listening eagerly for his response to William's suggestion.

Farmer Dixon drew himself up, astonished and indignant at the proposal that he should compromise what he thought was right, give up any fraction of what he held to be his rights. "Compromise!" he exclaimed. "Give up my rights! No, sir-ree! That land is mine! I bought it and paid for it! It's mine, I tell you, Bill, and I'm not going to let any blood-sucker get it away from me! I'm going to stick to my rights!" And a belligerent jaw with its thatch of gray-sprinkled whiskers was thrust out at an angle that betokened victory.

William stroked his brown beard thoughtfully, with the same gesture his elder had used an hour before. He was his father's own son and both of them came of the sturdy pioneer breed to which possessions and rights were the most precious things in the world, to be defended with the last drop of blood. In his heart was an answering glow to his father's words as he said, "Well, I expect I'd feel that way too, if I was in your boots. But there's no sense in bringing Amy into the quarrel," he went on as he moved to her side and put his arm about her waist again.

At that revealing gesture Stephen straightened up and a belligerent look came into his face. He began to understand that there was something more involved here than the quarrel about the land. He had been entirely sure of Amy, never doubting that matters would stay just as they were until he was ready for the marriage for which her parents were planning. And here was the son of their enemy apparently stealing her away from him, spoiling all their plans, enticing her to desert from their side of the feud!

His heart fired with a more determined purpose than he had ever known before. Billy Dixon should not have Amy! She was his and he would take her away with him and marry her at once! The sudden determination, springing full-fledged into his heart on the moment, brought an immense satisfaction to his masculine soul. But underneath it was another thought that made him exult inwardly and sent a grin to his face. To take Amy away and marry her from under Bill Dixon's very nose would be a great triumph over the enemy and would humiliate the whole Dixon family and set everybody for miles around laughing at them!

With a troubled face, but carrying her head high, Amy was stepping back from William and away from the arm he would have thrown about her. "I can't marry you, Will," she was saying decisively, "while your father feels that way. I won't be despised by my husband's family!"

At that moment Stephen entered the gate and slammed it behind him. The others wheeled about with surprise, none of the three having noticed his approach. Half consciously Amy's eyes noted and she afterwards remembered and wondered about an unwonted maturity in his appearance. He was no longer the boy with whom

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she had talked a few hours before, but a man intent on a man's purposes. But his manner and voice were casual as he said, "Howdy, Bill! When did you get home? Another furlough?"

Benjamin Dixon was glaring at Stephen and without giving his son time to answer he burst out angrily: "Haven't I told you not to come around my house any more, Steve Miller? What do you want?"

Stephen had had no intention of taking the line of his next speech, but the impulse surged up through him, dominated him, and he plunged after its lead, saying truculently, "I want to tell you not to go around telling everybody my uncle is trying to cheat you! I know what you're saying and you've got to stop it!"

"I'll stop it, you young jack-a-napes," Dixon responded just as truculently, his chin thrust out until his beard was almost at right angles to his body, "when he stops trying to steal my land!"

Stephen took a step toward him, his face set and his fists clenched. "Now, that's enough!" he exclaimed angrily.

"You git out of here, Steve Miller!" Dixon bellowed at him, his big shoulders crouching a little and his hands coming up as if he would throw the intruder over the fence.

With despair in her heart over this sudden and violent development and grasping at the one chance she could see of preventing something worse than words Amy moved toward the gate saying, "I guess I must go. Steve, will you come with me?"

Her action recalled him to his original purpose and opened the way for it. Moreover, he had no desire to be pommelled and thrown into the road by Farmer Dixon's big, strong hands, and in consequence to have

the laughter of the community turned upon him. So he was quickly at Amy's side, saying with protecting and lover-like tenderness as he put his arm about her: "Yes, Amy, dear, you'd better let me take you out of this hole. These doggoned brutes will be threatening you first thing we know!"

He was leading her to the gate as William rushed at him, seizing him by the shoulder and exclaiming furiously, "Stop right here, you scoundrel!"

Stephen flung back over his shoulder in a sneering tone, "You'd like to have her stay here and listen to your father's abuse, wouldn't you, and maybe see him strike her!"

William ignored both the insult and the boy giving it to go straight to the thing that was of most consequence to him, and turning to Amy he asked her, "Do you want to go with Steve, Amy?"

She freed herself with a little shudder from Stephen's arm and with a look of despair at William she said brokenly: "I can't stay here now, Will! We'll have to—our plan—we'll have to give it up—for a while. Sometime—maybe—but I can't marry you while your father—hates me so—and despises me!"

The tears began to come, she covered her face with her hands and turned falteringly toward Stephen, who put his arm about her again, saying tenderly, "Come along with me, Amy, dear, and let's get out of this bunch of pirates! We'll go home and get ready to be married next Sunday!"

"Wait, Amy!" William exclaimed desperately. "Don't go away like this, with that rascally boy. We can fix this up—I know we can!"

Through the open doors and windows Dixon's loud voice as he ordered Stephen to leave had reached the

ears of Emily, busy in the kitchen making a custard pie. She barely caught the words, and at once jumped to the conclusion that Stephen had asked her father's permission for their marriage and in consequence was being ordered off the place. Her hands flew over her work in trembling haste as she finished the pie and set it in the oven. Then with her sleeves rolled to her elbows and hands smeared with flour she rushed to the front porch and down the path to the gate.

To William's protestations Amy had answered, "I must go, Will! It's the only way to prevent trouble." Stephen was standing beside the gate, holding it open and saying with the sound of authority in his voice, "Come on, Amy, darling, and I'll take you out of this nest of thieves and liars!" when Emily came flying down the path, full of her pre-occupation with what she supposed had happened.

"Oh, Steve," she exclaimed excitedly, her eyes wide and shining, as she laid her hand on his arm, "have you spoken to father?"

So absorbed in his purpose had he been that he had forgotten all about his affair with Emily and he realized with a start the possibility of disagreeable complications if he could not get Amy away at once. He said hastily to Emily as he moved to go out, "No—not now—another time will be better. Come, Amy, we must go!"

But Emily held him with a detaining hand on his arm. "You said you'd ask him, the first chance you got, and here we all are and Billy's just come home. It's an awfully good chance, Steve," she coaxed.

But Stephen pulled away from her, saying brusquely: "Not now, Em! We've been quarreling about the orchard eighty. Some other time will be better."

Amy, about to step out of the yard, stopped, moved

back a little and gazed with a puzzled look at Emily and Stephen. Mrs. Dixon had come to the front door and, seeing Amy apparently about to leave with Stephen, started down the path. Absorbed in her work inside the house she had heard none of the quarrel and was inwardly wondering how it had happened that both the Miller young people could be inside the yard, in her husband's presence, with no explosion of controversy and anger. "Thank goodness, there's been no quarrel this time!" she was saying to herself when her eyes chanced to fall upon the pail of eggs, which she had seen Amy set down beside the fence when William came. She turned off the path to pick up the pail.

"Oh, no!" Emily was pleading. "You'll never have a better chance! And you said you would—you promised sure, you know, this very afternoon—oh, Steve—you aren't going away!" For Stephen had edged away from her again and with his arm around Amy was urging her to go and saying, "This is no place for you, Amy, dear!"

With a look of heart-broken surprise on her face Emily turned to her brother. "Oh, Billy," she cried, "is he going to marry Amy?" And dropping her head on his shoulder she broke into tears and sobs.

Mrs. Dixon cast an anxious glance at her daughter and began to understand from the agitated looks of the entire group that some sort of tragedy had been happening. But she spoke cheerfully: "Amy, you've forgot your eggs! If you don't take them with you I'll fry them all for William's supper!"

Amy turned quickly back, as though glad of an excuse for delaying her departure for even a moment, hesitated, covered her face with her hands, then threw

her arms around Mrs. Dixon's neck and began to weep upon her breast.

Mrs. Dixon soothed her, patting her shoulder and saying in motherly tones, "Why, Amy, child! What's the matter, dearie? Both you girls crying, and William just home! That's a nice welcome for our soldier boy! Why, I could laugh all day!"

Father Dixon had been eyeing Emily, as if not quite sure of the cause of her grief, and unable to believe what it seemed to mean without her admission of its truth. He strode nearer to her, where she still leaned, sobbing, against her brother's shoulder and demanded sternly, "Emily, have you been carrying on with Steve Miller?"

Emily lifted her head, wiped her eyes and told him, between sobbing breaths: "He wanted me to run away with him—that was at first—and I wouldn't, and he's said all the time we'd be married some day, but I wouldn't kiss him until he'd first spoken to you about it."

Astounded, her father gazed at her, scarcely able to realize her disobedience. Here was the second member of his family, in a single afternoon, ready to cast aside his wishes, his interests, his commands, as matters of little consequence and ally themselves with his enemy! As the full significance of her confession dawned on him his face grew stormy. "What!" he exclaimed. "Wanted you to run away with him! I'd have locked you up in your room if I'd known what was going on!"

"Steve Miller," William demanded, "what did you mean by making love to my sister when you didn't intend to marry her?"

"How do you know I didn't intend to marry her—then?" Stephen countered insolently. He began to fear

that the controversy was going against him, but he could not yet give up the purpose of taking Amy home triumphantly with him and he felt that if he was to succeed he must impress her with his courage and importance, show her that he was not afraid of any of the Dixons, or of all of them together.

"Because," William told him sternly, "you were trying to get Amy to marry you at the same time!"

"Well," said Stephen, with still more insolence in voice and manner, "haven't you had any sweethearts down South, while you've been making love to Amy up here?"

"Amy has the right to ask me that, but you haven't!"

Stephen's insolent bravado had worked against instead of for his purpose, for it had centered upon him Benjamin Dixon's wrath. Turning upon the young man with a threatening gesture he exclaimed to William, "What's the use of jawing a durned whelp like him?" and then to Stephen: "You get out of here, right quick, and don't you let me catch you hanging around here again, or making up to Emily anywheres! Get along now, before I kick you out!"

Mr. Dixon's manner and evident purpose were so menacing that Stephen saw no alternative but to obey. But he still was determined to put the best possible face upon his going and so he tossed back jeeringly over his shoulder, "Huh! d'you think I've stayed here this long because I wanted to—in a nest of thieves and liars like this? Come, Amy," he went on, changing his tone, "I can't have you stay here any longer. We must go home now."

Amy raised her head from Mrs. Dixon's motherly breast and faced him. "No, Steve, I'm not going with you. I'll go home, soon, but I'd rather go alone. And

I'm not going to marry you, Steve, next Sunday, nor any other time, ever."

Stephen was about to go to her, as if to urge her again, but she turned from him and motioned him away, while another menacing gesture from Father Dixon caused him to hurry his steps out of the yard. Emily was leaning upon the fence, looking dejected and forlorn, her face turned away from the group, while now and then she wiped away the tears.

Stephen's eyes fell upon her and again sudden purpose was born in his heart. "Emily!" he said in low and tender tones. The beloved voice, which had been the first to stir her heart with love's witchery, had not yet lost its power, and she started, looked up and turned toward him as if fascinated. Stephen moved toward her, exultation and the hope of final triumph in his heart as he spoke her name once more in lover-like tones. Her face brightened and she moved toward him a step or two as the old love surged up once more in her breast and glimmered in her eyes. But recollection quickly broke the power of his voice and personality and she turned to Amy, asking if what William had just said was true and if Stephen had really wanted to marry her.

"Yes, Em, it's true! Just now, in the last ten minutes, he has been trying to get me to go home with him and get ready to marry him next Sunday."

Emily's head went up and her manner stiffened with sudden decision as she turned sharply to her discredited lover. "You needn't 'Emily' me any more, Steve Miller," she told him. "You can marry Amy, if she'll have you, but if I have a husband I want a whole one!"

With satisfaction tempering the anger in his face and manner Father Dixon strode through the gate, motioning Stephen away as he said, "Now, get along out of

here, you young jack-a-napes! Get along home with you and see if you can think up some new way of being pesky mean about my orchard eighty!"

Stephen had no desire to challenge fate any farther and he started across the road, flinging back over his shoulder, "That eighty's all right! Our lawyer says we'll have possession before the peaches are ripe!"

The words were like a match to powder and in a sudden explosion of temper Dixon shouted after him, furiously, "He does, does he? Well, mine says you'll never have it!"

A jeering laugh was Stephen's reply as he crossed the road unconcernedly. He climbed the fence, turned and waved his hat at Emily, and then walked away through the trees, stopping to examine one now and then with the conscious air of a proud proprietor. Father Dixon shook his fist in impotent rage several times at the young man, but when he presently came back into the yard, still frowning and angry, and his eyes fell upon Emily, standing dejected and with quivering lips beside the fence, he bent over her with affectionate concern, patted her cheek and said soothingly, "Never mind about him, Emily! He ain't worth crying about!"

But Emily drooped against the palings and with full eyes gazed after the disappearing figure that such a little while ago had meant to her love, romance, the hopes and dreams of youth, the future. Love, that had been singing so gayly and happily in her heart, was dead at her feet, and her lover himself had killed it. In hardly more than a minute's time he had stabbed to death her faith in him, her sweet, undoubting confidence in his least word. And for the ruin of it all she mourned silently, half conscious meanwhile of a vague regret beneath her grief that her lips had never known his kiss—

regret that tormented her heart in the nights that followed when her tears wet her pillow and she secretly moaned, "I wish I had kissed him!"

But, while she thus gazed and mourned, her brother was losing no time in the pursuit of his own love affair. As the elder Dixon came back, showing satisfaction that Stephen had been vanquished and driven away discredited, William at once returned to the subject that most interested him. "Now, father," he said, "I want to settle this matter about Amy and me. Have you any reasonable objection to our getting married, anything against Amy herself?"

Benjamin Dixon's sense of patriarchal dominance over his family, the result of the pioneer, self-sufficing conditions under which they had lived through the youth of his children, was still sore and smarting from the blows it had suffered that afternoon and his anger over the developments of the last hour had calmed only on the surface. At William's incisive question it broke out afresh and he flung back an irritated, "Haven't I told you often enough that I don't want you to marry into that family?" And without stopping for a reply he rushed on, giving vent to his anger: "That old skunk! There ain't an honest hair in his head! He'd steal the——"

"Hold on, father," William broke in. "Remember you are talking about Amy's father and Amy is here and can't help hearing you!"

Dixon turned to his wife, who had gone to Emily and was comforting her, and said, with angry complaint in his voice, "He's taking her side already and if he marries her he'll soon be taking her father's part against me! I don't want either you or your wife," he said to William, the patriarch in him again seeking utter-

ance, "calling that man father, nor your children calling him grandfather, the same as they would me. Ain't there enough nice girls around here for you to pick a wife from without going to that family?"

"There are lots of nice girls," William answered, turning to Amy and putting his hand upon her shoulder as he went on, with tenderness in his voice, "but there's only one Amy" She looked up at him with trusting affection and he began once more to hope that the sorry tangle might yet be unwound.

"Don't you remember, father," Mrs. Dixon was saying, "that was the way my father used to talk about you?"

He laughed grimly at this sudden reminder of his own stormy courtship. "He didn't like me very well, that's a fact! But," he went on cheerfully, "that didn't bother us much, did it?"

Mrs. Dixon crossed the path to his side and laid her hand on his arm, smiling at him, the glow of memory in her brown eyes. "You remember, don't you, Benjamin," she spoke his name, by which she rarely addressed him, with a quaint dwelling on its first syllable that gave it an alluring sound, "that he said I shouldn't marry you. And then, one day, you came riding by our house. Of course, I knew you were coming and I was watching for you! I was standing in the door and you made a sign to me. And then I went in and put on my new poke bonnet—it had a pink bow in front and you said my cheeks were as rosy as the ribbon—and I ran through the garden and down through the orchard to the fence at the crossroads. You were there already and you took me up behind you, and we galloped away and were married! Father was working in the field behind the orchard, and he saw us and yelled at me to

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come back. But you just whipped up your horse and we rode away all the faster. That was back in Indiana, but you haven't forgotten about it, have you, Benjamin?"

Her husband laughed again, genially this time, his heart suddenly mellowed and warmed by the remembrance. "We played a good joke on the old man, didn't we?" he said to her as he chuckled over the memory of his triumph. "He deserved it too, he was such a cantankerous old fellow!"

The unconscious allurements of the woman whom nature has smiled upon, which years can not destroy nor hardships wholly obscure, was in her face and manner and voice as she asked him, "Have you ever been sorry you carried me off that way?"

Nor was there any mistaking the quality and depth of the feeling that spoke in his voice as he threw an arm about her and hugged her to his breast, exclaiming, "Sorry! Well, I guess not! It's the only way I'd ever have got you!"

"Don't you think likely William's horse might carry double?" she gently responded.

He stared at her a moment, and then grinned and said, half genially, "Oh, I s'pose they'll marry just the same, no matter what I say! The young fools always do it!"

William had been pleading with Amy to do as his mother had done, but she would not consent to any measure that would bring discord or unhappiness into his home, alienate him from his family, or give him a wife who would be despised. Seeing that farther argument with her would be useless, he approached his father again.

"Amy says she won't be my wife as long as you feel

this way about it," he said. "She's willing to marry me at once whether or not her own father objects, but she says she won't divide my family, because she thinks it wouldn't be right. I've persuaded and argued, but she's firm as a rock about it. What's the use of spoiling our happiness when you can't do yourself any good by it?"

Father Dixon's heart had been moved and softened and warmed by the memories of his youth which his wife had called up and now he looked indulgently at Amy. In the depths of his upright, four-square soul, admiration stirred also for her sturdy, uncompromising loyalty to what she thought was the right thing for her to do. Moreover, as she stood bonnetless in the westering sun that shone on her fair hair and made a sort of halo around her girlish face, she was a winsome figure.

"Amy's a right pretty girl," he admitted to his wife, "and she's a smart girl, too."

"Yes, indeed, she's a smart girl," Mrs. Dixon assured him with enthusiasm. "She's the smartest girl around here! She can cook—you just ought to see the big dinner she can get up! She takes care of all their milk and butter for her mother, and last fall she made a whole suit, coat and vest and pants, for her father! Yes, indeed! Amy Miller is a smart girl!"

He looked thoughtfully at Amy and William as they stood talking together, he still pleading and she shaking her head, and then turned chuckling to his wife. "Say," he exclaimed, "wouldn't it make old Miller too mad for anything if Bill and Amy got married!"

But Mother Dixon knew that in his heart he had already capitulated and that his pleasure in the rage of his enemy was only a side issue. He turned to the others, stroking his beard and saying, his voice genial and

casual, "Bill, if you and Amy are so set on getting married right away, there's that eighty acres beyond the barn—I might give that to you, if it wasn't for your fool notion about studying law. Or if we went out West I'd set you up out there."

Amy saw the condition he was making and met it squarely. "Does that mean," she asked him, "that you expect Will, if he marries me, to give up all his plans and ambitions and settle down to be just a farmer?"

"You don't think he could be anything better, do you?" he countered.

She fired up a little at this and answered quickly, "Not any better, of course, but better for him. You don't understand Will," she told him earnestly, a note of defiance coming into her voice as she went on: "You don't know and you don't care how ambitious he is! You think all he's fit for is to follow a plow and feed pigs! But I know better, and I won't stand in his way! He's going to study law, and be a big man, and go to Congress, and maybe he'll be president some day! Oh, I know Will better than you do and I know he'll succeed! You shall have your future, Will! I won't let you give it up for my sake. I'm going home now. Good-by, dearest, dearest Will!" She put her arms around his neck, drew his face down and kissed him. "I'll wait for you and some day we'll be married when I can be your wife without making things harder for you. Good-by!"

But he caught her hand and would not let her go. "No, Amy, you shall not go like this! Wait! I'm not through yet!"

Holding her beside him he turned again to his father, but his mother was already saying eagerly, "William never has liked farm work very well, you know, father.

Mark loves it as well as you do, but William has always liked his books better. He's always done his work on the farm well, because William always does well whatever he starts out to do, but he'll succeed better and be happier doing something else."

"Mother is right, father! A man never does the best that is in him and is never contented unless he is doing what suits him best. You know that is true, if you'd only admit it! But you don't understand yet what this means to me. I wish I could make you see this as I do! Think of all the big things that will be done! The West will be opened up and settled, the South set on its feet, lands and mines will be developed, new industries will be started and railroads built, the South and the North brought into harmony, a big, wonderful future planned for and the beginnings of it all made and directed. Oh, it's a wonderful time we're coming into and I want to have a place among the men who will do the thinking and the planning for it. Think of it, father, the men who will make the future of this country—and I want to be one of them! And I will be, too, if you don't ruin all my plans! I must have my wife—she comes first of all—but I want my future, too!"

Colonel Dixon was an impressive figure to the little group as he spoke these words, so earnest and thrilling were his tones, such utter conviction was expressed in his demeanor. His words penetrated Emily's dejection, drew her attention and brought her to his side. Amy's face was shining with an emotion of which she was hardly conscious, so absorbed was she in his fervor. There were rare tears in his mother's eyes and it was plain that in his father's mind a train of new ideas was opening. He made them glimpse for a moment a

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vague but splendid vision in which he, so familiar to them all, so near and dear to each one of them, appeared transformed, a commanding, important personage. Father Dixon was stroking his beard and looking thoughtful. For the first time he was impressed with the reasonableness of his son's wishes and was bringing his own reason rather than his desires and emotions to the consideration of the question.

"I see what you're driving at, Bill, and I'll admit there's something in it—more than I thought at first. But it seems to me that if you want to go to the Legislature, and maybe to Congress, you better take a fresh start in a new country, sort of grow up with it for a few years. There's been a whole lot of Secesh sympathy in this county all through the war and you'd have all that to work against if you stayed here. What d'you say to going West and sticking to your scheme out there?"

It was Colonel Dixon's turn to stroke his beard with that movement so like his father's that it made his mother smile to see it. "You may be right, father," he admitted after a moment's thought and then turned to Amy: "Would you mind going away from here, to Iowa, or Kansas, or Nebraska, and settling there?"

"I'm willing to go anywhere that it's best for you to go, Will, if your father wants me to, and if he will respect and like me the same as he would any other girl."

He turned to his father. "I'll make this bargain with you. If you will receive Amy as my wife with the same welcome you would give, as she says, to any other girl and promise never to make her unhappy or uncomfortable by talking in her presence about her father, I'll go West with you, put the money I've saved with yours for you to invest in land and share the

profits with you in proportion. But I will not live on the land and I must be free to work out my own plans and make my own career."

"How'll you do that without your money?"

Colonel Dixon smiled with confidence. "Don't worry about that! I can make my way and support my wife any place where there's work to be done."

"All right, Bill, it's a bargain!" Father Dixon exclaimed in a sudden burst of enthusiasm, thrusting out his big hand and seizing his son's, whereupon they shook hands cordially over the understanding. But the next instant he put William aside and saying with a smile, "I never did have anything against Amy! She's the nicest girl this side of Scott City!" he took her in his arms, lifted her face to a level with his own and planted a hearty smack upon her cheek. "It's all right, Amy, girl," he told her, patting her shoulder as he set her down again. "You're our daughter now!"

At once Mother Dixon and Emily were hovering over Amy, embracing her and exclaiming their affection and pleasure. Colonel Dixon took his father to one side and asked anxiously if there was danger that Amy's parents would try to interfere with their marriage. He thought there was and with some strongly flavored interpolations as to Sam Miller's general "meanness," for which he carefully lowered his voice so that it could not reach Amy's ears, advised an immediate start for Centerville, if the wedding was to take place that afternoon.

Centerville was the little town, three miles away, just beyond the belt of woods, to which went the road in front of the house on its way from Scott City. It was an old settlement that had once been a flourishing town and the county seat but had dwindled into unimpor-

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tance after the railroad had left it to one side and made a station at Scott City which had outgrown it and taken the county capital. But it still had a church, a school-house, a general store, a justice of the peace, a blacksmith. "The road's pretty bad," said Dixon, eyeing its muddy stretch, "but we can make it with the carriage and be back before dark. I'll go hitch up and you and Amy get ready."

Amy paled a little at William's announcement that they were to start at once to be married, but she agreed with him that it was the wisest plan. The three women rushed into the house to provide a hat and a cloak for Amy, Emily importuning her mother for permission to go with them. It was finally decided that Father Dixon and Emily should drive the lovers to town and keep watch against untoward happenings during preparations for the ceremony and while it was in progress. Mother Dixon chose to stay at home with Mark and little Benjy and, she told them, "get the chores all done" before they returned.

But in her own mind she had decided that if Mr. Miller and Stephen tried to make trouble about the marriage they were much more likely to come to the Dixon home than to go to Centerville and she wanted to run no risk of a meeting between her husband and Amy's father at that time. She had much more confidence in her own ability to carry through a controversy with him about the matter without unpleasant results than she had in her husband's and was, indeed, very apprehensive over what might happen if the two men should meet with their mutual anger increased by the sense of added insult and injury on one side and of triumph on the other. So she persuaded him to drive the lovers to Centerville and take Emily with him.

Notwithstanding her anxiety Mother Dixon's heart was full of happiness that afternoon. For nature had gifted her with a romantic temperament and an ardent love of beauty, twin guardian angels that had journeyed beside her through all her lifetime of hard work, of pioneering on the outskirts of civilization, and had held always before her eyes glasses of rose and gold through which to envisage life. An apple orchard in bloom under a full moon of May was for her still a place of enchantment where at any step a marvel might happen. Enfolded in its beauty, she could forget for the moment her years and cares and sorrows and feel everlasting youth in her heart. The glow of dawn, the splendor of sunrise and of sunset held for her pleasures inexhaustible that every day renewed themselves with unfading freshness. This glorious day, with its pulsing heart of spring, the stainless blue vault of heaven bending over the greening earth, birds caroling everywhere, the golden sunshine drenching sky and air and earth, and that pink cloud of fairy-like beauty across the road, was enough in itself to fill her breast with the glow of happiness.

But, in addition, William had come riding home so unexpectedly that it was almost as if he had dropped from the sky upon them, he had found his chosen bride at her gate and the girl loved him enough to cast aside father and mother and home and start at once with him upon the unknown journey of life. Ah, it was enough to make her heart sing gladly, send her thoughts flying back to the love-time of her own youth, to recall bits of things she had read and heard of the power and glory of love over the lives of men and women, to remember even lines of poetry that now and again she had chanced upon!

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She went often to the front door and at first gazed anxiously about, through the peach orchard and up and down the road, and then, with expression relaxing into smiling pleasure, she listened to the bird songs, lifted her eyes to the blue heavens, let them rest long upon the blooming orchard across the road, whose soft tints deepened as the sun dropped toward the horizon. Then she would ask herself, for the thousandth time, "How can anybody quarrel over such a pretty thing as that? You'd think that if they just looked at it once they couldn't be mad any longer!"

Not long after the carriage left she saw Mr. Miller and Stephen coming through the orchard. She went out and stood on the front steps, to let them know that she was there if they wanted to ask any questions or make any trouble. They climbed the fence, stopped, gazed at the house, then came on to the road and evidently saw and discussed the fresh carriage tracks through the barnyard gate and down the road toward Centerville. Evidently, too, they searched with their eyes the whole front of the house with its open windows, and all about as far as they could see. But, except the two boys busy in the barnyard with the evening chores, no one but Mrs. Dixon was anywhere visible. After a few minutes in which they seemed to be arguing about something they went away through the orchard.

The red glow of approaching sunset was bathing the earth when the wedding party came back. Mrs. Dixon met them at the front door, folded Amy in motherly arms and gave her the kiss of welcome into her husband's family. The bride's overcharged emotions threatened to find vent in tears, but she choked them back and smiled her gratitude. Mrs. Dixon thought she needed to forget herself by busying her thoughts with

everyday things, so, as she bustled about, making them welcome and comfortable, she said,

"Here's your pail of eggs, Amy. I saw them by the fence after you left and brought them in. What do you want to do with them?"

"Oh, my eggs!" exclaimed Amy, springing to her feet in sudden remembrance of the errand upon which she had started,—Ah, how long ago was it! So long ago it seemed years and years! "I was going—mother sent me, to see if Mrs. Smith would swap a pound of butter for a dozen eggs, and I forgot all about it!"

Her face clouded with distress over the forgotten trust and Mrs. Dixon said reassuringly, "Never mind, dearie. Anybody whose sweetheart comes home from the war and rushes her off to marry him on a minute's notice needn't worry about forgetting a few eggs!"

"But mother needs the butter!" said Amy, her countenance growing more troubled, "and I forgot! I ought to have remembered and got it for her, no matter what happened, because I told her I would! I must go and do it now," she decided suddenly.

"I'll swap you the butter," Mrs. Dixon assured her, "and you can send it to your mother by Mark."

But Amy would not listen to this. She must herself carry out the original injunction, just as it had been laid upon her. It was as if, having taken the disposition of her life into her own hands and ignored and disobeyed her parents in the one great issue, she passionately desired to make what atonement there might be in obeying to the letter her mother's last charge. But William understood her feeling and taking the little pail of eggs, he said, "Come, Amy, let's go together, and then we'll go to your father's house and see if they'll make peace with us."

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So, husband and wife took their first walk alone together, going down the road in the last red rays of the setting sun arm in arm, "into that new land which is the old." The exchange made, they went on to the Miller home, Amy growing pale and her heart beating painfully as they turned in at the garden gate and went to the kitchen door, just as she would have done had she been alone. Her father saw them coming and met them on the back porch, his wife just behind him. He scowled at them, at first without speaking, and as soon as William said that he and Amy were married he ordered them off the place, accusing William of having stolen her from her home and demanding proof that they were really married.

"You can have all the proof you want, if you will go to Centerville for it," William told him, adding significantly, "we expected you at the wedding, but you didn't show up!"

Amy pressed forward, pleading their cause, but her mother came out, took her to one side and said quietly: "Better not say anything more about it now. Your father's awful mad and you'll just make him worse, and it's bad for him to get that way. We wanted you to marry Steve, and I'm sorry you didn't, but maybe he'll get over his mad after awhile. Where you going to live?"

"I'm going to Washington right away with Will for a little while, and then we're all going out West to live."

"And we'll never see you again, I reckon, but if you'd married Steve you'd have been right here with us always," Mrs. Miller lamented, tears welling into her eyes. Then bitterness triumphed in her heart and "You ungrateful child!" she scolded. "How could you

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disobey your father and mother like that? After all we've done for you!" The two men were exchanging arguments that grew hotter with every sentence and Mrs. Miller looked at them apprehensively as she exclaimed, almost pushing Amy from her, "You'd better go, before your father gets so fightin' mad—it's awful bad for him!" Then she softened a little. "I'll send your clothes over to the Dixons to-morrow morning, and maybe I can get to see you again before you go out West." She left her daughter and went to her husband, her demeanor anxious as she tried to induce him to go inside.

"Let's go, Will," said Amy, her voice trembling. "Good-by, mother, father!" There was no response and her hand stole into William's as they turned away.

In the deepening twilight they went on in silence for awhile and then Amy spoke, her tones on the verge of tears: "I thought—they loved me—more than that!"

Indignation had been so hot in William's breast over what had seemed to him heartless treatment of his beloved Amy that he had not trusted himself to speak, but now she must be comforted, made to feel less desolate over this break in her life. He drew her close and said tenderly, "They do, dear, I'm sure they do! They care more for you than they let themselves show, or believe, now while they're so angry. Of course they love you, dearest—how could they help it? And just because they do love you they'll see after a little while that you did the right thing. Just now they are disappointed because they had set their hearts on something they had no right to ask of you and this silly quarrel has made them angry with all of us, but just be patient, Amy darling, and all this will settle down and they'll

see you were right and you'll have your father and mother again. You'll see!"

Amy had borne all that she could and she sank upon her husband's breast, sobbing heartbrokenly. The intuition of love made him understand that after all she had undergone that afternoon tears and sobs were only an escape valve for emotions kept at high tension for so long. So he held her close and whispered reassuring and endearing words. Presently she had herself under control again and straightening up with that gentle air of dignity he had always found adorable—it was one of his many dear memories of her childhood—she said with a little, half-sobbing laugh: "I'm afraid you'll think I'm awfully silly! But I don't cry that way very often—I don't believe I ever did before!"

"I don't think you're silly," he told her emphatically. "I think you are the dearest, darlingest, most sensible girl in the world!" Then he suddenly enfolded her in his arms and hers went around his neck, their lips sought each other, and they clung together in their first lover's kiss.

"Now, let's go on—home," said Amy. And hand in hand they went through the peach orchard, talking and laughing in their lover's paradise, under the cloud of bloom that glimmered palely above them in the dusk, toward the welcoming lights shining brightly from the doors and windows of the Dixon home.

CHAPTER V

THE DOMAIN OF A PATRIARCH

COLONEL DIXON decided that he would give up the one day he had expected to spend with his family and that he and his bride would start on their journey to Washington the next morning after the wedding, for he felt that it would mar her happiness if whenever she looked from a front door or window of his father's house her eyes should fall upon the home she had left, under such painful conditions, for his sake. When he proposed to her that they should go at once and spend the remaining day of his furlough in St. Louis buying some new dresses for her, she was eager for the plan. "I don't so much mind going to St. Louis in my country clothes," she told him, "but I would like to have something better to wear to Washington." He appeased his mother's and sister's protest by promising to come back with his discharge in his pocket before the family should be ready for its westward migration.

Father Dixon said he would drive them to Scott City, where Mr. Lane, the man who had wanted to buy his farm, was staying, and if the Easterner was ready to talk business, bring him back for a thorough examination of the place. Mother Dixon, noting that Emily's cheeks were not as blooming as usual and that she lacked her ordinary gayety of spirit, sent her with them, with

some butter and eggs with which to buy for herself whatever she wanted that their value would purchase, knowing that the variety and excitement of the trip would be a wholesome antidote to her love-lorn dejection.

Spring mud made the journey slow and heavy, but they reached Scott City with time to spare and the two girls had an hour of interest and excitement that sent the roses back to Emily's cheeks and the sparkle to her eyes before they concluded her shopping. Then they joined the three men at the railroad station and sat quietly at one side and listened while the men talked about what President Johnson was likely to do, whether the Southern leaders ought to be tried for treason, whether or not the negroes should be given the right of suffrage and the prospects of the country. Emily would have drawn Amy away upon more attractive enterprises, but the young wife, who had but yesterday determined that whatever interested her husband should interest her, was eager to listen to the conversation, saying to herself that she would ask William afterward about things she did not understand, and she would not be drawn away for talk about the purchases they had just made or which she would probably make in St. Louis and Washington.

Emily's attention was more spasmodic and once, when they heard Father Dixon say casually to Mr. Lane, but with evident pride, "My son is going to study law after he gets his discharge," she giggled, and then made quick pretense that she was laughing at something else, while she whispered to Amy, "I knew father would be just as proud of Billy as any of us just as soon as he'd give up about it!"

The man from New York spent several days at the

Dixon farm, making a careful inspection of the quality of its soil, its equipment, the condition of all its buildings and fences, the state of cultivation. Benjamin Dixon conducted him over the place with pride and satisfaction, for the farm was his creation. When he bought it, ten years before, from a lazy, shiftless owner who had allowed fences and buildings to deteriorate and weeds to run riot, it was a sorry-looking, unpromising investment. But he saw its possibilities and under his capable hands, aided by those of his growing sons, it had developed into a sort of small kingdom, prosperous and almost self-sufficing.

His pastures and his barnyard held all the horses he needed for any kind of use, all the cattle for his family's needs of milk, butter, beef, all the hogs whose meat products they could use or exchange, all the sheep necessary to furnish wool for their warm clothing. Chickens and turkeys and guinea hens and geese supplied their table plentifully with eggs and fowl, while the geese gave feathers for beds and pillows. Hives of bees furnished honey. From their garden came ample supplies of vegetables, of which many root varieties were safely kept through the winter. Others were dried for winter use, along with quantities of apples and peaches from the orchard. For this purpose he had built a drying kiln, to which neighbors also brought fruit and vegetables on wet summers, paying in money or in service of some sort for the privilege. There were fat pastures for grazing and fields kept clean of weeds where he harvested every year good crops of corn and wheat, oats and rye, buckwheat and sugar-cane.

In an enclosure between the barnyard and the garden stood the mill where the sugar-cane was ground and the furnace and evaporating pan where its juice,

under Farmer Dixon's skilled eye, was turned into syrup—sorghum, they called it. Here also was the smokehouse where the fat sides and haunches of pigs became bacon and ham. And in this enclosure were the ash hopper where Mother Dixon leached the ashes from stoves and fireplaces and the iron tripod her husband had contrived from which hung the huge iron kettle wherein, every spring, she made all the soap they could use throughout the rest of the year. A storehouse held bins for grain of various kinds waiting to be carried to the mill, barrels of sorghum molasses, kegs of pork and of beef salted down in brine, sacks of dried fruit and vegetables, the shorn fleeces of the sheep.

Mother Dixon had never spun and woven herself, had never even learned these arts, for her other household duties and the rearing of her large family of children had left her no time for them. From the first year of their marriage they had kept sheep, the size of their flock increasing from two at first, as they moved from farm to farm and their prosperity grew, to the hundred or more that now grazed in their pasture. But she had always, until recent years, paid for having the wool made into cloth by exchanging days of work with some neighbor who spun and wove and possessed spindle and loom, or with products of farm or garden, or finished yards of cloth. Since the beginning of the war manufacturing needs and the stimulus of a high protective tariff had multiplied manufactories and led to their establishment within easy reach of the Illinois and other Western farmers. To one of these, within a hundred miles of his home, Farmer Dixon had for several years shipped his annual clip of wool, with selections, made after much household discussion, from the samples sent by the manufacturer showing the different

kinds of cloth into which it must be made, the quality, color, design and number of yards of each. To the grist mill on the banks of the stream that flowed through Centerville were carried, as need arose, bags of wheat and corn and buckwheat to be ground into flour and meal for the family and bran for the horses and cattle.

Thus the farm furnished almost everything for the generous supply of their needs and desires save cotton goods, whose price had made them next to impossible during the war, boots and shoes and the few and simple luxuries in which they rarely indulged. It furnished also an excess in nearly all its products, the greater part of which Farmer Dixon and his wife found market for among their neighbors or in Centerville and Scott City. But sometimes, when the conditions of the roads permitted delivery at a profitable time, he sold grain or cattle, hogs or sheep in considerable quantities to an enterprising merchant in Scott City who shipped them to St. Louis. It was at the suggestion of this merchant that he had planted the young peach orchard in the belief that its fruit, either fresh or dried, could be marketed profitably and the two of them were planning a partnership in the matter when Samuel Miller's contention concerning the land made necessary the postponement of their purpose.

This was the prosperous domain which Benjamin Dixon, with justified pride in the creation of his own hands, showed to the prospective buyer from the Eastern state. There was much maneuvering between the two men accompanied by diplomatic professions of indifference, one saying, "I don't care whether I sell or not, I'd just as soon stay right here the rest of my life," and the other responding with, "I'm not sure I care to buy in this part of Illinois; in many ways I like the next

county better," before they finally reached the decisive matter of bargaining about the price. Mr. Lane had the title examined and a specially searching inquiry made into that of the orchard eighty.

"I didn't come out here to buy a lawsuit," he told Mr. Dixon with emphasis, while they were still in the preliminary stage of trying to break down each other's confidence in his own position. But he found the title of the main farm as clear as a title could be while upon the orchard eighty the report was so favorable that it filled Dixon with elation over its support of his side of the quarrel.

"The claimant Miller has not the ghost of a chance," Mr. Lane's lawyer told him, "and he is simply being bamboozled by some shyster who is prolonging the case in order to get money out of him. You'll be perfectly safe if you buy the land."

So, after much dickering and making and refusing of tentative offers, the sale of the Dixon farm was finally made and the Dixon family began their preparations to transplant themselves. William and Amy returned, he once more a civilian. Jefferson Davis had been captured, demobilization had begun, and Colonel Dixon, by making determined effort, had been able to secure the mustering out of his regiment and his own discharge among the first of the troops to be sent home.

Father Dixon's elation over the assurance of victory in the quarrel with Samuel Miller and the fact that he was so soon to leave both neighbor and quarrel far behind him tempered his bitterness and made him feel lenient and almost amiable toward the Miller family once more. He told Amy that she could send word to her mother to come to see her and that Mrs. Miller would be welcome in the Dixon home.

Mrs. Miller came, keenly desirous of hearing all about her daughter's wonderful trip to Washington, a little overawed by Amy's new importance and knowledge of the world, ready by this time to concede her right to wed where she chose, although sorrowful still that her choice had not been different, and showing once more interest and affection. But Amy's father remained bitter and resentful, refusing to forgive his daughter, or even to see her or send her a message. Stephen did not try to see her again and beyond a single kindly message which she sent him by her mother there was no communication between them.

Emily did not see Stephen Miller again, after the April day when her romance was so suddenly shattered, until many, many years afterward, when life had brought to each of them many and varied gifts—and taken some of them away again. She mourned over the fate that had befallen her first love, and thought that she was mourning for Stephen and that she longed to see him again, and so wondered much within herself because she knew that should she hear his call from the roadside or at her gate it would not persuade her feet to fly to the tryst, as once it had had unfailing power to do. But, wounded and grieved though she had been to the depths of her heart, she found excuses for Stephen, convinced herself that he had been forced by circumstances and his family's influence into the attempt to make Amy his wife and that it was she herself and she alone who had won his love. And so, after a little time, her romantic and loving soul rehabilitated her lover's figure, at least sufficiently to enable her to invest it with the memory of first love's radiance and to hold him in fond and forgiving remembrance.

But in the meantime she had not escaped parental ad-

monishing, from her father with especial reference to the affair with Stephen and the promise that if she ever "carried on" in secret with any other man she would be locked in her room until she "learned more sense," and from her mother upon more general principles and with a gentleness and reasonableness and affection that won the girl to promise complete confidence when again a man should seek to win her love.

Mr. Lane bought with the farm the animals upon it, (except the horses Farmer Dixon wished to take with him) and most of its equipment, but a sale was held of all that he did not wish to buy and of some of their household goods not considered worth taking West. News of the event and of the early migration of the Dixons went by word of mouth from farm to farm for miles in every direction and on the day set for the sale farmers and their wives came in wagons to see if there was anything they wanted to buy, to say good-by to the Dixons and to visit with one another. Those from a distance brought lunch—they called it a "snack"—which Mother Dixon, Emily and Amy supplemented with coffee made from roasted wheat—for the coffee bean was still at a price prohibitive to the western farmer—with honey or sorghum to sweeten it, pies and doughnuts and hard boiled eggs and slices of boiled ham. As the day declined they drove away, taking their purchases with them, and the Dixons began to feel that they would soon be homeless.

Their own personal and household goods were already packed and ready to be hauled to Scott City for shipment on the railroad. The family were to go by wagon, traveling light, with only the clothing, bedding and food necessary for the projected journey of two weeks. Mother Dixon insisted that all her feather beds, of which

she had accumulated half a dozen, should go by rail, for she would not risk the chance of their being wet or muddied in the wagon, and these, with her best pillows and blankets and quilts, her household furnishings, her rag carpets, their clothing not needed on the journey, and an ample supply for several months of hams and bacon and other portable foods were boxed and baled and barreled and taken to Scott City.

Then into the largest and newest farm wagon were put the mattresses filled with shredded corn-husks upon which, placed on top of the feather beds, they slept in the summer, the feathers being used on the top of the mattresses in the winter; enough pillows, old quilts and blankets for their needs; a box of clothing and, behind them and opening at the back of the wagon, a big food box. Into its capacious depths Mother Dixon stowed cans and crocks and jars of preserves and jams and pickles, the sweetmeats made with honey or molasses, bags of flour and meal and dried fruit, boiled hams, sides of bacon, roast chickens, loaves of bread, boxes of honey, a jug of molasses, and other things which she thought could be safely carried, for the satisfaction of outdoor appetites, while into a wooden pail were packed the few table utensils necessary for picnicking across the country. A "Dutch oven" hung beneath the wagon and into a corner were tied the pots and pans for the primitive cooking they would do along the road. A tent of heavy white canvas was tied over the mattresses and bedding, the bows were fastened on the wagon and over them was stretched a cover of similar canvas, and they were ready to start.

On a bright morning in the middle of May the horses were hitched to the wagon and the two-seated carriage, Emily's side-saddle put on an easy-riding horse which

was the favorite of the women of the family, William saddled the horse he had brought home from the army and with Father and Mother Dixon on the spring seat of the wagon, whose white cover gleamed in the sun, Emily and the two boys in the carriage and William and Amy on horseback, they set forth upon their adventure to a new state and a new home, leaning out to cry good-byes to Mr. Lane waving his hat to them from the gate and to neighbors who had gathered to see them start.

Into Mother Dixon's mind there flashed remembrance, which she dwelt on tenderly as the fragrance of the romance of life's springtime rose once more in her heart, of how she and her husband, more than a quarter of a century before, had set forth to make their home in a new country. From central Indiana to southern Illinois they had traveled, soon after their run-away marriage, in a one-horse covered wagon in which they carried all their possessions—a feather bed, some quilts, a very few clothes, an ax, a saw, a spade, a drawing-knife and a pitch-fork, an iron pot and a skillet and a few dishes—while sewed inside the pocket of her young husband's coat was all his little store of money, twenty-five dollars.

They had conquered the virgin woods and the virgin prairies, they had won success and prosperity from the soil, they had helped to create a commonwealth, to make an era in the history of their country. And now, because life had grown too monotonous and too easy and because the environment no longer offered enough of that stimulating gambler's chance with nature which for so long had been a part of all their days nor sufficiently challenged strength and energy and initiative and because newer and broader lands allured, they were once

more setting their faces toward the setting sun. But this time, into the lining of his coat—for Farmer Dixon was suspicious of banks—his wife had sewed \$15,000 in bills and government bonds.

Though they did not know it, they were putting behind them a stage in the growth of the American people and turning their faces with ever youthful hope and confidence toward the frontiers of a new and different era.

CHAPTER VI

PICNICKING INTO A NEW ERA

THEY struck southwestward, in order to cross the Mississippi at St. Louis, then turned westward and northwestward, part of the time following the valley of the Missouri. The mood of the whole party was gay and confident and they were like a band of picnickers out for a day's enjoyment. Their interest in everything they saw was exuberant and they were constantly looking at and talking about the soil, the cultivation of the fields, where spring work was already well advanced, the villages through which they passed, the sights in the larger towns, the character of the country, the people they met, the scenery along the way. The road was dotted with white-covered wagons traveling westward, for the same lure of new conditions, more acres and untried possibilities that had set Benjamin Dixon's desires upon the migration had moved many another farmer of the Mississippi Valley to seek the frontier once more. They were rushing toward the sunset, all of them, with eager surety that there they would find the pot of gold which nature had hidden in a prolific soil. The Dixon party, with its carriage and lightly weighted wagon and its horses well cared for and in the best of condition, overtook numbers of them, and soon left them far behind. Sometimes Father Dixon stopped to give a helping hand in some difficulty, or to exchange a little

gossip of the road, or they made camp at night or at noon near some other party of "movers." Then, if there were children among the strangers, as almost always there were, Mother Dixon never failed to visit their camp with a smiling, interested face and the friendly offer of a dish of her preserves or jam or hot biscuits and molasses.

In the late afternoon they would make camp when they found an inviting spot, where woods furnished shelter and a degree of privacy and there was grass for the horses, with a farmhouse nearby where they could get water and buy, if they wanted them, milk, butter, eggs and early vegetables. The horses were attended to—a matter about which Father Dixon was most scrupulous—wood for the campfire was collected and soon Mother Dixon and the two girls would have biscuits or thin loaves of bread baking in the Dutch oven—a wide, shallow, heavy iron pot with short legs and a thick iron cover, set over and covered with a plentiful supply of glowing coals—the savor of frying ham or bacon filling the air, potatoes boiling, other foods cooking, and marshaled on a tablecloth spread on the ground a varied array of viands from the box in the wagon. They gathered hungrily around the inviting supply on seats taken from the wagon and the carriage and ate with appetites that delighted Mother Dixon and kept her always fearful that she might not be cooking enough. Afterward, while daylight lasted, they washed the dishes, made things ready for morning, stretched the tent and made the beds, in the wagon for the three women, so that they might not be disturbed in the night by prowling beasts or crawling insects, while the men and boys shared the tent. Then, during the gathering twilight, they sat around the campfire and talked about

what they had seen during the day, what they were going to do in the new country, sang, joked, laughed, told stories of the past. None of them could do much in the way of singing, but Mother Dixon, William, Emily and Amy all had pleasant voices and so part of almost every evening was spent in this way. They sang songs of the church occasionally but for the most part it was the melodies to which ears and hearts had been attuned during the last four years that floated upon the evening air. Over and over again they sang "Marching Along," "We'll Rally Round the Flag, Boys," "When This Cruel War Is Over," "The Year of Jubilee," "Marching Through Georgia," "Nelly Gray," "John Brown's Body" and "Sweet Is the Vale Where the Mohawk Gently Glides."

Sunrise the next morning would find them eating a generous breakfast and soon they would be on the road again, their spirits as high and their enjoyment of sights and experiences as keen as ever. They frequently changed from carriage to wagon or from wagon to horseback, while sometimes both the riding horses were hitched behind the vehicles, and again several of them trooped along on foot until, left far behind, they would have to run to catch up. In the middle of the day they stopped always two hours or more, for the rest and refreshment of both horses and people, and this stop Mother Dixon would utilize for the preparation of some dish that required more time and care than she could give at the evening or morning meal—and was well rewarded by the praise and the hearty appetites with which it was eaten.

On one night of soft airs and brilliant moonlight, when they had made camp in the edge of a woods, the scene was so lovely, with the glow of their campfire all

red and gold in the silvery light, and they became so interested in their talk that they lingered longer than usual and even little Benjy, cuddled in his mother's arm, was allowed to sit up as long as the rest, for she could not resist his whispered plea, "Oh, mother, let me stay—it's so pretty to-night!" She knew that he, though a mere child, was feeling the thrilling beauty of the night as she felt it more than did any of the others. Of all her children he was most like her in his love of beauty. Both of them had instinctively recognized, long ago, their kinship in this respect and the sympathetic tie between them was very strong. Much as she loved all her children and deeply as she would have resented any suggestion that she cared more for any one of them than for the others, she knew, nevertheless, and acknowledged to herself that Benjy, the last of her seven offspring—for a daughter, between Benjy and Mark, had died in infancy—was bringing her a new happiness in motherhood, a deeper joy and satisfaction than she had known before.

They began singing war-songs and had just finished "The Battle-Cry of Freedom" when Emily demanded that William should tell them "the most wonderful thing he had seen during the war."

"Wonderful in what way?" he asked.

She did not know just what she did mean and took refuge in the request that it should be whatever he thought was the most wonderful.

"It would be hard to say," he responded, "when there was so much that was wonderful, so much that you wouldn't have thought it possible for men to bear and do until you saw them doing whatever had to be done and bearing whatever came to them with such courage and spirit and hope. But I remember a little

thing that happened once that was very interesting. The brigade my company was in had taken position in the woods on one side of a stream where we thought we were hidden and our plan was to cross the stream in the night and attack the enemy early the next day. The banks and rolling hills on the other side hadn't much timber on them just there, or it had been cut away. Anyway, they were rather bare and we were amazed when we saw in the late afternoon a regiment of rebel cavalry come dashing out across the top of the hill on the other side of the stream. It was a crack regiment, all on fine black horses, their gray uniforms spick and span, and they came galloping down that long hill in perfect alignment until they were half way down. Then they stopped in their tracks and every man rose in his stirrups, swung his saber in a high circle and shouted the rebel yell. It was a splendid sight, with the sun flashing on their swords, and the perfection with which they did it, just like clock work. Then the line swept around in a half circle and they galloped back, as if they were on a parade ground. It was an audacious, reckless thing to do, for our batteries were in position and we could have annihilated the whole regiment, and they must have known that we could. You see, they probably thought that we thought they didn't know we were there—which was true, for we were sure we were going to give them a surprise party the next morning—and they took that way of letting us know they knew just what we were doing and defying us."

"But you didn't fire at them?" said Mrs. Dixon.

"Not a shot! It was too fine a show to spoil! We just watched them and admired their skill—we knew the training it had taken to get it—and their reck-

less courage in doing such a thing. And when they stood up and flourished their swords and yelled, and then swept back, our whole brigade broke out into cheers and handclaps. I don't know, Emily—maybe that was the most wonderful thing I saw in the war, because, in the midst of desperate war, it wasn't war at all—it was splendid skill and dash and courage and defiance on one side and on the other admiration that wouldn't let us kill them, because it was all so splendid, though just then we needed mighty bad to kill all the Johnny Rebs we could."

They wanted more war stories and presently William told them one about an Irishman in his regiment that set them all laughing. Then Mark asked, suddenly:

"Father, have we got any Irish in us?"

This set them talking about their heritage of racial strains and Father Dixon, replying to Mark, said that as far as he knew his family was all of English descent, except that his maternal grandmother had been German on her father's side.

"But you get some French blood through your mother," he added.

The children knew this already but Mother Dixon had to tell them again about her grandmother's father who, with his young wife, had been a Protestant refugee from France. They had settled in Pennsylvania, and the story of the hardships they had undergone and of their efforts to take root in a new country before prosperity finally rewarded them had come down through the generations by word of mouth. Mrs. Dixon, whose fresh, eager feeling had been deeply impressed by the romance of it when she heard the story, as a little girl, from her mother, still had much of it at her tongue's end and as she retold it now it carried them back for

a century and a half to the childhood of the colonies. All this Frenchman's family, she said, except his one daughter, had remained in the region where they settled, but her grandmother had married a restless young Englishman and they had pushed westward to Ohio. There her mother had been born and had married the son of an English settler and the first years of her own childhood had been spent there, but while she was still a little girl her people had decided to go still farther west and had moved on to Indiana, where she had grown up while it was still a part of the frontier.

"What are you, Amy?" Emily wanted to know. "It's your turn to tell us now whether you're English, or French, or Dutch, or Irish, or what."

Amy said that her mother's father and mother had come from Scotland and after first stopping somewhere in the East for a while, she wasn't sure where, had come west as far as Ohio. There her mother had married and she and her husband had come with his parents, who were of English descent, to the very same place in Illinois where she had been born and had grown up.

Benjy was reminded by all this of stories he had heard his father tell about the migration of his own family westward from New York and he asked for these tales again. "Tell us about them times, father," he said.

"Those times, Benjy," corrected William promptly.

Emily laughed. "We'll all have to be careful how we talk now that Billy's come home again," she said jestingly. For William's insistence upon correct speech by his younger brothers and sister had been a joke in the family ever since he, mainly by studying them by himself at night, had learned the rules of English grammar. The tradition of good usage of English had come

down through the families of both Father and Mother Dixon and both they and their children had always spoken their mother tongue with tolerable correctness. But some corruptions of speech and mistakes of construction there had been and these William, with his studious temperament and his desire for knowledge, had set himself to correct in himself and in the younger members of his family as early as his middle teens. If any of them revolted at his schoolmaster's attitude toward them, or put too much rebellious feeling into their jokes, parental authority came to William's assistance and the rebels were quickly reduced to submission. He never said anything that his father and mother could take as criticism of their mistakes, but he noticed after a while that they also, whether by intent or unconscious imitation, were eliminating these errors and profiting by the training he was so insistently giving to the children.

Benjamin Dixon stroked his graying brown beard as his mind sped backward forty years and he told them about the journey his father had made from their home in northern New York, where he had been born, creeping slowly over bad roads or mere tracks with horses and oxen and cows and wagons piled with household goods, traveling into southern Ohio, where his father had been for a year or more superintendent of the farm of General William Henry Harrison, then moving on again into central Indiana.

"Did you ever see General Harrison?" Mark was curious to know.

"I wasn't any bigger then than Benjy—you're ten, ain't you, Benjy!—just a little shaver ciphering around like boys do, but I used to see him sometimes, when he was there. He was in Congress then and wasn't at

home much of the time. Once he spoke to me and patted me on the head."

"When you were ten your father was coming west," Mark commented gravely, "and now Benjy's ten and you're going west. When Benjy's grown up and has a boy ten years old where'll he be going?"

"Somewhere else, if he's a real Dixon," was William's laughing prophecy.

This made Mother Dixon wonder, deep within her own breast, how the childhood of the little ones she hoped would come to William and Amy would compare with his, and she began to tell them of the first home their father and she made, in a little, one-room log cabin they built themselves in the edge of some woods facing the virgin prairie sod which he soon turned into food-giving fields. There William was born and there they lived until he was four and his little brother Andrew two years old. A vivid memory came to her and she told them how she made his first suit of little pants and waist and tiny coat. They had got some sheep and the first clip of wool she herself washed clean in the stream nearby, dried it in the sun, picked it all over with her fingers to take out every burr and bit of dirt, bargained with a neighbor five miles away, who had a wheel and loom, to make it into cloth, for which she paid by washing, ironing or cooking for the neighbor as many days as were spent upon the spinning and weaving. Then she herself dyed it a bright brown with walnut shells, got patterns from another neighbor and cut and made the suit.

"I had no buttons for it," she went on, "and it was twenty miles to the nearest store, and we had no money to buy buttons with even if there had been one at our back door. So father took the hide of a wildcat he

had killed, which he'd cured and dressed very nicely—your father was mighty good at dressing skins and it came in handy in those days—and cut out some round pieces for me, different sizes, as I wanted, and punched holes in them and I sewed them on, with the hairy side out, and they made the nicest buttons you ever saw. William thought they were so nice and pulled at them so much to get them off to play with that I had to sew them on extra strong."

Amy listened to this story of her husband's childhood, while her hand stole into his, fascinated by the picture it evoked of the bearded man beside her, who had so lately taken off his colonel's uniform, as a quaint baby figure in pants and coat with a sweet, serious face and big, gray eyes, playing under the trees beside the tiny log cabin while wildcats prowled through the woods.

"It's time to go to bed," said Father Dixon in a definitive voice as he stood up yawning. "We're staying up too late to-night." Nobody, from his wife to his youngest child, thought of lingering a moment longer around the alluring fire. When he spoke in that tone, however pleasant his voice, his family was accustomed to yield instant obedience. But after the women had gone to their bed in the wagon Mrs. Dixon, in reply to a question from Amy, told her about William's birth.

"There wasn't, I guess, a doctor within fifty miles," she said, "but a neighbor woman, Mrs. Gates, who had had several children, promised to come and be with me and she'd loaned me some things and told me what to do if I should happen to be alone. When I felt sure my time was coming I went out to the field where Benjamin was plowing and he unhitched and rode off as hard as he could go to get Mrs. Gates. He looked white and scared," she said, tenderness creeping into her tone,

“and I told him I was all right and I just knew there wasn’t any danger, but inside of me I did feel awfully afraid. The Gateses lived three miles away—they were our nearest neighbors—and by the time he came galloping back with Sarah Ann Gates behind him, William had come and I had him, all wrapped up, in my arms. Sarah Ann was the kindest woman you ever saw, smart, too, she was, and she stayed and cooked a good supper for father—fried ham and eggs, and I sat up in bed and had some, for I was real hungry.”

The country through which they traveled was of varied and pleasing scenery, its rich vegetation resplendent with the fresh greenness of spring and roadsides, prairies, belts of woodland, all decked with flowers in their fullest array of bloom. If their road wound along a stream and they looked up at the cliffs facing it they would see the rocks hung with curtains of gold and purple columbine. Did their way take them through a stretch of wood they saw its floor carpeted with gayly nodding wild geraniums, sweet williams and other flowers, while blooming rosebriars and flowering vines were clambering over the thickets and wild roses were fragrant along the roadside. Birds were caroling everywhere, flitting from tree to tree in woods and orchards or perching on boughs and fence posts beside the road, the while they filled the air with melody. They gazed and exclaimed and admired, although they were inclined to be contemptuous over the condition of some of the farms of the region. Father Dixon especially made frequent and disdainful remarks when they noted slovenly looking barnyards, dilapidated houses and fences and a general air of shiftlessness. “But what can you expect,” he would add, “of a state where the people held slaves and always supported the Democratic Party!”

For Benjamin Dixon had always been deeply interested in politics, although to his dying day he never held or sought an office of any sort, and an ardent partisan, of the kind that sees in the opposing party the concentration of all evil. He had been a Whig of the strictest and sturdiest sort, until the organization of the Republican Party which at once and ever after received his unquestioning support, while to President Lincoln he had given unswerving allegiance throughout the darkest days of the war. He loved his country with the same quality of devotion, unspoken and undemonstrative except under attack, personal and rooted in the depths of his being, that he had for his family; and in his conviction its present and future well-being was bound up in the continuance in power of the Republican Party. He was sure that its welfare, perhaps its very existence, would be seriously menaced by even a temporary eclipse of that party's rule. Nor was he a weak antagonist in political discussion. He had had plenty of exercise in that frontier school of political debate, the cross-roads or small-town store and post office, which had so great an influence—how great has never yet been fully recognized—during the first half-dozen or more decades of the country's youthful history in training large numbers of citizens in political knowledge and the sense of political responsibility.

He knew almost nothing of books—he had read a good deal of the Bible and a little of Shakespeare's Plays, but little else inside of book-covers—and his schooling, which had been limited to two or three months each winter, had ended when he was twelve years old. But he had been an eager reader of newspapers. The first money that he could spare had been invested in a subscription to a weekly newspaper; he had taken Horace

Greeley's *Tribune* from the time it began to exercise a general influence and each week had read its every word with the keenest interest. During the war he had taken also a tri-weekly paper, *The Toledo Blade*, partly for the sake of later and more frequent war news and partly because of his enjoyment of the letters of Petroleum V. Nasby.

This knowledge of current public happenings combined, with a retentive memory and much thinking about them, to give him a considerable acquaintance with the recent decades of American history and he had long ago become accustomed to being the oracle of post-office, chance roadside and other meetings of men, with their inevitable discussions of political affairs, and to being recognized as the man who knew most about such affairs and the hardest to defeat in an argument. An oracle he was considered also in his own household, where it was his custom to read the newspaper aloud in the evening to his wife and children and to voice his opinions upon developments in public affairs, opinions that were always reflected in their own. Any questioning of the rightness or justice or wisdom of those opinions would have resulted in the doubter, if one of the children, being sent from the room and, if his wife, in his unconcealed annoyance.

So, as they traveled westward through Missouri, so recently a slave state and also so divided in its opinion upon slavery and secession from the Union, they accepted his conclusions as to the reasons for its being less prosperous than the region where they had lived and interested themselves in guessing which farms had employed slave labor and whether the owner of this or that one had been union or rebel, Republican or Democratic in his sympathies.

Of all the party none enjoyed the flower-decked and emerald beauty of the land with so keen an appreciation as did little Benjy. His mother saw and understood his pleasure, so near akin to her own, with an increase of her own enjoyment of the daily experiences. He was eager to share his happiness with her and was continually running to her with shining eyes and an eager, "Look, mother! Isn't that pretty!" He trotted along the roadside and made running excursions into fields and woods to pick flowers for her and he rarely failed to have a great handful of them for the decoration of her place at the table.

During the noon stop on one especially bright and lovely day he came running to her from an exploration of the woods round about their camp that his father would have called "ciphering around," his face aglow and calling to her, "Oh, mother, come! See what I've found! It's so pretty!" He seized her hand and hurried her to a narrow glade in the woods and sank down on one knee beside a little flower that, imbedded in fresh green grass, was holding its golden face to the sun. "See, mother!" he exclaimed, his hands fluttering around it in a sort of ecstasy of pleasure, while his face, filled with delight, shone up to hers. "Did you ever see anything so pretty?"

"Land sakes, if it isn't a dandelion!" she exclaimed, stooping down beside him. "How it does carry me back! I haven't seen one in years and years, not since I was about your age, Benjy. They grew in Ohio, when I was a little girl there, but I've never seen any since. Yes, it is pretty, Benjy."

"See how it shines, mother, as if it was so glad to be so pretty and yellow! Shall I pick it?" and his hand touched it caressingly, with the age-old longing

of humankind for material possession of whatever gives it pleasure.

"It hasn't much stem," she told him, "and if you pick it it withers in a little while."

"Then I won't," he decided, rising and looking down at the flower. "I'd hate to see it get ugly. And I can think about it all afternoon, about how pretty it is in this pretty, pretty little place." And he turned to her a serious face and brown eyes glowing softly with the thrill that had come to him at this dawning revelation of the possibility of spiritual possession.

"That's so, Benjy," she assured him, pressing him to her side. "We can think about it all afternoon and it will make us happy to remember just how it looks. There are so many pretty things in the world to think about, if people only would!"

But her thoughts that afternoon were chiefly occupied with Benjy himself. For she was discovering that, child though he was, he would sometimes put into words the things that she felt. Her heart might thrill with pleasure or stir with vague, deep happiness at sight of the manifold beauties of earth and sky, but she could not make any one else understand her feeling. And here was Benjy, such a little shaver, who could understand without her saying a word and could say, without seeming to think about it, just what she would have liked to say but couldn't. "That kind of a boy won't want to be a farmer," she told herself, "and father will be determined to make a farmer out of him. I'll speak to William about it when I get a chance."

But she did not have to wait for a chance. For within a day or two, during the noon rest, William found Benjy curled up in the wagon seat and busy with a package of newspaper clippings which he was read-

ing and arranging in order. William asked carelessly what he was reading, but his attention was arrested when he found that Benjy had, for many months, been cutting the Nasby letters from the newspaper and keeping them with the greatest care. He had sometimes been allowed to sit up in the evening while his father read them aloud and had joined in the chuckles and laughter of his elders as heartily as if he understood all their points. But something of them, perhaps some vague appreciation of their satiric humor, their presentation of current history, their dramatization of public men, roused his interest and gave him his first mental adventure into public affairs, literature, life. They made an impression upon his mind which lasted for years and long after the general public of another generation had forgotten their author, Benjy held him in affectionate remembrance. William talked with his mother about the incident and she told him what she had been thinking.

"Well, it looks as if that little fellow has got something in him," William assured her, "and I mean to keep an eye on him. If he shows after a while that he ought to have a chance I'll see that he gets it. Of course, father will want him to be a farmer, just as you say, but if he seems to be cut out for something else I'll make it my business to see that he doesn't have to waste too many years on the farm."

They had come almost to the end of their journey, which at most would require no more than three or four more days of travel, when the afternoon sun was suddenly blotted out by a black cloud that in a few minutes covered the western sky and darkened the earth with presage of an oncoming storm. Parts of it had a greenish tint which Father Dixon said meant hail and

a rising wind howled about them, tearing leaves and twigs and small branches from the trees. It would be wise to find a farmhouse in which they could have shelter, for the storm promised to be severe.

William, who was on horseback, galloped ahead and in a few moments rushed back to tell them that there was a farm with a good-looking house just around the next turn in the road and a woman whom he had asked at the gate had said they might stop until the storm was over. They urged the horses to a faster gait and as they reached the house the woman, who was waiting for them on the front porch, sent her son, a young fellow who had just hurried in from the field he was plowing to escape the rain, to open the barnyard gate for them, show them where to put their vehicles and bring them into the house. In the barn they found the man of the place, himself scurrying to shelter in advance of the storm, and in a few minutes they all came rushing to the house as the first great drops of rain dashed in their faces. Benjamin Dixon explained who they were and learned that their hosts were Mr. and Mrs. Walters. While the wind raged, the hail battered and the rain poured in torrents they all sat in the big living-room and made acquaintance and privately took one another's measure. The verdict on both sides was so favorable that they were soon upon a friendly footing.

"You must stay here all night," Mrs. Walters told them with cordial hospitality. "Even if the storm stops, everything's soaking wet and you couldn't camp out to-night. You just bring your things right in, when the rain lets up, and we'll find room and be glad to have you."

A lull in the storm made possible a hurried carrying

into the house from the wagon of bedding and food and then, while rain and wind renewed their fury, Mrs. Walters and Mrs. Dixon, aided by Amy and Emily and the two daughters of the house, combined their food resources and soon had ready a supper table piled with a smoking-hot and generous repast. Mrs. Dixon noticed that the young man who had brought them in followed Emily with eyes in which admiration was evident. No mother can see a man look with favor upon her daughter without considering him a possible applicant for the position of son-in-law. So Mother Dixon began at once to appraise him and to find excuses to send Emily on small errands out of the room. But she also said to herself that she liked his frank, sensible-looking, good-natured face, with its firm jaw and full forehead, and the readiness with which he sprang to do little things for his mother. Then she thought, with an inward smile: "Land sakes! How silly I am! We're going on to-morrow and we'll never see or hear of them again!"

The storm ceased during the evening as suddenly as it began and the moon came out with as brilliant a face as if it had never been obscured. The young man went out on the porch and looked about, then came in and said to Emily, "It's fine outside! Come out on the porch and see how everything's shining in the moonlight!"

They went, glanced round about at the scene, and at once forgot all about it in their interest in one another. He told her his name was Winfield Scott Walters and that he had always lived in that house, and how much he would like to go somewhere else and see things, as they were doing. She told him what a good time they were having and how much they were all enjoy-

ing their trip. "It's been just like going to a picnic every day," she said with enthusiasm.

And then they were soon absorbed in that mutual revelation of personalities than which nothing has greater fascination for youth, with all its knowledge yet to gain of mankind, of the world, of life. Did she see, as they stood in the moonlight and talked, a vision of a peach orchard glowing with pink-white bloom in the afternoon sun? Did this young man who stood so respectfully beside her, although there was no mistaking the admiration in his eyes, sometimes become confused in her sight with that of another eager for her hands and clamorous for her kiss? If so, perhaps she did not long remember it, as that other figure faded into the past and became a tender memory. But moonlight and silvered trees and diamond drops sparkling upon an emerald background never stirred Emily's heart in the years to come with the memory of romance and of the bitter-sweet pang of love as did peach trees in bloom.

"I'd like to study medicine," he told her. "I just think about it all the time and it seems no sort of use to stay here on the farm when I feel that way."

"Of course it isn't," she agreed with quick sympathy. "My brother felt the same way about the farm and he's going to study law."

"Is he?" said young Walters, with deep interest. "That's fine! I'm glad he is, but I want to be a doctor."

"Oh, I hope you will!" she exclaimed earnestly. "I know you'd succeed! And you're going to try, aren't you?"

"I'm afraid it won't do much good," he answered doubtfully, "for father and mother want me to stay

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on the farm. It takes lots of money to go away and study and they say they can't let me have it. It'll be another year before I'm of age and my own man and then it would take a long time to earn all the money I'd need."

"But you'll try, won't you?" she persuaded gently. "Get your mother on your side first. She'll understand better than your father, just like mother understood about Billy. Just try and try and keep on trying, and you'll succeed! I know you will! And some day you'll be a fine doctor with a big practice!"

"Come in, Emily! It's bedtime!" called her mother from the doorway.

"You won't give up, will you!" she smiled at him as she went indoors. He looked his gratitude and admiration with eloquent eyes and face, though his lips were dumb, and her mental vision continued to see his countenance and her heart to be conscious of a certain pleased satisfaction until she drifted out upon the ocean of sleep.

The next morning as they were preparing to start Winfield said to Emily, "I'm going to ride a piece with you this morning. Won't you go horseback, too?"

They cantered together along the wet road, sometimes ahead of the others, sometimes behind them, but always talking with as much interest and sympathy as if they had known each other for years. He confided to her still more about his desire to study medicine and the difficulties that barred the way and she gave him advice and encouragement that, he assured her, were wonderful and would help him greatly, and he promised her, very solemnly, that he would not give up his purpose. At the end of an hour he drew up at a cross

road down which his errand took him and they waited for the wagon and carriage.

"You're going to write to my sister Harriet, aren't you, when you get settled? I heard you promise her you would. Don't forget it, will you, for I want to know where you are!"

The Dixon party passed on along the main road and the last they saw of him he was still at the crossing, waving his hat to Emily who had turned to look back.

On the third day afterward, when they had entered another state, the road took them through a wide strip of woodland, across a stream and up a long ascent and then out upon a plain of low, rolling hills that stretched as far as they could see. It was a plain of virgin prairie turf as green as emerald and covered with wild phlox in bloom, pink and crimson and white, waving a roseate welcome in the soft, warm wind and making them all, even to Father Dixon, exclaim in wonderment and admiration over the feast of color spread before their eyes. Half the day they traveled across the plain, through wide, shallow depressions and over low, rounded, rolling hills, with the vast, gorgeously colored array of flowers, perfect in their spring beauty, spreading out upon each side of them for mile after mile. Finally they stopped on the bank of a stream in the edge of a strip of woods and made a permanent camp under its great oaks and maples and cottonwoods.

For they had come to the end of their journey and here the family stayed while Father Dixon rode about the country on horseback looking for the kind of farm he wanted to buy. He found it within a fortnight—a place that had been under cultivation for several years and had a good house and a stable and a young

orchard. A railroad was being built past it and a station would be made a half mile away. And the soil, he told them jubilantly, was five feet deep and as black and rich as soil could be. "There's no end to the crops it will grow!" he exclaimed enthusiastically.

They could have immediate possession, and so the early summer found the Dixons established in their new home and starting upon their new life, a life to be sharply different in all its distinguishing features from that which they had left behind them. For they, in common with the American nation, were entering upon a new era.

CHAPTER VII

"THE MOVING FINGER WRITES"

A BASIC difference was soon wrought in the life of the Dixons, for with the coming of the railroad almost to their doors, the multiplication of such roads in the Mid-West and the East and the constantly increasing ease of transportation, they were lifted almost at once out of the limited horizons and narrow interests of the earlier days and brought into nearer and more vital relationship with the rest of the country and the outside world. It was not long until the new influences began to tell upon their outlook and their individual characters. Even Father Dixon, whose whole nature had been molded and permeated by the patriarchal authority frontier life had vested in him, began to feel the broadening and mellowing influences of the new currents of interest that flowed in upon them and unconsciously lessened the autocracy of his rule over his family.

But the first effect was upon the material side of their lives. The five hundred acres which, within two or three years, were inclosed by Father Dixon's osage-orange hedges and barbed-wire fences were almost wholly devoted to the growing of wheat and corn, of which every year he sold and shipped away large quantities. The clothing of the men was bought ready made and the materials for that of the women in the stores

of Greenvale, the town that quickly grew up around the railroad station half a mile from their home, or in those of the larger and older county seat, Carters, ten miles up the railroad. No longer was their farm a manufactory also of soap and syrup and candles and other such main and by-products. Farm and household machinery for the lessening of the hand labor of both men and women was bought in ever increasing equipment. Small luxuries of food and clothing, which formerly they had scarcely heard of, began to find their way into the Dixon home and soon became necessities.

Although he said no more about it and apparently was entirely reconciled to William's course, in the bottom of his heart Father Dixon never ceased to regret the defection of his first born from the soil. He would sometimes look over his wide and prosperous acres and say to himself with a sigh, "What a farm we could have made of this if Bill had been satisfied to stay with me!"

As it was, his farm was not only the largest but the best looking and most fruitful in all that region. But it was never in quite as good trim as its owner wished to have it and he could not make the aid of hired "hands," whatever methods he tried with them, so efficient and creative as the work of a proprietor. But he himself was in his early fifties, in the prime of health and strength, straight-backed, broad-shouldered, hard-muscled, and the energy with which he worked produced results that were amazing to men of less powerful physique and ambitions less urgent. For strong within him were the pride, the ambition and the conscience of the creative worker who loves his labor so well that it is a pleasure to put into it the best of himself, who

can not endure letting it go through his hands without making it as nearly perfect as he can. Thus did he plow and plant and reap his fields, watch over his fences and his barns and care for his stock, with the best that was in him and with joy in his work and pride in its results—pride that was far less pride of possession than pride in his own handiwork.

If William would have none of the farm, Mark was a son after his own heart, for he, like his father, was the born farmer. To guide the plow in a furrow straight as a string across a wide field, with the scent of freshly turned earth in his nostrils and the warm and fragrant spring all about him; to watch spreading acres of corn thrust ambitious blades higher and higher and as day followed day turn from tender to darker green, then pale and falter and put on a tawny autumn suit; to see the whitening of a field of oats as it begins to ripen; to keep an observant eye upon stretches of wheat as the moment approaches of its full, golden ripeness; to gamble with the elements and stake his belief in himself against the possible menace of their destructive forces—for him these things meant the chief joys of life. And so Mark, as he approached manhood, as tall and sturdy, as broad-shouldered and well-muscled as his father, became Benjamin Dixon's right-hand man in the care and management of the farm.

William and Amy went at once to live at Carters, the county seat, where he read law in the office of the best lawyer in the county and, during their first winter there, taught the one-room, ungraded school. And there, on an April day a year after their marriage, a son was born to them. That he might have life Amy went down into the darkest shadows of death and was

barely able to battle her way back with the child. Nothing saved her finally, the physician said, but her determination not to die.

"I can't die, I won't die and leave you and him," she whispered faintly in William's ear when at last he was allowed to see her, "and I'm going to live." But the physician said her escape from death was so narrow that she must never again risk the ordeal. And so, grieving that she could not have the houseful of children that she coveted, Amy cared for her little Morris with a devotion that concentrated upon him all the tenderness and love that would have gone to a larger brood.

But this did not prevent her from constant endeavor to carry out that determination with which she had become William's wife, to keep step with him in his ambitious progress. Her husband wanted her to stay thus beside him as much as she longed to do so and thus they entered at once, and both of them with eagerness and pleasure, upon a life whose purpose of intellectual development lured them onward year by year into ever larger and richer and farther fields.

They went about it in a methodical way, setting aside each year a certain amount of money with which to buy books, magazines and newspapers. They pored over lists of books, selecting with the greatest care the few that they could, at first, afford to buy, reading them together, talking them over, sometimes rereading them because they had not enough books, through those first years, to do otherwise. Neither of them had read much, for books had been a rare possession in the homes of that outlying farm region in which they had grown up. But William had borrowed and read every book he could find in the neighborhood before he went to the war and

he had talked with Amy about them as she grew old enough to understand and had roused in her an interest in reading while she was in her early teens.

During the war he had had much contact with men of education and his eager, thirsting mind had grown and enriched itself by conversation with them, while days of leisure in camp had been utilized for the reading of such books and magazines as he could borrow from brother officers or secure from the Christian Commission, which did the best it could for the soldiers with its limited supply of reading matter.

So now they entered upon their married life intent upon intellectual growth and improvement, he with the urge of a vigorous mind and the ambition for achievement and service strong within him and she determined to keep step with him in his progress, to be a wife of whom he could always be proud in any company, who would be his companion and helpmate in every respect. In her zeal she even made a surreptitious dip or two into Blackstone's "Commentaries," secretly wondering if it would be possible for her to read enough law "so that William could talk about his law cases with me." But, being well gifted with common sense, she soon decided that it would be better not to attempt to cover so much ground. They read some poetry and a good deal of fiction, but more of history and, a little later, of the scientific and philosophical works that were electrifying the world and plunging it into bitter controversy during those earlier decades of the second half of the nineteenth century. Amy was much distressed by the story of mankind as it unfolded in the history they read of one nation after another. There was so much cruelty in it, so much selfishness, so much injustice, so little that conformed with the principles of right, clear and im-

perative to her, that often the dark and hideous past of mankind seemed almost unendurable.

"Sometimes I think," she said to her husband one evening when he had been reading aloud the story of the reign of "Bloody Mary," "that maybe it's better to be ignorant of all those dreadful things that men, and women too, have been doing, ever since there were any, than to be tormented with knowing how awfully wicked they've been."

William smiled at her, the specially tender smile of eyes and mouth that was for her always assuring and heart warming. "Well, would you rather we give up reading history?" He knew his Amy and he did not hesitate to leave the decision with her.

Her steady eyes gazed into his for a moment while her brow contracted. "No," she said, her voice trembling a little, then she repeated the negation more firmly and her brow cleared: "No, that would be running away, wouldn't it! And the wickedness is all there just the same, even if I am ignorant about it. It won't do me any good to be ignorant; I'd only just be more comfortable, and I don't want to be a coward. Let's go on just the same."

She talked about it with Mother Dixon, whom she had come to love as warmly as she had loved her own mother, and with an even stronger tie of sympathy and understanding. The older woman put down the sock she was darning, took off her spectacles and looked thoughtfully at her daughter-in-law, in whose words she sensed a real trouble.

"I've always noticed," she said, "that when people talk about their neighbors, or people they know, they nearly always tell all the bad things they know, or guess, about them and hardly ever any of the good

things. But if you know the people they are talking about yourself you know they have just as much good in them as bad and do just as many good, right things as the other kind, maybe more. I expect that's just the way the history books are written, and so there's a whole lot they don't tell that's just as true and important as what they do—more important, because good's always more important than bad. Just you think sometimes about the part they don't tell, dearie, and you'll feel better about it. Those awfully wicked people must have had some good in them and they must have tried to act right sometimes. Maybe they thought they were doing right oftener than it seems like when you read about it after such a long time.

"I remember once there was a man had a farm next to ours—that was before we went to the Centerville place—and everybody said he was stingy and didn't give his family enough to eat, nor his horses either. He was always trying to sell all of his crops that he could and people said he was a miser and was just getting money to hide it somewhere and they talked and talked and made so much fun of him that he was a regular laughing stock and most everybody despised him. But after a while it came out that he had an old mother and father back east somewhere who were in trouble and he was trying to get money to send to them. But people didn't talk about that after they heard it and lots of them just kept right on saying he was stingy anyway. I expect that's about the way they buzzed around about the kings and queens and generals and the rest of the big bugs in those old times and then along comes somebody and writes it all down and doesn't say a word about the other things."

Amy reported the conversation to William and at first

he said with a tender smile, "That's just like mother!" But presently he broke out enthusiastically:

"By George, she's right about it! She's got the right idea for the interpretation of history! We've got to try to understand it in the light of their times and not from the way it looks to us! It's what we must do, Amy, if we want to get the right viewpoint on it."

So, thereafter, they read and discussed their history in that way, trying always to see the achievement aimed at by those who molded the times in which they lived from their viewpoint and in the light in which it looked to them and judging them by the standards of their own surroundings rather than by those of a later day. The mental habit into which William thus grew was the chief influence in forming the broad outlook, the tolerant judgment and the just appraisal for which he became noted in later years.

At William's house Benjy spent all the time he could make possible and there he was from the first an eager listener and, as he grew older, a happy participant in the reading and discussion. His mental attitude toward humanity and its history was profoundly influenced by the just and tolerant spirit with which he became familiar and in after years it was impressed, through him, upon the thinking of many others.

During their first winter in Carters Amy heard from her old home that her mother had died from an injury to her head caused by falling on icy steps at her back door and a little later came the news that the severe shock of his wife's sudden death had made much worse the heart trouble from which her father suffered and that within a week of her burial he had been found sitting at the supper table with his head in his hands, dead. Stephen wrote her briefly, the first and only let-

ters she received from him, about both events and a little later came a letter from a lawyer in Scott City saying that her father, unforgiving to the end, had left a will explicitly disinheriting her and leaving all that he possessed to "my beloved cousin, Stephen Miller, who has been to me as a most dutiful and helpful son and has done his best to make amends for the disgraceful and heartbreaking actions of my daughter, who by her disobedience has forfeited all right to any share in my estate." The lawyer wanted to know if she would like to contest the will and in that case offered his services.

"Contest it? Never!" said Amy with her head high and her cheeks flaming. "If father felt that way about it I wouldn't want to touch it, and we're happy enough without the money. But I wish," and the tears started in her eyes, "he hadn't been so hard and bitter about my marrying you. I hadn't thought much about it before, but now that he's dead I wish I could think of him as different, not angry and unforgiving, but understanding how it was with us. I wonder," she went on softly, "if when our baby that's coming grows up and wants to marry somebody that maybe we won't like we'll understand, the way I wish father had!"

Not long after little Morris was born came another letter from the lawyer in Scott City enclosing a check and saying that Stephen Miller had sold the farm and all its belongings and, reserving to himself only the proceeds from certain horses, cattle and hogs that had been at various times given to him by Samuel Miller, wished the full price of all the rest of it to be turned over to her, because he considered her the rightful heir. But there was no letter from Stephen himself and when Amy tried to communicate with him to say that she wanted him to have the whole of the money, the lawyer

replied that he had left the neighborhood without telling any one where he was going. He had wound up all his affairs, the lawyer said, and departed, saying nothing about his plans or his destination, before the check was sent to her.

"I suppose," said Amy, with one of her rare glints of humor, "that Steve was so grateful to me for not marrying him that he wanted to show me how he felt about it!"

And afterwards Stephen Miller faded out of the lives and thoughts of the Dixon family, save only that Emily cherished a sweet memory hidden away in that secret crypt of her heart where, embalmed in tenderness as in myrrh and spices, woman ever keeps, known to none but herself, the memory of her first love. But she visited that secret hiding place less and less often, for it was the mating time of life and there were many sturdy young men on western farms and prairies whose thoughts were bent eagerly upon the finding of a partner. One of them was beginning to exercise a strong fascination upon her heart and to dominate her thoughts to the exclusion of the others, even of the memory of the love that was no more. For young Winfield Walters' courtship of Emily, through the broad and pleasant approach of friendship, was prospering well. He had enlisted the aid of his family's physician in his effort to gain their consent for him to study medicine and together they had won the day. With a high heart the young man plunged into preparation for his career, at first spending, upon William's urgent advice, all the time he could afford attending a high school, and then going to a medical college. But every summer he went for a little while to Greenvale, improving acquaintance with Emily.

Amy insisted, and finally won her way, that William

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should use the money, or some part of it, that had come to her so unexpectedly in making a better preparation for his future by attending a law school. He made the condition that she and Baby Morris should go with him, and so, for two college years, they lived in the little city of the University of Michigan and then William, armed with his law degree, hung out his sign as attorney-at-law in Carters. The following year he was elected to the State Legislature.

CHAPTER VIII

NEW HOMES IN THE MAKING

CAME the year 1870 and with it new developments in the life of the Dixon family. Young Winfield Walters secured his medical degree that spring and when he journeyed to Greenvale a little later it was for the wedding that made Emily his wife. He had some surprising news for her.

"You remember," he told her, "that I went at the Christmas vacation last winter with a friend of mine in the college to spend it at Scott City with his family. His father is a doctor too, Dr. Robert L. Foster. You told me then, and they said so too, that they had come there not long after you left, so you didn't know them. It was fine weather and John, that was the son, my friend, and I rode around over the country some, and it was wonderful, Emily, to see the place where you used to live, and the Miller farm, and the peach orchard you'd told me about and the little old schoolhouse where you'd gone to school! You remember, I wrote to you about it. Well, John was to go home this year and go into partnership with his father, who's got a good practice. He's a fine doctor too—there isn't another physician in that whole county can hold a candle to him. But this spring, only a few weeks before the last examination, John came down with congestion of the lungs. He got better, almost well, but wasn't strong enough

to attend lectures and he went home for a week or two. He had a relapse soon after he got there and died in two days. I guess I wrote you a little about it. I was all broken up, for John was my best friend. And his family, they just can't get over it; they were all wrapped up in John. And I tell you, Emily, he was a fine fellow!

"I liked all his family and they seemed to like me, too—they'd like anybody that John did—but I was surprised the other day to get a letter from Dr. Foster offering to take me into partnership with him, just as he had meant to do with John. He said he needed somebody and that he'd rather have his son's good friend than anybody else he knew and that he thought I showed the promise of being a good physician. I wrote him I'd have to find out what you thought about going back there to live. Would you like to do that, Emily, or would you rather have me settle somewhere else?"

She saw plainly what he wanted to do, although he had so scrupulously refrained from saying anything on either side of the plan, and she promptly told him, with all her characteristic enthusiasm, that she would like nothing so much as going back to Scott City to live and seeing how much bigger and nicer it was than it used to be; that it was a splendid opening for him, lots better than he could possibly find anywhere else, and that anyway, no matter what happened, she would be glad and happy to go anywhere with him.

"You'll like the Fosters," he told her, "and they'll like you—they couldn't help that! They're the kindest people you ever saw. They've got grown daughters, nice girls, so you'll have friends right from the start."

They were married in the early summer and Emily, gay and happy and winsome, notwithstanding the tears

with which she said good-by to her mother, her home and her youth, went forth with her young husband to set up their own little unit of the nation's life.

Only a few weeks later Mark also was married. His bride was the daughter of a neighboring farmer. At first it was planned that they should live on the Dixon farm in their own house, but Mark began to see a vision of farther West and broader acres. Now was the time, he told his father, to go "out West," where the county was still new, before the rush set in that was bound to come and while it would be possible for him, by taking up as much government land as he could and buying out other claims which could be got for very little money, to make sure of a big tract of land which, planted with wheat, would be a money-maker from the start and would increase in value with every year.

For him, the pot of gold was still hidden in the soil just beneath the sunset. The transcontinental railroad had been finished, linking the Atlantic and Pacific coasts together with a band of steel; railroads were being built at the rate of five, six, seven thousands miles per year, opening up new regions in the West, giving better facilities for transportation everywhere and stimulating the growth of grain for shipment to other countries; manufacturing industries were increasing in number and variety and in volume of output and the whole material life of the people was in the full flush of splendid development. The beat of its strong and steady pulse was thrilling every corner of the country and Mark felt its urge as well as that of youth and race to go out and test his strength in new ways.

Father Dixon made slight objection to Mark's project, much to the surprise of the rest of the family who remembered the autocratic rule he had wielded over his

older children. He said very frankly that he thought the scheme unwise and that Mark would find it more profitable to stay where he was and share in the work and profits of the home farm, but told him, with kindly acquiescence, to go if he wanted to. His unaccustomed attitude was significant of the gradual change that had been taking place in his consciousness of his relation to his family and to the world about him, a change that thousands of other American fathers began to realize in those years of rapid development.

Mark and his young wife, Beulah, packed their personal belongings and some household goods into a white-covered wagon and started with high hopes upon that westbound journey upon which, dazzled by the lure of the sunset and its promised pot of gold, every one of his forebears for generations had set forth across land or water. Among the goods they carried was one of Mother Dixon's feather beds with its accompanying bolster and pillows, linen and blankets. All her married life she had been thriftily and with far forethought accumulating her store of feather beds and pillows and woolen blankets for the purpose of being able thus to provide for the marriage of each of her children. Safely boxed, just such a nucleus for their future housekeeping had gone with Emily and Winfield to their new home in Scott City and another had made the beginning of the furnishings of the snug little home of William and Amy at Carters. Mother Dixon did not consider it as a gift but as something rightfully due to the child departing from the home nest and she would have felt it quite disgraceful, the last word of shiftlessness, not to be able thus to outfit a newly married son or daughter.

If William and his mother were surprised that Father Dixon made no protest against Mark's plan, although

the young man had not yet reached his twenty-first birthday and therefore, according to the custom of the time, his labor still belonged to his parents until that date, they were still more surprised and pleased when he opposed so little their wishes concerning Benjy's education. He did storm a little at first when William, seconded by Mother Dixon, began the endeavor to persuade him that Benjy would succeed better in some other pursuit, something that required education and training, than he would as a farmer. But he finally acquiesced and agreed to meet whatever expense should be involved, but not without some grumbling about the decadence of the times in which children ruled their parents and insisted on their own way regardless of the wishes of their elders. But his wife knew that he was proud of the success William was beginning to win, and that he had begun to think perhaps Benjy might be William's equal.

Carters had grown rapidly in the five years since William and Amy established their home there, trebling its population and beginning to provide itself with the essentials of a prosperous and ambitious town. William Dixon was a leader in every movement of this sort, creating, stirring up and guiding sentiment that resulted in the macadamizing of streets, the laying of sidewalks, the planting of shade trees, the building of a town hall in which could be held meetings of every kind, concerts, lectures, entertainments, the providing of an adequate public school building for all grades from the primary to the high. He worked especially hard upon this last project, for he had to overcome the opposition of many who thought that the town was not yet ready for so expensive a school program.

"We must build for the future," he told them, "for

the boys and girls that are growing up or whose parents are going to bring them into this town and county, and we must be ready to give them the education that every American child ought to have." He won the day and had the satisfaction, by the time he was elected to the State Legislature, of seeing a well-equipped school building finished and ready for pupils.

Thither to the high school went Benjy for two years, sometimes riding on horseback the ten miles from the Dixon farm morning and evening, but staying at William's home when he and Amy were there. "One of the first things I shall do in the Legislature," William told his brother, "will be to start a movement to establish a State University. I've already set things going, talked about it with leading men in other parts of the state and got the promise of their help and I think I'll be able to put it through. We must have it—the young people of this state must have every opportunity to get all the education they want. It's their right, and I intend they shall have it. Education means everything nowadays—but it's hard to make some of these old fogies see it."

William made his fight in the Legislature for the State University, and a valiant and hard-fought one it was, in which he learned many a valuable lesson in the handling of men, the necessity of forehandedness in knowledge of individuals and ways of securing it, the appeal to and manipulation of personal prejudices and interests, the combination of groups. He came near to defeat, but he won the battle, won also his contests for other measures, and went home triumphantly with a record in his first legislative term of having put through every measure he had sponsored. In after years he looked back upon his first service in legislative bodies,

and especially upon his determined struggle for the establishment of a State University, as an important experience in his training for public life. Moreover, he had made himself known all through his state as a young man of ideas, of forceful character, of shrewd political ability, who could handle men, who knew what he wanted and how to get it.

When the infant State University opened its doors in the autumn of 1872, with a single building of half a score of rooms and half that many members in its faculty and three hundred students, William was invited, as the father of the institution, to preside at the opening function and make the address of the day. From her seat in the audience Amy watched him as he ascended the platform, her heart swelling with pride in him and in his crowning achievement. Much as she had admired him and believed in him when they were married, in her eyes he was now a finer, more impressive figure than he was then. The bushy brown beard that, in accordance with the custom of the time, covered his face when he came home from the war had disappeared and his only facial adornment, as had become the fashion with men, was a mustache, and his countenance, thus exposed to view, gave evidence of the molding process that was going on within him, the refining of fiber, the training of intelligence, the development of forcefulness. That little limp in his walk, from the bullet that had entered one leg at Gettysburg, gave him in her sight an added dignity and distinction because it was the symbol of his years of service for country and humanity.

Benjy was with her, there to enroll as a student, and they listened to William's speech with many glances at each other of appreciation and approval. For years afterward Benjy maintained that William never made a

better speech than he did that day, nor one with more of his heart in it. At any rate, it brought him new and wider recognition and much praise. Accounts of it appeared the next day in important papers in Mid-West cities and forward-looking people outside his own commonwealth noted the enlightened, constructive, progressive character of his ideas. And in his own state people began to say of him that he was an orator as well as a man who could get things done.

CHAPTER IX

THE POT OF GOLD BENEATH THE SUNSET

FROM the short grass country to which Mark and Beulah had gone began to come disturbing news. Through several years the roads leading to the western borderland of the great Mid-West region had been lined with the white-covered wagons of migrating families eager for more and cheaper land, bent on home-making under pioneer conditions, moved by that never sated urge of the Anglo-Saxon race to grapple with Nature when Nature has the odds. Westward once more they had gone and scattered North and South over hundreds upon hundreds of miles, dotting the treeless, waterless, sun-drenched plains with their tiny shacks and sod-houses, last audacious outposts of man's contest with the soil before the barrier of the Great Divide.

After a few years there were rumors of suffering among these pioneers, of drouths that parched the last drop of moisture from sandy soils and shallow streams, of weeks upon weeks of blazing sun, of hot winds in whose breath all vegetation shriveled, of grasshopper plagues that darkened the very sky and left no green thing in their track.

Then came the panic of '73 and the following years of business depression in which paralyzed industries and gloomy outlook made their influence felt everywhere, so that in these remote sod-houses and sun-parched fields

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there was necessity of endurances greater than the souls and bodies of men and women could bear. And the roads were lined once more with their outfits, but facing East and carrying back only the last remnants of the courage and hope, equipment and money with which they had started upon their venture. From Mark and Beulah the letters came with less and less frequency until they almost ceased and they said less and less that would give an insight into how affairs were going with them. Then, when it had just been decided that William should make a hasty journey of investigation as to their plight, Father Dixon met with sudden death and Mark was needed to take charge of the farm.

Benjamin Dixon had recently bought a new saddle horse which was proving skittish and unreliable, easily frightened and when startled likely to break into any unforetrollable sort of antic. He had ridden the horse the half mile from his house into Greenvale, had made some purchases of nails and padlocks and a heavy chain and had started home. That was the last that was seen of him alive. It was supposed that something, perhaps the whistle of a passing locomotive, perhaps a scrap of wind-blown paper, had startled the horse and caused it to rear and wheel and, taking its rider unexpectedly, unseat him and throw him against the fence, where his head apparently had struck a post, and then drag him some distance until, its fright calming down, it stopped to graze. There it was found by a passer-by some hours later, still dragging the body, one of whose feet was twisted in the stirrup. The physician said that his skull had been fractured by the supposed impact against the fence and that death had been instantaneous.

Thus Benjamin Dixon went to his long account, leaving behind him the tradition and the influence of a

sturdy, forceful character that had met life without whining, no matter what it required of him, and had found it good, had faced its responsibilities without question and met them squarely and successfully. His rule in his family had been severe, but he had given to his children honest and aspiring souls and had brought them up in the love of righteousness for its own sake. By his unskimping and competent toil he had shared in the creation of the power of his country; by his intelligence and patriotism he had aided in making the great adventure of democracy a success; by the blood of his sons, dearer to him than his own, he had helped to dedicate anew that adventure to the cause of human liberty. His station was lowly, his life simple, and of all the millions of the Republic his very existence was known only to the merest handful. But he had been an essential drop in the life-blood of the country that he loved as he did his own offspring, the life-blood that depends upon such as he for its vigor and its worth. May his ashes ever glow with the living spirit that animated him and send down through the generations the bright message of his life—the responsibility that rests upon the shoulders of every individual, whoever he may be!

When Mark and Beulah came, in response to William's urgent message, their silent, restrained manner, as of people who have long kept themselves under an iron curb, their set faces and spiritless eyes gave pathetic indication of what they had undergone.

"The poor thing! The poor thing!" Mother Dixon said to herself again and again as she looked at Beulah, forgetting her own sorrow in her sympathy. "Poor child, she must let down that strain somehow!"

Impulsively she gathered Beulah into her arms ex-

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claiming, "You dear child! Won't you tell mother all about it?" For a moment Beulah was silent, as if struggling from the force of habit to suppress emotion, then great, dry sobs began to rack her body and presently, as Mother Dixon crooned over her and spoke reassuring words in tones rich and warm with sympathetic feeling, the tears came and she sobbed upon the other's bosom like a child. "There, there, dearie, tell me about it," Mother Dixon urged. "It's all over now and you can tell me. I want to know just what happened to you away out there."

"Oh, it was dreadful, dreadful," Beulah whispered between her sobs. "I could never tell you how awful it was! The sun just blazed and blazed every day as if the skies were afire—oh, I never want to see sunshine again, never, never! And it burned and parched everything to dust and there wasn't any water—sometimes not enough for the horses and sometimes we didn't have any and the sun blazing all the time and burning up the wheat and my garden—and in the winter the blizzards—oh, how cold it was, and the snow drifts all around the house—and we couldn't keep warm inside because we didn't have anything handy to make a fire with—corn cobs and corn—we had to burn corn sometimes that the horses needed. And the wind never stopped blowing—so cold in the winter and so hot in the summer and the wheat shriveled up in it and died. And then the grasshoppers came and they—oh, I can't tell you how horrible they were! It was like a snowstorm that was all alive and eating things. They covered everything and you couldn't step without crunching them—ugh! It made me sick! And they ate up every green thing. There wasn't anything left. We worked and worked and worked and all the time things got worse

until—until we didn't have anything left, only just that dry sand with the horrible wind blowing clouds of dust all over it. I couldn't cry, no matter what happened—something had hold of my throat and gripped it tight. I couldn't cry even when—the baby died."

Her sobs broke out afresh and her husband came beside her and put an arm tenderly across her shoulders saying "There, there, old girl, don't wear yourself out!" But with sudden contradiction he turned to his mother: "Let her cry, mother! It'll do her good—it's what she needs." And then with his own great shoulders heaving, he hastily left the room.

"Not even when the baby died and my heart was a big stone. The poor little baby—it was so little—and my milk dried up and I couldn't nurse it any more—and the cow died and there wasn't anything the baby ought to have. I tried to fix things for it—but it died—with that sun blazing like fire and that awful wind scorching everything. And we didn't have any boards to make a coffin and we had to wrap it up in a sheet—and Mark dug a grave and we buried it, just us, by ourselves, because there wasn't anybody near us, and I looked down there at it—in the little grave—and something held my throat so tight—and Mark—found some sticks and put some barbed wire around the grave—and we had to leave it there—all by its little self——" Again her sobs shook her body and Mother Dixon bent over her, weeping with her and holding her close in sympathetic and loving arms.

William was much puzzled by the outcome of the migration to the short grass country, of which Mark's disaster was an example. Why had this race of American pioneers which had marched triumphantly half way across the country, subduing Nature to its purposes

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with never a halt or a setback, so suddenly met with defeat? Had it lost its old-time vigor and courage? Had its fiber grown soft and unequal to hardship? Had its confidence in itself dwindled? He wanted to question Mark about it and found him in the barn, renewing acquaintance with the horses he had formerly worked with and cared for. They went out and sat on the fence and talked the matter over.

"The amount of it is," said Mark as they neared the end of the discussion, "that we didn't use our brains enough to start with. And after we found out we needed them we didn't know how to use them. Because it was all different, Bill, from any kind of farming any of us had ever done before—the climate was different, the soil was different, most everything needed to be done some other way, and we didn't know any other way, and there wasn't anybody to tell us. I'd like," he went on, his eyes kindling with the ardor of the man who, once downed in a fight, springs to his feet and goes at his opponent with redoubled energy, "to go out there and try it again, only it wouldn't be right to take Beulah through what it would mean for her. But I'd like to experiment and try it again. I'm sure I could make it go after a while, and there's lots of money in farming out there—if you could just get enough water on the soil. But," he added as he gazed over the fruitful acres that spread around them, "this looks pretty good to me now and I reckon I'll have my hands full taking care of it."

William was much impressed by Mark's words, "most everything needed to be done some other way, and we didn't know any other way, and there wasn't anybody to tell us."

"All that suffering and waste," he said to himself,

“because of ignorance. Nobody knew enough to warn them of what would happen to them, nobody knew enough to advise them how to meet different conditions.”

He began to get glimpses of a new vista, splendid and far-reaching, of constructive possibilities in the contest with Mother Earth that men of vision might set in operation and for years he kept them in his thought until the time came when he could aid in translating them into realities.

CHAPTER X

ROSE-DARK EVALEENA

THE famous dictum that a log with a student sitting on one end and Mark Hopkins on the other would be a university does not take sufficient account of the spirit of the student. For unless it be thirsting and eager and vital the rich and mellow wisdom, the profound knowledge and the lofty character of the Mark Hopkins end are lost upon him and the whole thing becomes barren and unavailing, whether it be a log or a many million-dollared collection of buildings, equipment and teaching staff. The infant State University at Bidwell, which William Dixon by determined effort had succeeded in getting born, was rich in that essential quality of its few hundred students and also in the enthusiasm and devotion of the half-dozen members of its faculty, although its material equipment was meager almost to the point of absurdity.

Its ardent enthusiasm and its aspiring soul were typical of the spirit that began to make itself felt in the decades following the Civil War, a stirring, eager, ambitious spirit that found expression in questing after the intellectual and the ideal as well as after material benefits. There was everywhere a new appreciation of the value and the pleasures of intellectual development, but the new spirit found its most significant and most important expression in the states of the Mid-West and

Western regions. With quick response to its appeal they set up their state institutions of the higher learning upon the basis of support by the people of the commonwealth, established their systems of popular education and gave recognition and encouragement to dozens upon dozens of smaller, sectarian colleges, believing, in their new zeal, the more the means of mental training were multiplied the more quickly and surely would come about that universal education and culture which were their hope and purpose.

And while men of light and leading in medicine and education and social welfare and statesmanship were arguing whether or not women, for their own good and the good of the race, should be admitted to these educational advantages, whether or not, indeed, they had the brain capacity to profit by them, these young institutions of a newer and more pliant civilization, whose men had seen the women of their families taking an equal share in its development, threw their doors wide open for sons and daughters alike.

The student life which Benjy Dixon shared in the eighteen-seventies at Bidwell was the counterpart of that which went on in the halls and on the campuses of scores of young and hopeful institutions in little towns scattered over the prairies of the West. With ardent minds and dauntless eyes these young men and women plunged into their studies, eager for the stored wisdom of the world, longing to make it all their own, questing after it as upon a high adventure. Benjy made friendships among his fellow students, meeting men and women alike, as he had done in country schools and in the high school at Carters, in class rooms and society meetings, walking in the tree-shaded campus and streets and out through the country, discussing their studies, themselves,

one another, their futures, and high affairs of literature and philosophy, science and life.

Among the girls there was one who did not enter until he was half through his four-year course and had come to be recognized as one of the most promising students of the University and a leader among them. She attracted his attention at once by her beauty and he soon discovered her name to be Evaleena Vincent. She was dark, with an olive skin of delicate texture to which abounding health gave a faint glow, deepening to a soft, dusky red in her cheeks. Her masses of dark brown hair had a bronzy sheen in the sun and the somber look of her liquid brown eyes was emphasized by the dark brows whose slightly curved lines met across her forehead. But her beauty lay chiefly in the purity of line and the delicate modeling of her features that gave to her countenance a subtle attractiveness. Eyes sensitive to beauty could gaze at her face with never ceasing pleasure and yet be unable, unless their owner were of an analytical turn of mind, to say why it was so pleasing.

Benjy Dixon, as sensitive to beauty of any sort as when he was a child, was soon her frequent companion. He felt a keen and never lessening delight in the exquisite contours and colors of her countenance and his very soul seemed to him to caress their satisfying loveliness. When her countenance was in repose the dark somberness of her eyes hinted at an underlying sullen temper and her thin-lipped mouth, her least beautiful feature, looked as if it might straighten and compress itself into the outward index of an unlovely soul.

But Benjy did not see her countenance in repose. From the first of their acquaintance her whole being thrilled with response to his presence and her face was

radiant with the new pleasure in her heart. It gave such a soft glow to her beauty that people turned to stare at her and those who knew her well gazed at her face and wondered at this flowering into new and greater loveliness.

Benjy was taking all the work and doing all the outside reading that he could in history. The evenings that he had spent during his boyhood at William's house listening to the reading and taking part in the talk had influenced his mental tastes and interests strongly in this direction. He even traced the beginning of the trend back to those childhood years when the Nasby letters, read aloud by his father on winter evenings around the great, blazing fireplace, had tickled his sense of humor and stirred his budding intelligence. He was absorbed in his work, fascinated by it, and he talked much about it with Evaleena Vincent. She thought him a most interesting young man and listened to his every word with that evident pleasure that makes even the most silent of listeners an inspiration and the best of companions. One day as they walked beneath the trees of the campus during a vacant hour—it was the autumn of Benjy's senior year—she listened as he talked, her dark eyes bright and her countenance glowing with wild rose tints beneath its olive duskiness. He stopped suddenly, his heart making a joyful bound as a fresh realization of her beauty swept through him.

“Rose-dark! That's what you are, Evaleena! I've tried so often to get the right word for your beauty—and that's it—Rose-dark Evaleena!”

A caressing delight stressed his last words as he bent toward her and she lowered her eyes in sudden fear that they might tell more than she wished them to until he had spoken the words she longed to hear, words that

her heart told her were now surely upon his lips. But he only repeated, "Rose-dark Evaleena!" as if he were in love with its poetic sound. She waited a moment, but there was nothing more and her heart was sick with sudden disappointment.

"It's a pretty name," she said, struggling with the need to say something, and went on, "You always think of such pretty things!" Fear of what she might do next—perhaps burst into tears, perhaps throw her arms around his neck and break into wild words of love—forced her unwilling feet to leave him. "I must go," she said hastily; "it's my class hour," and was gone.

But from that day she was aware of something more personal, more intimate, in his attitude toward her. Previously they had talked mostly about themselves and their work and play and friendships in the University, and Benjy a great deal about his ideas and opinions, his conjectures and convictions concerning his historical reading and history. But now he began to mingle more intimate matters with these things and occasionally he would tell her about his mother, what a remarkable woman she was and how much she had meant to him and how close and sympathetic their relations were. For that close kinship between them, rooted in their common love of beauty, which extended back almost to his earliest remembrance, had grown with the years until now, as he came to manhood, she recognized within her own heart that he was the dearest to her of all her children. He had told her about Evaleena, how lovely the girl was and what good friends they were, and she had listened with eager interest and asked him many questions about her appearance and personality.

So, as Benjy's interest in Evaleena grew and he began to realize what it meant to him, he jumped to the con-

clusion that of course she would like to hear about his mother. It was some time before he noticed that she listened in cold silence and invariably turned the conversation as quickly as possible to some widely different subject. "Of course," he said to himself, "she can't be as interested as I am until she knows mother, and then she'll love her as much as I do."

But the passions that raged in Evaleena's heart, underneath her silent and cold exterior, whenever Benjy spoke of Mother Dixon in tender and enthusiastic terms were not those that transmute themselves into love. She began to detest the very word "mother" on his lips and the fires of jealousy and hate flared up in her heart whenever he spoke of her with affection and appreciation or told with praise about anything she had said or done. Bitterly she said to herself, or felt chaotically, that "that woman" had so much of Benjy's heart there was none left for her—and she wanted it all, all! And if it should turn to her, as it surely must because she loved him so much, then she would share it with no one!

But at last there came to her tormented breast the blessed surety of love returned. Benjy put a sheet of paper into her hand, with love in his eyes and the words, "Here's something I wrote last night and I'd like you to read it, if you will," as he left her at her door after walking with her and carrying her books from the campus. It was a poem, "To My Rose-Dark Evaleena," a creditable poem of its kind, gently lover-like and praising her beauty, her grace and her sweet womanliness, but lacking the fire of a great passion. But Evaleena loved it and kissed the possessive "my" of its title while her heart sang with joy the refrain for which it had hungered, "Benjy loves me, Benjy loves me!"

On a warm day in early spring they took a long walk

away from the town, across fields and meadows and into a belt of woods. All about them birds were caroling their mating songs, early flowers dotted the ground, budding leaves upon the trees clothed the forest in a fine green mist against which glowed here and there the orange cloud of a maple in bloom, and the soft, caressing, vital, inspiring breath of the spring was everywhere. Unconsciously they stayed their steps in the meager shade of the budding trees and instinctively they turned with eyes seeking each the other's face.

Evaleena's beauty was radiant, dazzling, her olive skin flushed and glowing with the warm tints the long walk had given it, her eyes bright and lovely and tender with the happiness that sang in her heart, her lips soft and sweet and smiling. A wistful fondness softened her beauty and gave it a seductive appeal. Nor did his appearance have less attraction for her than did hers for him. For he was a personable young man and a girl in the mating-time of life might well look at him with appreciative eyes. Not quite so tall as his father and his brothers nor so stocky of build as Mark, his chest was deep, his shoulders were broad and square, his body slender and upright—the greyhound build so often seen among American men of native breeding indicative of the latent strength and endurance bequeathed by their pioneer forebears and of the nervous energy with which climate and civilization have endowed them. A square, firm jaw and chin, a mobile, sensitive mouth, a straight, thin nostriled nose, a clear, healthful looking skin, bright gray eyes, like his father's and his brother William's, and a broad, high forehead made a countenance that might mask the character and betoken the future of either a poet or a man of action. They were both very good to look at and so they found each other as they

gazed for a silent moment while their hearts beat quicker and their breath came fast. Then their eyes met and the flash of love passed between them.

"Evaleena, you are so lovely! My rose! My darling!" His voice choked with feeling and he held out his arms to her. At once she flew to his breast and was folded in his embrace.

As he sat at his window that night musing fondly upon Evaleena while the high midnight moon flooded the earth with silver, suddenly there shot across his warm and tender thoughts, coming he knew not whence nor why, a question, a doubt, that brought him bolt upright with the force of an electric shock. "Do I love her?" he realized that he was asking himself. For a moment he was bewildered, and then his astounded faculties gathered themselves together and his heart responded with indignation, "Of course I do! I love her dearly!"

When June came, it was the June of 1876, Benjy received his degree from the University, which offered him also, and he accepted, a position upon its faculty as assistant professor of history. A little later he and Evaleena were married and went upon their wedding journey to the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia, whither were flocking with eager eyes and proud hearts well-nigh all the people of the United States who could make the trip. In the late summer they returned to Bidwell and bought a pretty cottage on the bank of a deep, wooded ravine that opened out into a lovely, tree-lined valley which in turn spread into a broad plain dotted with farmhouses and orchards and fields. A porch ran the length of the house on that side and upon it opened a door from the living-room and another from the room beyond which was to be the library and Benjy's

study. He ranged his few books upon some shelves and looked at them gloatingly, in imagination seeing them multiply until they covered the walls to the ceiling and piled up on tables and the floor.

"The view from these windows is so lovely," he said to Evaleena, "that I think likely I'll have to pull down the shades when I want to work here in the daytime!" They went out on the porch and looked down into the leafy ravine and out over the spreading valley, all green and gold and soft, veiling haze, far-reaching miles upon miles, to the dim blue horizon. "How beautiful it is!" said Benjy half under his breath, his voice rich with feeling.

"Yes, indeed," said Evaleena, but her tones were cold, for her eyes were upon his face and in her heart was resentment of the lovely scene because it was taking his gaze, his feeling, his admiration.

To the Centennial Exposition went also William and Amy, taking with them their ten-year-old son Morris, and Emily and her husband, Dr. Walters. They met Benjy and Evaleena there and, all together, they made a busy and interested family party. William had already begun to find in Benjy a companion after his own heart and they discussed with each other the realization the Exposition was giving them of the unity, the greatness, the splendid future of the country and the many suggestions they discovered in it of new possibilities of development and they agreed that its influence upon the country would be so profound as to make that centennial year a notable one in its history. But whenever William wanted to have a satisfactory talk with Benjy he asked Amy if she and Emily would take Evaleena upon some enterprise by themselves so that she would not hover around and call Benjy away at

the most interesting point in their discussion. Amy and Emily discussed their new sister-in-law with interest, for Benjy had sounded her praises to both of them, and they agreed that she was very lovely and that they were rather sorry for Benjy.

When Benjy and Evaleena settled down in their home in Bidwell and the University opened for the fall term they had not yet been to Greenvale to visit Mother Dixon and Mark and Beulah. For Evaleena found one excuse after another to postpone the trip until it was so late that Benjy could not leave because of his duties in the University. He grieved over the delay, for he longed to see his mother and he knew how much she wanted to fold her arms about his wife and give her the kiss of welcome into his family, knew that she longed to see him and have some of their old-time talks together, rejoice with him over his success and his happiness and listen to his hopes of the future. And above all he wanted to show her his lovely wife and hear her words of admiration and approval. He imagined fondly and tenderly just how she would say, "She's so pretty, Benjy!" He grieved all the more, when it became evident they could not go before the University opened, because he knew that his mother was ailing with a serious malady and that she might not have many more months to live.

But the more he fretted the more Evaleena determined in her secret heart that their visit should be still longer postponed. For to her Mother Dixon was still "that woman" who held securely Benjy's deep and abiding filial love, and she wanted all of his heart. Since their marriage she had sensed the fact, with bitter humiliation, that Benjy loved her less profoundly, less passionately, less absorbingly, than she loved him and her heart.

flamed with jealousy and resentment of whoever and whatever had any portion of his admiration and affection, of which she could not get enough to satisfy her longing for equality in love.

Mother Dixon proudly sent them, with a letter full of motherly love, the feather bed and pillows and outfit of linen and blankets, whose duplicate it had been her very great pleasure to give to each of her children as they married. Benjy knew how much of her heart was in the gift, how much she considered it less a gift than his right and he was deeply touched. But Evaleena found an excuse to pack it all away in their tiny garret until she thought he had forgotten it, when she gave it away.

At the fall election of 1876 William Dixon was elected to Congress, carrying his district by an overwhelming majority. Nor was the size of the vote cast for him due wholly to the fact that the political sentiment of the district was strongly Republican and William staunchly of that faith. Like his father, his love for his country and his devotion to its interests were deep and intense but he felt very sure that his country's welfare was safe only under the rule of his own party, the party that had saved it from disruption and democratic government from disaster and under whose guiding hand it was forging forward to wealth and power and influence. His wide reading, which he and his wife steadily kept up together, had given breadth and tolerance to his understanding of human nature in past ages and other countries and a viewpoint at once just and generous in his estimate of its achievement. But in his outlook upon the past and present of his own country he was still a strong party man, seeing conditions, problems, measures from a narrow and partisan point

of view. But the majority that sent him to Congress was not merely a party success, for he polled a much heavier vote, in proportion, than did the candidate for any other office in the state, and one that greatly exceeded the usual Republican success in his district. The ballots that piled up for him so overwhelmingly were largely a personal tribute, a proof of the confidence in him and admiration for him of constituents who had come to have the utmost belief in his probity and his ability.

A telegraph message from William at once bore the news to Mother Dixon of his triumphant success and the promise of an early visit. But when he and Amy arrived a few days later at the farm at Greenvale, where she lived with Mark and Beulah, they found her seriously ill, her malady having taken a sudden and dangerous turn. A telegram to Emily brought her flying at once to her mother's bedside and another to Benjy sent him, white-faced, to Evaleena.

"You'll come too, won't you, dear?" he said to her with a little falter in his voice and his eyes distraught with the fear of what might happen to his mother, so dearly beloved. "Mother has never seen you yet, you know."

Evaleena bit her lip at his way of stating the fact and thought bitterly, "He's always putting her first." She began to find excuses—she had this and that to do, she had engagements for this week and next week, she was not feeling well; no, it wasn't possible for her to go.

Benjy listened patiently until her final sentence. Then he stood up, looked at her squarely and said in a voice whose definitive note was reminiscent of Father Dixon: "You must go with me, Evaleena. We'll start on the

next train. You must be ready." And then he left the room.

Evaleena went, but her dark eyes were mutinous and somber and sullen clouds now and then shadowed the beauty of her countenance. They found Mother Dixon upon her deathbed, but for several days she lingered upon the very shore of the Unknown Beyond, while her children gathered about her and eagerly seized upon every faint hope, telling one another that this or that symptom was so much better than it was yesterday, that she was stronger than she had been, that there was yet possibility of her recovery. But at last the end came and the doctor told them she could live no more than a few minutes.

Benjy fell upon his knees beside her, seizing her hand and covering it with kisses, fondling it against his cheek while tears streamed down his face and sobs shook his body. The others stood or knelt at the bedside, weeping, but trying to restrain their sobs that they might catch her last word or wish and, if possible, comfort her passing. But Benjy's grief was uncontrolled. Evaleena stood a little way behind him and apart from the others, her eyes not on the helpless figure on the bed that was saying farewell to life but on that of her heartbroken husband. Suddenly she bent over him and with her hands beneath his arms half urged, half lifted him to his feet, led him away and seated him beside her, his head upon her breast and her arm about him. From the bed came Mother Dixon's faint voice of inquiry. "Benjy?" it said, and again, "Benjy?" Evaleena laid her hand across his ear that he might not hear and heed that last call and she lowered her head that no one might see the flash of triumph that lighted it. She had won at

last. She had kept her husband beside her even against his mother's last call. And now she would be forever dominant in his heart.

They laid Mother Dixon to rest beside her husband, for whose successful and useful life she deserved equal credit with him. She had shared his toils and his sacrifices; hand in hand with him she had helped to build their material prosperity; to their children had gone her equal bequest of upright soul and loving heart; she had had more than an equal share in their nurture and rearing in wholesomeness and righteousness; and in their hearts would thrive, as long as life should last, a green and fragrant memory of her, a memory compact of love and gratitude and devotion. Because of her and her influence upon their characters and their lives and through them upon an ever widening circle, they came to know that a nation can not be better than its mothers.

From the day of her death Benjy felt in his heart the searing touch of remorse. For, notwithstanding his wife's hand over his ear, he had heard that faint call and he knew that his mother had missed him and with her last breath had asked for her beloved son. And he had not gone. In his sensitive soul the knives of grief were doubly long and sharp and in many a lone hour they stabbed and turned and stabbed again while he tried to understand why he had not heeded her call; tried, human-like, to find some excuse for himself in which there would be ease for his self-accusation. He told himself that he was so benumbed by his grief that he did not realize that she wanted him until it was too late; that perhaps, after all, it was not he that she was asking for but that, in the fog of death, it was her husband who was vaguely in her thought. But underneath it all he knew it was he that she wanted and that he

did not go on flying feet to her side because his wife was detaining him, knew that in a sudden flash he had understood why she held him thus and that he could not bear at that dread moment to pierce her heart by turning from her to his mother. And in the lone watches of self-accusation and remorse his heart cried out, "Oh, mother, mother, you know now, don't you, and you understand!"

Evaleena won, but in winning she lost all that had been hers. Down in the depths of Benjy's heart there came into life a sort of horror of her soul, although in horror of himself for feeling it he tried to crush it out of his consciousness and in his struggle found presently that his love for his wife was dead. And his regret for this, his sympathy and tenderness for her led him to try to make amends to her in other ways, to be always so kind and gentle that she would not know how cold was his heart. His effort led him to make many and great sacrifices as the years went by and shaped his life to issues different from those it might have had.

CHAPTER XI

VARIED FORTUNES

IT was twenty-five years since Amy Miller came walking under the blossoming peach trees of that "orchard eighty" that had caused so bitter a quarrel between her father and Benjamin Dixon, wearing a calico dress (that she had made herself out of two old ones), a hoopskirt and a sunbonnet and carrying a dozen eggs to trade with a neighbor for a pound of butter—came walking under the pink clouds of bloom and stepped out into love and life and the great world.

Twenty-five years, and on a day in March of 1890 she came walking beside her husband down the steps of their home in Washington, wearing a dress of brown cloth whose straight, ample skirt, tight postillion basque and close, puffed sleeves were of modish cut and elegant appearance. A brown toque partly covered her fair hair in which only a few silver threads bespoke the passing years. Her figure was still slender almost to girlishness and her countenance revealed the serious quality that was the dominant trait of her girlhood, but a happy and successful life, overflowing with interest, had matured and brightened and diversified her character and transformed the shy simplicity of girlhood into the gracious simplicity of a fine, sweet nature.

William Dixon's brown hair and mustache were well

sprinkled with gray and the lines with which life sculpts the human countenance into the image of the spirit within told the story of busy years whose thought and effort had sought the welfare of his fellowmen, the good of his country, the bettering of life, the development of his intellect, the realizing of ideals. He was in the prime of life, with health and strength, vigor and energy at their highest, the look of distinction upon face and figure emphasized by the slight limp, reminiscent of Gettysburg, that still marked his walk. For fourteen years his district had sent him to Congress, term after term without a defeat.

As they left their home, a comfortable-looking, three-story brick house with a little square of grass and trees and shrubs in front, she gave him a letter she had just received from Benjy, for his reading in some moment of leisure. "Benjy says," she told him, "that the University has made him head of the Department of History and has given him the chair of Philosophy of History. And he says—can't you imagine his dear, whimsical smile as he wrote it?—'of course, as the farmer said of the giraffe, there ain't no such animal, but I'll have to wave its alleged skin before my students, just the same.' Oh, yes, and he sent us a poem he wants us to read and criticize for him before he sends it to a magazine."

"I wish Benjy would do more writing," William commented. "Seven or eight years ago the magazines were all glad to get anything from him, whether it was a poem or a short story or a Western sketch, and everybody who appreciates good literature had found out that they could be sure of fine English and sound thinking and exquisite imagination in anything over the signature of Benjamin Dixon, 3rd. But for the last five

years he has written very little. This poem is the first thing he's done in fully two years. He's making a great mistake, I think."

"I've guessed," Amy replied, "that it's because Evaleena doesn't like to be left alone so much. Of course, if he writes in addition to his University work it means that he has to spend most of his time at home in his study and he is so thoughtful of her happiness that I think he's given it up for her sake."

"And she would let him do it!" exclaimed William. "What a tragedy!"

"Their whole marriage is a tragedy," his wife responded, "although everybody thinks they are a most lover-like couple and just devoted to each other. Well, of course Evaleena is devoted to Benjy. She always has adored the very ground he walks on. And poor Benjy tries his best to love her as much as she does him—or at least make her think so."

"Does he succeed?"

Amy considered the matter. "Well, he makes other people think so, anyway. But Evaleena—I doubt, Will, if any woman who loves very much could be fooled that way. No, Evaleena must feel the truth. And there's an unhappy look in her eyes so much of the time."

"And so Benjy gives up all this splendid writing he has it in him to do—he has genius, Amy—to try to make her happy when she's bound to be unhappy anyway! Why, it's a farce, a bitter kind of farce, as well as a tragedy!"

He halted a moment as he arranged some papers from his breast pocket which he had taken out preparatory to finding a place for Benjy's letter and as he turned them over his eyes fell upon a folded sheet of memo-

randa. Instantly his thoughts turned in another direction.

"By the way, Amy!" he exclaimed. "You'd never guess whom I saw last night! And I'd almost forgotten to tell you. Steve Miller!"

"Steve Miller!" wondered Amy in blank amazement. "Why, we haven't seen him, or heard of him, since—since father died—twenty-four years ago, when he wrote me, and his lawyer sent me the money for the farm! What did he want of you, Will? I'd like to see him again!"

"I've heard of him—that is, I've heard of a man named S. S. Miller who is mixed up in some rather big enterprises—packing houses and railroads—in Omaha and Chicago, but I never guessed it was your cousin until Stillman introduced him to me in the cloak room last night. He's interested in the tariff bill we are considering. I stopped only a moment, but I'm to have a talk with him to-day. Would you really like to see him?"

"Yes, indeed! I've never felt quite right about his giving me all the money for the farm, you know, and this would be a good chance to straighten the matter out. And I'd like to see him again anyway."

William smiled. "I don't imagine that money would mean anything to him now, for they say he's several times a millionaire already and is rapidly piling up more."

"Steve a millionaire!" she marveled. "It sounds like a fairy tale! For he had so little idea of the value of money and he didn't seem to care much for it."

They had stopped on a street corner where their ways diverged and William summoned a cab to take him to the Capitol. "I'm to see him to-day and if you'll come

up about two o'clock he and I will be through with business and we'll all have lunch together. Can you come?"

Amy hesitated. "There's Morris," she said. "He goes back to New York to-morrow, you know, and I wanted—but that's all right, too, for he's to have lunch with the Stillmans to-day. Yes, I'll be there."

William turned, his hand on the cab door, a frown on his face. "Is Morris really in earnest, Amy, in this frantic pursuit he's making of Stillman's daughter?"

"He seems to be very much in love with her," said Amy diplomatically.

"Well, I wish she were a different kind of girl. With the career that he can look forward to she won't make the best kind of a wife for him."

"But, you know, he's balking about that career," she reminded him.

"I'll have a talk with him before he goes back," her husband promised as he drove away.

As Mrs. Dixon passed on down the street, which bordered one of Washington's many little parks, she saw her son approaching and noted his frowning countenance. A glance at the other side of the park revealed its cause and she smiled, but with a wistfulness that betrayed her sympathy. For a pretty girl was walking there with a tall man of elegant appearance. She was directly in front of Morris before he saw her.

"Never mind, Morris!" she said with gentle raillery, while her countenance showed her understanding of his mood. "You'll have her all to yourself at luncheon, you know!"

"No, I can't! Because her mother will be there and Mrs. Stillman doesn't like me."

"Does Marian?" she questioned, her eyes on his face,

and noted the light that suddenly transformed it from a sullen to an eager, happy expression.

"I believe she does, mother!" he exclaimed.

"Then don't worry about it if she does let Count de Portellane pay her some attention now and then," she counseled as she turned toward a seat in the park. "Come, let's sit down here for a few minutes—you have time, haven't you?"

As they walked across the grass Amy had again the feeling of physical smallness of which she was often conscious of late in the company of her son. She was slight of figure, but she had never felt little beside her husband. He was tall and broad-shouldered and erect, with a military trimness of form that he had not lost even yet, a quarter century after his days of soldiering, but with him she seemed to herself to be an equal comrade. But with Morris she had come to have an annoying sense of insignificance which she told herself she must not permit because it was silly and because it might unconsciously influence her attitude toward him.

She looked at him now from the corner of her eye while the wondering thought went through her mind, "Can this big man really be my little son?" And with it came a stab of regret for the days when she cuddled him in her arms and filled so large a part of his small world. Her gaze rested upon him a moment in silence as she tried to feel him comprehensively, tiny baby and little boy and growing lad and big man all in one, and that one there before her. A little taller than his father, he had his grandfather's more burly build and in figure looked not unlike him. He had also the good, roomy head of all the Dixons with its high, square brow above heavy eyebrows and large, brilliant gray eyes.

Amy's imagination was never either very quick or vivid and it did not help her much now, but her clear good sense and her mother love came to her aid and suddenly she wished for walls around them that she might throw her arms about him and press him to her breast and persuade him to open all his heart to her. She took his hand and held it fondly. "Morris, dear boy," she said, "why do you feel so unwilling to go on with your work in the law, as your father wants you to do?"

He smiled grouchily and his eyes were moody, but he pressed her hand. "My mind hasn't changed since last night, mother, and it isn't likely to. I told you then that I hate it, and I hate it more every day."

"I know, Morris, dear, but we didn't really go into it last night. Have you thought what it will mean to your father for you to give it all up?"

"I don't see what difference it makes to father. It isn't his life that's in question. It's mine."

Did Amy's mind go back to that scene twenty-five years before in the front yard of the Dixon farmhouse when William Dixon and his father struggled over the same age-old question? If it did she cast the memory resolutely out of her thought, for she would be wholly loyal to William as long as she was pleading his cause. If later her sense of her son's rights should lead her to espouse his side of the controversy it would be time enough to recall their own youth.

"That's true. But have you tried to look at the matter from his point of view? He feels so strongly that men of education, training, upright character and broad views ought to go into the service of the country and help to guide its progress that ever since you were a little boy he has hoped you would follow in his footsteps. We have tried to fit you for a useful life, for

your father wanted you to have all the things that he couldn't have—he had to educate himself by reading in the evenings and at odd moments, you know—and so we've done all for you that we could. You did well in Harvard, we were proud of the record you made there, and in the law school you've shown that your brains are as good as anybody's. And now your father has got you this position in a big, important, New York law firm where you can work up to partnership in the firm in a few years. Then you will gain experience in the law, which he thinks is desirable in public life,—he often wishes he had had more of it—and knowledge of men and affairs and then you can step into the public service with the best possible equipment. And nothing could give him more satisfaction than to know that his son was preparing to take up public life and the service of the country."

The young man smiled satirically. "That is, he is ambitious to found another Adams family in the United States."

"Don't put it that way, Morris. It isn't fair to him. His ambition is for his son to be more useful and beneficial in the life and progress of the country than he has been."

"Having sacrificed his own life to the country he wants to sacrifice mine, too!"

"Morris, my son! Do you call it sacrifice?"

"Perhaps it wasn't for him, because it was the thing he wanted to do, but you can't deny that father would undoubtedly have made much more money if he had worked for himself instead of for his country."

"I hope you don't intend to make money your standard of success."

"You've got to have it in these days if you want to

amount to anything. But the point is, mother, that his kind of achievement and success does not appeal to me at all. I don't want to do that kind of thing. I'm sick of that stuffy old law office and I want to get out where men are doing real things, building railroads and cities and starting big businesses—and that kind of thing. I know that sounds silly, now, for a man in my position, but if I once get into it you'll see what I'll do!"

He turned to his mother with a sudden movement and bent a searching look upon her face. "You're on my side, really, aren't you, mother? You've just been talking like this because you promised father you would. But you really think I ought to choose my own career, now don't you?"

Her blue eyes fell under his gaze and a flush rose in her cheeks. He laughed gently and took her faultlessly gloved hand into both of his. "I knew it all the time! You're too sensible to take any other view. And you're going to help me work this thing out with father, aren't you, mother, dear! I appreciate all he, and you, have done for me and I'm properly flattered by his glowing vision of my future. I don't want to hurt his feelings by bucking too hard against his plans—unless I have to. I do want to have his full agreement before I make any change. Will you help me?"

"Before I make any promise, Morris, you must have a talk with him."

"I want it settled before I go back to New York tomorrow. It was partly what I came over here for."

"And he is so very busy now with the long sessions the House is holding and the meetings and hearings of the Ways and Means Committee, which is preparing a

new tariff bill. Will you go with us to the Congressional reception at the White House to-night?"

"Yes—Marian will be there."

"We can all three get together in a quiet place in the conservatory—I know just the corner for it—and talk it over. I must go now," she went on as they strolled back to the street, "for I have several things to do and I must go up to the Capitol to meet your father at two o'clock and see a second cousin of mine, Stephen Miller, whom I haven't known a thing about for twenty-five years, though we grew up together."

At her mention of the name Morris showed interest. "You don't perhaps mean S. S. Miller?" he asked.

"Yes, your father tells me he's the same man, though I didn't know it."

"And he's your cousin! Why, mother, he's doing some wonderful things, just the kind I want to get a hand in! I'd like to know him!"

"I'll arrange it, if I can, so you can meet him before you leave to-morrow, Morris. Good-by, dear boy, and I hope Count de Portellane won't camp on the Stillman steps while you're having lunch!"

She smiled at him in gentle raillery, but his return smile, as he lifted his hat and turned away, was with his lips only and his eyes flamed as he replied, "I'll go out and knock him off if he does!"

As Amy Dixon went to meet her husband her thoughts leaped back to the Illinois farm and the boy who had been the companion and almost brother of her girlhood for ten years and she wondered what he would be like now. In those long-ago days, until he wanted to marry her and the ugly developments of that last day by the front gate of the Dixon home, she had been as fond of

him as if he had been her brother and now the memories came crowding back to her of his kindness of heart, his good-natured indulgence of her wishes, his desire, which he usually found the means of gratifying, to have something of interest going on—a resourceful faculty which had added much to her enjoyment of life during her youthful days. As she fondly dwelt upon all these the other things faded into the background and when she saw him there sprang up in her heart again the old pleasure with which she had been wont to welcome his return to the house after a trip to Scott City or a half day in the field.

He met her with an affectionate handclasp and a cordial, "Well, Amy, it surely is good for sore eyes to see you again!"

Her glance made quick appraisal of his appearance. The tall, broad-shouldered and somewhat ungainly youth of her recollection had become a large, well-built man, inclining to portliness, with a ruddy face and the look of one who enjoys the material pleasures of life. His semblance was that of a highly prosperous business man and she noted in his manner a certain impressiveness, as of one accustomed to deal easily with men and affairs, to dominate obstacles and to win his way,—the impressiveness that has its source in the conscious possession and the constant use of power. His blue eyes were keen and clear and plainly spoke his approval and admiration as he looked at her. She was aware, as the talk went on, of the old personal charm that had been one of his characteristics as a boy and she said to herself presently that he had developed a magnetic personality and could doubtless sway people who did not stand firmly on their own feet. But his countenance, compared with her husband's, lacked distinction, she

thought, and revealed a man of more common mold and coarser fiber.

"It's mighty good of you and Billy," Stephen was saying, "to let bygones be bygones and treat me just as if I hadn't been so dogged mean the last time I saw you both."

"Oh, the day Will came home from the war and we were married! No, Steve, you didn't show up very well that day, did you! But that's too long ago to bother about now, and we are glad to see you again. What did possess you that day to make you act as you did?"

"As I remember it, I needed a licking and Billy or his father ought to have given it to me. I liked to succeed with what I'd planned to do in those days just as well as I do now and I hadn't learned yet when to stop pushing a thing. And I liked to have things happen, no matter what, so there was some excitement. Tell me about Emily. Is she married? Where does she live?"

"Yes, she married a young physician and they went back to Scott City to live. A new railroad has lately gone through there, right through our old place and the Dixon farm, and a town has grown up on that orchard eighty that made so much trouble in our youth. They moved there and bought some of the land where the peach orchard was and have made their home there ever since. They have a house full of children, four girls and two boys, and Emily has had a very happy life. She is a fine woman! Why didn't you follow her, Steve, after everything settled down, and make love to her in earnest?"

"Well, to tell the truth, Amy, I did think of it sometimes, but there always seemed to be so many pretty girls wherever I went——"

"Yes, I know!" Amy broke in, laughing. "You'd

flirted with all the pretty girls in our whole neighborhood until you didn't dare face any of them again! And I suppose you kept it up wherever you went! Have you ever been content to take just one pretty girl and settle down to married life?"

"Oh, yes, I've got the best wife in the world and we have a son, David, who's twenty years old now."

"How I would like to meet your wife!" Amy exclaimed. "The woman who could win and hold Stephen Miller's susceptible heart must be a wonder! Is she here with you?"

"She's coming this afternoon, and to-morrow we're going on to St. Louis together."

"Will, I wonder if you could arrange for them to go to the reception at the White House to-night? Would you like and do you think she would like to go, Steve?"

"Very much, both of us. But isn't it just for members of Congress?"

"The lines are not closely drawn," said William, "and it is easy to make the arrangement if you want to go. You'll see plenty of people there who are not members of either House, nor relatives of members. I'll fix it up for you."

"Our son, Morris, who is four years older than yours," said Amy, "wants to meet you, Steve. He knows about the big things you have been doing and he is very much interested. He'll be there to-night. Where did you find your wife, Steve, and how did you get into these big affairs you are interested in?"

"Well, when I left Scott City I went to Omaha and got into the meat-packing business. I was married there. The firm I was with shot right along and I made money from the start. After a while I was taken

into the firm and we spread out a little, established other branches, took up some other interests, went into banking and railroading and—oh, one thing opened the way for another, you know.”

“And you’ve been successful with everything you’ve tried, and are just piling up the dollars by the million!”

Miller smiled his satisfaction. “Oh, I’ve only accumulated one or two millions as yet. But I’ve got things going good now, and after this it will be like rolling a snowball.”

“You’re going to be tremendously rich, aren’t you! Think of it, a multi-millionaire!”

“I don’t see how I can help it, Amy, unless I’m a bigger fool than I think I am.”

“I’m glad you’re so successful, Stephen. We’ll never be rich, because we don’t care about it—we wouldn’t know what to do with so much money if we had it, would we, Will,—and because Will doesn’t have time to make money. Oh, we have plenty, of course, for people who live modestly.”

“Billy helps make the laws that open the way for the rest of us. He gets the glory, we get the money.”

“His district has sent him back to Congress every term ever since he was first elected in ’76,” said Amy proudly. “He’s never been defeated.”

“But I came near it once,” William added, with a laugh. “Amy and I scraped enough money together one summer to take a trip to Europe and my constituents resented it so much that they cut down my majority at the next election until I barely pulled through. My opponent told them the United States wasn’t good enough for me any more and described how I’d been lolling around having a good time in London and Paris

and Switzerland while they were sweating in the harvest fields. We had an exciting time that campaign, didn't we, Amy!"

Before they separated Amy found an opportunity to bring up the matter of the money for her father's farm, which Stephen had sent her so long ago, for in her scrupulous conscience she had felt all these years that he had been unjust to himself and that the money really belonged to him.

"You shouldn't have done that, Steve," she said. "Father gave the farm to you in his will and you ought to have kept the money for it. I've never felt right about your sending it to me, because father had willed it to you."

Miller laughed, with a slow, chuckling amusement, and his blue eyes twinkled at her. "That was my first big deal," he told them, still chuckling, "and, first and last, I got quite a lot of entertainment out of it. In the first place, I'll have to confess that I egged Uncle Sam on to make his will that way, just as I'd egged him on to quarrel about the orchard eighty. I had to be doing something, and life was so doggoned dull there on the farm, and it was duller than ever after you and the Dixons went away, so I just did any rattlebrained thing that came into my head. And it was mighty interesting to see what I could make Uncle Sam do if I tried. That was really why I did it, just to see if I could. I didn't care anything about the farm. After he died I wanted to see how you'd take it and so I told the lawyer to find out if you would contest the will and for a little while it gave some spice to life to figure out what my defense would be. But you wouldn't and so I jumped at the first chance to sell and got out of there."

He laughed his slow, chuckling laugh again and looked

at Amy with amusement evident all over his ruddy countenance. "And you've been sitting up nights over it with that blessed conscience of yours ever since! Why, bless your heart, there wasn't anything else to do that was decent, but send all the money to you, after my machinations with your father. I'd had fun enough out of it to pay me well, and I cared more for the fun than I did for the money, a heap! Put your conscience to bed now, Amy!"

Amy had listened with wide eyes and there was a trace of severity in her tone as she answered, with an emphatic nod, "Yes, Steve, I shall!"

CHAPTER XII

CROSSED WIRES

EVERY human being carries within his breast potential desires and impulses that under sufficient outside pressure or incitement may break out, like crossed electric wires, into sudden flame. The result may be only a brief flare that dies down again and leaves him and his surroundings and relations but little changed or it may be a conflagration in whose track remains almost nothing of what had been a definite character, a settled life.

To the onlookers such an outburst is often inexplicable, so flat is its contradiction of what they know of the individual's character. Sometimes he may be surprised himself by the sudden bubbling up, from those dark and hidden deeps of the human heart where run the black streams of the common heredity from a thousand generations of evil-doers, of greedy cravings and fierce impulses which he would have thought foreign to his nature. But they rise up within him and unless he is strong against their onslaught they bend him to their will.

More often the individual has consciously progressed toward the possibility of such an explosion by the motive power of thoughts, feelings and desires that, confined within his own breast and known to him alone, have steadily carried him in that direction. Then, be-

cause he has known of the growth of these inner forces, the final outburst seems to him logical, inevitable. But to others, unaware of the developments that have been taking place within him, it is beyond explanation.

Morris Dixon, making his way with his mother through the crowded rooms of the White House, was fast approaching just such a point of crossed wires whose flare-up would change his whole life and would influence through him, in unending succession, lives, events, history. The reserve, the dignity, the seriousness that had come to him from both his parents had intensified, in this double heredity, into coldness of demeanor and quiet self-command that gave little hint of the forces beneath. His mother and father were puzzled by his sudden revolt against the plans for his future which they had developed with so much love and hope and such confidence that, because his opportunities were better, his success and his services would be greater than his father's; for hitherto his wishes and purposes had apparently harmonized with theirs. Mrs. Dixon wanted to find opportunity for a few minutes of intimate conversation with him, to gain a clearer understanding of the mystery, before they should meet his father for the promised consultation on Morris's career. As they threaded their way toward the conservatory she saw the elegant figure of Count de Portellane across the room and said to Morris:

"There's Count de Portellane over there. What is a member of the French Embassy staff doing at a Congressional reception, and how do you suppose he managed to get here?"

She saw her son's jaw stiffen and his eye flash. "Mrs. Stillman managed it for him, of course, and he's here because Marian is."

"The same reason you are!" said his mother, smiling.

"Exactly! But I'm getting tired of being treated by Mrs. Stillman as if I was nobody—and by Marian, too, if that French monkey is around!"

They found the conservatory almost deserted, as it was still early in the evening. "Down this way, Morris," said Amy. "There is a quiet little corner down here where we can sit and talk for a few minutes and your father will join us presently. He wants to see Mr. Stillman about something, and Steve Miller if he can find him. I think this is the place. Yes, right through here. Isn't it a charming spot?"

It was well to one side of the corridor, a secluded nook not likely to be found by any one who did not know that it was there. Vines and blooming plants screened the two entrances, one at each end of a long space enclosed by palms, small and large, of many varieties, while palms drooped over and half concealed the seats placed here and there and flowering plants and vines threw dusky shadows and filled the air with fragrance.

"I told your father to meet us here," said Amy as they chose a seat near one of the entrances. Then it occurred to her to try to find out how matters stood between Morris and Marian Stillman before she approached the subject upon which she had purposed to talk with him. "Marian is looking very lovely to-night, isn't she!" she said, with her gaze upon her son's face. It lighted up at once.

"Isn't she beautiful! She's stunning in that dress and with her hair done that way!"

His mother laughed. "Why, Morris, she always wears her hair that way, and you've seen her in that gown before!"

His countenance darkened. "She knows how I think she looks in it, and then she wears it and talks with de Portellane!"

"Maybe he likes her in it, too!"

"She promised me to-day she'd wear it to-night, because I like it, and then she lets him hang around her and pretends she's having a better time than she could with me."

"You must remember how much attraction there is—for some girls—in a title."

"A title!" the young man exclaimed, disgust in his tones.

"Yes, a title, and the social position that goes with it. I think that would mean a good deal in Marian's eyes and I know it would in her mother's. If he is in earnest with Marian, and proposes to her, Mrs. Stillman will see to it that she marries him."

Morris's head went down on his hands in bitter dejection. "I can understand how she feels," he said after a moment. "I know how all that he could give her looks to her. And I have nothing to offer her, nothing at all—and he has everything."

"If she loves you, and is worth having as a wife, will she care whether you have anything or not?"

"Of course she will! All girls care! You know, mother, that things are different now. It didn't matter when you and father were married. But those things count now, and nobody considers a fellow of much consequence unless he has at least a prospect of being able to command the wealth, the position, the luxuries, that everybody wants, that make life worth living. That's one of the reasons why I want to get out of that law office. I'll never amount to anything as long as I stay there."

"But, Morris, an able lawyer makes money and is highly considered and when you enter public life you can hold a commanding position—none higher or more respected."

"That takes a lifetime, and I want Marian now. Father is fifty years old, and you and he have only money enough to live comfortably. I can't ask Marian to share a lifetime of economy and semi-poverty with me."

Mrs. Dixon was inwardly shocked and disappointed to hear her son express views of life so material, so different from what she had hoped would be inspired in him by the atmosphere of simple living and high thinking, of intellectual interests and fine aspirations in which he had grown up. She sighed as she realized how the thought and feeling of the country had swept past the ideals of her own and her husband's youth and had centered themselves greedily upon winning wealth and luxury and material ease. But she knew it was of no use to try to influence his conception of life now, while he was under the sway of this absorbing love and had neither eyes nor ears for anything that would not aid in its realization. Her common sense and her knowledge of the human heart combined to assure her that it would hold him until life itself had taught him better. So she endeavored only to discover the causes of what seemed to her a revolution in his mind and soul.

"Why have your ideas changed so suddenly, my son? Until within the last few days your father and I have supposed you were entirely satisfied with the career you were looking forward to."

"I've never been especially enthusiastic about it—it never seemed to be just the thing I wanted. But I didn't know what I did want and so I went ahead

along the lines you and father suggested. 'And anyway I knew that whatever I might do my college course and my law training would be good preparation. But when I went into that law firm last fall I began to discover I didn't like it. And in New York you see so plainly what big things you can do, what power you can have, if you have money to work with. I tell you, mother, money, with brains behind it, is the biggest power in the world.'

"We used to think," said Amy gently, "that brains, ideas, rule the world."

"Money," replied her son, with the oracular surety of youth, "buys and sells brains and ideas as if they were corn or wheat."

Inwardly Amy gasped with consternation to hear her offspring uttering such thoughts with evident belief in what he said. But she desired enlightenment, not controversy, and so she replied:

"There may be something to be said on both sides, Morris, but let's go back to you. You found after you went to New York that you didn't care about the law and public life. What then?"

"I met a man who is working under James J. Hill on the railroad systems he's building up in the Northwest and he told me something about Hill's plans and ideas. Mother, it's wonderful! I knew at once that was the kind of thing I wanted to be part of—throwing out railroads into new country, developing it, bringing in settlers, turning land and water and mines that are idle and useless into wealth producers—don't you see, mother, making the country, building the nation?"

Amy looked at him in surprise. Not since his boyhood days had she seen this quiet, reserved son of hers so moved, so enthusiastic. He sat upright, his eyes

shining and his face illumined and strong. She was thrilled by his words, almost as she had been thrilled by the vision his father had made them see, a quarter century before, and impulsively she put her hand into his.

"I see, my boy, I understand," she said with loving sympathy. "And I'm glad it isn't all just Marian."

"It's partly Marian," he confessed. "I'd been thinking about it, and I saw already how much money there is in railroading and what big things can be done and I knew I wanted to get into it. And when I was over here for the holidays, in December, I saw a good deal of Marian—and that settled the matter. I want to do it partly because I want to feel sure that I can give her, very soon, all the things a girl wants and ought to have, and I can't ask her to marry me unless I am sure of that. But whether she will marry me or not, it's what I want to do—and what I intend to do, too, mother, as soon as I can find or make an opening. But I wish you and father felt happier and better satisfied over it."

The wistfulness of his tone as he spoke the last sentence, in contrast with the sharp decision of the words which preceded it, touched his mother's heart and her love and sympathy went out to him in a rush of feeling.

"Oh, my dear boy," she exclaimed, "we won't oppose it—at any rate, I shall not, and I'll help you all I can, and I'm sure your father will too, when he understands how you feel about it. Steve Miller, my cousin, is more or less interested in some railroad, I don't know where, and perhaps he can make an opening for you."

"That would be fine, mother! I wouldn't ask for a better chance! I know where his railroad property is and what they're doing with it—not what they ought to, in my opinion. Mr. Stillman is interested in it,

too. But I don't think he amounts to much. Shall we go back now? Marian promised to meet me in the East Room, and it's almost time for me to be there."

They moved toward the entrance, and there met Stephen Miller and his wife. "Billy said we'd find you here," he explained after he had presented his wife and Amy her son, "and he asked us to keep you here a few minutes longer until he can join us."

Behind Amy's polite and friendly glances at her cousin's wife was the keenest curiosity as to what kind of woman he had chosen for his life companion. She had imagined, in her guesses and wonderings since she had met him in the afternoon, a woman of slender and delicate prettiness, daintily feminine, demure in her manner, but bright-eyed and of lively spirit. For she remembered that girls of that type had had most attraction for him in his youth and she argued that of course his liking for it would have grown stronger. But to her surprise she saw a woman of ample proportions, almost as large as Stephen himself, with a round, beaming face that in youth might have had the attraction of wholesomeness and fresh, clear skin. But whatever beauty Mrs. Miller might have been blessed with the passing years and prosperity had robbed her of, although her countenance was eloquent of good nature and an inspiring vital energy seemed to radiate from her whole being. Morris, with the tantalizing image in his mind of Marian looking up into the admiring eyes of his rival, as he had seen her a little while before, at once excused himself and rushed away.

"You knew Stephen when you were both young, didn't you, Mrs. Dixon? What a long time ago that was! But that fine son of yours must be a comfort. What a handsome boy he is! Does he resemble his

father? Isn't that nice! Now, there's our David—has Stephen told you about our son? Well, I wish he was more like his father. But he's just like me, all for a good time. Stephen, he's all for making money all the time, just piling it up. But David and I," and she laughed as she went on, "we're for spending it, just making it fly, all the time." She laughed again and the diamonds in her hair and around her neck flashed and twinkled into Amy's wondering eyes. "But that's fair, now, isn't it?" she continued, laughing genially, apparently in sheer good humor and enjoyment of the world and of life and the prosperity it had brought her. "You couldn't expect him to make it and spend it at the same time, now, could you? And somebody's got to spend it, or what's the use of anybody making it? Don't you think so, Mrs. Dixon?"

"I don't know—perhaps you are right," Amy began cautiously, seeing that Mrs. Miller really expected an answer to her question this time. "I'm afraid I haven't thought much about it in just that way."

"Haven't you, really? Isn't that funny! But maybe it's because you haven't had much to spend. That makes a difference, sometimes. But come along! Let's all go and have some supper, while Stephen is here to take care of us."

"Mr. Dixon is going to join us here, you remember, Sophy," her husband reminded her.

"That's so, he said he would! Well, let's go and find him and take him along!" She rose, and the genial good humor of her face and manner impelled the others to forego any different purpose they had in mind and all three walked through the palm-enclosed place toward the other entrance from the corridor, while

Mrs. Miller rattled on and Amy listened in amazed amusement.

"You know, Mrs. Dixon, I never give Stephen any spare time when he goes anywhere with me. Isn't that so, Stephen? I don't believe in letting a man sit around and do nothing. It's no use, and it just spoils him. And Stephen hasn't anything to do to-night but just take care of us. He isn't organizing a new company, or starting a bank, or buying a railroad, or building a factory, or anything like that, and so we'll keep him busy looking after us and seeing that we have a good time." Her easy laugh bubbled forth, but before any one else could speak, her monologue was going on, as they filed out through the vine-draped passage: "Because it isn't good for him to be idle. Isn't that so, Stephen? If American men were as idle as the men we saw over in Europe what would become of us women? Don't you think so, Mrs. Dixon?"

As they strolled down the corridor, Mrs. Dixon saw that one of the couples they passed was Marian Stillman and Count de Portellane and, remembering that Morris had said he was to meet Marian at about that time, uneasiness crept into her heart. She had been surprised to see what angry jealousy of the Frenchman was flaming in the breast of her son, whom she had been accustomed to think so calm and self-controlled, and the evening's developments were making her anxious. She noted that Marian was hanging upon her companion's words and that he bent over her as if fascinated. Another backward glance as she turned a corner showed her that they had halted beside the flower-decked entrance to the palm room out of which she and the Millers had just come.

"Let's see where this pretty little passage goes to!" Marian exclaimed. "Oh, isn't it lovely!" she went on as they came out under the palms and he found a seat for her. He was describing to her, in vivid phrases, speaking English with only a slight French accent, his home in France, and she was listening with such attention that their appearance was that of a pair of lovers absorbed in each other.

"Yes," she said, with her fine, dark eyes upon his face, "I can imagine how it looks! The lovely château, the beautiful grounds, the peaceful, wooded hills all about, and the river winding gently at the foot of that long green slope! Oh, it makes an exquisite picture!" She smiled at him with witching sweetness.

He was evidently pleased with her appreciation and went on in enthusiastic tones while his countenance eloquently expressed his admiration of his auditor: "You, mademoiselle, can understand how I love it so much! It is all so different from this country, where everything is so new, of a crudeness, unfinished. There it is all of a neatness, a finish, complete, and one has only to look and enjoy. Ah, how you would appreciate the beauty, the charm!"

"Do you know," she replied as impressively as if she were imparting some momentous secret, "it almost seems to me as if I had really seen it myself! For you have shown me the lovely pictures and told me so much about it and described it all so eloquently!"

"Ah, I shall have the pleasure some day, shall I not, mademoiselle," he asked her, and his voice was soft and lover-like and had in it a little thrill of feeling that set up an answering thrill in her nerves, "of showing my home to you? That would be so great pleasure! But now, mademoiselle, now, my home lacks something—

something that is most important! It is very beautiful, but," he hesitated an instant, then went on, still more softly and impressively, "it is like a beautiful body without a soul! For now there is no Countess de Portellane. Some day I hope to give it a soul, and then it will be truly beautiful!"

Her eyes fell and she waited for him to go on with the words that, intuition told her, would presently follow. She was not quite sure that she wanted to hear them, but all her young girl's being was a-thrill with the romance, the excitement and the expectation of the moment. Then some one burst impetuously through the entrance that was almost facing them. She started violently and de Portellane sprang to his feet, scowling angrily as he saw that the intruder was Morris Dixon.

Morris had hurried to the tryst he had made with Marian but had not found her. After searching through the crowd for a few minutes he happened upon Mrs. Stillman who told him—he thought with an air of half-concealed triumph that greatly nettled him—that Marian had just gone with the Count de Portellane and she did not know where they were. Thereupon the young man decided to go back to the conservatory where he supposed he would find his mother and the Millers, and perhaps by that time his father also, bring up the subject of his future, try to persuade his father as he had his mother and see if Stephen Miller would offer him an opening. In the vine-covered passage he hesitated a moment, seeing the lover-like attitude of the pair upon the seat, then the flickering light showed him who it was and he strode forward with a countenance even blacker than that with which de Portellane faced him. The two glared at each other an instant without speaking and then Morris turned to the girl.

"This is the time you promised me, Marian. Are you ready?"

"Are you aware, Mr. Dixon," de Portellane asked with a sneer in his voice, "that you interrupt? If you can not see that you do, permit me to give you the information."

Morris did not even look at de Portellane, but kept his eyes upon Marian as he replied: "Miss Stillman is aware, I believe, that she had promised this identical time to me. Shall we go, Marian?"

Marian rose, hesitating and agitated, uncertain what she should do. "You didn't come," she began. "I waited—you weren't there, Morris, and Count de Portellane asked me to come into the conservatory."

"I went to where you had said you would be and looked everywhere for you and could not find you."

"He had no difficulty in finding me," said Marian, recovering her self-possession and determining to put Morris in the wrong and make him, in the end, humbly beg her forgiveness.

"Evidently not!" Morris conceded. "Perhaps you were more willing to be found by him!"

"Morris!" Marian exclaimed in hurt tones. Then she went on indignantly, "You must excuse me from this half engagement we had made. Monsieur, will you take me to my mother?"

With her hand upon his arm they swept past Morris, de Portellane throwing him a look of vindictive triumph.

Morris gazed after them a moment with blazing eyes, then, moved by youth's sheer need of doing something, turned and dashed out of the other entrance and made off down the corridor as if he were in the greatest haste. He had gone but a few steps when he ran into Congressman Stillman and Stephen Miller.

"Hullo, Morris!" said Stillman, who cultivated a bluff and hearty manner of speech. He was in his third term in Congress where he represented a Chicago district. Before he entered Congress he had been in the banking business and he had recently been enlarging his banking interests and investing money in other enterprises. His political opponents charged him with having used his political position and influence to add to his wealth by methods that, if they were not illegal, were at least shady. But his constituents continued to support him. "We're looking for your father," he went on, "but we can't find him anywhere. Have you any idea where he is?"

"No, sir, I haven't. I wanted to see him myself, but have lost him in the crowd. I'll look for him, if you like, and bring him to you. Where can we find you?"

"Well, I suppose the only sure thing," said Stillman with a laugh, "is to stay right here until you come back."

"I'll show you where to wait," said Morris, as he led them back along the corridor and pointed out the entrance to the palm room.

In the meantime Mrs. Dixon had found her husband and in a secluded corner of one of the crowded rooms, screened by banked palms and flowers, she told him what Morris had said to her about his dissatisfaction with his present plans and prospects and his desire to take up railroading.

"Of course I won't urge the boy, Amy," William said, "if his heart is set on this other thing, but it is a disappointment!"

"I know it is, Will, but don't forget how wonderful this work is that he wants to do—creating so much

wealth and prosperity and making this country so rich and powerful!"

"Yes, that's true. But there are plenty of men who can do that, and not nearly so many who have the brains and the conscience and the far-sightedness to guide the country's progress. I believe he will have all three and that after a while he would be able to give to our country the very best service and help to make it a strong and influential nation. You know I believe profoundly, Amy, that the United States has a mission in the world—to be a beacon light to all other nations and show them what democracy can do for a great people, that it can give them universal prosperity, education, justice, happiness. But, if that is to be, the right kind of men must make the laws and guide our development. It is a disappointment that Morris can't see this as I do."

"Perhaps," Amy suggested, "this work he wants to do will prove to be just another means of entering into what you would like him to do and be."

"Maybe so," he replied. "And anyway if this other thing calls him so strongly it is what he ought to do. We'll see if Miller or Stillman can make an opening for him. The boy would like to have it settled before he goes back to New York, I suppose. Shall we see if we can find Steve?"

They stepped out from behind the screening palms and flowers and came face to face with Morris, who was gazing about with a puzzled air. He met them with a look of relief. "I've searched for you," he told them, "until I began to think you must have gone home." He gave them his message and Amy, seeing Mrs. Miller on the other side of the room, suggested that they should all go back to the conservatory together. On the way

she told her husband about her anxiety concerning Morris and de Portellane, which had been increased by Morris's manner since he met them. For she noticed that he was unconsciously clenching and unclenching his fists while his eyes every now and then emitted an angry flash. "We must keep him under watch as far as possible," she said.

They passed the entrance to a room in which Mrs. Dixon remembered there was a fine collection of orchids and having heard Mrs. Miller a little while before mention her admiration of that flower she suggested that they go in and look at them and afterward join the men in the palm room.

CHAPTER XIII

MORRIS AND THE TARIFF BILL

STILLMAN and Miller were absorbed in a comparison of views concerning certain schedules of the tariff bill upon which the House Committee of Ways and Means had begun to hold hearings. Upon products in which they were interested they wanted the tariff raised to as high a figure as they could get it and while they waited for Dixon they went again over the several features of the bill in which they were concerned and agreed upon the arguments which they would offer to William Dixon. Miller had not yet found opportunity for a satisfactory talk with Dixon and he wanted assurance as to how he would stand.

"Is Dixon all right?" he asked.

"Staunch as a rock," replied Stillman with conviction. "He's as strong for protection for American industry as McKinley himself. That's one of the reasons why he's on that Committee. But don't make any mistake about Billy Dixon! He's one of the ablest men in Congress and there isn't an honest man in Washington. Here he comes! Come on, Morris," he went on heartily as he saw the young man turning away as if to leave them. "We're just going to ask your father what his committee will do about protecting our industries and if you're not interested in such things it's time you were."

He laughed jovially and gave Morris a hearty slap of welcome upon his shoulder. He liked the young man and his secret preference for a son-in-law was strongly in his favor. But he considered this a matter to be left wholly in the hands of his wife and daughter and with one or two disapproving grumbles to his wife about "that Frenchman's" attention to Marian he dropped it from his mind. "If they think they'd like to have a title in the family, it's all right," he said to himself, "if they want to hustle for it."

As Amy Dixon and Sophy Miller entered the orchid room they saw others moving about and admiring the flowers and presently in a quiet corner they came upon Mrs. Stillman and Marian, the former frowning and impatient and the latter looking nervous and disturbed. Marian was very attractive in a gown that matched her fair hair, a shade too dark to be golden, that was massed high on her head. Her large, dark eyes and dark brows emphasized the unflecked fairness and delicacy of her complexion and the lines of nose and chin gave piquancy to a face that, whatever its prettiness, yet lacked the subtle charm that tells of intelligence and fine spirit. But her smile was one of peculiar and witching sweetness and had turned the heads of most of the young men she knew. Mrs. Stillman looked an older and somewhat ravaged replica of her daughter and her appearance indicated not wholly successful efforts to disguise and conceal the trail of the years. Impatience and petulance were evident in her expression as she greeted the two women.

"Marian and I have come in here for a few minutes of quiet," she said, "but there seem to be so many people everywhere! Shall we go back now, dear?"

"Don't take your lovely daughter back into those

rooms, Mrs. Stillman," counseled Mrs. Miller in her heartiest manner, "unless you are ready to have her kidnapped from under your very nose! From what I've seen to-night I'm sure there's a regular army of young men in there just waiting, each of them, for a good chance to carry her off." She laughed genially and her tongue hurried on: "And one of them is that handsome boy, Mrs. Dixon's son. Isn't it funny how our children always want to marry somebody we don't want them to! Isn't that so, Mrs. Dixon? I'm just dreading the day," but the laugh with which she said it belied her words, "when our David brings a wife home, for I know it will be somebody I can't bear the sight of. Marian seems to pick out good-looking young men, Mrs. Stillman, I'll say that for all her beaux. There's that fine-looking Frenchman, Count—what d'ye call him—Porterhouse? He's another. And they say he has a lovely castle on the Nile, or somewhere. I don't think I'd care much about castles myself." She stopped long enough for another breezy laugh and rattled on. "It would be nice, of course, to have one to look at and send photographs of to your friends, so they'd think you were living in kingly grandeur and sleeping in a diamond crown." Her own diamonds twinkled and flashed as she laughed again. "But when it comes to living in one, from all I've heard, I'd rather camp out. Wouldn't you, Mrs. Dixon? You take my advice, Miss Marian, and when Count de Porterhouse proposes to you, ask him right off, before you say yes or no, whether he can give you a comfortable house to live in."

"The pictures of his country house are very lovely," ventured Marian.

"Yes, of course! But in my opinion warm rooms

and hot water faucets and porcelain bathtubs are much lovelier than landscapes and architecture! Don't you think so, Mrs. Stillman?"

Marian's mother was showing signs of impatience and Amy, guessing that she had brought her daughter here to find a quiet place for confidential talk, began to move away, saying, "We must move on, Mrs. Miller! I'm sure the men will be waiting for us."

Mrs. Stillman was evidently annoyed and as the two women turned away she gave what she thought was a parting shot, winged with the haughtiness of superior social possibilities: "Perhaps you don't approve of American girls marrying into the European nobility, Mrs. Miller?"

But the good nature of Stephen's wife was proof against it and all it did was to give her an opportunity for her genial laugh, which bubbled forth as she stopped in their progress toward the door, turned a beaming face upon Mrs. Stillman and Marian and said, with jovial smiles and many little gestures with her hands:

"Oh, yes, I do—when they can't find anybody else! A title does sound nice, I'll admit, when it looks as if it was an heirloom. The Count de Porterhouse's title fits him like his uniform. Not a wrinkle in it! And of course, if you want a title and haven't got one in the family, the only thing to do is to get one ready made. I always say," and she laughed again, apparently out of sheer good nature, "if you really want a thing, buy it, no matter what it costs! Don't you say so, too, Mrs. Dixon?"

But Mrs. Dixon was already at the door and Mrs. Miller hurried on after her, although she heard Mrs. Stillman's acid-voiced rejoinder:

"A very good philosophy, doubtless, Mrs. Miller—

for you. As for titles, some of us do not have to buy them."

Mrs. Stillman's annoyed eyes followed them until they disappeared in the corridor, when she turned to her daughter with a sigh of relief. "There, they've gone at last! I thought that tiresome woman would never leave! Now there's nobody near us and you can tell me all about it, darling." She drew Marian down to a seat beside her and put an arm affectionately around her waist.

"There isn't much to tell," Marian began and stopped, embarrassed.

"Tell me just what happened," her mother encouraged.

"He was telling me about his estate in France, and he said it is like a beautiful body without a soul, because now there is no Countess de Portellane, but he hoped some day to give it a soul. It wasn't so much just the words, mother—it was the perfectly beautiful way he said it!"

Mrs. Stillman frowned with perplexity. "Why didn't he go on," she asked, "and really say what he certainly seemed to mean?"

Marian showed signs of embarrassment again. "There wasn't time for him to say anything more," she explained, inwardly hoping that her mother would not carry the investigation any farther. But Mrs. Stillman was bent on getting to the bottom of the matter.

"Why not?" she wanted to know. "You didn't stop him, did you?"

"No, mother, of course not. But——" she hesitated and then plunged forward into what she knew would

be to her mother a most unwelcome statement: "Morris came in just then."

"Morris! How unfortunate!" Mrs. Stillman exclaimed, pointed disapproval in her voice. "What did he want?"

Marian took refuge in a demure expression and the simple sentence, "He wanted me."

"Marian," said her mother with the emphasis of finality in her manner and tones, "you must stop encouraging that boy. His father is as poor as a church mouse and he always will be—he doesn't seem to have any ambition. And Morris is nothing but a clerk in a law office, with no prospects at all. Don't let him interfere again."

Marian's eyes were brimming and her voice broke into a sob as she said, "I've been horrid to him tonight!"

"Come, darling," her mother rejoined coaxingly, "you must get this schoolgirl nonsense out of your head. Morris is a nice boy and a good friend, but you must keep him in his place and not allow him to spoil your brilliant prospects." She stopped an instant, then went on impressively and with a little air of mystery, "I know what Count de Portellane's intentions are!"

Marian looked up with instant interest. In the bottom of her heart she had never been wholly convinced of the seriousness of the Frenchman's attentions to her. But she enjoyed them, they gave her an enviable prestige among her girl friends and they were the best of means for teasing Morris. The present situation gave her so much pleasure that she would much prefer having it continue just as it was to any kind of settlement.

"What do you know, mother, dear?" she demanded. "Has he said anything to you?"

"He has intimated to your father and me," her mother told her importantly, "that he would like to make you the Countess de Portellane!"

"What did you tell him?" Marian asked breathlessly.

"Your father told him that it depended on you, that he must first win your love, and we'd talk about marriage afterward. But I—well, I assured him that I thought there would be no difficulty, because a man who knows how can always win a girl's heart. Think of it, Marian! That wonderful estate and his beautiful home in Paris, and the title and all the family jewels, and the doors of society opening wide before you wherever you wanted to go! Oh, it would be wonderful, a most brilliant match!" Her eyes glowed eagerly and her countenance shone with enthusiasm.

Marian gazed at Mrs. Stillman thoughtfully while her imagination opened before her mind's eye the dazzling vista inspired by her mother's words.

"It would be nice, wouldn't it!" she exclaimed. "The Countess de Portellane!" She sprang up and made her mother a curtsey, then went on as the brilliant vista showed more and more alluring colors: "Oh, it would be perfectly splendid and I'd love it all!" But her enthusiasm cooled suddenly as she remembered the only means by which all that splendor could be won. "Only—I'd have to marry him!" And her face broke into the sweet, girlish smile that was its crowning attraction.

"Of course, you silly child!" her mother chided, frowning with vexation. "That's what we are talking about!"

"But I'm not right sure," Marian responded doubtfully, "that I want to do that!"

Mrs. Stillman drew the girl close beside her and in affectionate tones, with a caressing arm about her waist, began to reassure her. "Ah, but you will, darling, if you think about it in the right way! Any girl ought to find it very easy to fall in love with such a fine figure of a man as Count de Portellane, even if he couldn't offer you such marvelous advantages. I depend upon you to carry it through."

"If he wants to propose to me I suppose he will," Marian replied, reverting to woman's fundamental desire to be sought.

"It is your place to make him want to propose to you. That is a woman's privilege—and pleasure. When we leave here to-night, Marian, dear, I want you to be able to tell me that he has proposed and that you have accepted him. Now we must go back." Drawing her daughter's hand through her arm Mrs. Stillman led her away, counseling her as they stepped out into the corridor, "The Count will be looking for us, I am sure, and you must make an opportunity for him to bring you again out here into one of these lovely conservatory rooms, and then choose the quietest spot you can find. And remember, Marian, don't let that Dixon boy hang around you any more to-night!"

When Amy Dixon and Stephen Miller's wife left the orchid room, with Mrs. Stillman's last icy remark in their ears, Sophy Miller glanced back over her shoulder with a puzzled expression and then turned to Amy, her smiling face clouded a little: "She's vexed about something, isn't she? Did I say anything to make her look haughty?"

Amy smiled back reassuringly. "Perhaps she thought you meant more by what you were saying than you really did."

"Well, I suppose I've gone and done it again!" She heaved a deep sigh and looked dejected. "Stephen says that every time I open my mouth I put my foot in it!"

"Oh, not so bad as that, surely," Mrs. Dixon responded sympathetically.

"Oh, it's really much worse! Usually it's both feet, up to my knees! Once, in Chicago, we knew a very rich woman whose husband had just died and Stephen wanted her to invest the money he'd left her in one of his companies that he needed to get money for awfully bad just then. So we were being just as nice to her as ever we could and she had almost made up her mind to come in. Then one awfully hot day I forgot all about her being a widow and I said to her, 'Of course your husband suffers terribly from the heat! Isn't it too bad you can't make him comfortable!' She was the strictest kind of a Presbyterian and it made her so mad she wouldn't have anything more to do with us and she went right off and put all her money into a rival concern that Stephen was trying to smash. He wouldn't speak to me for a week!"

Suddenly something flashed across her memory and she turned to Amy with an eager question: "There! Do you think I've offended Mrs. Stillman very much? I've just remembered Stephen told me to be very nice to her and careful what I said, because he's getting into some things with her husband."

"It won't matter—she'll soon forget it," said Amy reassuringly.

"Is her daughter going to marry the Porterhouse man?"

"He seems to be very much in love with her, and Mrs. Stillman wants her to marry him."

"Of course she would," Mrs. Miller interjected. "She's that kind."

"Still—there's no telling, where a girl's heart is concerned," Amy continued.

"Is there some one else, then?"

"Yes—my son."

They had reached the first entrance to the palm room and as they entered it they saw the men at the other end still talking earnestly together in a close group. Sophy Miller's interest was keen upon the romance she had just scented and she wanted to follow it up.

"Does Marian love either of them?" she asked, as they sat down upon a palm-screened seat.

"I think she cares more for Morris than she does for the Count. But she is young, and perhaps a bit frivolous, and likes pleasure and luxury and social position, so it's possible that her head is a little turned by what her mother and every one tell her would be a brilliant match."

Mrs. Miller nodded her head and her eyes twinkled. "Yes, I know how her mother would feel about it! That woman is the biggest fool in Chicago—or Washington, either—and I reckon that's saying a good deal—about wanting to get to the top of the heap. Stillman is our Congressman and so we've known them for years. I sized her up a long time ago. If there's any fool notion she can put into Marian's head she'll do it! Do you want Morris to marry her?"

Amy hesitated a moment, then smiled at her companion. "Does a mother ever see a girl that she really wants her son to marry? But it's a selfish mother who does not want him to follow his heart, if his choice is

even a moderately good one. Marian does seem a little more inclined to take a frivolous view of life than I could wish, for my son's wife, but that may be due mainly to her mother's influence and may not really be a part of her character."

Again her companion's head nodded sagely as she interjected, "Yes, that's true. Marian has got more sense than her mother."

"She has a sweet disposition," Amy went on. "That bewitching smile of hers speaks truly about her character, in that respect. She's a dear girl and I'm fond of her, and I think she is of me, too, and if she cares enough for Morris to marry him without any inducement but himself I can give her a warm welcome."

"So you are sort of on the fence and waiting to see what happens?"

Amy turned a distressed look upon her cousin's wife. "The anxious seat is where I am to-night!" she exclaimed.

There was quick sympathy in Mrs. Miller's inquiring face and Amy leaned toward her with a hand upon her arm, moved by an impulse toward farther confidence. She was beginning to feel strongly drawn toward this woman of thoughtless, scatter-brained speech and easy laughter who at first had surprised and repelled and then amused her and she was getting a glimpse beneath these surface manifestations of shrewd common sense, a wholesome nature and a warm heart. "There is the bitterest feeling," she went on anxiously, "between Morris and Count de Portellane. Morris is usually so self-controlled—he represses all his feeling, so that most people think him cold, and to-night he's not himself at all. He seems on fire inside, and almost beside himself, because Marian is showing more favor to the

Count than she is to him. I've guessed there've been some words between them already. I'm afraid of what may happen before he goes back to New York!"

"Why doesn't he jump in and capture the girl on the spot?"

"He says he can't ask her to marry him until he has something to offer her that will at least be a prospect beside the things the Count really has. He says she ought to have, or be able to look forward to having, the wealth and luxury and position that he thinks she's justified in wanting. He's been educated for the law, but he says he'd have to wait half a lifetime before he could amount to anything in that. He wants to quit it and go into business—railroading especially. His head's full of it and of the things he believes could be done. He doesn't seem to think of anything else—except Marian!"

Mrs. Miller pondered for a moment, abstractedly turning the diamond bracelet on her plump wrist. "I like Morris," she began. "I had a talk with him a little while ago. He didn't talk much," she interrupted herself with a laugh and a sentence of self-ridicule. "Stephen would say he didn't get a chance! But I sized him up! I know how he feels, too!" She considered again, her brow wrinkled in thought, then turned upon Amy a beaming smile. "It's about time for Stephen to have a cosmic hunch!" she announced.

"A what?" Amy exclaimed.

"A cosmic hunch," she repeated. "It's the way he does most of his business. He just goes along and gathers up all the facts about a thing and doesn't make up his mind and presently he knows all at once what he's going to do. It just comes to him that's the thing to do and he goes ahead and does it."

Amy smiled as her memory flashed backward a quarter century and brought to her mind her cousin's boyhood tendency to impulsive action. "He was always that way, more or less," she said, "but where did you get that name for it?"

"A man he was doing some business with once got very impatient with him because Stephen didn't make up his mind about something, but just dawdled along, and then all at once, one day, as they were talking about something else, Stephen flashed at him his decision, and the man said, 'Lord, Miller! Do you often have cosmic hunches strike you out of the blue like that?' And ever since that's what I've called his sudden decisions. Stephen says," she laughed, "that he asked me to marry him on a cosmic hunch! But come on, let's go over there and give him one now!"

They started toward the group of men and she continued: "Anyway, it's time for me to put on my muzzle!"

Amy looked at her with surprised inquiry and Sophy laughed as she explained: "Stephen says I can say more fool things and do more mischief with them than anybody else he ever saw, but when I stop talking and start in to do things he doesn't know anybody who can be more useful. So I tell him he ought to muzzle me when he takes me out anywhere."

Miller and the two congressmen had been discussing the schedules of the tariff bill in which Stillman and Miller were especially interested and Dixon had been making inquiries of them, insisting upon a thorough presentation of the facts and conditions in each case before he would promise his support in the Ways and Means Committee for the high protective tariffs they wanted. He was in complete sympathy with the prin-

ciple, he told them, but each schedule must be determined on its own merits. When finally they had convinced him and he had agreed to work for the results they desired, Miller began asking, as his wife and Mrs. Dixon approached, about the prospects of the bill.

Morris was standing a little to one side and his mother went to him and put her hand through his arm with a reassuring glance into his face. She felt the muscles of his arm tense beneath her fingers and she saw that his brows were drawn together and his mouth shut in a grim line while his jaw—the determined Dixon jaw—was as set and stern as ever she had seen his father's or his grandfather's.

"Now, then, Dixon," Miller was saying, "tell us how the bill is getting on. Are you fellows on the Ways and Means Committee getting it into shape?"

"We're working on it night and day and it won't take us long, now, to get it ready to report out to the House. And I can tell you that I think there's no doubt about its going through!"

"That's right!" Stillman assented with enthusiasm. "We've got the new rules now and Tom Reed in the chair and the majority can pass anything it wants to!"

"What will the Senate do?" Miller went on.

"Oh, the Senate will talk a lot, as it always does," said Dixon, "but I can assure you that it will pass the bill, substantially as it gets it from the House, and the President will sign it."

"Well, gentlemen," said Miller, with the air of final summing up, "of course you know how much is hanging on this bill. I and the companies I'm interested in are all waiting to make investments of millions of dollars as soon as we can be sure of it. And thousands of others are waiting in the same way."

"You can go right ahead," William assured him, speaking with more enthusiasm than he was wont to show. "You can go right ahead! We all know it's going to bring an era of wonderful prosperity that will make this country richer and more powerful than it has ever been before!"

"That's right!" Stillman agreed and went on with gusto: "A business man who's got any gumption at all will be able to pick up money by the handful! Think of it! New railroads built, new resources opened up, new factories started, everything humming! Millions of acres of the richest land in the world! Millions of people that are easy buyers! We'll grow and make everything our huge population wants! Everybody earning, everybody spending! Gentlemen, the twentieth century will see more big fortunes in this country than there have been anywhere else in the world since money was first made!"

They listened with approving and enthusiastic faces and as he ended Miller clapped him on the shoulder, exclaiming, "That's right! And I intend to be in on the deal!"

"Me too!" Stillman heartily assented. "I'm through with Congress when I finish this term. Business for me after this! Dixon, you'd better quit, too, and come in with us!"

William shook his head. "No, I guess not. I've got the Congress habit and I'm likely to keep it up, as long as they don't turn me down in my district."

"Then," said Stillman, slapping him on the shoulder, "you're fixed for life, Billy! That is," and he turned to Mrs. Dixon with a grin, "as long as you don't make another trip to Europe!"

Dixon laughed. "That's all right now, or soon will

be, for my constituents will soon be taking trips to Europe themselves. I haven't any time, or inclination, for the money-making game myself, but this boy of mine," and he turned to Morris and laid an affectionate hand upon his shoulder, "thinks he wants to go into business."

Mrs. Miller was close beside her husband and before any one else could speak she had laid a hand on his arm and was saying in her usual cheerful and rather loud tones, "Yes, Stephen, he's a young man who can trot in your kind of harness and you'd better nab him before anybody else gets a chance."

He gave her a glance of inquiry and she nodded her head, saying in a lower voice, "I've sized him up and he's all right—enough energy to pump the ocean dry!"

"What kind of business?" Miller asked, turning to Morris.

The young man brightened, straightened up and drew a deep breath, forgetting for the moment his heart's trouble in the hope that at last he would be able to realize his longings. "Railroading," he answered promptly. "It's what I mean to go into as soon as I can make a chance." Stephen Miller mentally noted that he did not say, "as soon as I can get a chance." "But I'm willing to go into anything that will give me a start in which I can work up and get into the transportation business afterward. But I want the railroading and I'll start in as an office boy if you'll give me a chance!"

"What have you been doing so far?"

"I went through Harvard and then I had a course in law and now I'm with a law firm in New York. But I don't like it and I'll never make good in it. When I ought to be looking up precedents and making out briefs I'm studying the increase of population somewhere and

the corn yield or the wheat crop somewhere else, or working out how to make some branch railroad pay that I know doesn't, or how to link up two lines somewhere else or how to develop some new section by getting more people there. Besides, I've begun to see already that the men who've got the money and are doing the big things hire the lawyers, and I'd rather do the hiring than be hired."

Miller grinned and gave Morris a hearty clap. "Right you are, young man! You're a boy after my own heart and I wish my David had some of your gumption! Your law training is so much to the good—knowledge of the law comes in handy in business. Yes, I think I can do something for you, if this tariff bill is sure to go through—it's going to mean a lot to the country's business."

He glanced at Dixon, and William responded coldly, with emphasis on his first words, "As I told you just now, the bill will go through. You needn't worry about that."

Miller turned again to Morris: "Now, there's that ramshackle line down in Arkansas that Stillman and I and some others are getting control of——"

"I know, sir!" Morris broke in eagerly. "I know about that! I've been watching! It's a rich country down there, and you can send it on through the Indian Territory and into Texas and develop the country as you go along——"

Miller put out a curbing hand and laughed as he said, "There, there, young man! Don't go too fast! You'll have to begin at the bottom, you know!"

"Of course," Morris assented, "but that need't hinder my thinking, I suppose?"

"Do all the thinking you can! I want men of that kind. But you'll have to work a while in the yards and take a turn in the offices with waybills and routing of cars and familiarize yourself with the business. But I want you to keep your eyes open and your mind busy and come to me with any ideas you get or results you've figured out."

Mrs. Miller claimed her husband's attention. "What about his pay, Stephen? You won't expect him to do all this on an ordinary workman's wages, will you?"

"Oh, his salary will be all right! I'll see to that."

"Enough for him to marry on, if he wants to?" she insisted, and Morris gave her a look of gratitude to which she responded with a smile and a wink.

"Sure! If he's modest about it and doesn't want too much."

"Then it's settled?" Morris asked anxiously. "You'll take me on, Mr. Miller?"

"Yes, indeed!" Stephen answered heartily. "I'll be in Chicago again next Monday and you come to my office any day next week and we'll have a talk and decide on just what you'll do first."

Morris's countenance was transformed. It was radiant as he said to Stephen, "I can't tell you how grateful I am for the chance you're giving me and I promise that you won't be sorry for it! I'll make good!"

His eyes sought the vine-draped exit and impulsively his feet began to move in the same direction. "Excuse me, won't you, please, all of you," he said over his shoulder, "I've—I've got an engagement!" Their eyes followed him as he strode out, his head high and his face shining.

His aspect sent a new stab of anxiety to his mother's

heart. "Oh, Will," she exclaimed in a low tone to her husband, "if he should meet de Portellane now!"

Miller was chuckling. "Great boy, Dixon! If I give him more than half a show he'll be at the top of all my business before I know it, and offering me a place as a messenger!"

William gave him a smile half proud, half wistful. The boy had given a good account of himself, his father was saying in his own heart, but with what a blow to that father's dearest hopes! "Stillman," he said, "I'm a little afraid Morris is looking for trouble to-night and I wish you'd help me keep an eye on him."

"What's the row?"

"There seems to be some ill-feeling between him and Count de Portellane."

"About Marian?"

"I suppose so."

"My God, Billy!" Stillman exclaimed, his eyes widening with sudden anxiety and excitement. "We can't have anything of that sort happen! There'd be no end of talk! And everybody would connect Marian with it! She mustn't be mixed up in anything like that! Come on, we'll make a search for them both and see that they don't come near each other again until Morris is headed for New York. And I'll send Marian home with her mother! Come on, Billy!"

They hurried off and Mrs. Miller, looking after them, remarked casually, "They needn't be so excited about it. The first thing Morris will do will be to find a place where he can ask Marian the all-important question. He won't stop to pick any quarrels with anybody until he's done that. If she says yes that will end their quarrel and if she refuses him that will end it too. So let's go along and find Mrs. Stillman and keep her so

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busy she can't butt in and spoil things until Morris has had his chance."

Amy was reassured by her view of the situation. But neither of them took into account the dynamic possibilities of a girl's uncertain temper.

CHAPTER XIV

FACING THE FUTURE

MARIAN STILLMAN decided as she came out with her mother from among the orchids that she would not allow Count de Portellane to propose to her, that evening, at least. Life was much too gay and happy and exciting just as it was for her to desire any change in its factors. She settled the matter in her own mind quite easily and simply as they walked down the corridor: "If he proposes I'll have to accept him, and be engaged, and then married, and it's much more fun this way—for a while, anyway, and I shan't let him propose, yet."

But she did not find it an easy matter to outwit de Portellane's eager desire for another tête-à-tête with her and at the same time to foil, without seeming to, her mother's purpose to make it possible. She had almost decided, as she saw that it could not be avoided much longer, that she would plead sudden illness and demand of her mother that they go home. Then she saw Morris Dixon coming straight toward her, with eager face and shining eyes, moving through the crowd as if no one else were there. She knew that danger lay in that direction too, but she said to herself, "I can manage Morris easily enough!" and welcomed him with her sweetest smile. De Portellane was frowning at them only a few feet away, himself intent on reaching her side,

and beaten in the race by no more than a moment or two. Her mother might take desperate measures. So Marian with a quick movement dropped her fan and concealed it beneath her skirts.

"Oh, Morris," she exclaimed, "I've left my fan somewhere—it must be in the conservatory. Let's go and get it! Mother, Morris is going with me to get my fan—I must have left it in the conservatory."

They were off before Mrs. Stillman could make a protest or devise an excuse to prevent Marian from leaving her, and so, like a good general, she made use of the present situation to prepare for later action. She smilingly told de Portellane, who looked at her angrily, as if he thought she ought to have prevented this sudden flight: "They've just gone to get Marian's fan and are coming back at once. If they are away more than five minutes," and she laid her hand on his arm and spoke earnestly, with a meaning in her voice that he understood, "may I ask you to go after them and tell my daughter that I want to see her immediately?"

The look of angry questioning cleared from his face and he smiled back with grateful understanding. "With pleasure, madame! See, I will time myself," and he looked at his watch, "and in five minutes I will go!"

It was growing late and the conservatory was almost deserted as Morris went marching down the corridor at so rapid a pace that Marian looked up, perplexed and amused, at his abstracted countenance. He was Youth, the Conqueror, he had won his way to the career he wanted, the girl of his heart had shown him favor and now he was taking her where he could ask her for her love and her life. He was walking above all the clouds of earth with his head in the air of the gods and for him at the moment there were no limits to his power

and his possibilities. Marian, with her hand on his arm, had to quicken her steps almost to a run to keep beside him as they rushed without speaking down the corridor. As they reached the farther entrance to the palm room and Morris turned abruptly into it she said petulently:

"I didn't ask you to run a race with me, Morris!"

"Marian," he began, and his voice was so tense and thrilling with the love that had been surging in his heart all the evening that she knew at once what was coming. "Marian, you must know how I feel——"

"No, I don't!" she interrupted. "How should I?" To herself she was saying, "Oh, dear! I don't want him to propose—yet! I mustn't let him!"

"But, Marian, darling, you know how I love you!"

"How should I know?" she answered coolly. "You've never told me!"

He was taken aback and the exalted, all-conquering mood of a few moments before began to be sicklied over with uncertainty. "I thought girls always knew!" he hazarded lamely, while he tried to collect his faculties and bring them down to earth.

"You must think they are very wise!" she responded, aloof and a little disdainful.

Instantly for him the winsomeness and allure of all girlhood were concentrated in the girl before him. "I think you are," he began impetuously, "oh, everything that's lovely and charming and sweet! Marian, you do know I love you!"

She turned away and toyed with the flower of a blooming plant beside her as she said perversely, "I'm no cleverer than other girls!"

"But I don't love other girls!"

She turned rebuking eyes upon him. "I didn't say you did!"

His answer rushed out, all his heart in his voice, "And I do love you, Marian!"

The words stirred her deeply and her heart sprang toward him, but she would not let him see that she was moved. She must not, she said to herself, "give him any encouragement." So she put a touch of sarcasm into her tone as she said: "Oh, I didn't know whether or not you were going to admit it!"

"What do you mean?" Morris demanded abruptly. "I've been telling you ever since we came in here how much I love you! Will you marry me, Marian?"

It was Marian's turn to be taken aback by this sudden question, that she had determined she would prevent him from asking, and she took refuge in the time-honored pretense of her sex: "Oh, Morris! You shouldn't throw it at me so suddenly! You almost—really, you did—you almost knocked me over!"

He was humbled and penitent and tried to take her hand as he said: "Forgive me, dear! I didn't mean to be so abrupt! And I thought you must know all about how I feel and how much I want you to love me, because—I feel it so much! You will be my wife, won't you, Marian?"

She would not let him touch her hand and turned away a little as she answered, hesitatingly, in a faint, small voice, "I—I—don't know!"

"Marian, darling," he rushed on, impetuously, "I've wanted to say all this to you for a long time, but I loved you so much that I wouldn't ask anything of you until I had more to offer. But now, darling, I'm free at last to do what I want to do! I've got the chance I've been looking for! It's a splendid chance, and I know what I can do with it!"

Here was neutral ground, perfectly safe, and she felt

a genuine interest in his prospects. "What are you going to do, Morris?" she asked eagerly.

"I am going to help develop this country and have some of the wealth it will produce. The road has been blocked ahead of me and I've had to stand by and see that dawdling Frenchman pretend to make love to you and dangle his title before your eyes!"

Perhaps it was loyalty to an absent friend, perhaps it was instinctive recognition of a possible loophole of escape from immediate decision of the matter, perhaps it was both combined that led Marian to reply indignantly: "Count de Portellane is my very good friend, and it is rude of you to speak that way about him to me!"

"Forgive me, dear! I didn't mean to offend you! But you can't imagine how I hate him! You—Marian!—you—don't love him, do you?"

"I didn't say so, did I?"

"No, thank heaven, you didn't! But you haven't said yet that you love me, either! Marian! Do you love me? Will you marry me?"

For a moment Marian could give no answer, thus brought face to face with his insistent demand, and she stood, silent, hastily searching her mind for some means of evasion. Her heart was pleading for him, but she would not listen to it, nor yet was she willing to send him away. Presently she said, without looking at him, "Don't you think we are too young to make such definite plans?"

"No, I don't!" Morris scoffed. "And I don't believe you do either!" Then suspicion began to whisper in his heart, inspired by her evident unwillingness to give him a definite answer, and he went on anxiously: "Marian, you're not just playing with me, are you? Do

you care for any one else—de Portellane, or any one?"

"Sometimes it is hard for a girl to know whether or not she really cares."

"But you would know it, Marian, if you loved me," he told her, with a surety born of the overwhelming dominance of his own feeling. "You couldn't help knowing!"

"Wouldn't I know it if I loved the Count?" she hazarded, wondering with secret zest just what kind of an explosion the words would produce. But they fell harmlessly upon Morris's humbled and bewildered mood and he merely strode impatiently for a few steps back and forth in front of her as he went on:

"Oh, I don't know! I don't know anything about girls! I thought I knew a lot about you, and I don't know enough to get you to say whether or not you love me! Marian, if you really love that Frenchman I don't want you to marry me!" He stood close beside her and took her hand as he went on, with impassioned voice and manner, "But don't marry him, Marian, darling, unless you do love him! I know how his position and title look to you, but if you'll marry me I'll give you money and power enough to make all that nothing but poverty and trash! I know I've got nothing now, but some day, before many years, I shall have all that any woman can want! You're not going to marry him, are you? Say you're not, Marian, darling!"

She found herself disconcertingly agitated, and, dominated as she was by her mother's purpose and also swayed in contrary directions by the desire of her own heart and her determination to keep matters unsettled as long as possible, she could only stumble uncertainly through her answering sentence: "I don't know—I'm not—I'm not quite sure—what I shall do."

"Has he asked you to marry him?" Morris demanded, the suspicion of a few moments before again making itself felt in his heart.

"You've no right to ask me that!" Marian flashed back at him with unexpected resentment.

"I think I have," Morris responded firmly, the suspicion growing more definite. "Because I love you and want to make you my wife I have the right to know just how things are between you and him. Marian, are you putting me off just to see if he will propose to you? Are you waiting to give me my answer until you know whether or not he wants you?"

She turned upon him indignantly, with flashing eyes. "Morris Dixon, I did not come here to be insulted!" She made an impetuous movement toward the entrance and as he started after her with outstretched hand she darted an angry glance back at him, exclaiming, "Don't come near me! Go away!" Another headlong rush toward the entrance almost brought her into collision with Count de Portellane, at that moment entering the palm room in his search for her, as he had agreed with her mother. With a little scream Marian drew back and he stood aside with a low bow and "A thousand pardons, Mademoiselle!"

"Oh, Count de Portellane," she welcomed, "will you take me back—to my mother?"

"But surely! With pleasure!" he assented, with a mocking glance at Morris. There was a touch of familiarity in his manner as he took her hand on his arm and bent over to say, "Where have you been so long? I have been desolated!"

Morris straightened up angrily, his gray eyes flashing, and with a sharp ring in his voice he said, "Count

de Portellane, will you have the goodness to return here, at once?"

De Portellane turned toward him a sneering face and his voice was crisp with insult as he replied, "I have not the custom, Monsieur, to take orders from canaille whose rudeness drives ladies from their presence!"

In a blaze of wrath Morris rushed up to him, before the words were barely out of his mouth, and struck him across the face. "Now will you come back?" he demanded.

They faced each other a moment, both of them speechless with anger. Marian dropped de Portellane's arm, gathered up her skirts and sped away, and neither of them was aware of her going. When the male animal fights for his mate, whether he be beast or human, he forgets all about her until the contest is over.

As de Portellane recovered the use of his tongue he flung out "Immediately!" at Morris and turned upon his heel. Then he remembered Marian and rushed into the corridor, sure she would be there. But she had darted into the other entrance to the palm room, rushed through the little passage and was hiding behind a group of palms and smaller plants that concealed her from the entrance and also from the rest of the room. A complexity of emotions had inspired and governed her flight—the impulse of the female animal, whether beast or human, to get out of the way when the male is preparing to fight about her and a sudden violent antipathy, born in the instant, to de Portellane had moved her to headlong rush down the corridor, and then a consuming desire to know what would happen next, what the two men would really do, swerved her back into the palm room and into hiding. She heard de Portellane's step

hurrying down the deserted corridor, heard him come back an instant later, hesitate a moment here and there and speak her name, and then apparently giving up his search for her, march back to the farther entrance. From her hiding place she saw him come in and saw Morris, who had been striding back and forth, turn and face him.

De Portellane said quietly, but with a tensivity in his tone that told of the wrath in his heart, "Monsieur, I will ask a friend of mine to meet, at once, any friend of yours that you will name."

Morris turned on him a face that Marian could see was white with suppressed anger. "I don't care to bother with all that flummery!" he jerked out. "I'll meet you at once in any place you say. We can take some friends with us."

"Very well. Shall we choose the weapons now?"

"The weapons I would prefer," Morris replied in a voice as insulting as his words, "are probably too manly to suit you!"

"Explain yourself, Monsieur," exclaimed de Portellane haughtily, "and beware what you say" And then, as Morris doubled his fists and thrust them in front of the other's eyes, he drew back in disgust and went on, returning in ample measure the contempt and insult that Morris had put into his tones: "Faugh! It is what I would expect from you! A gentleman does not soil his hands that way!"

Morris's fist shot out and stopped barely in front of the other's nose as he warned, "Take care, sir! Or you will compel me to soil this on your face again! Choose your own weapons! I'll agree to whatever you say!"

"Revolvers, then, at twenty paces!"

"That suits me. In ten minutes my friend and I will

meet you at the Pennsylvania Avenue entrance to the White House grounds, and we will drive to any point that you select."

"To-night?" asked de Portellane, surprised and for the moment a little disconcerted by the urgency of this young American.

"Certainly!" Morris affirmed, with emphasis, and went on with a sneer: "Are you afraid? There is brilliant moonlight. And this thing has got to be settled to-night!"

"Very good, Monsieur! In ten minutes! Au revoir!" He turned and went out briskly at the passage near which they were standing and Morris, looking after him an instant with a sneer on his face, walked up the palm room toward the other exit, as if he disdained treading in his rival's steps. He had to pass close beside Marian's hiding place and she sprang out, crying, "Morris! Morris!" and threw her arms around his neck.

"Marian! You here!" he exclaimed, amazed.

"Morris! Don't fight with him," she begged. "He will kill you!"

"What will you care if he does?" Morris responded bitterly, unresponding to her caress. "You'll still have him!"

Her arms tightened about his neck and her face was close to his. "Oh, Morris, I love you, and I was horrid to you just now! I'm so sorry——"

She felt his body thrill at her words. "You love me, Marian? Do you mean it?"

"Oh, yes, I do! Indeed, I do!"

At once his arms were about her and he was asking, "Marian, darling, why didn't you tell me before?"

Her arms were wound about his neck and her cheek was against his as she whispered, "I couldn't, because

mother had said I must marry the Count. I was horrid, I know I was, but I'm sorry, and I love you!"

"My darling! Did you come back to tell me that you loved me?"

"I don't know—I didn't think—but I just had to be where you were—if anything was going to happen to you."

"My poor darling! And I was cross with you just now and made it harder for you! Forgive me, sweetheart!"

They were so absorbed in each other that they did not notice Mrs. Stillman coming in through the passage nearest them and peering cautiously into the room. She had seen de Portellane return alone and with evident preoccupation seek out a man whom she knew to be his closest friend and engage him in earnest conversation. Deeply anxious she set out at once alone to discover what might be happening. She could not let her cherished plans fall through without another effort. It was growing late and most of the guests had departed, but if she could find her daughter there might yet be time to carry her scheme through to success. She felt sure that de Portellane had not failed in purpose or effort and she had seen him on previous occasions exercise subtle efficiency in ridding his surroundings of persons whom, at the moment, he considered superfluous. So with much perturbation she set forth to investigate and dismay filled her breast as she came upon Marian and Morris in the deserted conservatory, clasped in each other's arms. The sheer outrage to her feelings held her stock still and speechless for a moment while she heard her daughter saying:

"I didn't know when you asked me to marry you what I did want to do. And mother had said I must

marry the Count and—oh, everything bothered! But I know now, and I'll do it no matter what mother says. I love you, Morris, just you and nobody else, and I'll marry you whenever you say."

Mrs. Stillman heard Morris's enraptured "My darling" and saw him kiss her. Then the rising anger in her breast loosened her tongue and she said sharply, "Marian, have you found your fan?"

The lovers started violently and moved a little apart, but Morris kept in his one of Marian's clinging hands. That fan! It seemed ages ago, and she had forgotten all about it!

"I—I—haven't looked yet, mother," she stammered and with sudden attempt to put a plausible face upon the matter she began to peer at the floor around her as she added, "Perhaps I didn't leave it here, after all!"

Morris raised her hand to his lips and kissed it, once, twice, three times, then dropped it and turned away, saying, "I must leave you, Marian, darling! Good-by!"

She seized his arm and clung to him desperately, crying out, "No! No! You mustn't go! He will kill you!" while he moved toward the passage, trying meanwhile to loosen her grasp.

"You don't want me to seem a coward, do you?"

She would not give up her hold upon him and struggled to delay his steps as she sobbed, "I don't want you to be killed now, when we've found out how much we love each other!"

The sense of possible tragedy began to penetrate beneath Mrs. Stillman's personal feelings and she followed them, asking, "Marian, what does all this mean?"

"Oh, mother, help me keep him," Marian wailed, trying to brace her feet against the floor and to hold back his progress as he endeavored to free his arm from her

clasp. "He's going to fight a duel with de Portellane and he'll be killed! He'll be murdered! Morris, dear, don't go!"

"I've given my word to meet him, and I can't break it!"

"Morris, you mustn't do it," Mrs. Stillman exclaimed, horrified, and Marian pleaded, "Don't go! We'll find some other way!"

"If I'm not there before he is he'll think I am a coward," was Morris's only reply as he loosened her fingers from his arm. He held her away at arm's length for a moment, while he gazed at her with adoring eyes.

"Mother, help me," Marian was begging in agonized tones. "Morris, you don't love me or you wouldn't——"

His lips upon hers ended her plea and as he lifted his head and turned away he gave her a little push to prevent her from again seizing him, and was gone. She screamed and swayed and her mother sprang to her side and caught her as she fell.

"Marian, don't faint!" Mrs. Stillman cried out, and then, "Help! Oh, somebody come! Quick!"

The girl struggled with her swirling senses, while perception of the responsibility upon her shoulders suddenly loomed before her like the threat of imminent doom. "Mother," she gasped, trying to control the constriction that was gripping her throat, "I'm all right—I'll sit down here—and you run—quick—hurry—and find somebody—don't stop—go—go!"

She gave her mother a push to emphasize the need of haste and Mrs. Stillman rushed out into the empty corridor and down its length. Then she heard Mrs. Miller's easy laugh coming toward her and saw her and her husband and Mr. and Mrs. Dixon. "Morris! Morris!" she

called to them and then flew back to her daughter. They rushed after her in silence, each fearing to think what tragedy might be awaiting them, and found Marian half lying upon the stone bench, struggling to overcome the hysteria in which her overstrained nerves were threatening to revenge themselves.

She straightened up, leaning against her mother and between her sobs she called to them shrilly: "Somebody go, quick—Mr. Dixon, Mr. Miller—go, hurry, and stop them—Morris and the Count—they're going to fight a duel!"

Amy's hands went to her breast, clutching at her laces. "Oh, no, no!" she exclaimed and Dixon bent over the girl and said gently but firmly, "Tell us what has happened!"

"They've gone to fight a duel—with revolvers—twenty paces—in the moonlight—and they are going to meet right away at the Pennsylvania Avenue entrance, and decide where they will go. Oh, do hurry! Why don't you go and stop them!"

"Revolvers!" exclaimed Dixon. "De Portellane is a crack shot and Morris doesn't shoot at all!"

"We'd better call the police," said Miller.

"Police, nothing!" Mrs. Miller interjected. "Wiggle your toes yourselves as hard as you can go and get them before they leave, knock their heads together and send them home!" The two men were already rushing away and she called after them, "You know we saw Stillman a minute ago—get him and take him with you!"

Amy was pacing up and down the room, her hands clenched together and her face white and tense, and while they waited through the leaden moments Sophy Miller walked beside her and tried to lessen her anxiety.

Marian crouched upon the seat beside her mother, sobbing, and now and then giving her grief and remorse expression in words:

"Morris will be killed! And it's all my fault!—and yours too, mother! Why did you tell me I must marry the Count? If you had let me alone this would never have happened!—it's your fault as much as it is mine!—and I'll never marry de Portellane! Never! Never! Oh, Morris, Morris! I do love you! And we've killed him, mother! You and I have killed him!"

At last they heard the men's footsteps hurrying down the corridor and Amy and Mrs. Miller rushed to the entrance as Dixon and Stillman came in.

"We've stopped it!" they called.

"But where is Morris?" Amy asked anxiously and Marian staggered to her feet echoing the question.

"He's coming with Miller," Dixon answered, putting his arm reassuringly around his wife, "and they'll be here soon."

"Tell us what you did," Mrs. Miller urged.

"Dixon got the French Embassy on the phone," Stillman told them, "while I rushed out and caught de Portellane just as he was entering his cab to go to the place they had agreed on. I told him his chief had just phoned for him to come to the Embassy at once on a matter of the greatest importance. He tried to put me off with a message, but I wouldn't take it and made him come back and talk with the Ambassador himself and as Dixon had told him what was up that ended their excursion to-night."

Amy was still fearful of the safety of her son and asked anxiously, "But why doesn't Morris come? Are you sure he hasn't slipped away and gone to meet de Portellane somewhere?"

"Miller looked for him," Stillman went on, "and found him and young Walter Graves, who had agreed to be his second, trying to find a cab and told them the affair was all off because the Count had been summoned to the Embassy. Of course they wouldn't believe him, but he saw de Portellane and me coming back into the house and he pointed us out to them and told them to come along and ask me about it. They saw something was up and agreed to wait and see what happened. But Miller had to stay with them and let them make sure that de Portallane drove to the Embassy and not to their meeting place before they would drop it."

They had been listening so intently to Stillman's narrative that they had not heard rapid footsteps approaching and did not know Morris and Stephen Miller were coming until they were in the room. Amy rushed to them and threw her arms around Morris's neck. But she allowed herself only a moment's pleasure in his return embrace, glad though she was to feel its unwonted warmth, but stood aside, saying, "Marian is over there, and heart-broken!"

But Marian, as soon as she heard his voice, was able to spring to her feet and at once, regardless of all the onlookers, they were in each other's arms.

And so Morris Dixon, with his bride upon his arm, faced the future, and strode forth to meet it, impatient for whatever test it might make of him, eagerly desirous of the wealth and the power he was so confident of winning. But his impatience was only one manifestation of the spirit of the whole nation, whose appetite for luxury and wealth and material gains and powers had been sharpened by its toils and successes and the glimpses it had gained of its own possibilities. Its people had seen a vision—a vision of a vast, unmeasurable

pot of gold whose edges they had barely uncovered and they were yearning and straining to measure their strength in the hauling forth of the whole of it and lusting to buy with its contents all the luxuries of all the earth.

CHAPTER XV

THE MARCHING YEARS

MORRIS and Marian were married a fortnight after that evening in the White House that had been so momentous for them both and went to Chicago to live in a tiny apartment. For Morris, after his stormy and precipitate wooing, would listen to no pleas for delay and swung Marian to his side in the matter, notwithstanding her secret sympathy with her mother's desire for a long engagement, elaborate preparations and a large and formal wedding. At the end of the year a baby girl was born to them and a year later came a little son—Josephine and Herbert.

Stephen Miller decided after his first long talk with Morris that it would be a waste of time for him to take training in office routine and sent him at once on a tour of inspection of the Arkansas line, more as a means of trying him out than with the expectation of worthwhile results. But Morris went into the matter with quiet, steady, persistent energy, absorbing facts from every one with whom he talked, from track walkers and section men to division superintendents, and collecting information about the resources of the country through which the road ran, and he came back with a report so comprehensive and so detailed and yet so compact and to the point that Miller and his colleagues found it little less than amazing, so complete and illuminating was

its picture of the physical condition of their line and of its possible income from the surrounding region. They had almost decided to get rid of the road as quickly as possible, fearing it was going to prove a white elephant on their hands, but now, encouraged by Morris's convincing presentation of its possibilities, they agreed to see what could be done with it, and to give young Morris Dixon a little leeway in the carrying out of his ideas.

Through the next two years Morris worked over the ramshackle line like a father trying to reclaim an errant son. He figured on costs of construction and repair, watched the outcome of experiments, studied the methods of operation, made himself familiar with every fact connected with the road itself or with its tributary country that he thought would aid in its development. In the meantime, Stephen Miller made use of him also in other enterprises, sending him to study the conditions and possibilities of any industrial plant which he and his associates wished to buy or of any region in which they thought of establishing a branch of some enterprise in which they were already engaged.

Morris assimilated facts quickly and his mental training enabled him to bend concentrated attention upon a subject, so that he seemed fairly to absorb its features and elements by merely looking at them, while he brought at once under contribution to his knowledge every person with whom he came in contact who had information to give concerning it. He shot out his questions right and left, each one going straight to a vital point, without thought of the person thus examined, intent only on the information he sought. He had an instinctive sense of proportion in values and powers and when he had thus marshaled his array of facts it put

them quickly in their due alignment with regard to the result to be achieved; and then his practical imagination leaped forward and showed him what could be done with them. As soon as he had familiarized himself with the factors of a situation he could see, by virtue of that active imagination, how they would combine, what they could be made to do, the results which they ought to work out. Miller liked to talk over projected plans with him and watch his mind at work.

"You always know what you want to do, Morris," he said after one of these conferences, "and exactly why you want to do it and what will happen afterward. Now, I go it more or less blind nearly always. All I know is that I want to succeed and I get all the facts I can together and then I mostly depend on a cosmic hunch to tell me what to do next."

"Your mind probably works subconsciously," Morris told him, "and carries on, without your knowing it, the same kind of operations that mine does, openly and above board. Yours merely announces results."

"Well," rejoined Miller, "my cosmic hunches have been pretty reliable so far, anyway, and I reckon I'd better stick to them."

Morris was not satisfied with his association with Miller, Stillman and their colleagues. He thought their methods and aims not calculated to bring about the best results and he wanted a freer hand than they would give him. They seemed to him to have narrow views and limited horizons and to be content with the exploiting of an enterprise for results alone, no matter how obtained. They were always buying and selling, getting an enterprise under headway and then letting it go as soon as they were assured of a price that would pay them well for their investment.

But Morris's spirit in those years, and for some time afterward until the fever of the big game had turned his head, was the spirit of his pioneer forebears, the spirit that wishes to create, to produce, to mold, that longs to feel a farm, an enterprise, a region, a nation taking form beneath its hands and emerging as a factor in the community, a force among men. The creative instincts and powers of a race of such men and women were working within him and demanding expression.

Miller, Stillman and the others would not take the measures for the building up of the country supporting their Arkansas railroad that he thought necessary and, notwithstanding all his efforts, it would no more than pay expenses. Finally, when the panic of 1893 was strewing the Mid-West country with wreckage, they had to sell it and Morris, through the connections he had already formed, was able to interest sufficient capital in his plans to form a new company and buy it, with himself as the active head of the enterprise.

William Dixon served his district in the House of Representatives for nine successive terms, and then his state took him from the district and sent him to represent it in the Senate. "We'll miss our campaign travels over the district, won't we, Amy," he said to his wife.

"There'll be an aching void," she replied, "if we don't do something to take their place."

"I want," he told her, "to get into the same kind of touch, as nearly as possible, with the whole State. We can't know everybody, as we do in the district, but we can meet a lot of people in all the cities and towns if we take a trip over it—spend a month or two, every year, just before Congress meets."

"I wish we could do it in our old buggy," she said,

smiling in happy recollection. "Even the dogs know that old buggy, on every farm in the district!"

From the first year of his election to Congress William had insisted that Amy should accompany him both during his campaigns for reelection and on the trips over the district that he usually made in the intervening summers. And so, almost every summer or autumn for eighteen years, they had driven in a buggy over the whole of the district, stopping over night or for a day or two in each town and village, visiting for an hour or so every farm. William addressed meetings, gave talks to schools and societies and chambers of commerce, talked with farmers and bankers and school teachers, business men and ministers and clerks and helpers in every kind of work, getting their views on national questions as well as upon those of local interest, and Amy made friends with all the women and children, met and talked with most of the men and developed a better ability than did William in remembering names and faces and personalities. During his childhood she took Morris with them on these trips, because she would not be separated from him for even a day or two, and "the Dixon kid" came to be as well known all over the district as was its representative in Congress himself.

By means of these sociable journeys William kept his human connection with his constituents. He and Amy entered with interest into their local affairs, suggesting and urging town improvements, the starting of libraries, the organization of literary and debating societies, eating dinners of fried chicken and peach cobbler at farmhouses and afterward sending the farmers' wives flower and garden seeds. They brought the breath of the outside world to little communities, where the women tried

to pattern their dresses after Amy's and filled their buggy with jars of jelly and preserves; where men, women and children crowded into church or school-house or town hall to hear William give a talk on Congress or Washington or some historical subject, the proceeds to go to the local library fund; where the news that Mrs. Dixon was going to preside at a flower, or cake, or pie, or ice cream table at a sociable for helping some local improvement was sure to bring out a large attendance and make the affair a financial success. And on the Fourth of July they were always distinguished guests of honor at some picnic celebration at which William made the chief address or read the Declaration of Independence.

William knew his district and his constituents as did no other man in Congress, and Amy knew them almost as well as he did. To get into the same kind of touch with the larger area and population he represented in the Senate he and Amy made almost every summer a trip over the state, visiting the cities and towns, spending several days in each of the larger ones, driving out into the surrounding country, or, now and then, driving from one to another town and stopping for an hour or two at each of the farms on their way. It was not possible to gain so intimate and comprehensive a knowledge of the whole people of the state, but William succeeded in making himself a real human being to almost all of them, in keeping in touch with their ideas upon public affairs and acquainting them with his and in establishing among them an intellectual leadership.

During these summer and autumn trips to their home state Amy and William always visited Benjy and Eva-leena, who still lived in the cottage whose windows looked down the leafy ravine and out over the farm-

dotted valley and plain. Excepting Amy, Benjy was William's most intimate companion and the two would spend hours in talk in Benjy's library or on long walks into the country. Benjy had the soul of a poet, of a dreamer, of an idealist, and his long study of the history of the human race made him rebellious over the obstructions which that race is forever piling up in the path of its own progress. And this mental attitude led him to hold disapproving opinions concerning many existing social and economic and political conditions.

"I don't know what the remedy is," he would say to William, "but I don't believe it will be found in any of the destructive or revolutionary isms that come up now and then. I've studied most of them and I find that the people who spin theories out of their own heads don't keep their feet on the ground. And any reform that doesn't keep its feet firmly planted on the facts of human nature is bound to get into trouble. The only thing inside my range of vision that looks to be really a means of making things better is more democracy, and that only if men and women can be made wise enough to apply and appreciate it. But things aren't right as they are."

His companionship with Benjy influenced the course of William's thinking and led him into a broader and more liberal development than he might otherwise have made. In politics he became a less narrow partisan and after he entered the Senate party lines began to lie lightly upon him. He would insist that public affairs should be viewed from a national rather than a partisan standpoint and he would vote upon them as seemed to him right, however the party whip might hiss around his ears. But no matter how many times the leaders of his party might threaten to read him out of it, they were

too desirous of retaining within the fold his strength and his prestige to carry out their threats. And so William remained nominally a Republican, but held insistently to his right of independent thought and action and endeavored to use his party organization to forward his own ideas and purposes.

Not long after William became Senator Dixon, he and Amy, with Benjy and Evaleena, spent a summer in Europe, a trip which was memorable for both William and Benjy because of the many opportunities it gave them for the long talks which both of them found stimulating and productive of new ideas and fresh points of view. It was as much the influence of these frequent discussions, with their threshing out of ideas, opinions and arguments concerning the social, political and economic conditions and tendencies of the time, as it was the broadening results of travel that brought William Dixon home with wider horizons and farther and clearer vision than when he left. His mind, as so often happens after the half-century mark is passed, was not hardening along old lines and settling down into ruts. It was still, because he kept it so incessantly and so variedly exercised, as eager and as curious as the mind of a young man and as open and as friendly to new impressions and new ideas as the mind of early maturity, while its views and its judgments were the ripe and tolerant products of many years of study, of observation of men and affairs and of constant work.

It was on this trip that Amy lost the last of that feeling of resentment against Evaleena which she had held almost ever since Benjy's marriage because of the check upon his career which she thought his wife had been. The intimate association of the long journey convinced her that, whatever might have happened between them

in the early years of their married life, their affectionate dependence upon each other had become as real, although not so complete, as was that between herself and William, and she said to herself, "If Benjy is happy and satisfied, why should I hold any ill feeling?" If any closely hidden tragedy between them had wrecked their happiness, or broken their hearts, or even caused to either or both of them deep and abiding pain, she saw that they had built above the wreckage a fair and livable house of life which they themselves seemed to enjoy, and which those who met them considered pleasant and enviable.

Evaleena, then in her fortieth year, had become a woman of even more striking beauty than she had been in her girlish loveliness. Her dark hair, well threaded with silver, gave dignity and distinction to her appearance, her complexion was still as dazzling and as warmly colored as in her youth, and the beauty of line and modeling which had given to her countenance its crowning touch of exquisiteness was still there in all its purity. But into her dark eyes, in place of their former somberness and threat of sullen storm, had come a chastened, gentled expression that gave a new and softer charm to her countenance. For Evaleena had learned that she could not strike at the sacred places of a human soul without having life, the guardian of souls, strike back at her. It had struck her ruthlessly, but she had learned her lesson.

"I wish," Any said to William one day during their journey, "that Evaleena and Benjy might have had babies. They are both fond of children and although Benjy never has said anything about it I am sure he would have been delighted. And such a yearning look comes into her eyes sometimes when she sees an at-

tractive baby—it's pathetic. If Evaleena had had two or three children they would have softened her so much. But she's very nice now, and I'm really beginning to love her, William! A few years ago I would have thought that quite impossible, although I was sorry for her—that is, sometimes I was. She seems to be sensitive about not having children, for when I said something casually the other day, without intending it to have any special significance, she flung back a quick answer that let me know I had touched a sore spot in her heart."

After they returned Amy made a visit to Morris and Marian in Chicago. Josephine was four years old and Herbert a year younger. She recounted to William with mingled grandmotherly delight and disapproval the doings of the children and Marian's happy-go-lucky methods with them.

"Josephine," she said, "is such a serious-faced little thing and so much in earnest about everything, but she has the sweetest, most winning smile, just like her mother's. And she hasn't the least idea of minding, or paying attention to anything but what she wants to do. If Marian tells her not to do something, she goes right along and does it just the same. And when Marian tells her other little girls don't act that way she looks up with the most serious expression, as if she were thinking it over and says, 'But Josie do!' And then that angelic smile breaks over her face, and that ends it. Marian exclaims, 'Isn't she adorable!' and grabs her up and kisses her and then lets her do as she likes afterward."

On her frequent visits to Chicago Amy saw much of the Miller family and she and her cousin's wife became

warm friends. "Sophy Miller," she told William on her return after one of those visits, "is an amazing creature—such a queer and amusing contradiction! She rattles along, just talking words, and always saying some absurd, tactless thing—she never opens her mouth but she says something like that—and then all at once, if something important comes up, she will pull up and speak about it in the most sensible, level-headed kind of way. Stephen really depends a good deal on her advice about business matters and he has so much respect for her judgment of people that if it is possible he always gets her opinion about anybody he expects to have important dealings with. I wonder where Stephen found her! I've a strong suspicion that she was a waitress in a cheap restaurant in Omaha. But, whoever she was, Sophy Miller is a fine, good, sensible woman, and she's made Stephen a good wife, much better than he deserves, and I'm fond of her."

Amy and Sophy Miller were talking one day about Amy's and Stephen's youth on the farm and Amy said to her, "Stephen was an awful flirt in those days!"

"He is yet, Amy Dixon," the other responded calmly. "Do you suppose I don't know? When I married him I knew what I could look forward to, for I'd seen the way he has with women. He likes them still, especially the pretty ones, and likes to make love to them, as much as he ever did and if they're silly enough they just tumble before him and wait for him to pick 'em up. I married him with my eyes open, and so I've no right to find any fault. But there's this about it, Amy," and her manner warmed and her face became more earnest, "there isn't one of all those dozens of women who have come into and gone out of his life that has meant to

him what I have, and do yet—for I am his wife and his partner in the business of life. They've been just the playthings of a day, the last one of them!"

Amy listened in silence, marveling, and afterward she thought wonderingly about it and said to herself, "How can she feel that way? Does she love him, or did she ever love him, the way I love William, and always did?"

David Miller, she found, was rather a puzzle to his parents, so little did he seem fitted for any important or useful pursuit. Finally his father bought a seat for him on the Board of Trade and, when he did anything, which did not seem to be often, he tried his hand at manipulation of the wheat or corn market. After a trip to Milwaukee, on which his father had sent him to see if he could be trusted in the handling of an important piece of business, he came home at the end of a fortnight with a wife, having forgotten all about the business. It was after this episode that Stephen told him he was hopeless for any business purpose and, as a sort of sop to his own conscience, gave him the seat on the Board of Trade.

David's wife was a dainty, pretty, shy little thing, with a manner that at first was apprehensive and almost frightened. Sophy received her with warm motherly arms and she responded with an intensity of feeling that seemed to indicate a girlhood barren of such love.

"Be good to her, mother," David said, "for she's had a hard time; and don't ask her anything about her folks or her home, for she hasn't got any."

The girl said nothing about these things nor about her life previous to her marriage and Sophy, respecting her reticence, asked her nothing. If David knew anything about her past he did not tell his mother or father. They lived with Stephen and Sophy for the

double reason that Sophy quickly grew so fond of the little bride that she would not listen to their living anywhere else and the girl was equally as eager to stay with them.

At the end of a year, during which David's passionate devotion to his girl-wife grew constantly deeper and more ardent, she died in childbirth. He was so heart-broken that he would not even look at the baby daughter, for whose life his sweetheart-wife had given hers, and presently he went away upon a trip that lengthened out and finally grew into a journey around the world, from which he did not return for a half-dozen years. Sophy named the baby girl Gladys, for the little one's mother, and tended and loved her as if she had been her own child.

The day on which Morris Dixon succeeded in organizing a company for the buying of the Arkansas railroad laid the foundation for his fortune. He set out to develop the country through which the road ran, to bring in settlers, to stimulate production, to increase buying. His methods were many, resourceful and ingenious. Sometimes they were spectacular, but they were usually efficient. They drew attention to him and the fact that the market value of the stock of the road rapidly went up aided his next ventures. He sent out branches into contributing regions, he got control of a line that tapped part of the oil country of Oklahoma Territory and linked it with his own road.

It began to be easy for him to get the capital he wanted for any enterprise and soon he had control of a road that was the outlet for an Illinois coal district and had large interests in the coal mines. By the time he had finished his thirtieth year he had rounded up his first million. And he had bought a house in the fash-

ionable quarter of Chicago and installed Marian and the children in it, with every comfort and luxury which the time afforded.

Whenever Amy visited them she found, to her continuing satisfaction, that Morris and Marian seemed still as much in love with each other as they had been at the start. Their mutual affection and devotion were quite evident, and Morris seemed also to be interested in the two children and very fond of them. But he was absorbed in his business affairs, that grew bigger and more complicated with every week; he was at home very little and he seemed to his mother to become, with each visit she made them, a little more self-contained and reserved, a little colder, than before. The home, Marian's affairs, what she did with herself, her time, how she managed the children, he left entirely to her, asking no questions about them and displaying but little interest therein.

Marian was having a considerable social success and was deeply interested in it and in means by which she could increase her social prestige. Her father died a few years after her marriage, before he had time enough to gather in much of that wealth to which he had looked forward so covetously, and her mother married again, an Englishman whom she believed to be a younger son with a good chance of inheriting a title. She went to England to live and Marian suspected that she had been disappointed in both the prospects and the position of her husband, that possibly, indeed, he was even something of a swindler, and that her mother was too proud and ashamed to let her know the truth. She missed her mother's advice and counsel in the furthering of her social ambitions, but as she saw her husband's wealth piling up she laid glowing plans for the future. Amy

said to her, when little Herbert was five years old, that she hoped there were going to be more children, that there ought to be a lot of them to make that big, new home entirely worth while.

"No," said Marian easily, "I'm not going to have any more children. They're so likely to spoil the figure. My figure's still very good, thank goodness, and I mean to keep it so. Josie and Herbert are adorable and I'm glad I've got them, but I don't want any more. You can't have any sort of a good time or make plans for doing things, like going abroad, or to Florida for the winter, or to Newport or Narragansett or anywhere for the summer, if you're having a baby every year or two. No, indeed, I've had enough of that! These two are all I can manage, and more, too. I'd love to spend next summer at Bar Harbor, but it's such a bother to take the children."

"Let me have them for the summer," said Amy eagerly. "They're always happy and good with me, and I'll take the best of care of them. It will be much better for them, and you can have a better time, too."

That was the beginning of an arrangement that ended in Josephine and Herbert spending practically all the summers of their childhood and youth at the home in Carters which William and Amy still kept, or on the farm at Greenvale where Mark and Beulah were rearing a houseful of children, or with Benjy and Evaleena at Bidwell, or in the roomy house of Emily and Dr. Walters at Orchardson, the town which had grown up nearly a quarter century before on the "orchard eighty" over which Samuel Miller and Benjamin Dixon had quarreled, where they too were bringing up a half dozen of their offspring.

CHAPTER XVI

THE NEW CENTURY AND THE NEW GENERATION

AS the marching years told off the full number of the old century and rounded into the new there was ample proof on every hand that the predictions of Stillman and Miller and William Dixon were being fulfilled. For fortunes were piling up, big and little, and everywhere there was avid desire for more and more money, which was spent by those who made it with the freest of hands. Early in the first decade popular report began to credit Morris Dixon with being worth twenty million dollars. His holdings probably would not then have aggregated in value half of that sum, but his wealth was growing like a snowball rolled over damp and newly fallen snow and by the time the century was a dozen years old the estimate would not have been exaggerated. He was often called "captain of industry," but "railroad colossus" was the descriptive term usually applied to him. He had extended and solidified his transportation interests until he was rapidly becoming the dominant figure in American railroading.

The railroad systems in which he was the outstanding personality, the chief creative and driving force, extended from coast to coast, gridironed the Mississippi Valley from the Alleghanies to the Rockies, sent out tapping and feeding lines into the huge Northwest, the new Southwest, and the newly realized resources of the

old South. He was the head of companies that controlled coal mines and iron mines, he was deeply interested in the steel industry and his banking connections were so intimate that they made capital his ready slave.

His railroad lines organized excursions of sight-seers and of home-seekers that started on unaccustomed travels hundreds of thousands of people who without them would not have thought of leaving home. They sent agricultural experts into both new and old farming regions to introduce new methods and increase production. If an irrigation project was bringing water to arid land or a new region was being thrown open to settlement some Dixon railroad line threw out a branch to tap the new country and was ready to carry in the rush of new settlers and to carry out their products. The agents of his lines and of his coal and iron and steel companies scoured Europe to stimulate immigration and secure the cheap labor they desired. Italians, Poles, Slovaks, Russians, Austrians, Hungarians, they came pouring into the country by the ship load, sometimes a million per year, jerked out of their centuries-old communities and pitchforked into a new land by the plans of men whose dynamic energies demanded the production of more coal, more iron, more steel, the building of more railroads, more factories, more cities.

Senator Dixon and his wife celebrated his sixtieth year and the beginning of the new century by making a trip around the world, crossing the United States to the Pacific Coast, visiting Japan and China, and thence by way of Siberia to the countries of Europe. His reputation as one of the foremost statesmen of America and an orator of unusual gifts was already world wide and everywhere they were received with signal honors. But at home he began to find, about that time, that his public

usefulness was hampered by the prominence of his son in the industrial life of the country and Morris's rapidly mounting fortune. He refused to know any more about Morris's activities than was matter of common knowledge and never allowed his son or his son's associates to discuss with him any of their plans or purposes or indicate their desires concerning legislation. But William found that people were growing suspicious of measures that he favored and asking one another what there would be in them for "the railroad colossus." From the beginning of his work in Congress Dixon had championed the cause of irrigation for the arid and semi-arid regions of the West and Southwest and all efforts for the improvement of agriculture, moved thereto by Mark's tragic experience in the short grass country and his brother's impressive summing up of the causes of the disaster, "We didn't know what to do and there was nobody who could tell us." But now, notwithstanding his clear record of a quarter century of interest, if he proposed or defended similar measures, at once it was said that his purpose was to make it possible for his son to build a new railroad line into the benefited country.

Josephine and Herbert grew up more under the influence of their grandparents' home in Washington than of their own in Chicago. Its comfortable, homelike atmosphere appealed to and satisfied their child yearnings more than did the luxurious house in which they saw their beautiful mother dressing and going out, or receiving company, or resting from her social labors, and a silent, absorbed man whom they called father appearing sometimes at dinner or breakfast. But their grandfather always could find a few minutes sometime during the day to take them on his knees and tell them some fascinating tale about his own childhood on a frontier

farm and the wild animals he had seen, or about the Civil War, or about that wonderful journey in a covered wagon to the West which they had all made after the war; and their grandmother was always happy to answer, or do her best to answer, all the questions they could think of, to take them to the menagerie at Rock Creek Park, or up into the Washington Monument, or wherever they wanted to go.

And there were almost always interesting young cousins in the house, so that it was not lonely, as their own home was so often. For Amy, who when she married William had made his kin her own with all her heart, welcomed them all into her home whenever they could go to Washington. Emily and Dr. Walters, Benjy and Evaleena, Mark and Beulah, all were occasional visitors and as Emily's half dozen and Mark's five boys and girls began to grow up each of them at various times spent two or three winters with Amy and William. And as the youngest of these were only a little older than Morris's children, Josephine and Herbert found their companionship entirely desirable.

After a while little Gladys Miller was added to the group. For Sophy Miller died when Gladys was ten years old and Stephen sold his home, put the child into a fashionable boarding school and himself went to live in a hotel. From the loneliness of the boarding school during the summer vacation Amy Dixon rescued the little girl and took her with the two grandchildren to the cottage in Carters which formed a sort of summer headquarters for the children between their long visits to Mark's farm, or Benjy's home, or elsewhere.

William and Amy had a purpose in thus keeping Morris's children with them as much as possible. "We must do it," William said to her, "at whatever incon-

venience to ourselves, for the children's sake. It will be their only chance to come into touch with the simple, homely democracy of real American life and if they can get it in their childhood they will always feel its influence."

Amy agreed with him heartily, besides longing to have the children with her for her own pleasure, and so, under her charge, they spent the greater part of almost every summer ranging the farm, bareheaded, with their bobbed hair flying, sometimes rushing out barefooted into the summer rain, with shrieks of laughter catching and riding the horses and cows in the pasture, tumbling about in the haymows, sliding down the haystacks, perching themselves atop the piled-up hay wagons. Marian willingly sent the children with Amy both for long visits in the winter time and for the summer vacations partly because she knew, as Amy told her, it was much better for them, partly because it gave her a free hand for the campaign she was always carrying on to further her social ambitions, which mounted higher with each new advance, and partly because her husband, when she asked his advice, moved by memories of his own childhood, had given his emphatic approval to the scheme.

After Josephine entered her teens she began to develop a striking resemblance to her great-grandmother. Her features took on a semblance that was much the same, her dark brown hair waved prettily down over a head similarly shaped, and her countenance, while it had not much claim to beauty, had the same kind of comely, wholesome attractiveness. In repose it was a serious-looking countenance, but when she talked it sparkled with animation. When she smiled the corners of her mouth curled up, her eyes twinkled and over her

face broke the same sweetness that made her mother's smile her crowning attraction. But her eyes were the Dixon bright gray eyes, although they sometimes softened and darkened into hazel. William would take her on his knee and holding her face between his hands say to his wife, "Amy, just look at the child! Doesn't she look more like mother every day of her life?" Benjy would gaze long at her and with an arm around her shoulders kiss her forehead and say, with what Josephine more than once suspected was a tear in his eye or his voice, "Josie, dear, if you'll just be as much like my blessed mother as you look like her——"

Benjy had among his dearest possessions an old daguerreotype of Mother Dixon made in the late forties of the nineteenth century while her countenance still had the semblance and the comeliness of youth. It was in an album case, after the fashion of the time to which it belonged, and when he was first married Benjy kept it open on his desk in his study at home. But one day—it was during the time of Evaleena's secret but stormy jealousy of his love for his mother—he chanced to see it in his wastebasket underneath some torn papers and discarded photographs. He rescued it and without mentioning the matter took it to his office at the University where he had ever since kept it locked in his desk. He showed it to Josephine, who gazed at it with such interest and delight, looking at herself in the mirror and with the picture open before her comparing it with her reflection, that Benjy sent it to her on her fourteenth birthday.

The next summer Emily, in whose home she was making a long visit, gave her another relic which she received with equal delight—the bonnet of leghorn straw with its big, scoop-shaped brim and its high, perky

crown which Mother Dixon had worn on that memorable day of her youth when her young lover had come riding by and she, to escape the parental ban on their marriage, had slipped out, mounted his horse behind him and galloped away. Josephine listened to the story entranced and then rushed away, coming back presently with her wavy hair combed down over her ears, as in her great-grandmother's picture, the bonnet tied on over it and herself clad in an old, tight-fitting waist and long skirt of Emily's, somewhat resembling the earlier fashion, which she had found in a trunk in the garret. She made a picture so like the mother of Emily's earliest remembrance that Mrs. Walters gazed at her between laughter and tears and called her husband to see the likeness.

The physical resemblance of which she heard so much roused Josephine's interest in her great-grandmother and she never tired of listening to anecdotes and accounts of Mother Dixon, her noteworthy housekeeping, her practical abilities, her wisdom in the rearing of her children, her love of beauty and her strong and attractive personality. And so the pioneer woman came to be the heroine and model of her descendant, the daughter of the multi-millionaire and "railroad colossus."

But if Josephine derived from Mother Dixon in physical appearance, the outstanding factor of her character she inherited from the male line of the Dixons. "Josie is all Dixon," her grandfather and his two brothers were wont to say, as they laughed over some small victory she had won by her calm persistence. "When we Dixons want a thing," Mark once said to the others, "we go after it for all we're worth until we get it, and that's Josie, all over." The viewpoint of her infancy which her grandmother had noted with mingled amuse-

ment and concern, "But Josie do," when she was told that other little girls did not ask act so, or so, remained with her as she grew up and became the very core of her character.

Herbert was more like his mother in appearance, having her fair, almost golden hair, her general cast of countenance, masculinized, and her exquisite complexion, although his eye was the large, flashing gray eye of the Dixon men. He had also a certain frivolity, or lack of seriousness, or of steadfastness in his viewpoint of life that was reminiscent of Marian Stillman. But down through the generations from his great-grandmother had come a precious heritage which promised to reach in him its full flower. It was Benjy who first discovered and encouraged the boy's artistic gift and tried to make him understand how great a thing it might be made. In Mother Dixon, pioneer farmer's wife, the artistic heritage, coming down through life's channels from some unknown ancestor, perhaps in distant France, had manifested itself only as a vital but inarticulate love of beauty and the spirit of romance. In Emily, her daughter, the romantic spirit outcropped enough to vivify life and add immeasurably to her happiness. In Benjy she had seen her own passionate enjoyment of the beautiful repeated with equal intensity, and Benjy knew that the artistic impulse would have made itself felt in him in a magic power over words, if he had given it full play. But Mark had it not at all, except perhaps as it enriched his interest in and enjoyment of his surroundings, while through William and his son Morris it had passed on, flashing out a little in one in his oratorical gift and in the other in his practical imagination, gathering in intensity and power for its bursting out in full force in Morris's son,

Herbert. But Herbert, while he intended some day to be an artist, was inclined to dawdle, to enjoy himself, to give his attention to matters of passing interest.

Josephine had no gift that equaled Herbert's, but she had a driving force of purpose and an inborn compulsion to concentrate upon achieving a desired aim that was likely to give her success in whatever she might undertake. It was this driving force of purpose, the "but-Josie-do" mental attitude, that made it inevitable that she would carry through her desire to study medicine against the pleas and arguments, the beseechings and the tears of her mother.

The idea was born and the plan took shape in her mind the summer that she spent with Emily, the summer after her fourteenth birthday. Dr. Walters' office was in a separate building in the front corner of the grounds that surrounded his house and Josephine displayed much interest in all that happened there. She watched, and soon began to help, him take care of his instruments and when he compounded medicines that he wanted to carry to country patients she followed with keen eyes every step of his operations. She went with him frequently upon his trips into the country and her questions were incessant as to what was the matter with this and that patient and what the different medicines would do to those who swallowed them. Finally she said to him shyly:

"Uncle Win, do you think I could be a doctor?"

"Well, lots of women are physicians, nowadays," he replied, evading her question.

"Of course they are—I know that—and just as good as men physicians, too! But I mean do you think that I could learn to be one?"

He considered the question, smiling as he thought of

the horror her mother would doubtless feel over such a proposition and wondering if he ought to encourage her nascent ambition in the face of what Marian's attitude would surely be. Then he remembered the longings of his own youth and said to himself, "If she's got it in her to be one she'll carry it through anyway," and plunged in:

"You know, Josie, it takes a long time and a lot of hard study to be a good doctor, and, besides, a really good physician is born, first—I mean he has a native gift for medicine—and then he has to have, in addition, all the training he can get, the more the better. You are interested, already, in medicine and you seem to have a knack that way, but you're too young for you or anybody else to know whether or not you have a real gift for it, or whether you'd want to do all the hard study and work that would be necessary."

Josephine thought this over for a moment, her young face very serious and her eyes preoccupied, before she said, with an air of solemn importance:

"No, Uncle Win, you're mistaken about me. I'm not so awfully young as you think. I'm almost grown up and I know what I want to do. I'm going to be a doctor. I'm not a bit afraid of hard study and work—I like to study. If it was Herbert, now," she turned that supposition over in her mind and then continued, "he probably wouldn't ever be one, because he'd hate so to work that long at the same old thing. But I'm going to make him be an artist," she concluded, with a look of determination that her uncle thought promised some unhappy hours for her brother, "because Uncle

Marian had already made all her plans for her daughter's training and career. Josephine was to attend a Benjy says he'd be a genius."

fashionable finishing school for girls near New York City where she would meet the daughters of people whose social position was so high and unquestioned that the friendships sure to develop would open doors otherwise most difficult for her to enter. By the time the new century was well under way Marian had established herself in Chicago as one of the leaders of its wealthiest and most exclusive social circles, but as Morris's wealth piled up and his position in the business life of the country became one of spectacular importance she began to have visions of a palatial residence in New York with herself a dominant figure in that city's topmost social coterie. And Josephine, as an attractive, marriageable daughter and heiress of vast wealth, would be an efficient aid.

But when Josephine approached her middle teens and was told that she would soon be privileged to enter the famous finishing school, she replied that she did not wish to go there, that she had decided to attend a real college and was going to Wellesley as soon as she was prepared to enter, astutely keeping to herself her ambition for subsequent achievement. Her mother alternately pleaded, stormed and wept but she could not shake Josephine's determination. She appealed to Morris to exert his authority, but all he would say was,

"I am going to send Herbert to Harvard and if Josie wants to go to college, too, I don't see why she shouldn't. But that's your affair. You and Josie must settle it between you."

In the end Marian gave up, secretly determining that Josephine should spend a year at the school later on, when the girl, having grown older would, she hoped, see the wisdom of following her mother's wishes. So to Wellesley College Josephine went, followed a little

later by Gladys Miller. The two girls were close friends, Gladys looking up to Josephine, who was two years her senior, with ardent admiration, thinking her the cleverest, most capable, most wonderful girl in the world and Josephine delighting in the other's beauty and grace and bright, gay spirit. Gladys had a dainty, graceful figure and her spirits were always blithe. She went about the house on dancing toes, her mop of bronze-brown curls flying about her head and a laugh or a song or a lively speech bubbling from her lips. Josephine, with her figure cast in a larger mold and her serious nature, admired Gladys heartily, but her stronger character made her the leader in their friendship.

When Josephine told Gladys of her ambition and her purpose to become a physician the younger girl was deeply impressed and was voluble with enthusiastic admiration.

"Oh, Josie," she cried, "I wish I could be a physician too, and then we could go into partnership!"

"That would be splendid, Gladdie! You must do it!"

But Gladys was doubtful about herself and feared that she was not clever enough for such a career.

"Well, then," said Josephine, "you can be a nurse. You don't have to be so awfully clever to be a nurse and, oh, Gladdie, that will be perfectly splendid, for then you can be my nurse assistant and help me in my office!"

On the instant Gladys decided that that was what she would do and if in the following years her resolution ever wavered or she felt the lure of the primrose path that her grandfather's wealth could spread before her feet Josephine's steadfast determination and unswerving purpose so rebuked her that she kept it to herself.

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While they were in Wellesley a new influence came into their lives that braced them both to even firmer determination upon careers of usefulness. Among Josephine's classmates was a tall, thin girl, with dark, sharp features and an intense countenance, named Laura Wayne Bradford. She was the granddaughter on her mother's side of a woman who had been in the forefront of the suffrage movement in its stormy infancy and youth, and through her father of a man who had been a fearless advocate of the abolition of slavery. The one had spoken many a time from a platform drenched with the ill-smelling arguments of the brainless and to the end of her days had suffered a painful foot due to stones thrown at her when she wore bloomers on the street. The other's house had been burned, his newspaper property damaged and himself mauled and injured by angry opponents of his convictions. Their granddaughter exulted in the story of her ancestors and longed for immolation upon the altar of an unpopular cause.

"Oh," she exclaimed, sitting on a cushion on the floor of Josephine's room, her long arms clasped about her knees and her dark face glowing with the intensity of her feeling, "it must be wonderful to be a martyr! I'd give anything to be stoned in the street or to have rotten eggs thrown at me!"

"Maybe you would, Laura," Gladys suggested, "if you'd talk socialism on a Wall Street corner!"

"No such luck!" she responded scornfully. "Those people are buried too deep under their dollars to feel anything but a rifle ball hit them. They'll get it some day! And I'll help give it to them, too! When I get through here I'm going to New York and I tell you, girls, socialism's going to be a live issue then!"

Laura Wayne Bradford counted her conversion of

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Josephine Dixon and Gladys Miller to socialism as her most signal achievement. "If I never do another thing as long as I live," she told them, "I consider that I've justified my existence just by making you two see the light! It's sending a bomb straight into the camp of the enemy!"

When Josephine wrote to Herbert, who was in Harvard University, that she and Gladys had been converted to socialism and had joined the Inter-Collegiate Socialist Society, filling several pages of her letter with arguments in its favor, she received an immediate reply that delighted her so much that with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes she at once called Gladys to hear its wonderful news. There was a chapter, he wrote, of the same society at Harvard, and one of the fellows had taken him to one of the meetings; he had been so interested he had gone again and, finally, he had become convinced that they were right and had joined the movement; and he had only been waiting to see her to tell her about it and try to make a convert of her too.

When they next went home they wore their new convictions on their sleeves with all the ardor of new converts and all the arrogance of youth. Marian tried to meet their arguments but, having neither much knowledge nor trained faculties, she presently fled from the room in horror with her fingers in her ears. Morris merely turned on them sharply with an impatient, "Don't talk that nonsense around here!"

Marian went to him in tears and begged him to take both of them out of college, if they were going to be under such evil influences. But he said they had already got the infection and the worse the attack the sooner and more thorough would be their recovery, so it would be better for them to stay in the same environ-

ment. He had not the least doubt of their return to the viewpoints, the ideas and the methods of thinking to which they had been accustomed as soon as they should again be settled in his home with a proper understanding of all that his wealth could mean for them.

"They're just kicking up their heels, like a couple of young colts," Morris told his wife, "and they'll settle down all right when they're a little older. Too much opposition now would make them worse."

He might not have taken so lenient a view of their case if he had known the course of training through which Laura Wayne Bradford was taking his daughter and which she in turn was passing on to Herbert concerning some of his own business methods in the acquiring of desired railroad lines and other property and the wages and living conditions of the immigrants brought over from Europe to recruit the cheap labor he wanted for the mines and the mills and the construction in which he was interested. They listened to her descriptions and her statements of facts and figures with a sort of bewildered horror, the picture she painted for them was so different from any conception of life as they had known it and the presentation of their father was in a guise so black and sinister that they could not recognize in it the man they knew. But she told them that the things which so pained and horrified them were all due to the capitalistic system and that they must hate the system and not the men who ran it, who were as much its victims as were their industrial slaves.

When Josephine reached her twentieth birthday and Herbert his nineteenth Morris gave to each of them enough stock in one of the railroads under his control to supply their needs. He thought that possession of

such a share in the country's industrial life would be one of the best of antidotes for their economic heresies. Josephine showed hers to her mentor, Laura Wayne Bradford, saying,

"Laura, how can I keep this and profit by all that wickedness? If I accept this stock and use the dividends it will make me a part of that capitalistic system that I know is so wrong and I hate so much. I think I ought to send it back to my father. Don't you?"

"Send back nothing!" exclaimed Laura vigorously. "Keep all you can get out of the rotten old system and get all you can! Tell your father this isn't enough and ask him for more! All you can get will be just that much taken away from capitalism and that much to the good for socialism!"

Josephine did not ask for more but she and Herbert both used their money after that with a clear conscience, enjoyed the sense of individual freedom it gave them and felt even less—little as it had been before—of obligation to their parents or of the restraint of family ties.

Neither Herbert nor Josephine said much at home about Laura Wayne Bradford, but at their grandfather's they talked about her freely with William and Amy, expounding her views and dwelling upon her vivid personality.

"Don't let her influence you too much," William cautioned them. "Of course you find her very interesting, but she seems to be a striking example of a good old stock gone to seed through too much vanity about itself."

Josephine admitted that she thought Laura a little queer sometimes. "I don't see," she went on, "why she should want so much to be pelted with rotten eggs

or to get into a street fight. I believe in socialism just as strongly as she does but I think there are better and more efficient ways of working for it than that."

William smiled at her. "I'd bet my last hat, Josie," he bantered her, "that you don't believe in it nearly as much as she does!"

"Indeed I do, grandfather!" she protested, and then turned on him with the indignant demand, "Why do you think that?"

"Because, in the first place," he told her, "you are a Dixon, and that means that individualism is in your very blood and marrow, and in the second place you are an American, and that means the same thing, and they both mean that you love your country above everything else, and in the third place you are sound at the core!"

CHAPTER XVII

CLASHING PURPOSES

IT was the last year of Josephine's course at Wellesley and she and Gladys were homeward bound for the Christmas holidays. They were going to Washington where Senator and Mrs. Dixon were having a family party that included the two girls, Herbert, Morris and Marian, and as many others of the Dixon family as they could get together. Their train was a special filled with young women students from Wellesley and Smith and other women's colleges and schools in that region, all of them as gay and excited and chattering as a flock of birds on a sunny spring morning.

Their special pulled into a station, stopped and stayed there, stock still, and the girls began asking one another impatiently what was the matter. Then windows went up and eager young faces filled them and other bright countenances leaned over the shoulders of those in front as they all sought to find the cause that was delaying their journey, already far too slow for their impetuous wishes. They saw their train to be in a railroad yard and across three or four lines of track they saw another train whose windows were all full likewise of eager and impatient faces. But they were the faces of good-looking young fellows whom they knew in a moment to be college students too.

"Oh," said one of the girls, "it's the boys from Harvard and Boston and Brown and some other places, and they've got a special, just as we have! Oh, don't some of you know somebody there?"

Josephine and Gladys gazed out of the window, discovered Herbert and waved to him. Instantly the whole trainful of young men was waving hands and caps and hats from their windows; and at once, like a flash setting off a heap of powder, the train load of girls was responding with waving handkerchiefs and hands and smiling faces. Herbert called out, "Come on, fellows! My sister's there!" He jumped from the train with the others at his heels, some leaping from the doors and others climbing through the windows and all rushing pell mell across the tracks to the train where the eternal feminine smiled its welcome. They sprang up the steps and swarmed into the corridors and here and there a girl stepped out and greeted some youth in whom she recognized an acquaintance. On the instant others would be at his elbow and twitching his coat-tails to be introduced and she in turn would present them to her friends, waiting eagerly but a step behind her, and soon the whole masculine incursion had paired itself off and the train was filled with happy, laughing, chattering couples and groups.

There had been some confusion of orders as to which of the two specials should have precedence and both had been stopped until the matter could be settled. But the young people decided it for themselves and when the men's train was ordered to move they refused to go back into it. Its whistle blew furiously, its bell rang long and loud, its conductor shouted "All aboard!" until he was hoarse, and the boys merely stuck their heads out of the windows and yelled at him with laugh-

ter and gibes to go ahead, that they were well satisfied and were going to stay where they were. And finally the girls' train moved on with the engine doubled at its head and the empty coaches trailing at its rear while triumphant youth crowded the other cars, filling the seats, promenading the aisles, sitting on upturned suit-cases and seat-arms, laughing, singing, talking, exchanging confidences, absorbed in that most absorbing of all youth's enterprises—exploring the soul and testing the heart of some new specimen of the opposite sex.

But Gladys was not allowed to enjoy that particular pleasure. For Herbert, whom she already knew perfectly well, appropriated her, as he had a habit of doing when they were together, and ignored, though he knew he would have to pay later on for his studied indifference, the signals of several of his friends who thus plead with him to be introduced to the blithe and pretty girl by his side. When he leaped up the steps of the coach he saw his particular friend, Clifford Wright, just behind him and reaching out a hand as he ran he jerked the other to his side saying, "I want you to meet my sister before any of the other fellows get her!"

Clifford was very willing, for he had many times admired Josephine's photograph on Herbert's desk and had listened with interest to whatever Herbert said about her. The four of them made their own exclusive little party, diplomatically keeping all would-be intruders out of it, until Wright left the train two hours later. Josephine learned that he was taking an engineering course and would be graduated the next spring as a civil engineer. On Christmas day she received a box of candy from him and her note of thanks brought a letter in reply which made necessary a response from her; and they were soon embarked upon a correspond-

ence which both found interesting enough to demand the exchange of long and frequent letters.

Josephine finished her course at Wellesley in less than the conventional time, leaving behind her a brilliant reputation as a student. She had kept steadfast her purpose to study medicine and Marian had cherished her own hope that Josephine would at last become a dutiful daughter and her determination that now she must follow her mother's wishes and either take a year at the fashionable finishing school for the sake of its social prestige and the friendships she would form or must prepare to make her formal entrance into society. Neither had said much about these opposing desires for the last year or more and each had thought that the other was giving way. In consequence, they came abruptly upon the most determined and irritating clash of their lives. Josephine listened impatiently to her mother's pleas and arguments and swept them aside with the brusque statement that it was her life that was in question and it was her undoubted right to order it as she pleased and prepare for it as she thought necessary.

"But what about me, Josie?" Marian protested. "Has a mother no rights after her years of devotion for the good of her children? You seem to think that you owe no gratitude for all that I have done for you and the care and love I have given you!"

"That's an old-fashioned idea, mother, part of the dead wood of the nineteenth century, just like your notion that a girl ought to do nothing useful, just be a parasite," was Josephine's calm response. "There's been a lot of nonsense talked and written about the devotion of mothers to their children—as if they deserved any credit for it! They don't, any more than

they deserve credit for breathing, or digesting their food. It's just a biological instinct, part of the processes of nature and, while they deserve no end of blame if they don't obey it, they deserve no praise if they do. It's no use, mother, dear, for us to talk about this matter any longer and I hope you won't mention it again. It's been my purpose for years and I'm going to carry it through. I shall enter the Woman's Medical College in Philadelphia next fall." And then she turned upon Marian her sweet, vivid, disarming smile, nodded brightly and left the room.

As before when their purposes had clashed, the stronger character won and Marian temporarily gave up her opposition, comforting herself with the hope that at least her daughter would not wish to practice medicine and that when her whim of studying it had been satisfied she would be willing to live in accordance with her mother's wishes. But Josephine was looking forward, with calm and forceful purpose, to a busy and, she hoped, a brilliantly successful professional life. The farther in that direction her studies led her and the more her mental horizon lifted and receded, disclosing alluring vistas of desired knowledge, the more disdainful she became of her mother's manner of life, her pursuits and her ambitions. So impatient of them was she, so puerile and futile did they seem to her, that she disliked to spend any time at home and during her course in the medical college, which she finished in less than the usual time, leaving behind her, as she had done at Wellesley, a reputation for striking abilities and high ambitions, she made excuses whenever possible and went elsewhere for her vacations or limited the time of her stay at home to a few hours.

In the meantime, Morris Dixon had found it expedi-

ent to transfer his headquarters to New York City and Marian began to see the realization of her dream of a magnificent home in that metropolis. Her husband bought for her a house, just off Fifth Avenue in one of the Seventy streets, that was already palatial in size and architecture. But Marian engaged the most famous architect in America to enlarge and remodel it and for the remaking and decorating of its interior the most expensive and exclusive firm of decorators the city afforded. She found the consultations over plans and the watching of progress and the elation of her own feelings at the consummation of her dreams so absorbing that she had little time or inclination to worry over what she thought her daughter's ungrateful and fatuous course.

Moreover, as the years swept by and she met and passed her fortieth birthday, she devoted more and more of her attention to the cult of the body beautiful, determined that time in its passage over her head should leave no footprints that could be prevented. The daily manipulations of a masseuse kept her figure as slender and lissome as it had been in her girlhood; a complexion specialist saw to it that no wrinkle appeared anywhere upon her countenance and that the skin of face and neck and shoulders remained as flawless, as delicate and as softly brilliant as when she became a bride; her hairdresser gave such expert attention to her wishes that her crown of fair-hued locks, instead of darkening with the years, was more softly golden than it had been in her youth and was still as plentiful and as lustrous as then. All this, with her social duties and successes and the watching of progress on the New York house, so occupied her days that she thought herself the busiest woman in the city and very much resented the sarcastic

smile with which Josephine, on her rare and brief appearances at home, listened to her complaints about her many engagements and her over-filled time.

Marian gave Josephine enthusiastic accounts of the new house and told her triumphantly, "When you see it, Josie, you'll be perfectly willing to live at home! No sane woman could be induced to stay anywhere else when such a wonderful and beautiful place could be hers just for being willing to live in it. I'm having the loveliest suite decorated and furnished for you and one for Herbert and I'm looking forward to having you both at home again when we get into the house."

But Josephine would not even, when she visited New York, journey up to the street in the Seventies to see the new house in process of transformation. Laura Wayne Bradford had established herself in a little apartment in Greenwich Village, and Josephine, on her frequent week-end or short vacation journeys to New York while she was studying in Philadelphia, always stayed with her. Laura was the center of a coterie of young or youngish men and women who prided themselves on their free minds, their advanced ideas and their unhampered outlook upon life. They made themselves free of her apartment, coming and going as they liked, inviting themselves to meals and bringing their own food with them or coming empty-handed, as the spirit of the moment moved, and talking all the time. Each of them had his or her own hobby which would be, of itself, enough to make over and energize anew a decadent society. They were all socialists or anarchists or communists and they were all eager to help overturn the existing social, economic and political order. They would argue all night over what ought to be done after the revolution should be accomplished, but they were

all agreed that destruction, wide-spread and thorough, should come first, and they were never tired of announcing their readiness to take a hand in the upsetting of things when the time for it should come.

Josephine, with the clear and widely-searching views of racial well-being and racial progress which her scientific studies had given her, found repugnant the beliefs of many of them upon the questions of love and marriage and parenthood and because she argued hotly for her own convictions they were inclined to consider her, with more or less good-natured contempt, a conservative, and even a reactionary. She smiled when they applied these terms to her as she remembered her reputation in her own home for rabid radicalism. She thought Laura's friends, most of them, too fanatical and too fond of talking to attain any practical result and she frequently set them down as fantastic in both personal appearance and ideas, but she found them almost always interesting and stimulating and their influence led her to examine anew from fresh viewpoints and under new light the convictions and tendencies of her own mind.

She described the coterie to her grandfather and told him about its opinions and its arguments. Her account did not lack in mirth and sarcastic humor and it was frequently interrupted by the laughter of both of them. He took her young, strong hand in both of his, that she noted with a pang in her heart were getting thin and wrinkled and old-looking, and told her:

"I'm glad you can laugh over it, Josie, for as long as you are not afraid to face ideas and can laugh at them if they are absurd, it proves to me that you are, as I've always told you, sound at the core. Hold on to your Dixon common sense, Josie, dear, and be sure you keep

your feet on the ground, even if your head is knocking the stars!"

Toward the end of Josephine's medical course Laura took her one evening to a social settlement in the lower East Side in which she sometimes worked. It was a Jewish quarter to which were constantly coming, to relatives already there, immigrants from Russia and southeastern Europe who were appallingly poor and ignorant and of low standards of living. The two girls went through the swarming streets and into little shops through whose back doors they could see the homes of two or three rooms crowded with families of eight or ten or a dozen members. It was Josephine's first personal knowledge of such conditions and her heightened color and brilliant eyes showed to her friend that the sight was having the effect Laura had hoped for on her mind and heart. When they started home Josephine fell silent and did not speak again until they reached Laura's little apartment. There she walked about aimlessly, looking at one thing and another with abstracted eyes, but presently she wheeled sharply around and began in a business-like tone:

"Laura," then her voice shook and she had to wait a little to regain her poise before she could go on, controlling her emotion with deep, slow breaths and making a stop every few words to keep her tones firm and even: "Laura, I've found—my life work. I see it plain—before me. I'm going to set up my office over there in—that ghetto and do what I can to teach—those people how to live cleanly and wholesomely, and how to keep—themselves well and strong. They're a festering mass and I—can do a little to make it—aseptic. Gladys will help me—I know she well—she'll come with

me, and we'll make a beginning and develop, as we learn what to do and how to do it, into a health center. I'm going to write to her about it right now."

Gladys would finish her training as a nurse at almost the same time that Josephine would be ready to begin her medical practice and Gladys was enthusiastically ready to do anything or go anywhere that Josephine asked of her. For the next few months they were busy exchanging ideas and suggestions and making plans for the work they intended so soon to take up.

Gladys's father, David Miller, of whom it was her custom to speak as "Davy Dad," had married again and the second wife had little use for the daughter of the first. Nor had David himself ever recovered from his first revulsion against the child who had cost the life of his sweetheart-wife and although he tried when with her to conceal his feeling she had sensed it while still a little girl and ever since had avoided him. Her grandfather, whom she always called "Grandad Stephen," she knew loved her in his own careless, irresponsible way, although he had never, even after his wife's death, burdened himself with anxiety or care about her. He had brought her up, as far as he took any hand in the enterprise, on the principle of letting her do as she liked and take the consequences.

David had reached middle age, leaving behind him an unbroken record of business blundering and incapacity. Stephen had made or found for him position after position, in which he had never made good, and time and again had started him in business for himself, only to see him presently run it into complete failure. Stephen, watching him and forever grumbling about his manifold incapacities and then being again disarmed

by his buoyant spirits and incurably optimistic outlook, said to himself many times:

"The only cure for him will be to let him spend it all, down to the last cent, so that he'll know there is absolutely no more, unless he earns it himself. Some day I'll do it, as sure as I'm alive!"

Stephen himself, as old age came on and business responsibilities became a burden, drew out of one after another of his enterprises and invested his money in stocks and bonds about which he needed to take little thought. But he retained his membership in the Board of Trade and amused himself and occupied his time by dabbling in its operations. And he tried to induce David to confine his business endeavors to similar speculations, telling him,

"You can't help making a winning there sometimes, and it's the only thing you ever try to do that isn't all loss!"

The friendship between Josephine and Clifford Wright, which had begun on the invaded holiday train, continued through all the years of her training and they had become close and dear friends. He had a position in charge of the engineering work on one of her father's railroad systems, with offices in New York, and while she was in Philadelphia they saw each other frequently. But he told her that he wanted to be his own man and was looking forward to opening his own office as a consulting engineer. Comparing prospects, they found that he would probably be able to realize his hope about the time that she would carry out her plan of becoming a practicing physician in the East Side. As the day to which she looked forward came near she found his attitude toward her changing from

friend to lover and had to meet his suit for her love and promise of marriage.

She was surprised and alarmed by this menace to her plans. At first she thought that she would, that she simply must, refuse him. But she quickly discovered that this was not an easy thing to do. Life without Clifford Wright in it, she realized, would be a colorless, unsatisfactory thing. She faced the stern fact that the career which she had believed would be all-sufficing would not fill his place and she could not bring herself to definite giving up of the work she had planned with such high purpose and such solemn consecration of herself. Nor could she persuade herself that she would be justified in giving either to him or to it a divided allegiance. Slowly and unwillingly she realized that she must choose between her profession as a physician and what she liked to call the profession of wife and mother. And it was difficult to make the choice. Her purpose, which had become a part of her very being, dominated her and would not be overridden, or even questioned. And so she held her lover off, she would not tell him whether or not she loved him, she evaded direct answers to his pleas, she told him she must have time, lots of time, to consider so serious a matter. Underneath it all she felt a surety that she would go right on in the way she had planned, regardless of her elemental desire to keep her lover at her side.

Herbert, in the meantime, had been traveling his own difficult way. Inspiring him toward an artistic career and urging him to take the necessary training had been his own inclination, Benjy's influence and Josephine's belief in his ability to achieve success as an artist and her constant encouragement of his purpose. His father had looked forward from Herbert's boyhood to training

his only son for a business career, to taking him as soon as he should be graduated from Harvard into his offices and inducting him into the management of his manifold enterprises, seeing him become as astute and expert as himself, and finally, after many years, turning over to him the magnificent business estate, the dominating industrial power he had built up. And Herbert was a socialist and reviled it all and wanted to study art and paint pictures. And, worse still, Herbert dilly-dallied even over what he wanted to do, spent a good deal of time amusing himself and did not make much headway. If the boy had shown as much determination as he himself had felt over what he wanted to do when he began his career, or as much force and purpose as his sister displayed in her medical studies, Morris said to himself that he would have made little objection.

"But," he grumbled, "Herbert is just simply lazy and the only cure for him will be to put his nose on the grindstone and keep it there until he comes to his senses."

Morris believed, with entire conviction, that if Herbert were to be once installed in the midst of that wonderful interlocking machinery of vast and many-sided business that he had built up, could see it moving with all its resistless energy and its flawless adaptation, the boy would quickly be won over to its service by sheer admiration of its perfection, would forget his socialism as if it were no more than a suit of outgrown clothes and find in this new work a satisfaction far greater than in art. For to Morris these huge business enterprises that he had created and had interlocked with smoothly-running machinery, so that each one served all the rest, formed the most admirable and most wonderful thing in the world and he could not understand how any one,

comprehending it and its results, could fail to find service in it the most desirable of all occupations. But he was willing, and he thought himself very generous in this, to give his son some leeway in the matter and opportunity to prove whether or not he was likely to make a worth-while artist of himself. If Herbert did not within two or three years begin to show some likelihood of results he warned the boy that he would have to take up a business career that would prepare him for the inheritance and management of the Dixon interests.

And so the fateful year of 1914 dawned upon the Dixon family, rent by its clashing wills and opposing purposes. The long, slow processes by which spirit and purpose, character and environment, work their way to focal points were ready for fulfillment.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PEACH TREES BLOOM AGAIN

IT was April, 1914, and the peach trees blooming in Emily Walters' garden, pink and sweet in the golden sunshine, were telling once more their wondrous story of how youth and hope and love are forever renewing themselves in the heart of the world. Emily looked at them with the same delight and the same stirring of the springs of romance in her heart that their beauty always gave her and her thoughts ran back to that April day, almost fifty years ago, when William came galloping down the road and Stephen—but she smiled as she thought of Stephen and the heartbreak he gave her that day, and said to herself, "What a silly goose I was!"

For she had had a busy, full and happy life and had loved her husband with whole-hearted devotion. Stephen had become, long ago, a mere memory, but, because it was Stephen who first wakened love and romance in her heart, thought of him and sight of blooming peach trees always stirred that memory into dim, vague beauty and fragrance. Peach tree blooms seemed, somehow, in the bottom of her heart, to be more closely connected with Stephen than even his granddaughter who had spent, with Josephine, parts of several summers at her home. She had grown fond of Gladys, but for the girl's own sake and not at all for Stephen's, and she

was looking forward with pleasure to seeing her again. Josephine and Gladys had both written asking her to visit them in their East Side apartment, where they had begun the work to which they had been looking forward, and to stay as long as she wasn't bored. It would be a new experience, different from anything she had ever known, and Emily, notwithstanding her sixty-six years, had a heart that was still youthful enough to relish new sights and new experiences. She was going first to Washington to visit William and Amy and afterwards to New York and later on there would be a long stay with Benjy and Evaleena, another with Mark and Beulah and a visit to her daughters on the Pacific Coast.

Life in its ruthless progress had stripped Emily and left her alone in the home where she had lived so many happy years. Her husband had died five years before; her oldest daughter was principal of a high school in Chicago; another daughter had died; the other two had married and gone to the Pacific Coast—that never-resting progress westward—where one lived in Washington on a great hay ranch and the other in southern California on a raisin vineyard; both of her sons were married and one of them, who was interested in a commercial house in St. Louis, had been sent by his firm to South America, whither he had gone with his family; while the other, married but two weeks before, had already started with his bride on their journey to China where he was going as a medical missionary. So Emily, with the fabric of her life thus cut sheerly away, but with the love and enjoyment of life still fresh in her heart and the conviction and desire of usefulness still strong within her, faced an uncertain future. She thought that probably she would go to Chicago to live

with her unmarried daughter, who urged her to do so. But first would come this round of visits and after that she would decide.

She was not thinking of that problem as she went among her peach trees cutting off the loveliest branches and carefully packing them in a long box with damp moss and wet paper. She was wondering what had happened to the Dixon family in New York and hoping that no serious trouble had come upon Josephine and Herbert—if it was only Morris or Marian she would not care so much, for she was not fond of either of them. A telegram had just come from Amy asking her to start at once on her trip to Washington and go with her and William over to New York, whither they had been called by an urgent request from Marian. Emily had planned to start only a day later and so she had only to make ready the gift of peach blooms which she always made to Amy as regularly every year as April brought their flowers.

"I'll take an extra lot this time," she said to herself, "and carry some of them over to New York to the girls. I wonder if they've ever heard the story of how William came home that day in such a rush and would marry Amy, right off, whether or no."

Senator and Mrs. Dixon had been urged by their daughter-in-law to hurry over to New York to help her prevent, she told them, her silly, reckless children from disgracing the family any more than they had done already. They had been guilty of irreparable mischief, unspeakable behavior, she declared, and their crazy actions must be stopped. What with tears, excitement and indignation she had been rather incoherent over the long-distance phone, but William inferred some very real trouble behind her urgency and promised that

he and Amy would start as soon as Emily could reach Washington to go with them as, since she was due so soon, they could not leave until she came.

Marian was marshaling all her forces for a final attack upon the purposes of her children. She and her husband had decided that their patience had been tried and their feelings and interests outraged beyond further endurance and together they were preparing to bring every possible pressure to bear upon the young people to force them to give up their purposes. The final blow upon the raw which had set both of them, and Marian in particular, to immediate and energetic action had been a newspaper account of Josephine's enterprise. Josephine had feared that some such publicity might flame out over them and she and Gladys and Herbert had gone about the realization of their plans with the greatest care, hoping they would be able to hide themselves in the crowded East Side street and be forgotten by all but the friends for whom they most cared. Herbert was still dilly-dallying with his study of art, showing by the fresh and vigorous drawings that he frequently made and the occasional studies on canvas that came into life under his brush that he lacked only application and purpose to bring his rare gift to wonderful flower. He lived at the social settlement near Josephine's place, did some work there, did a little work also for a socialist newspaper, made considerable pretense of studying in an art school and spent a good deal of time at Josephine's apartment.

Josephine had put a sign beside the street entrance to the stairway where, new and bright and in large letters, it made known that the offices of Josephine Dixon, M.D., and Gladys Miller, Trained Nurse, were one flight up. There a keen-witted newspaperman saw

it soon after its first appearance in mid-winter, wondered idly if by any possibility this East Side doctor could belong to *the* Dixon family, decided that she couldn't, and then happened to learn from a fellow-reporter who sometimes, for entertainment's sake, went to Laura Wayne Bradford's apartment in Greenwich Village, that the son and daughter of Morris Dixon were said to be socialists although Laura's crowd rather turned up their noses at them as reactionary. He scented a good newspaper story and for weeks worked on it casually, learning a little here and a little there, finally identifying Josephine and Gladys and unearthing the whole account of what they and Herbert were doing and of their repudiation of accepted social and economic doctrines. Each of them refused to talk with or see him, but that merely delayed his gathering together of the facts that would round out his narrative. He sent a photographer to loiter in the street near Josephine's apartment and succeeded in getting recognizable snap-shots of all three of them as they went in and out. And he used plentiful and glowing color in the writing of his tale.

When David Miller, in April, 1914, began a spectacular attempt to corner the wheat market of the world this newspaper man decided it was a good time to bring out his story, with its illustrations. His newspaper ran it on the front page, with big headlines. All the other newspapers in the city took it up and printed more or less about it and it was sent by wire to journals in all the principal cities of the country. Editorial writers found in it themes for discussion and considered it from varied viewpoints as illustrating the growing unrest, or the spread and menace of socialism, or the reaction against excessive accumulations of

wealth, or the decay of family ties, or the deplorable lack of filial and stable qualities in the new generation, or the fads of the rich, and a dozen other matters.

Marian Dixon was overwhelmed when the story was thus spread everywhere before the eyes of the public that Josephine and Herbert Dixon and Gladys Miller were living and working in the most crowded and unsanitary and poverty-stricken Jewish quarter of the East Side, openly flaunting their belief in socialism and cutting loose from their families. When she first saw it, pictures, headlines and all, she fainted, and then spent the rest of the day in bed, weeping and hysterical. The next day she gathered herself together and set out to put a stop, finally, she told Morris, to "the disgraceful conduct of our ungrateful and unnatural children."

She got the promise of Senator Dixon and his wife, whom she knew to have more influence with Josephine than any one else, to come to New York as quickly as possible, and she tried to get into communication with Stephen Miller, but over the long-distance phone his hotel told her that he was in Florida. Then she called David Miller, but he was so absorbed in the manipulation of the wheat market upon which he had started that all he would say was, "Yes, yes! Too bad! Can't do anything—too busy—you must excuse me!" Her husband promised to go with her and bring to bear upon the young people the severest possible pressure. Then she engaged passage to Europe for herself and her daughter and Gladys, and told Morris that if everything else failed she would not hesitate to have the two girls kidnapped and put on board just before the steamer sailed.

After she had arranged her plans Marian went to make one last plea of her own before bringing to bear

the final pressure. Josephine's apartment was on the corner of two streets that were always crowded and dirty, fairly swarming with the streams of untidy humanity forever pouring up and down the sidewalks and in and out of the tenements that stretched away on every side. She had seen to it that the hall and stairway leading to her rooms were sanitary and spick and span in white paint. She had taken two small apartments, thrown them into one and enlarged the rooms. They were very simply finished and furnished, with the woodwork all painted a creamy white and the walls a soft tan, the windows draped with white net, cushions and a bit of upholstery here and there of an inexpensive grayish blue material giving a touch of color. Pots of growing flowers were scattered about and on Josephine's desk in her office was a bowl of glowing yellow daffodills, the daily tribute of Clifford Wright, which seemed to concentrate in their golden cups the sunshine and the spirit of spring that were flooding even the dingy street outside the open windows. On her desk also stood the open case of her picture of her great-grandmother. Near by were a stand with shelves filled with bottles of medicine and the implements of her profession and scales and a basket for weighing babies. At one side a door opened into her bedroom and other doors led from their private hall into the office and connected the office with their living-room in front, which was also the waiting room for Dr. Dixon's patients.

Marian arrived in the midst of Josephine's office hours, and Gladys, who in nurse's uniform admitted and shepherded the waiting patients, ushered them in their due turns into the office and gave Josephine whatever assistance she needed, led her to a seat in the waiting

room, was very sorry but Josie would never let any one in out of turn or see any except her patients until the last one was gone, fluttered about her and made utmost effort to beguile her impatience and her indignation. For Marian felt that being thus kept waiting among her daughter's patients was the final and crowning injury and insult.

Gladys came out of the waiting room and shut the door behind her. Josephine was showing a patient out at the hall door and saying to her, "Now, Mrs. Wilkowsky, try to remember all I've told you, and take this prescription to the dispensary. They will give you some medicine and you must be sure to give it to the little boy exactly as they tell you. I'll go this afternoon to see him, but if he should get worse before I come send for me at once."

The woman left and Gladys danced across the room, smiling and gay. "Josie, dear, your mother must have been saving up patience to make this visit for weeks, but it's absolutely all gone already and she says that if she has to wait any longer she—she can't wait any longer!" They both giggled and Gladys made a little face and said mirthfully, "Didn't know I was Irish, did you?"

"Are all the patients gone?"

"All except your mother, and you'll find her the most difficult case of them all!"

"Oh, Gladdie, why won't they let us alone? We're happy here, and useful—we're really doing some good—and I don't see why they can't be decent about it and let us live our own lives. I suppose those horrid newspaper articles have set mother off again. Well, I might as well see her and have it over with."

Josephine opened the door into the living room and

saw her mother standing just inside, frowning and impatient. She nodded coolly. "Good morning, mother! Come in!" Then as Marian stepped in she turned to Gladys, who was just vanishing into the hall: "Oh, Gladys! If you have time will you look in at Mrs. Wilkowsky's and see that she is giving the medicine right and if the little boy is clean and the milk covered and kept in a cool place and—oh, all the rest of it!"

"All right, Josie. I have two other visits to make in the same house and I'll take them all in."

Marian was standing in the middle of the room, her face flushed and her eyes snapping with indignation. She looked almost as young as her daughter and was much more beautiful. A stranger would have been sure she was a slightly older sister instead of the mother of the younger woman. But Josephine's countenance told the story, unmistakably, of a stronger nature and a better intelligence and upon it life had already made a more interesting imprint.

"Can you, finally, spare a few minutes to your mother?" Marian was saying with angry petulance.

Josephine smiled at her. "Sit down, mother! I'm sorry you've had to wait. But when I have patients waiting I can't break into my office hours for social purposes."

"It was bad enough to have to drive through these wretched streets," Marian complained, "and then to have to sit and wait all that time in the room with those dirty, smelly creatures! Really, Josephine, it was too much!"

A definite stiffness was in Josephine's manner as she replied, "I'm sorry you have been annoyed. You wanted to see me about something particular?"

"I want to beg you once more to give up this crazy,

disgraceful project that is bringing shame upon your whole family—oh, Josie, those horrible newspaper articles! They've almost killed me!"

Marian sobbed and Josephine's manner softened a little as she replied: "Yes, mother, they were dreadful, and very annoying, to me as well as you. But they were a mere incident, a pin-prick that couldn't be avoided, in the course of the vital things I want to do."

"Selfish as always," her mother upbraided. "You think only of yourself! Try just once to think of others! Think what a grief and disgrace this shameful, socialistic scheme of yours is to me and your father and your grandfather! Morris Dixon's daughter refusing to live in her father's home and preferring a dirty East Side street so she can wash the faces and doctor the stomach-aches of a lot of filthy, ignorant immigrant children! Ridiculous!"

Josephine's color was rising and her eyes beginning to flash, but she replied quietly, "The children and their mothers do not think it ridiculous."

"Oh, of course," Marian conceded with an air of conscious generosity, "it's all right for somebody to do that kind of thing! But why should you do it? You can have all the money you want, your father will give you anything you ask for—anything—if you will only give up this scheme—and your socialism. Now, Josie, dear, I am planning to go abroad soon and I've taken passage for you and Gladys, too, and if you will go with me I can arrange for us all to be presented at court! Think of that!"

With wonder in her eyes Josephine regarded the air of triumph with which her mother concluded. Then she sprang up with a gesture of impatience and crossing over to the window she said brusquely, "There, there,

mother! Don't waste your time and mine talking about such plans! Why should we argue any more about this? You've said everything there is to be said so many times already, and I know I'm doing the right thing—know it absolutely!" She turned back to her mother abruptly and demanded with an annoyance in her tones that spoke eloquently of the strained relationship, "Did father send you to make this offer?"

"He wanted me to try once more, after all this disgraceful newspaper publicity, to bring you to your senses."

"And does he think," Josephine went on earnestly, with a touch of contempt in her tone, "that the promise of all the money I could use for my own selfish pleasures would be an inducement?"

"He supposes," Marian responded, nettled by her daughter's tone, "that you are human, and a woman, and like the things money can buy!"

Josephine looked out of the window upon the swarming street. "It's because I am human and a woman that I am here! All this dirt and poverty and ignorance and wretchedness break my heart and I must do what I can that will help!"

"Have you never heard that charity begins at home?" Marian's voice and manner were reproachful. "Do you never think of how much your own father and mother need you?"

Josephine walked across the room and stood before her mother with a sarcastic smile on her face. "The newspapers say father is worth fifty million dollars. Can't you buy some playthings to amuse yourselves with?"

Marian sank back with eyes full of tears. "Josephine! How can you be so hard?"

“Forgive me, mother! I didn’t mean to hurt you. But what would I be in that palace of yours but a plaything for you?” She turned away again, speaking bitterly: “Money! Money! Money! When I am in that house we seem to do nothing but eat money and drink money and wrap ourselves up in hundred dollar bills! The whole place smells so of money—fairly stinks of money—that I loathe it!”

Marian sat up straight with a horrified expression. “Josephine!” she upbraided. “How can you use such language? So unladylike! See what coarseness your associations are bringing you to!”

Gladys’s code knock sounded at the door from the hall, two sharp raps, a pause and two more, and she came in bringing a telegram for Josephine.

“Gladdie, dear,” said Marian, “I’ve been making one more appeal to Josie to give up this outrageous scheme of hers and come home to live, as a young woman ought until she marries. And of course we want you, too. Will you come?”

“Thank you, Mrs. Dixon! You’re awfully kind, and I appreciate it. But did you see our sign as you came in?”

“That sign!” Marian exclaimed disgustedly.

“We’re very proud of it, Mrs. Dixon, although you don’t seem to like it. We’re sorry to disappoint you, but we can’t desert our first-born sign and we’re going to stay right here on the job!”

Josephine looked up from her telegram, her face bright with pleasure. “It’s from grandfather,” she told them. “He and grandmother are on their way over here from Washington and they are bringing Aunt Emily. They are due early this afternoon and they’re

all coming straight up here. The old darlings! Won't it be jolly to see them again, Gladdie!"

"I asked them to come," said Marian, rising and speaking with decision. "I want them to see just how foolishly and disgracefully you two silly girls are acting. Your grandfather, Josie, will tell you how injurious to his reputation and your father's all this is, and surely his opinion will have some weight with you, even if what your father and mother say does not." She included Gladys in her glance. "I'm going to sail for Europe next Saturday and I want both of you girls to be ready to go with me."

Gladys dropped a curtsey and demurely murmured, "Oh, Mrs. Dixon! This is so sudden!"

"I shall meet them here," Marian went on, moving toward the door, "and I am going down to your father's office, Josie, and shall bring him back with me."

"Josie," exclaimed the irrepressible Gladys, as they accompanied Marian to the outer door, "just think of all that heavy artillery we'll have to face! We must have Herbert come and help us man our guns! Why don't you get my Grandad Stephen, too, Mrs. Dixon?"

"Is he in town? They told me in Chicago that he was in Florida."

"He came in last night and he's at the Waldorf-Astoria."

"Thank you! I'll bring him, too, and," she turned a triumphant face upon them as she left, "you can expect us all a little later!"

They came back into the office, Gladys dancing and humming a gay tune. She laughed and seized Josephine's hands. "Josie, dear, we're in for it, aren't we! If we let them all say just everything they want to, and

can think of, talk themselves clear out, do you suppose they'll let us alone after this?"

"Oh, Gladdie, let's hope so! But I am sorry for mother, because she just simply can't understand how we feel. It's beyond her horizon."

"Oh, your mother's a dear and I love her—when she lets us alone. But she's so set on her social ambitions that she's just plain buggy about them. She is determined to be a social leader herself and she wants you to be a brilliant social success and help her boost the family to a commanding position at the very tip-top of the most exclusive social circle in New York. And you are determined to do—this! Yes, Josie, I reckon she is some disappointed!"

"She's broken-hearted," said Josephine with a sigh. "I used to cry over it, because I understand how she feels, until I saw that I was just wasting my energy in useless emotion. For I can't change her and I know, I *know*, I am doing the right thing. Gladdie, I envy you—you can go right along without any interference from your family."

"Oh, my Davy Dad," said Gladys unconcernedly, "has never bothered his head five minutes about me, since the day I was born, and Grandad Stephen, the old darling, always lets me do as I please. I suspect they might have been a little naughty about our plan here if I'd told them all about it beforehand. But I thought the less they knew the happier they'd be—and of course it was my duty to make them as happy as I could."

"Don't they know about it yet? Haven't you told them what we're doing?"

"Not enough to worry their dear hearts! Business men always think that whatever succeeds is all right, so I knew that if I didn't tell them too much at the start

they'd pretty soon be patting my head and saying what a clever girl I am and how proud of me they are!"

The door bell rang, three short, sharp tinkles, and both girls sprang up exclaiming, "There's Herbert!" and rushing into the hall. Gladys's dancing feet carried her ahead and she called back, "And Clifford's with him!" At the name Josephine stopped suddenly, the color rising in her cheeks, and turned back into the room.

"My, but we're glad to see you!" Gladys was saying as she ushered them into the room. "You've come just in time to save our lives! Josie and I are about to take our positions on the burning deck!"

"And you want us to be the fire department, do you," Clifford Wright bantered her, his eyes seeking Josephine.

Gladys stood in the middle of the room, her eyes wide and her face solemn, as she declaimed with angular, pawing gestures, "Awful things are about to happen! A regular slaughter of the innocents! And you are just in time for the carnage!" Then she giggled and asked with childlike eagerness, "Aren't you glad you came?"

"What's the matter? Police about to raid you as a hot-bed of socialism?" Clifford wanted to know, and Herbert demanded impetuously, "What's up, Josie?"

Josephine told them and Gladys joined in: "In short, the cohorts of capitalism are coming, and we're going to have a perfectly lovely scrap."

"Is it time for noncombatants to get out of the firing zone?" Clifford asked, pretending anxiety.

"You're not a noncombatant, Cliff!" Herbert exclaimed, his fair hair, combed straight up above his forehead, seeming almost to bristle as he talked with impulsive gestures. "You're one of the slaves of capitalism

and you fight against us because you have to. You're just a mercenary soldier!"

Clifford laughed good-naturedly. "Put it any way you like, Herbert! But you know I don't believe your socialistic theories. I think you are all wrong, away off, economically, and that you mistake the psychology of human beings."

"That's because," Herbert rejoined with emphasis, "your little old pay envelope hits you in the eye every week, and injures your eyesight! When all you folks who sell your brains at so much per to the big corporations wake up and see things straight, then something will happen! The money lords, like my father and Gladys's grandfather, fatten themselves off the brains of you salaried people. They are like cannibals, and we need a new word to describe them!"

"Call them brannibals, then," Gladys interjected.

"Good word, Gladdie! Thank you! Trust you to hit it off! The brannibals have got you, Cliff, and unless you get away from them they will suck the last atom of brains out of your skull and then throw you on the scrap heap. Nice prospect, don't you think?"

"No, I don't! But I hope I've escaped already."

At once they were all eager to know if he had really at last set up his own office and he told them proudly, "You ought to see my beautiful new sign—it's as bright and shiny as yours! 'Clifford Wright, C. E., Consulting Engineer.'"

They all shook hands with him enthusiastically, congratulated him and rejoiced with him, and Gladys said: "I'm sure you will succeed, because you are a perfectly good engineer, and some day we are going to make a perfectly good socialist out of you, aren't we, Herbert?"

Clifford laughed and told her, "Not unless miracles still happen!"

"But they do sometimes," she insisted, "if you have vim enough to make them. I'm due right now to make a miracle happen in a house in the next block, if somebody will go with me and help me carry it. Please don't both offer at once, because three's a crowd, you know, and that street," she stood on tiptoe and peeked down upon the swarming sidewalk, "looks pretty crowded already."

Herbert sprang up, saying, "I'll go, Gladdie! Come along!" He seized her hands and as they tangoed toward the door, Josephine called after them, "You'll come back, won't you, in time to help me hold the fort against the cohorts of capitalism?"

"Oh, sure!" they called back, laughing, as they danced down the hall.

Josephine had found Gladys's blithe nature and irrepressible spirits a very great aid in their work. Her merry laugh, her ready tongue and her bright and pretty face won quick welcome for her wherever she went and whatever her errand. She could persuade and wheedle and amuse a frightened child into taking medicine or a rebellious one into having a bath, she could jolly a discouraged man into making a fresh effort and her gay and friendly talk and laughter as she showed an ignorant mother how to bathe her baby or clean her rooms properly or take care of food inspired trust and friendly feeling in return and the desire to win her praise.

But Josephine knew that underneath her gayety and daintiness were practical ability, an unusual knack of getting others to do what she wanted and shrewd com-

mon sense. Her lightsome disposition that sent her to face whatever might happen with a whimsical jest or a gay and gallant laugh merely disguised capacities as practical and efficient as those that had been masked by Sophy Miller's clattering and tactless tongue. Josephine wondered sometimes how long her helper would be willing to continue in the difficult and unpleasant task they had undertaken, but she had much faith in Gladys's loyalty to her and in her steadfast nature. But there was Herbert to reckon with also, Herbert, eager and impulsive and temperamental, and she guessed that matters between Herbert and Gladys were progressing toward the point where, presently, they might begin to talk of marriage. And how would she adjust her own scheme of life then?

But it was her personal problem that she had to consider at the moment, for Clifford Wright was approaching her, taking her hand, dropping on his knees beside her chair, and saying, "Josephine, have you decided—don't you see now that what I want—for us to marry—is the thing for us to do?"

"No, Cliff, I can't see that," she said gently, with tenderness in her voice and letting him retain her hand. "What I see more and more is that it's the thing I can not do!"

"But why, Josephine, dearest, when you love me?" He hesitated, remembering that she had never admitted that she loved him, although he was sure of her feeling, and then went on pleadingly: "You do love me, don't you, Josephine, darling? Say you do! You almost said it the other day!"

She was silent a moment with face averted, and then, with a beating heart and an agitated mind that began to upbraid her inwardly because she had not the cour-

age either to accept or refuse his suit, she took refuge once more in evasion. "But what good will it do to say anything about—that, when I—I haven't decided—that I'll do—the other?"

"Never mind the marrying part—just now!" he went on eagerly. "If you don't love me and feel sure that you never can, I'll go away and never trouble you again. But if you do care it is my right to know it! Josephine, dearest, don't send me away uncertain again! Think what it will mean to me to be sure that you are keeping me in your heart as I am keeping you in mine. Josephine! The thought of you is the sweetest, dearest, holiest thing I know! I love every thought of you that comes into my mind. I love you, my dearest, more than anything in the world, and I want your love. Oh, darling, how I want it! Josephine, if you do love me, won't you tell me so?"

Josephine sat very still with her face turned away. Her conscience was telling her that she had no right to keep this man any longer the slave of her indecision, that the time had come when, in justice to him, who was so good and dear a friend, she must bid him either to stay or go. Then, in the space of a heart-beat, she was wholly possessed by the desire to confess her love. The overwhelming impulse sent a wild thrill of happiness through her veins and made her heart beat joyously. She turned her face to him as it suddenly lighted up with her radiant smile. The gleam of sunshine that broke over her countenance and shone in her eyes and the sweet womanhood of which it told fired his pulses and he would have clasped her in his arms, saying hoarsely, "Josephine, you do love me—your blessed smile—it tells me so!"

With her hands upon his shoulders she held him back

as she said, "Yes, Cliff, I do love you!" Again he tried to take her in his arms but she sprang up and the glow that filled her heart from love confessed suddenly made her see that she had never intended to marry him, that she had never been quite honest with herself or with him and that now she must tell him what, she realized at last, had all the time been her purpose.

"No, no! Let me finish! I shall not marry, ever, you or any one. But I love you dearly—as much as I could love any man."

"Is it because you think marriage would interfere with your career?"

"That is too cold a way to put it," she objected, crossing to the window. "See, Cliff," she went on, pointing to the crowded street below, "how life swarms out there—swarms and rots and breeds more life! Oh, I can't tell you how the longing fills me and possesses me to help these people, if only those in a single block, to cleaner, more wholesome ways of living! And when I think how much my father is responsible for all that and for the same kind of thing in other cities and around his mines and factories—and he is responsible, because his tremendous success and his awful wealth have made this abominable economic system stronger and more cruel—when I think of that—oh, Clifford, I wish I had a dozen lives so that I could give them all to this work!"

"But," he objected, "you could marry and do this work, too."

She shook her head with decision. "No, it isn't possible. I've tried to persuade myself that I could, but I know too much to attempt it. Marriage and motherhood demand for many years all the best that any woman can give, if she meets her obligations as she should.

And this work, that calls me so, demands not only the best but the whole of me, and the whole isn't nearly enough!"

"But, Josephine, dearest, it is not right, it is most unfair," he argued with desperate earnestness, "for you to sacrifice the whole of your life in this way, when one person can do so little!"

She sank down dejectedly upon the window seat and with her cheek on her hand gazed down for a moment upon the street. "Oh, I know how little I can do—how insignificant it is in comparison with the whole vast flood of poverty and ignorance and misery. And when I think of all the dwarfed and blighted and corrupted lives that might have been good and straight and wholesome—oh, it makes me wild! I can do so little and I want to do so much!"

She sprang up and walked restlessly across the room and he followed her, saying: "Your feeling about this great problem is noble and beautiful, and I love you for it all the more. But are you sure you see your relations to it quite clearly? And aren't you too sensitive about your father's wealth? You are not responsible for that!"

She turned and faced him squarely and he realized the utter conviction that inspired her words as she said: "My father in the pursuit of his wealth has broken and ruined many lives and I must do what little I can to help and heal a few of the other lives that his wealth and the system that makes his wealth possible would ruin if I didn't do what I can to save them. No, Cliff, I shall never marry."

He saw that her mood was one of higher tension than usual and he thought it best to say no more at that moment. She let him take her hand and kiss it as he

told her, "Perhaps I ought not to have spoken to-day, because you are under a nervous strain—your mother's visit and all of them coming presently—but I can't be sorry, for it made you say that you love me! And I've not given up hope that some day you'll change your mind. Anyway, I shall try again to persuade you!"

She smiled at him, tenderly, wistfully, with love in her eyes and assured him, with a little quaver in her voice, "It will be of no use to talk about it any more!"

Her smile and her eyes fired his heart with fresh hope and he tried to draw her to him, exclaiming, "Josephine, dearest! You do love me!"

But she pulled her hand from his clasp and drew back, telling him, "No! No! I've given you my answer!"

The voices of Gladys and Herbert, merry and laughing, sounded from the hall and Clifford turned to go. "Good-by, dear," he said. "Remember, we haven't said the last word yet! And I shall keep on hoping!"

She heard Gladys and Herbert calling out to him gay banter and good-byes as he went down the stairway, and then she threw herself into the chair beside her desk with her face upon her arms. There a few moments later Gladys saw her as, followed by Herbert, she came in from the living room. Gladys turned and waved Herbert back.

"Go away a while and be good all by yourself, Herbert," she admonished him. "Feminist gathering in the office just now, and men are not admitted." She shut the door, then opened it a little to call after him, "You can come and sit in the gallery for the speeches, after the dinner's over!"

She sat down beside Josephine and patted her arm as she asked, with concern and affection, "Josie, dear,

what's the matter? Has Clifford been proposing again?" Josephine nodded without looking up and Gladys went on, with exaggerated hopelessness, "What are we going to do about that man?"

Josephine sat up, wiped her eyes and sighed. "I'll have to ask him not to come any more."

Gladys sniffed. "Much good that would do! Josie, there's just one way out of it! We'll have to put a small-pox sign on the door!"

"But we'd miss him so much if he didn't come!" Josephine answered thoughtfully. "Somehow, after he's been here, everything seems so different! He's always so interesting and—sort of heartening. We'd miss him, wouldn't we?"

"Oh, yes, of course," said Gladys, with a superior air. "And you'd miss it awfully if he wasn't here every day to propose to you. You've acquired the habit, Josie, of having Cliff propose to you, and you want it, just the same as Grandad Stephen wants his cocktail before dinner."

Josephine smiled and said, "Gladdie! You're absurd!"

"I am only a poor, weak woman, Josie," Gladys answered meekly, "but I've noticed that the truth often is absurd."

"I suppose you mean that you think I ought either to promise Cliff that I'll marry him or send him away entirely."

Gladys got up and with her hands in the pockets of her jacket stood nonchalantly beside the desk. "Oh, that depends on what the pair of you like best. If you enjoy it, both of you, for him to propose every day in the week, and no half holiday on Saturday, and be refused every time, why, go ahead! But it strikes me

as being considerably less than a living wage. Just one of these overworked and underpaid propositions! But if both of you like it, that's your affair! I don't insist on unionizing this office!"

Josephine sat up straight and sent a quick, sharp glance at her friend.

"Gladdie, you mean something!" she exclaimed. "Have you and Herbert——" she paused, and Gladys nodded. She drew the girl down beside her and asked anxiously, "But what about our work here? You don't want to break this up, do you?"

Gladys smiled at her tenderly. "I knew that would be the first thing you would say—your heart's so wrapped up in what we are doing! But Herbert wants me to keep right on, and he'll come here and live with us. And he's going to begin painting East Side types and scenes. He thinks we are doing wonderfully well and that our work will grow and we can make it the center of a big influence."

"I know he does. But do you think, Gladdie, that's the right way for a woman to marry?"

"Why not? You must remember, Josie, that marriage isn't the same thing now that it was forty or fifty years ago, when our grandmothers married. Then a woman had to be married all over or not at all. Marriage swallowed up the whole of her. Now it just takes bites out of her time and energy and personality and she can use the rest for something else."

Josephine looked at her thoughtfully. "If I could feel that way——" she began, then stopped and took up another idea. "You'll soon find you can't do it—that you're only one woman and can't do the work of two, and then you'll have to choose which woman you'll be."

Gladys laughed. "Sufficient unto the day. And just now we're going to keep right on here, for all we're worth, just as we've been doing." She leaned impulsively over Josephine, slipped an arm around her neck and kissed her forehead. "Josie, dear, you aren't disappointed, are you? Because you needn't be, not for a long time yet, anyway."

Josephine returned the caress. "Of course, I'm disappointed a little, because you are a wonderful helper, Gladdie. But we'll go on as long as we can. And I'm glad you and Herbert are so happy." Herbert's knock sounded at the door and his voice called out, "That feminist gathering ready to be dismissed?"

"Run along with him, Gladdie, and I'll see you both after a while, before the cohorts get here."

As Gladys went out and shut the door Josephine's unhappy eyes wandered from the bowl of yellow daffodils, where they rested for a moment, because the flowers were Clifford's gift, to the daguerreotype of her great-grandmother, standing open at the back of her desk. She reached for it and gazed at the pictured face.

"You dear, smiling, splendid woman," she murmured. "You'd tell me, wouldn't you, to do my job, whatever it is, the very best I can, and think nothing too good for it. You did your job so well, so wonderfully well! But it took all of you, didn't it, body and mind and heart and soul!—You didn't have to choose, there was only one kind of job open for you!—It's the price we pay!—Smile at me, and help me bear—my choice!"

CHAPTER XIX

THE BREACH WIDENS

JOSEPHINE, Gladys and Herbert were all at the office window watching for the arrival of their expected visitors, when Herbert caught sight of an automobile making its way slowly down the crowded street.

"There they come," he cried. "Father and mother!"

"And Grandad Stephen," Gladys added excitedly. "Big money has arrived!" She sprang up, seizing a hand of each of the others. "Come on, boys and girls! A hundred million dollars is knocking at our little front door and we're all going to stand in a row and tell it, 'Shoo, fly, don't you bother us!'"

They ran out to meet their visitors and presently Marian and Morris with their two children and Gladys hanging to the arm of Stephen Miller were all trooping into the office. Morris Dixon, nearing his half-century turn, his big frame carrying no extra flesh, his clean-shaven face, cold and severe in its expression, his gray eyes sharp and piercing, looked the personification of the silent, ruthless, avid energies that had amassed his wealth. Stephen, lacking but two years of the Psalmist's three-score and ten, was broad-shouldered, portly and well preserved, his ruddy, smooth-shaven countenance amiable and smiling, while above it shone a bald head fringed scantily with white hair.

"Gladys has written you all about our plans, hasn't

she, Mr. Miller?" Josephine was asking, moved by the longing to plunge at once into the affair and get it over as soon as possible.

Stephen chuckled and shook his finger at his granddaughter. "Young lady, answer for yourself—have you or haven't you written me all about them?"

"Of course I have, Grandad—all about some of them. And if you think well of these, I'll tell you about the others."

Morris turned his piercing eyes upon her and his cool, deliberate tone was full of significance: "And if he doesn't approve, what then?"

But Gladys was not in the least flurried by either penetrating glance or significant manner. "Oh, then I wouldn't annoy him by talking about them! Of course not! Would I, Grandad Stephen?"

Stephen put his arm around her shoulders and gave her a little hug as he laughed and said, "It would be something new if you did!"

"I want you two girls," said Morris incisively, "to tell me just what your plans are."

"We have opened our office here," Josephine began, "because this is one of the poorest, dirtiest, most congested and most unsanitary quarters in the city. We doctor and nurse the sick, especially trying to teach the mothers how to take care of themselves and their babies, and we show the well how to make the most of what little they have and how to clean up themselves and their homes and make their surroundings more sanitary and more decent. And we try to inspire them, in one way or another, with the desire for a better grade of life. We work in connection with a social settlement near here and we hope to develop our beginning into a health center that will have a big influence."

"And I suppose," Morris rejoined with a covert sneer, "that you neglect no opportunity to spread your gospel of socialism!"

"That is my particular work!" Herbert sprang to his feet impetuously, thrusting his head forward in a belligerent way, his cheeks reddening at his father's tone.

"You, Herbert!" Marian exclaimed indignantly. "Dawdling over your art and your socialism, when you ought to be in your father's offices, preparing yourself to relieve him of some of his burdens and carry on the magnificent work he has done! You ought to be ashamed of yourself! You are the most ungrateful children I ever heard of!"

"Ungrateful! Why?" Herbert demanded. "When we think father's immense fortune is a crime and abominate the methods by which he made it! What have we to be grateful for?"

Morris was on his feet, scowling at Herbert and Marian rose, her hand outstretched. "Herbert, stop! No matter what you think, speak more respectfully to your father!"

"You have never shown any reluctance," Morris flung at him, the sneer still evident in his voice, "to using the money I have earned, even if you do think it is so sinful!"

Josephine sprang up and standing near her brother told their father with a touch of defiance in her voice: "We have no pangs of conscience about using any of your money, none whatever, for we know that when we use it for our purposes we are putting ill-gotten gains to good uses and preventing at least that little from being used again for evil ends."

"We don't blame you personally, father," Herbert broke in, his tone more conciliatory, for the happy state

of his personal affairs made him feel, at the moment, more amiable and less tense than did Josephine, "so much as we do the economic system which has made it possible for you to get possession of so much wealth."

"I'm not so sure of that, Herbert!" Josephine exclaimed, her attitude stiffening and her nerves growing more taut as the discussion continued and their feeling waxed higher. "No, father, I can not absolve you! For you have the intelligence to see, if you would, how bad it all is!"

"You must remember, Josie, if he hadn't done it somebody else would."

But Josephine was as unyielding in her convictions as the most obdurate of her Dixon forebears and her rejoinder came out, immediate and clear, and also in a tone a little more highly pitched than was usual with her: "The one who does it is none the less guilty!"

Morris's face went suddenly white with indignation and he turned upon them, his eyes flashing and thin nostrils quivering: "Guilty of what, you young feather-heads? Of building hundreds of miles of railroads and opening up whole states so that people by the hundred thousand can live and become prosperous? Guilty of developing mines and giving employment to thousands of workmen? Of establishing factories where an army of these ignorant people you love so much can earn more money than they ever did before in their lives? Guilty of damming rivers to make them produce wealth, of building bridges and carrying the country's produce to market? Do you think this country would be the rich and powerful nation it is if I and others had not been doing these things, working night and day, all our lives?"

Josephine met her father's wrath with a face as white

as his. "But you haven't done all that," she charged him, "with an unselfish purpose because you wanted to benefit the country or the people! You have done it—selfishly—because you wanted to make money, to get wealth and power for yourself!"

Marian gave a despairing cry and sunk weeping into the chair against which, with a flushed and angry face, she had been leaning. "Oh, Morris," she sobbed. "This is horrible! Our own children! When everybody else admires and honors you!"

Josephine recognized the accent of hysteria in her mother's voice and at once the instinct of the physician dominated her. She ran to Marian's side and with an arm round her lifted her upright, saying gently and soothingly, "No, no, mother! You don't understand! You are hysterical and you'd better come with me."

Gladys left her grandfather, by whose side she had been sitting, and ran to Josephine's assistance and together they led Marian into Josephine's bedroom, which opened out of the office, and persuaded her to lie down while they ministered to her comfort. But Josephine saw at once that her mother shrank from her touch and in order not to irritate her nervous condition she left Gladys in charge and went back to the office.

"Josephine is right!" Herbert had said to his father as the three women left the room. "What she said goes to the bottom of the whole question. There will be hideous and appalling fortunes like yours as long as the present industrial system, with its selfish individualism and its foxy and wolfish——"

"Yes, I know!" Morris broke in impatiently. "It's your damned upsetting socialist theory that's at the bottom of the whole business. Miller, what do you

think I ought to do with these two pig-headed young upstarts?"

Miller considered Herbert judicially, but with a friendly smile, much as he had looked at Herbert's father nearly a quarter century before and had offered him a helping hand in his revolt, perhaps as much to see what the boy would do as because he thought Morris's energy and ambition would be useful. Stephen had not yet wholly lost his youthful zest for setting forces in motion in order to see what would happen afterward. "Well," he said, "you might let 'em earn their own livings for a while, as you and I had to when we were young. That ought to put some sense into their heads!"

Morris turned to his son and asked him in a sneering tone, "Herbert, have you ever earned any money in all your life?"

Josephine had come back into the office and stopped beside her desk, listening eagerly to learn how the controversy was progressing. Herbert's manner was entirely confident as he replied, "I could if I had to."

But Morris's conviction was evidently quite the opposite, for his voice was mocking as he demanded, "What could you do?"

"At present I'm doing some work on a socialist newspaper. But I give my services because I don't need the money and they do. I could have a salary if I needed it and I could earn money with my drawings and paintings, some now and more later on, if I tried to."

Morris snorted his skepticism and his countenance began to relax and to show signs of inward satisfaction as he decided to apply the final means of pressure which he had long been holding in his mind as a last resort.

He had no doubt of its eventual efficacy. "I've a great mind," he said, "to set you both down on your uppers, without a cent to your names."

Josephine moved forward, surprise on her countenance. "Have you forgotten, father, that several years ago you gave to each of us some railroad stocks? You gave them to us absolutely and they have been our property ever since and we have supported ourselves on their proceeds."

"How much do they yield?" Morris wanted to know.

"Each of us," Herbert told him, "gets from them between five and six thousand dollars a year."

Morris smiled his satisfaction. "How would you like to come down within a week from five thousand a year to absolutely nothing? It's true I gave these stocks to you, and they are yours." He stopped and turned his gaze from one to the other. Many a business rival who had been maneuvered into his power had seen the same look of satisfaction and triumph that now gleamed in his eyes. "But don't you know," he went on, "that if I choose I can make your stocks worth no more than so much waste paper?"

Herbert stared at his father. "Do you mean," he asked incredulously, "that you would ruin the road?"

Morris struck the arm of his chair with his clenched fist and his features hardened. "I can make both of you beggars within a week," he said with cold decision, "and that is what I am going to do. Will your socialism look so desirable then?"

Josephine came toward him crying out, "Father, this is monstrous! To try to bring us to terms you would ruin a railroad and strike down into poverty thousands of men, women and children!" She opened a drawer in her desk, took out a package of papers and went on,

as she faced her father again: "Oh, the utter heartlessness of capital! That is the way you men of wealth juggle with the food, the homes, the very lives of human beings! They are no more to you than the rubbish you throw into your waste-baskets." She paused an instant, lifted her hand high in the air and went on passionately, "They shall not suffer because of me. I can earn my own living and you can have your stocks!" And she threw them at his feet.

Herbert sprang across the room to her side and said as he took her hand, "Mine too, father! I have not got them here, but I will mail them to you to-night!"

Morris drew back, surprised and a little disconcerted, for he had not expected to meet with such instant and complete defiance. He had felt sure that at the worst his children would be willing to haggle for terms. With heads high they stood silent for a moment, Morris staring with flashing, angry eyes into the faces first of one and then of the other of his children and they into his, neither finding in the other any hint of fear, or surrender, or compromise.

Then the door from Josephine's bedroom opened and Gladys came in, saying, "Mr. Dixon, Mrs. Dixon wants to see you."

"Now?" he asked with a tinge of impatience in his voice. "She doesn't need me at once, does she?"

"She's quiet now, but I'm afraid she'll be hysterical again if you don't go to her at once. She said, 'Tell him I must see him,'" Gladys replied, still holding open the door.

Without another glance at his children Morris left the room.

CHAPTER XX

THE FRAGRANCE OF THE PAST

GLADYS closed the bedroom door and crossed the room, smiling at the others and asking cheerfully, "Well, how is the fray progressing?"

"Oh," said Josephine in discouraged accents, "we're just where we have been all the time, only it gets worse instead of better."

"Why can't they let us alone?" Herbert complained irritably. "If they don't like what we are doing they can keep away from us."

"Don't forget, youngster," Miller told him with a genial smile, "that they are your father and mother and take an interest in you!"

"Grandad Stephen," Gladys questioned severely, "are you going to take so much interest in me that you'll make my life a burden?"

He beamed at her and patted the bronze-brown locks that rippled over her head and were caught into a curling mass at the back. "Well, Gladdie, if you like living down here I can't say that I think much of your taste. But if you enjoy it, go ahead! I don't care!"

She stood up on the sofa beside him and kissed the top of his bald head. "You jolly old Grandad! You're just the best ever!"

The bell of the apartment rang and Josephine sprang up with a brightening face as she cried out, "Oh, there

they come!" She ran into the hall with Herbert and Gladys close behind her and in a moment more they were ushering in Senator and Mrs. Dixon and Emily Walters.

It happened that Emily was the first of the group to enter the room and as she came in she saw Stephen coming toward them, his hand outstretched, and saying, "Emily!" She had not seen him since the day, almost fifty years before, when she had gazed with overflowing eyes at his beloved figure disappearing under the blooming peach trees. She had not known that he would be there, had not thought of ever meeting him again. For a moment her mind sought uncertainly through her memories, trying to place the figure, the voice and the countenance in which there was something bafflingly familiar.

Then he said "Emily!" again and with a little gasp of astonishment she recognized him. "Why, if it isn't Stephen Miller!" she cried out delightedly, and gave him both her hands. She laughed with pleasure at the sudden, unexpected meeting and he noted that it was the same gay, sweet, happy gush of laughter it had been in her girlhood.

"Yes," he said, beaming and as pleased as she, as he held both her hands and the others crowded around them, "the same old Stephen, after all these years!"

Senator Dixon took a newspaper from his pocket, asking as he opened it, "Steve, what is that son of yours trying to do?"

William's seventy-four years sat lightly upon him, although with increasing age his tall figure had become more spare and the limp that he had brought home from the Civil War had grown more decided, so that he walked with a cane. But his trim, military erect-

ness was as marked as ever and the look of distinction upon his clean-shaven face, to which his abundant white hair gave its own added touch, led many a passer-by upon the street to turn and gaze after him. And life had impressed upon his countenance the elevation and the benignity under whose molding forces his mind and soul had grown and been shaped for so many years.

"My Davy Dad, Senator Dixon?" asked Gladys, whose brown head had been bobbing about among them as she embraced and kissed one after another. "What mischief is he into now?"

"That wheat corner?" said Miller. "I think he's riding for a fall. Have you late news?"

"An extra, just out," William replied, handing him the paper. "He seems to be pretty hard pressed."

Stephen glanced over the dispatch from Chicago. "I guess they've got him," he commented quietly. "I told him they would!"

"Has he involved you, Stephen?" Amy wanted to know, looking at him with concern. Amy, too, was nearing the seventieth mile-post of life. Her always slender form had become so slight and frail that it looked as though there were hardly enough substance in her body to withstand a strong puff of wind. Her face was much lined and wrinkled but it was filled with such sweet motherliness and such loving-kindness of heart that the eyes of friend and stranger alike lingered upon it with pleasure. When Amy and William were married her nature was an empty casket, strong and true in its making, but likely to narrow and harden and remain empty in a circumscribed life. But marriage had led her into the fullness of life and offered her rich gifts of intellectual and spiritual and emotional interests. She had proved her worthiness, for she had given

them eager welcome and they had deepened and broadened and enriched her personality. The shy, quiet and simple-natured girl of half a century ago, as she walked into the sunset of life, was leaving behind her a long trail of years filled with happiness, with varied interests, the riches of friendship, with a multitude of friends who held her in admiring and loving memory.

"A good bit," Stephen admitted, in answer to Amy's question. "But he still has a chance and he may win out yet."

"And if he does, Mr. Miller," Josephine wanted to know, "how many people will he beggar?"

"He'll make a big pile himself," Miller answered carelessly, "and the others will have to look out for themselves. They'd do the same thing to him, my dear girl, if they thought they could make it win."

Josephine nodded and made an expressive gesture. "Yes, of course, and that's just the kind of thing and the point of view that we socialists protest and fight against."

"If he loses all your money, Grandad Stephen," Gladys asked, patting his cheek, "will you turn socialist and come here and live with us?"

Amy was at the window and she turned from an interested glance at the surroundings to say, smiling upon the two young women: "It's wonderful, Gladdie, that two lovely, bright girls, like you and Josie, should be willing to give up all the social pleasures and enjoyment you might have and come away down here to live, just to help these people. I'm sure you're doing a great deal of good, but, Josie, dear, it doesn't seem quite right that you and Herbert shouldn't live at home, with your father and mother, at least part of the time!"

"At home, grandmother!" Herbert exclaimed with

scornful emphasis. "Do you think that a palace with an army of servants in it can be a home? You haven't seen father's two-million-dollar mansion since it was finished, have you? It's just a super-magnificent servants' boarding house! The last time I was there I counted twenty. Think of having twenty people, all in livery, to wait on you! Bah! It made me feel as if I was the boss of a chain gang!"

"Of course you know, grandmother," Josephine explained, "that all that sort of thing, the big, pretentious house and the servants and all that, are mother's doings, because of her social ambitions. And she wants me to live at home and help her in her social campaigns and be satisfied with the things she does."

Mrs. Dixon put an arm through Josephine's and drew her close. "And they don't appeal to you, do they, dearie!"

"They bore me to death," Josephine exclaimed. "They are so childish, so futile! I want to do something that will make a difference, something that will help the world along! Oh, I can't give up to father and mother! I must stay here and at least try to do something!"

"The same here!" Herbert cried. "I want to pitch in and do things that will help the under dogs to get out! And father thinks I ought to be a director in his railroad companies and help the upper dogs to get a tighter strangle hold on the under ones. I won't do it, grandfather! The things we are doing here may not seem to be very significant, but they're part of a big, important movement that's going to make the whole world different after a while. And I'm going to stick, no matter what father says or does!"

Herbert took all his emotions hard, and now his look

was bellicose and his hands trembled with the vehemence of his feeling. His grandmother drew him to her other side.

"You dear things!" she said softly. "That's just what your father used to say at your age!"

Amy smiled at the look of amazement on the two young faces as they both turned to her with the exclamation, "Father!"

"Yes, your father! He didn't want to do what his father wanted him to. He said it wasn't of any consequence and he wanted to get out among men who were doing what was worth while, and take part in big things."

Stephen, from his seat on the sofa between Emily and Gladys, was listening with interest and at Amy's last words he laughed reminiscently. "Amy, do you remember that night in Washington when Morris almost fought a duel with that Frenchman?"

Herbert turned to him, eager but incredulous. "What! Did father really fight a duel?"

"We stopped it just as they were starting for the field of honor."

"Oh, how jolly!" Gladys cried, clapping her hands. "Josie, don't you wish we'd been there?"

"It was about your mother, Josie," Amy explained. "Your father and the Frenchman, Count de Portellane, both wanted to marry her, and her mother was determined she should marry the Count and step into the title and the social position it would give her in Europe."

"And mother?" Josephine and Herbert asked in one breath.

"Well, Marian Stillman was a lively girl and she got them both pretty well worked up."

"And things came to a climax," Miller took up the story, "at a reception at the White House. They quarreled, your father slapped the Count's face, and they agreed to fight it out with pistols at twenty paces. The Count was a crack shot with the pistol and your father, who couldn't shoot at all, magnificently told him, 'All right' when he said 'pistols.' And they actually started off with their seconds to hunt up a safe place for the duel."

"What happened then?" Herbert demanded excitedly.

"Your mother," Amy told him, "overheard their quarrel and arrangements and she hung on to your father and begged him not to go. She had never admitted to him before that she cared for him and now she told him that she loved him and not the Count and that she would marry him whenever he wanted her to, no matter what her mother might say."

"But father rushed off to fight anyway! Good for him!" cried Herbert.

"And your mother," William joined in the narrative, "almost had hysterics there in the White House conservatory, before we could catch your father and bring him back to her, after we had got the French Embassy to help us stop the fight."

Herbert slapped his thigh and laughed delightedly. "Josie, what do you think of that? Father wanted to fight a duel for mother! The old boy was human, after all!"

Josephine leaned over and kissed her grandmother impulsively. "I'm so glad you've told us about this, gran! It—it makes me feel better toward them!"

The apartment bell had rung and Gladys was at the door talking with some one. Amy made inquiry about

Morris and Marian and was told briefly what had happened and that they were in Josephine's bedroom. Gladys came back with a message. "Josie, Mrs. Wilkowsky's little boy has suddenly grown very much worse and she wants to know if you will come right away."

Instantly the physician, who had already become so large a part of Josephine, was dominant and she sprang up, asking her guests to excuse her for a little while, adding, "I'm awfully anxious about this poor little thing." She hurriedly put on the coat and hat Gladys brought her, looked into her bag, asking, "Is everything here I'll need, Gladdie?" and answering herself, after one quick glance into it, with "Yes, it's all right," as she moved toward the door. There she stopped long enough to say over her shoulder, "Please, all of you stay till I come back. I'll come as soon as I can and Gladys and Herbert will help you amuse yourselves."

"If you don't mind, I'd like to go with you, my dear," Senator Dixon told her, getting his cane. "We can have a little talk on the way and then I want to walk around and look at things a bit. I've not been in this part of New York for a long time."

Josephine welcomed his company and they went out together. Amy was moving restlessly about the room, looking at Josephine's medical paraphernalia, her thoughts, since she had been told what had happened just before their arrival, with her own offspring. She was as much appalled by her son's material successes and his vast wealth and deprecated it all as much as did his own children; she had been much disappointed by the way her son's wife had developed, and in the quarrel between her grandchildren and their parents her sympathies were chiefly with Josephine and Herbert. But she was deeply pained as she thought of the

disappointment, the grief, the unsatisfied love, the blighted hopes, the hunger of the parent heart that the years had brought to Morris and Marian. She longed to go to them, to try to help them in their trouble, and to see if she could not do something toward bringing about a better feeling between them and their children.

"I want to see Morris and Marian," she told Emily and Stephen, "and you two can talk over old times together. Gladys, dearie, will you show me the way?"

Gladys tucked Mrs. Dixon's arm into her own and started toward the bedroom door. Half way across the room she stopped, threw her arms around Amy's neck and kissed her twice.

"There!" she exclaimed, nodding triumphantly. "You old dear! That was for Herbert—and me!"

Amy looked at her a moment puzzled, then with sudden comprehension exclaimed, "Oh! You dear little thing!" Then she returned the caress and added gayly, "You and Herbert seem to be two such—what some people call—cranks together that I'm sure you'll be happy."

Gladys laughed, delighted with the answer. "Yes, grandmother, we both crank the same way, so it will be all right!" She knocked at the bedroom door and as she opened it Amy heard from within the sound of Marian's voice sobbing softly.

"It's only mother, dearies," she said, her voice full of sympathy. "May I come in?" Relief and pleasure were in both the voices that gave her instant welcome.

Herbert stepped forward from the window where he had been standing and met Gladys as she came back. They caught each other's hands with a smile of understanding and stood in front of Emily and Stephen.

"Grandad Stephen, did you hear what I said to—grandmother?" said one and the other chimed in with, "May I speak to you about it, Mr. Miller?"

Stephen waved them away jovially. "All right, youngsters! We'll talk about it presently. Run away now and let me and Emily have a little chat. We haven't seen each other for a thousand years." They started away, swinging their clasped hands, and Miller called after them, "Young man, I ought to warn you that Gladdie's an awful tyrant. You'll have to give her her own way all the time, because she's always had it."

"That's all right, Mr. Miller," Herbert laughed back. "Her way is always the best way!" And Gladys made a little face at him over her shoulder and exclaimed as they disappeared into the living-room, "There now, Grandad Stephen! Now will you be good?"

Miller turned to Mrs. Walters with satisfaction. "Now, Emily," he said, taking out his glasses, "I want to have a good look at you."

"So do I at you, Steve," said Emily, putting on hers.

They looked at each other in silence for a long minute and then Miller said as they put their glasses away, "You haven't changed much, Emily. I'd have known you anywhere."

"I'd have known you, too, Stephen. But of course I've changed. We both have. Why, it's almost fifty years—what can you expect?"

"Fifty years! So it will be, next year! And we haven't seen each other in all that time!"

"Steve, do you remember that morning, the last time we ever saw each other, when Billy came home from the army and the peach trees were in bloom?"

"That was the orchard eighty, wasn't it, that your father and Uncle Sam had such a quarrel about? Do the peach trees still bloom there in the spring?"

"The old peach trees died long ago, of course, but my husband and I, when we went back there and bought a little part of the orchard eighty for our home, set out new ones when the old ones died and our grounds are always lovely with them when April comes. What a wonderful life you've had, Steve! Making money all the time, till I suppose you don't know now how much you are worth!"

Stephen laughed. "Well, if that son of mine gets smashed in his wheat corner it won't be much trouble for me to count what's left."

Emily looked at him with wide and sympathetic eyes. "Will it ruin you?" she asked in horrified tones.

"Oh, I've kept enough out to last me as long as I live, and I've put some away for Gladdie where he can't touch it. I let David have all the rest of it because I thought he might as well scatter it now as any time. David has never been worth a continental, except to get rid of my money in big schemes that were all hot air, but he's been very skillful at that. Maybe, when my money's all gone and he knows he can't depend on me any more, he'll settle down and amount to something. Emily, I'd like to go back and see the old place again."

She laughed gayly at him. "You wouldn't know the old place if you should see it. For there's a big, prosperous town there now, and has been for many years, that covers the orchard eighty and most of your old farm and ours, too. They named it Orchardson, because of the peach orchard. But, if you want to go, what's to hinder Stephen Miller from going any place on the face of the earth that he wants to?"

"I didn't know, till this minute, that I did want to go," he confessed with a grin, and she smiled as she remembered his old trick of doing things suddenly and unexpectedly. "Emily, do you remember how I hid, that morning, behind the lilac bushes at your gate, so your father wouldn't see me, and whistled to you, and you ran down to the gate, and I wanted you to kiss me and you wouldn't?"

She laughed, the merry, rich-voiced, ringing laugh of her girlhood. It thrilled him with the memories it stirred. "Don't I remember it? Oh, Steve! How many, many times I've thought of it! And, Stephen, I was so sorry afterward that I didn't give you that kiss!"

"Were you, Emily? Well, now, I thought of it a good many times afterwards and I was always glad you didn't."

She looked at him wonderingly. "Why, Stephen?"

"Because you were the only girl around there that wouldn't kiss me whenever I asked her to. And I've always liked to think of you as being a little better than the others. Emily, you're alone now and so am I. Why can't we join hands the rest of the way? I treated you shamefully in those days, like the silly young cub I was, and your father and Billy ought to have given me the good licking I deserved. But I'd like to make up to you for it now. Will you let me, Emily?"

She laughed at him, but her voice was tender as she said, "Dear me, Steve! At our ages! How silly it would be! Think how old we are!"

"You're not old, Emily!" he protested, looking at her with admiration. "A woman is no older than her laugh, and yours is still as young as it was that day under the

peach trees! And a man isn't old as long as he can be stirred by it! Come, Emily! Let's take the few years that are left us!"

"The peach trees are in bloom there now," she said, looking out of the window with far-away eyes while the color bloomed in her wrinkled cheeks and the old romance stirred again in her heart and filled her thoughts with its fragrance.

"Then give me the kiss now that you wouldn't then," he begged. She did not answer and he put his arm around her, drew her willing head down to his shoulder and kissed her lips.

They did not hear Gladys and Herbert open the door from the living-room, come in and then draw back. But the scene was too unexpected and extraordinary for youthful curiosity to deny itself and the two heads close together peeked out through the partly open door.

"The sweethearting old dears!" Gladys exclaimed in a whisper. "It looks as if I'm going to have another new grandmother, doesn't it, Herbert? Oh, Herbert, dear, I've just remembered! There was some sort of a romance between them when they were young. Your grandmother told me. Suppose he had married Aunt Emily then! Little Gladys would be somebody else, wouldn't she? And you wouldn't love her a little bit, would you? Say you wouldn't, Herbert!"

"Of course not!" he assured her emphatically. "I couldn't love anybody that wasn't you!"

She reached up and tousled his hair. "And then poor Herbert would have had to live and die such a lonely old bachelor! Let's go in and stir 'em up and find out what's happened!"

They stole on tiptoes across the room and stood in front of the couple on the sofa, still absorbed in them-

selves. "Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Time to change cars, Grandad Stephen!"

They straightened up, laughing in an embarrassed way and Emily said, smoothing her rumped hair: "You mustn't mind us, dearie. We're just two old fools!"

"You're going to be my new grandmother, aren't you?" Gladys asked with a welcoming smile.

"Will you have me for your grandmother?"

"Won't I, though! Come along to my room and let's have a gabfest about it!" She tucked her arm into Emily's and they moved away, Gladys saying, "We can be each other's bridesmaids, can't we? Ta-ta, Grandad Stephen!" she called back as they disappeared into the living-room. "You can have her again after a while!"

"And I must give you," said Emily, "something I've brought for you and Josie—a box-full of the loveliest peach blooms from my back yard. We must get the box and put them into water."

"Well, Herbert," said Stephen Miller, rising and shaking himself as the two women left them, "let's go out and stretch our legs around a block or two while we talk about this matter of yours and Gladdie's."

"Certainly, sir," Herbert told him, getting their hats. "We'll exchange ratifications if you like!"

At the street door they met Clifford Wright. He came rushing up the street as if he were on a race, his head high, his face determined and his eyes alight. Herbert gazed at him in surprise, saying to himself, "Cliff looks as if he was out to beat some other fellow to it, for something or other!" But he made no comment and when Wright asked for Josephine and said he would wait for her return, Herbert took him up to the office

and left him there. As he walked back and forth, impatient at the delay, he could hear in the stillness the murmur of voices from Josephine's bedroom, where Amy was soothing Marian's grief and tears and urging Morris to a more tolerant attitude toward his children.

CHAPTER XXI

HANDS ACROSS THE CHASM

JOSEPHINE came in so quietly that Wright did not see her until she sank down at her desk, her head in her hands.

"Josephine, dear! What is the matter?" he asked with concern, going to her.

She lifted her head with a deep sigh. "Oh, Cliff! The little boy died! I couldn't save him!" She rose and began walking restlessly back and forth, her head drooping in dejection. "The poor mother! She is heartbroken! Such a wretched, poverty-stricken home! But oh, how they love their children! And I couldn't save the boy! Oh, Cliff, it is horrible to feel life slipping away under your fingers and not be able to stop it!"

Wright put his arm about her and drew her to his side. "You did your best," he comforted. "You did all that any one could! You must not feel this so deeply, dear. Every physician loses many cases. You can't cure every one."

In her depression she welcomed his sympathy and as she leaned against him her head dropped for a moment upon his shoulder. Then, as he stroked her forehead, she realized what she was doing and stepped back, freeing herself from his arm. "Cliff—you mustn't! I was unhappy—your sympathy—I didn't think what I was doing!"

"Where should a woman find comfort and happiness," he asked, "but in the arms of the man who loves her?" He held his arms open toward her and begged, "Come, Josephine! Here is your home!"

Her eyes rested upon him for an instant and he saw love and longing in them, but at once she turned away, stiffening, and walked toward the window. "No, Clifford, I have decided and I know that my work is out there. I shall fail sometimes, as I have to-day. But I can do something, and I shall learn more. And they need me so, all those mothers and little children!"

She turned toward him again and her voice was tender and sweet as she went on: "Cliff, dear heart, believe me, if I meant to marry any one it would be you. But I have made up my mind and I shall never marry. I love my profession and I want to grow wiser and more skillful in it for the sake of my poor sister women out there who are so poor and so ignorant and so helpless."

"But you can marry and still do all that," he told her, as he had told her so many times already, "and be all the stronger for your work because you will have your husband's love and interest and sympathy!"

"No, no!" She shook her head with decision. "Not in the work that I want to do! To try to do both would be to fail in both!"

"I need you too, dear, as much as any one. And there's something else—children! Are you willing to deny motherhood to yourself?"

"I do not want to," she confessed, and her face looked weary and strained as she went on. "It is a sacrifice, but I've thought it all out—and I'm—I'm going—straight on, in the way I've chosen." Her eyes wandered to the scales and the baby-weighting basket and rested there as she listened to his pleading.

"A splendid woman like you never to have children," he was saying, his voice eloquent and persuasive with the love and admiration that filled his heart. "A woman with such intelligence, such a wonderful spirit, such a mother heart! And all to end with you! Josephine, believe me, it isn't right! It's monstrous! I've come again to-day to ask you to think about this matter once more, to be quite sure of yourself, before you tell me no—for the last time!"

She started and looked at him in surprise. "Since I was here this morning," he went on, "two offers have come to me. One would take me to South Africa. If I accept it I shall go with the intention of never returning, or, at least, not for many years. For if you will not marry me, sweetheart, I must put all the distance I can between us. The other would give me charge of a big, splendid undertaking in Colorado. If you will promise to marry me I will close with that offer. If you will not I shall accept the other and go at once, with my mind made up never to see you again. For I will not stay near you any longer unless you are to be mine."

She stared at him wildly, her breath coming in little gasps. "Oh, Clifford! Oh, Clifford!" was all she could say.

"It's the only way," he told her, as he took out his watch. His face was white, but it was a complete mask of his feeling, except that she saw his mouth was closed in a thin, firm line. But his voice was unsteady as he went on: "I've only a little while until I have to meet both these parties and give each of them my decision. I will wait—five minutes—for your final answer."

She sat quite still, staring at him with a puzzled look, and it seemed to her it had been but a few seconds, that

she had not thought at all, when she heard his voice saying, "One minute!"

She rose abruptly, glanced about the room as if uncertain of herself, then went to her medicine stand and stood beside it, taking up the instruments and the bottles of medicine, looking at each one absent-mindedly and then putting it down, until she heard his voice again, "Two minutes!"

The sound startled her and she jumped as if there had been an explosion at her side, then turned and sat down at her desk. She fingered the papers upon it and looked curiously at the package of certificates of railroad stocks, wondering vaguely how it came to be there when she had thrown it a little while before at her father's feet, then pushed it aside and reached for the picture of Mother Dixon. She gazed at the smiling face as if it were an oracle that could answer her question while she heard her lover say "Three minutes!" and presently, in a voice that to her ears seemed to waver and plead, "Four minutes!"

She sprang up again and in the tense silence that followed she could hear from her bedroom the voices of her father and grandmother, one low and persuasive and the other louder and obdurate. Once she heard him saying with the cool decisiveness she knew so well, "I will not have it!" And all the time she was conscious of something within herself saying over and over again, "I can't! I can't!" But sometimes it meant that she could not give up her plans and sometimes it was her heart crying out that it could not send love away. She was standing with her back to Clifford and she did not see the look of misery that suffused his white face as he said, "Five minutes!"

He waited a moment longer and then she heard the

watch snap shut and his slow steps lagging on their way to the door, as if he hoped even yet for her repentance. At the door he turned and looked back at her with eyes full of pain and longing. "Josephine, good-by," he said, and again, "Josephine," his voice lingering lovingly upon each syllable. With head down, she stood, stock still, as if she did not hear him, and he went out and closed the door.

With the click of the latch she started and turned quickly round, her countenance as anguished as his had been. The thought that instantly smote her was, how silent and empty the room! And then she knew that even more forlorn and dreary was her heart. In a flash she saw the years stretching out before her and instead of being useful and full and happy they, too, seemed empty and forlorn. And then something fell from her, something that had held her heart and her tongue. She did not stop to ask herself whether it was the determined purpose that had guided her course for so many years, or belief in herself, or devotion to the cause she had espoused. She knew only that something fell away, leaving a great gap behind it, and set her feet flying to the hall door. She flung it open and in a shaking voice called out:

"No, no! Cliff! I mean, yes, yes! Oh, Clifford, come back!"

He had closed the door into the outside hall, but he thought he heard her voice and looked back, to see her leaning against the door and sobbing, "Oh, he's gone, he's gone!"

He rushed back, crying out, "Josie, you called me! Do you mean it?"

"Oh, Cliff! I can't give you up, for always," she told him, with outstretched hands.

"But you know I can stay only on one condition!"

"Yes, yes, I know! I'll marry you! Only don't leave me!"

Instantly he swept her into his embrace and was saying, "My darling! You shall never regret it! You'll see how much bigger and broader your life will be!"

She stepped back and with her hands upon his shoulders looked at him with her sweet and witching smile. "It won't be the same. I'll have to give up, oh, so very much! But I'll gain so very much too! And I know in my heart, and have known all the time, that what I gain is of just as much consequence as what I lose, maybe more. But I just couldn't give up the plans and the purposes that had been part of me for so long."

Voices were at the outer door and in a moment Herbert came in with Senator Dixon and Stephen Miller. As they went back into the office William glanced keenly at Josephine and then at Clifford, for they both looked agitated and the glow of happiness was in their faces.

And then he said in a smiling aside to the young man, "I hope we didn't come in at an inopportune moment!"

Clifford beamed at him with satisfaction. "It was all settled, at last!" he said. "But I'm mighty glad you didn't come a few minutes sooner! I've had a long, hard siege, Senator, but I've won!"

Dixon clapped him on the shoulder. "I congratulate you! And I tell you, young man," he went on with earnest emphasis, "you've got the greatest treasure in New York City!"

The sound of voices and laughter brought Amy from the bedroom and behind her came Morris and Marian. Amy's countenance, usually sweet and cheerful, was

downcast, for she had been able to make but little impression upon Morris. He was willing to concede a little, and had told Marian she must agree to that much. But he was still the self-sufficing, forceful man of business, accustomed to rule among his associates, rather than the father, as he crossed the room and called Josephine and Herbert.

"I have an important board meeting this afternoon," he told them, "and I must go in a few minutes. I can't waste any more time on you headstrong children. I want you to understand, both of you, finally and for all time, that I won't have it said that my children are preaching socialism. And for your mother's sake you must live at home. Herbert, I'll give you just six months more to prove that you can make good with your art. If you don't do it by that time you'll have to give it up and come into my railroad offices. But, for the present, if you'll do these two things, stop preaching these revolutionary ideas and come home, you can muddle around here in the dirt as much as you want to. If you won't agree, you can quit altogether. Your mother and I will have nothing more to do with you, and I shall make a new will, leaving both of you out of it entirely. There is my ultimatum. Suit yourselves!"

Herbert bristled, his bellicose mood stirred into life again by his father's manner. "We don't care about the money," he flung back. "Keep it if you want to!"

But Josephine had been tuned to a different key by the reminiscences to which she had listened earlier in the afternoon and her heart had been warmed and softened and the tensivity of her mood relaxed by the experience through which she had just passed. "We don't care about it for ourselves, that is," she broke in, "although we think we could do much good with it.

But don't drive us away from you and mother! Don't be so hard!"

"It's you who are hard," Marian flamed back at her, "you, both of you, who will do nothing that we want you to!"

Senator Dixon limped forward from the window where he had been standing. "Morris, my son," he said gently, "you and Marian are not taking the right view of this matter. The trouble with you is that you are getting old. You must remember that the world is always young, and if you don't stay young along with it you get into trouble."

Josephine laid a hand upon his arm and looked at him with swimming eyes, so grateful was she for the touch of sympathy in his words and tone. "Oh, grandfather, I knew you'd understand, even if you don't agree with us!"

"But, father," Morris protested, "they are all wrong! They are preaching a tissue of fallacies and falsehoods that will undermine property rights and upset our institutions. It will plunge this whole country into dissension and the nation into ruin!"

"Don't worry about this country, Morris," his father replied. "Its foundations are laid too deep in the hopes of humanity and it's too sound at the core for anybody's theory or any set of people to ruin it."

"Father and the other big capitalists," Herbert began belligerently, "with their huge piles of money, are more likely to ruin it than we are!"

Stephen Miller joined in: "I haven't any use for these socialists, Morris, but I know there is some truth in what Herbert says. The country is getting on its ear about us fellows who have corralled so much."

"It's only the envy the poor always feel for the rich!" Marian exclaimed.

"No, Marian, it's more than that," William told her. "There is a profound feeling, all over the country, that these big fortunes are a menace. I feel its effect on my influence in the Senate and in the country generally. I've worked in Congress, House and Senate together, for almost forty years, and I'd like to die in the harness. But I doubt very much if I can be elected again, just because I have a very wealthy son."

"I've never cared about the wealth," said Morris, "except that I wanted to do big things, and for that you've got to have big money."

Herbert pushed forward eagerly. "Don't you see, father, we want to find a way to do big things without such big money in individual hands, and so many with no money at all!"

Morris listened impatiently and dismissed his appeal with a contemptuous wave of his hand. "You can't do it! It's a feather-headed dream! Impossible!"

"Not so fast, Morris! Not so fast!" his father warned. "Give a few years and the impossible always happens! I am just as sure as you are, my son, that the economic ideas upon which socialism is based are not sound and that they will not stand practical application. They do not take sufficient account of some of the fundamental characteristics of human nature and they certainly are not suitable to the conditions and the political principles of our own country. In fact, I don't believe," and he smiled broadly at Josephine and Herbert, "and I've told these two youngsters so before this, that most of the people in the United States who think they are socialists ever have given any real thought to its economic basis. They have been carried

away by its other phases, its ideals of brotherhood and comradeship and altruism. And on that side, Morris, it does promise something that is better than the excessive individualism and selfishness of our present system. But," and he smiled again at his grandchildren, "take its economic features away from socialism and what you have left is not socialism at all but something else—perhaps practical Christianity."

"Don't you think, Senator," Clifford asked, "that if Big Money and Little Money and No Money would just get their heads together with a sincere desire to straighten things out we'd come out all right?"

"Yes," assented William, "we must have a better spirit all round." Then his head went up with a sudden recollection and he smiled reminiscently. "Last summer," he went on, "I went to Gettysburg to the reunion of the Gray and the Blue that had fought there fifty years before. Gettysburg, you know, was where I got this leg. The second day of the battle I was making a charge with my company and we ran into an ambush of Johnny Rebs. We peppered each other and yelled and swore and shot to kill. Their captain and I tried our best to get each other, and he did catch me in the leg. Last summer he and I hunted each other up, and we went together over that ground where we had fought like bulldogs, and we showed each other where we had stood and what we had done, and laughed over it—and cried a little, too, I'll admit. And that night I got all my men that were there and some others and we went to the Confederate tents and serenaded that captain and his men. We took a band and we sang 'Dixie' and 'My Maryland' and gave 'em the rebel yell. And they pitched out of bed and sang 'John Brown' at us and then we toddled 'em all off in their

night shirts and we all drank beer and told stories together till morning, and fought the old fights over again in friendly comradeship and loved one another like the brothers we've all grown to be. After all those terrible years of anger and bitterness and bloodshed the North and the South have come together in harmony and love for our common country—and it has cost the South bigger sacrifices than we in the North give her credit for. So, Big Money and Little Money and No Money—as Clifford said just now—must get together in the same love and harmony for our common country, even if," he paused a moment, looking keenly and meaningly at his son, "some of them have to make sacrifices. But they will make them if they really love their country."

Morris stiffened and said coldly, "I yield to no man in my patriotism!"

"But you may have to in your point of view," his father rejoined, a touch of severity in his tone.

"Grandfather, you are just splendid!" Josephine cried. "You are yesterday and to-day and to-morrow, all in one! You understand us all and you see farther into the future than any of us!"

William took her hand and patted it fondly. "When our eyes grow old, my dear, we get our second sight. And this is what I see: This old world always plunging along after something finer and better than it has already. It sees a vision off yonder, chases after it, gets good out of it, wears it to tatters, then sees another and plunges after that, just as young and confident as ever. My dear, your father had his vision twenty-five years ago, just as you have yours now. What he saw was material prosperity, a giant nation doing a giant's labors in a land flowing with milk and honey. It was a good vision, but—he chased it too hard and too far."

Clifford Wright and Stephen Miller were standing near the window and a sound from the street caught Clifford's attention. Leaning out he saw a newsboy calling an afternoon extra, and tossing down a coin, signed to him to throw up the paper. To the youngster's delight and admiration he caught the wadded lump, they grinned appreciatively at each other, and Wright smoothed it out, glanced at the big headlines and then at Miller who was engrossed in the controversy.

"And it's time for another vision," Josephine was saying triumphantly, "and that is Herbert's and mine!"

"If it seems right to you, go after it," William told her. "It's the only way to keep square with yourself. But be sure of yourself, and very sure that your vision isn't a mirage. And remember that after you've chased it half a lifetime it may not look any better than his does now. And anyway, my dear, give him credit for having followed his vision."

Josephine turned slowly to her father. She was in gentler mood toward him than she had been for a long time and the fact that she had that afternoon given up to her heart had undermined a little her once sure faith in herself. And also she had been much moved by what her grandfather had said and the influence of his tolerant, far-sighted vision had made things look different. Nevertheless, it was hard to speak out what had, in this last half hour, taken shape in her mind, so hard that she stumbled a little over it at first:

"Father—Herbert and I—perhaps we've been too opinionated—but we really do think we see—a vision that's better—as grandfather says—a great deal better. But we don't want to antagonize you—so much

—and we want to be good friends. Don't we, Herbert?"

Herbert threw his arm chummily around her shoulder. "Sure we do! But you must remember, father, that Josie and I are man and woman now and have the right to live our own lives. All we want is a square deal, the same as grandfather gave you."

Morris gazed at them for a long moment while his features slowly softened and his expression grew more tender than they had seen it since their childhood. Then he put a hand on the shoulder of each. "Well—perhaps you are right. Maybe I have been too hard, too determined, with you. But you have been very annoying sometimes. Perhaps we've both irritated each other more than was necessary. But you are grown up now—as you say—and it is your right to live your own lives. I'll not interfere again, but—I'm disappointed!"

Josephine put her arm across her father's neck. "I'm so glad to be friends again, father! I've wanted to ever since I heard about the duel you were going to fight for mother!"

Marian turned to her daughter in smiling surprise. She, too, had been softened and this sudden summoning of a memory that meant so much to her gentled her heart still more. "Who told you about that, Josie?" she asked, and then, quite unexpectedly to herself, she threw an arm around Josephine and kissed her and was deeply pleased to find her caress warmly returned.

"Now, children," she said pleasantly, "we'll all be good friends again, won't we? You can't understand how disappointed I am, but if you must do this sort of thing I'll have to make the best of it." Then she added wistfully, "But couldn't you come home to live?"

Josephine smiled at her, the sweet, distracting smile that in her infancy had always got for her whatever she wanted, and the color flooded her face and neck. "No, mother, we can't, because I am going to be married and have a home of my own, and so is Herbert. But, mother, I'll come home and stay for a while before that—if you'll promise not to trot me around to teas and things!"

William looked up from the paper Wright had handed to him. "Steve, he's done it!" he exclaimed.

"Who? David?" Miller asked as unconcernedly as if no more than a dollar or two were at stake.

Gladys and Emily had been absent from the gathering ever since they had gone, at Gladys's suggestion, for "a gabfest." In Gladys's room, beyond the living-room, they had heard nothing of what had transpired in the office, while Emily told stories of her youth and Gladys of her grandmother and together they made plans for the future. At last Gladys sprang up exclaiming, "Come, grandmother, dear, I'm having an awfully good time, but let's go and see if Herbert and Josie have got the cohorts of capitalism on the run. Maybe they need us, for you're on our side, aren't you?" Then she ran back for the peach blossoms, saying, "Josie must see these lovely things right now, this minute."

As they went into the office, Emily's glance, searching first for Stephen, caught his eye and knew by the way it welcomed her that he had been waiting and wishing for her return. She made her way at once to his side while Gladys stood beside the door, the great mass of peach-bloom against her shoulder, its pink-white beauty throwing into relief the loveliness of her own bright young face and brown, rippling hair.

William was answering Stephen's question: "Yes, his wheat corner has collapsed and he's smashed flat!" He gave the paper to Stephen, who glanced at it and passed it on to Emily.

"Are you badly caught in it, Miller?" Morris asked.

"For about all that I am—that is, was, worth. I kept out some, enough for Gladdie and myself, but I thought it was about time to let him get rid of all the rest of it, as he would sooner or later anyway. Now maybe he'll amount to something. But I'm through with business and money-making. I've had my fun out of it—and it was good fun, too, years of it—but I've had my share, and I've quit."

"And anyway, Steve," said Emily, looking into his face with laughing eyes as he put his arm around her, "there's what's left of the orchard eighty! We've still got that, you know!"

Gladys moved toward Josephine holding out her armful of bloom. "Look, Josephine!" she called. "See all these lovely peach blossoms Aunt Emily brought us! She says her back yard is full of them!"

Josephine took the flowers, her face glowing with pleasure. "How beautiful! And how sweet of you, Aunt Emily, to remember us!"

"I brought them," Emily told her, "because they always remind me of how they were blooming fifty years ago when your grandfather came galloping up the lane, home from the war, and made such fierce love to your grandmother that she married him right away! They're so lovely, they always mean spring to me," she went on, "and my husband used to say that spring means youth and hope and love!"

"Youth and hope and love!" Josephine repeated after her, looking at the flowers. Then she turned suddenly

to William with her radiant smile and said tenderly and mischievously as she tucked a spray of the bloom into his buttonhole, "You must wear them, grandfather, for that's what you mean, too!"

CHAPTER XXII

"SOUND AT THE CORE"

THE world war had roared and flamed its course through its four devastating years. The armistice had been signed and thirty million men rested on their arms beside the graves of ten million dead comrades. Across the ravaged, desert waste of northern France Morris Dixon drove through the wintry rain on his way to what had been the headquarters at the front of the American Air Service, where he would visit his son Herbert and hoped to see also his son-in-law, Clifford Wright, on a day's leave from the camp of his regiment of Engineers.

When the German forces poured across Belgium Herbert's socialism fell from him like a forgotten garment. He was among the first to enter the Lafayette Escadrille and his gray Dixon eye, keen and far-sighted as an eagle's, ranged the air above the German lines and his skill and dashing courage made him victor in many a conflict. He had daring adventures, his plane was shot full of holes, he had once brought it down barely within his own lines in a narrow escape from being burned to death. But he had gone through it all without a wound. And there, above the clouds, Herbert had found himself. His genius had burst through its entanglements of frivolous, passing desires and frittering days and inspired him with the longing to work.

His paintings of battles in the air soon began to attract attention and after he was transferred to the American Expeditionary Force he alternately fought his plane and painted what he had seen, because he would not give up any opportunity he could get of smiting the enemy and his newly awakened desire for artistic effort was incessantly urging him to expression. His father knew that since the armistice he had been working steadily, drawing and painting French landscapes and children and French and American soldiers and camp scenes, with an enthusiasm that left no doubt of his singleness of purpose for the rest of his life.

Morris Dixon, looking out from his automobile across the shapeless heaps of rubbish that had once been homes and villages and the torn and cratered waste where had been fruitful fields, was making such inquiry of his own soul as he had never made before. The early years of the war had shaken a little the foundation of his estimate of life, but he had not felt the disturbance sufficiently to make him doubt his viewpoint, his purposes, his ideals.

Then America had entered the conflict and he had gone to France to give to his country's cause the benefit of his extraordinary knowledge of the building of railroads and the organizing and directing of land transport. For a year and a half he had worked night and day, as he had not worked for himself since his early manhood. In all that time he had given but little thought to anything but the means of making quicker and surer the winning of the war. For the first time he was seeing what the battles had left in their wake and as he looked across the desolate, God-forgotten waste there stole gradually into his mind the idea that per-

haps not the invading enemy alone, but in part also the ideal that the world had been pursuing had been the cause of the monstrous years of destruction. There came back to him some of the things his father had said, that day in Josephine's office, about the need of a better ideal than that of material prosperity, about what the vision of his youth had been, "a giant nation doing a giant's labors in a land flowing with milk and honey," and how the world wears its visions to tatters.

Then his thoughts went back to Herbert, and he was surprised to find that he was not so disappointed as he had made sure he would be now that it was settled that Herbert would not try to follow in his footsteps and become the master in the second generation of his huge enterprises. And then he surprised himself still more by deciding presently that he was glad his son was going to be an artist, that he was already proving his possession of a great gift and giving promise of high achievement. At first he said to himself that it was because he wanted his son to be a success, that he didn't care so much what the boy did if only he did it as if he meant it, went at it with energy and single-mindedness and put it through. Then he discovered that underneath his desire to see his son "go after what he wanted for all he was worth" was another reason for his content over Herbert's purpose of following an artistic career. He considered this for a little while and then he said very definitely to himself, "Yes, it's better—I'm glad Herbert's going to do something else. It's a bad thing for our country for great wealth and big properties and enterprises to descend from generation to generation."

He found himself a little disturbed and embarrassed

by his conclusion. "It's queer," he ruminated, "that I should feel that way about it. I never did before—before the war."

As he passed through what had been village after village and saw scarcely one stone left upon another, he fell to thinking of the German nation and of why it had done this monstrous thing. "They were chasing a vision," he thought, "a vision of material prosperity and national greatness, and they chased the world to bloody tatters in the pursuit."

The thought made him uncomfortable and ashamed and presently he was saying to himself, "We in America must try to get our feet on a better basis—we must have a different, a better ideal."

Again he thought of Herbert and was more pleased than before that his son was going to be an artist and would not follow in his steps. He would talk with Herbert, he decided, about these things, would tell him how the war had changed some of his ideals and viewpoints and, yes—it might be a little difficult, but he would ask the boy about those phases of socialism of which his father had spoken, about the ideals of social service and comradeship, of social responsibility and obligation. Now that Herbert had definitely, even aggressively, after Herbert's characteristic manner, discarded socialist affiliation and theory they could talk about these things without acrimony.

"There's a new day coming," he said to himself, "and I must—what was it father said?—keep myself young in heart and soul so as to be in sympathy with it. We must, in America, have more of these ideals of social obligation and social responsibility. After all, it all comes down to the individual and the question of

whether he is selfish and self-absorbed or kind-hearted and neighborly."

Then he remembered another thing that his father had been fond of saying about America—"sound at the core,"—and in accord with the individualism that was in his blood, he began to apply it to himself, to ask himself if he had the right to apply it to his own heart, his own Americanism. And with a sincerity and humility that made it almost a prayer, he said to himself, "I'm going to try to be, hereafter!"

When her husband went to France, among the earliest contingents of the American Army to cross the Atlantic, as major of a regiment of engineers, Josephine went with their baby son to live with Senator and Mrs. Dixon in Washington. For Amy had been feeling the burden of the war sad and heavy upon her heart and her strength was failing. She died during that first summer of America's participation and at first William was bewildered by his loneliness and uncertain of his daily course without his close companion of more than fifty years. Then he seemed to find new inspiration in the needs of his country and through all his long and important service in Congress he had never been more brilliant and inspiring in his oratory than he was in urging the Senate and the country to full and enthusiastic support of war measures, or wiser, more far-seeing and more sought for in council, or more persuasive and successful in bringing his associates to work together in harmony. His friends watched his constant, energetic and untiring labors and cautioned him against such prodigal use of his strength.

But he merely smiled at them and said, "I've got

strength enough left to last until the war is won and I can't put it to a better use than to help win it!"

Benjy and Evaleena were in Washington and living in the Dixon home, he in charge of a section in the Food Administration and she in a position in the Red Cross headquarters. Emily was chairman of the Woman's Liberty Loan Committee for her county and busy also with local Red Cross and food conservation work. Stephen had sprung back into active life and was energetic and helpful with the War Industries Board. Marian, too, had brought what little gift her life had made possible for her country's use and was indefatigable in organizing social affairs and committees and enterprises for the raising of money for war aiding purposes. Gladys, married just before Herbert's departure, had followed him across the Atlantic to engage in work for the refugees in Paris and was still in France, where she had served during the last year of the war as a nurse in an American hospital.

From New York Josephine heard, soon after America entered the war, that Laura Wayne Bradford was in a fair way to win the kind of martyrdom she had so long coveted. She was endeavoring to influence selected men to ignore and evade their summons to army camps, organizing meetings of socialists, pacifists and enemy sympathizers to protest against the war, leading socialist parades, speaking on street corners. A little later her apartment in Greenwich Village became the center of a circle of Bolshevists, including both the "pink parlor" and the "red bomb" varieties. Josephine journeyed over from Washington one day to try to persuade her one-time friend to desist from such efforts.

"You are just trying to shoot my husband and my brother in the back, Laura," Josephine told her.

"What difference does that make?" Laura wanted to know. "We're going to stop this war and if your husband and brother get in our way they can take the consequences. Herbert's a renegade anyway and he deserves to be shot in the back."

"What about me, Laura?" Josephine asked, smiling.

"You are the disappointment of my life!" Laura exclaimed with tragic emphasis. "You've given up your career, you've married and you've renounced socialism—you are a deserter all along the line! And now you want to make a deserter out of me! No, Josephine! I've got the blood of martyrs in my veins and I'm not a quitter! A detective watches my apartment all the time and an agent of the Department of Justice follows me on the street. I've been arrested and let go three times for talking socialism and opposing the war from a soap box on a street corner—obstructing traffic, they called it. But that's nothing to what I'm going to do! I shall be a credit to my ancestors before I'm through! I shall not tell you anything about it, because I haven't a particle of confidence left in you, Josephine. But there will be things happening in this country before long that will make all you old fogies run to your cellars for safety. It's a good thing that we red-blooded socialists have got rid of all such quitters as you and Herbert. I don't believe now that you ever were real socialists at all! Now we real Reds can accomplish something!"

Josephine, caring for her little son and devotedly watching over her grandfather and aiding him to keep his strength at its best, found time also for work with

the Red Cross and the War Camp Community Service. When the influenza epidemic swept the country during the winter after the armistice and in crowded Washington mowed down its victims like grass before the scythe, she found work to fill every moment of her time. In the midst of it her grandfather was stricken with what she knew to be a serious form of the disease. He was very ill for a few days, then rallied and grew stronger. But as Josephine began to hope that they could save his life pneumonia developed and she saw the shadow of death upon him. Coming out of unconsciousness once he said to her, "Josie, it's been a great blessing—I'm so thankful for it—that I've kept strength enough these last two years to hold on and work."

Then his mind seemed to wander and she heard him saying, disconnectedly, but as if he were struggling to couple the words with some other thought, "Morris—Josie—Herbert—our Country——" He was silent again, his vital forces seeming to fail; but his brow wrinkled as if his mind were still trying to grasp the thing that eluded its fading powers. Suddenly a light of satisfaction broke over his countenance and he lifted his head, looked at her and said clearly, "Sound at the core!" Then he fell back, exhausted by the effort, and in a few moments Josephine, with her finger on his pulse and the tears streaming down her face, knew that his heart had stopped beating.

THE END

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