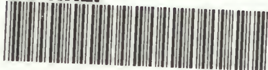

UC-NRLF
B 4 102 290

"IT IS YUE-LAOU, THE MAKER OF MOONS!"

THE MAKER OF MOONS

BY

ROBERT W. CHAMBERS

Author of "The King in Yellow," "The Red Republic"
"A King and a Few Dukes," etc.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK — 27 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET

LONDON — 24 BEDFORD STREET, STRAND

The Knickerbocker Press

1902

Copyright, 1896
BY
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

Entered at Stationers' Hall, London

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

PS 1284
M25
1902
MAIN

TO MY FATHER

973267

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE MAKER OF MOONS	1
THE SILENT LAND	83
THE BLACK WATER	129
IN THE NAME OF THE MOST HIGH	197
THE BOY'S SISTER	229
THE CRIME	265
A PLEASANT EVENING	305
THE MAN AT THE NEXT TABLE	347

THE MAKER OF MOONS

"I am myself just as much evil as good, and my nation is—And I say there is in fact no evil;
(Or if there is, I say it is just as important to you, to the land, or to me, as anything else.

* * * * * *

Each is not for its own sake;
I say the whole earth, and all the stars in the sky, are for Religion's sake.
I say no man has ever yet been half devout enough;
None has ever yet adored or worshipped half enough;
None has begun to think how divine he himself is, and how certain the future is."

WALT WHITMAN.

THE MAKER OF MOONS.

> "I have heard what the Talkers were talking,—the talk
> Of the beginning and the end;
> But I do not talk of the beginning or the end."

I.

CONCERNING Yue-Laou and the Xin I know nothing more than you shall know. I am miserably anxious to clear the matter up. Perhaps what I write may save the United States Government money and lives, perhaps it may arouse the scientific world to action; at any rate it will put an end to the terrible suspense of two people. Certainty is better than suspense.

If the Government dares to disregard this warning and refuses to send a thoroughly equipped expedition at once, the people of the State may take swift vengeance on the whole region and leave a blackened devastated waste where to-day forest and flowering meadow land border the lake in the Cardinal Woods.

You already know part of the story ; the New York papers have been full of alleged details. This much is true : Barris caught the "Shiner," red handed, or rather yellow handed, for his pockets and boots and dirty fists were stuffed with lumps of gold. I say gold, advisedly. You may call it what you please. You also know how Barris was—but unless I begin at the beginning of my own experiences you will be none the wiser after all.

On the third of August of this present year I was standing in Tiffany's, chatting with George Godfrey of the designing department. On the glass counter between us lay a coiled serpent, an exquisite specimen of chiselled gold.

"No," replied Godfrey to my question, "it is n't my work ; I wish it was. Why, man, it 's a masterpiece !"

"Whose ?" I asked.

"Now I should be very glad to know also," said Godfrey. "We bought it from an old jay who says he lives in the country somewhere about the Cardinal Woods. That 's near Starlit Lake, I believe——"

"Lake of the Stars ?" I suggested.

"Some call it Starlit Lake,—it 's all the same. Well, my rustic Reuben says that he represents the sculptor of this snake for all practical and business purposes. He got his price too. We hope he 'll bring us something more. We have sold this already to the Metropolitan Museum."

I was leaning idly on the glass case, watching the keen eyes of the artist in precious metals as he stooped over the gold serpent.

"A masterpiece!" he muttered to himself, fondling the glittering coil; "look at the texture! whew!" But I was not looking at the serpent. Something was moving,—crawling out of Godfrey's coat pocket,—the pocket nearest to me,—something soft and yellow with crab-like legs all covered with coarse yellow hair.

"What in Heaven's name," said I, "have you got in your pocket? It 's crawling out—it 's trying to creep up your coat, Godfrey!"

He turned quickly and dragged the creature out with his left hand.

I shrank back as he held the repulsive object dangling before me, and he laughed and placed it on the counter.

"Did you ever see anything like that?" he demanded.

"No," said I truthfully, "and I hope I never shall again. What is it?"

"I don't know. Ask them at the Natural History Museum—they can't tell you. The Smithsonian is all at sea too. It is, I believe, the connecting link between a sea-urchin, a spider, and the devil. It looks venomous but I can't find either fangs or mouth. Is it blind? These things may be eyes but they look as if they were painted. A Japanese sculptor might have produced such an impossible beast, but it is hard

to believe that God did. It looks unfinished too. I have a mad idea that this creature is only one of the parts of some larger and more grotesque organism,—it looks so lonely, so hopelessly dependent, so cursedly unfinished. I 'm going to use it as a model. If I don't out-Japanese the Japs my name is n't Godfrey."

The creature was moving slowly across the glass case towards me. I drew back.

"Godfrey," I said, "I would execute a man who executed any such work as you propose. What do you want to perpetuate such a reptile for? I can stand the Japanese grotesque but I can't stand that—spider—"

"It 's a crab."

"Crab or spider or blind-worm—ugh! What do you want to do it for? It 's a nightmare—it 's unclean!"

I hated the thing. It was the first living creature that I had ever hated.

For some time I had noticed a damp acrid odour in the air, and Godfrey said it came from the reptile.

"Then kill it and bury it," I said; "and by the way, where did it come from?"

"I don't know that either," laughed Godfrey; "I found it clinging to the box that this gold serpent was brought in. I suppose my old Reuben is responsible."

"If the Cardinal Woods are the lurking places for things like this," said I, "I am sorry that I am going to the Cardinal Woods."

"Are you?" asked Godfrey; "for the shooting?"

"Yes, with Barris and Pierpont. Why don't you kill that creature?"

"Go off on your shooting trip, and let me alone," laughed Godfrey.

I shuddered at the "crab," and bade Godfrey good-bye until December.

That night, Pierpont, Barris, and I sat chatting in the smoking-car of the Quebec Express when the long train pulled out of the Grand Central Depot. Old David had gone forward with the dogs; poor things, they hated to ride in the baggage car, but the Quebec and Northern road provides no sportsman's cars, and David and the three Gordon setters were in for an uncomfortable night.

Except for Pierpont, Barris, and myself, the car was empty. Barris, trim, stout, ruddy, and bronzed, sat drumming on the window ledge, puffing a short fragrant pipe. His gun-case lay beside him on the floor.

"When *I* have white hair and years of discretion," said Pierpont languidly, "I'll not flirt with pretty serving-maids; will you, Roy?"

"No," said I, looking at Barris.

"You mean the maid with the cap in the Pullman car?" asked Barris.

"Yes," said Pierpont.

I smiled, for I had seen it also.

Barris twisted his crisp grey moustache, and yawned.

"You children had better be toddling off to bed," he said. "That lady's-maid is a member of the Secret Service."

"Oh," said Pierpont, "one of your colleagues?"

"You might present us, you know," I said; "the journey is monotonous."

Barris had drawn a telegram from his pocket, and as he sat turning it over and over between his fingers he smiled. After a moment or two he handed it to Pierpont who read it with slightly raised eyebrows.

"It 's rot,—I suppose it 's cipher," he said; "I see it 's signed by General Drummond——"

"Drummond, Chief of the Government Secret Service," said Barris.

"Something interesting?" I enquired, lighting a cigarette.

"Something so interesting," replied Barris, "that I 'm going to look into it myself——"

"And break up our shooting trio——"

"No. Do you want to hear about it? Do you Billy Pierpont?"

"Yes," replied that immaculate young man.

Barris rubbed the amber mouth-piece of his pipe on his handkerchief, cleared the stem with a bit of wire, puffed once or twice, and leaned back in his chair.

"Pierpont," he said, "do you remember that evening at the United States Club when General Miles, General Drummond, and I were examining

that gold nugget that Captain Mahan had? You examined it also, I believe."

"I did," said Pierpont.

"Was it gold?" asked Barris, drumming on the window.

"It was," replied Pierpont.

"I saw it too," said I; "of course, it was gold."

"Professor La Grange saw it also," said Barris; "he said it was gold."

"Well?" said Pierpont.

"Well," said Barris, "it was not gold."

After a silence Pierpont asked what tests had been made.

"The usual tests," replied Barris. "The United States Mint is satisfied that it is gold, so is every jeweller who has seen it. But it is not gold,—and yet—it is gold."

Pierpont and I exchanged glances.

"Now," said I, "for Barris' usual coup-de-théâtre: what was the nugget?"

"Practically it was pure gold; but," said Barris, enjoying the situation intensely, "really it was not gold. Pierpont, what is gold?"

"Gold 's an element, a metal——"

"Wrong! Billy Pierpont," said Barris coolly.

"Gold was an element when I went to school," said I.

"It has not been an element for two weeks," said Barris; "and, except General Drummond, Professor La Grange, and myself, you two young-

sters are the only people, except one, in the world who know it,—or have known it."

"Do you mean to say that gold is a composite metal?" said Pierpont slowly.

"I do. La Grange has made it. He produced a scale of pure gold day before yesterday. That nugget was manufactured gold."

Could Barris be joking? Was this a colossal hoax? I looked at Pierpont. He muttered something about that settling the silver question, and turned his head to Barris, but there was that in Barris' face which forbade jesting, and Pierpont and I sat silently pondering.

"Don't ask me how it 's made," said Barris, quietly; "I don't know. But I do know that somewhere in the region of the Cardinal Woods there is a gang of people who do know how gold is made, and who make it. You understand the danger this is to every civilized nation. It 's got to be stopped of course. Drummond and I have decided that I am the man to stop it. Wherever and whoever these people are—these gold makers,—they must be caught, every one of them,—caught or shot."

"Or shot," repeated Pierpont, who was owner of the Cross-Cut Gold Mine and found his income too small; "Professor La Grange will of course be prudent;—science need not know things that would upset the world!"

"Little Willy," said Barris laughing, "your income is safe."

"I suppose," said I, "some flaw in the nugget gave Professor La Grange the tip."

"Exactly. He cut the flaw out before sending the nugget to be tested. He worked on the flaw and separated gold into its three elements."

"He is a great man," said Pierpont, "but he will be the greatest man in the world if he can keep his discovery to himself."

"Who?" said Barris.

"Professor La Grange."

"Professor La Grange was shot through the heart two hours ago," replied Barris slowly.

II.

WE had been at the shooting box in the Cardinal Woods five days when a telegram was brought to Barris by a mounted messenger from the nearest telegraph station, Cardinal Springs, a hamlet on the lumber railroad which joins the Quebec and Northern at Three Rivers Junction, thirty miles below.

Pierpont and I were sitting out under the trees, loading some special shells as experiments; Barris stood beside us, bronzed, erect, holding his pipe carefully so that no sparks should drift into our powder box. The beat of hoofs over the grass aroused us, and when the lank messenger drew bridle before the door, Barris stepped forward and took the sealed telegram. When he had torn it open he went into the house and presently reappeared, reading something that he had written.

"This should go at once," he said, looking the messenger full in the face.

"At once, Colonel Barris," replied the shabby countryman.

Pierpont glanced up and I smiled at the messenger who was gathering his bridle and settling

himself in his stirrups. Barris handed him the written reply and nodded good-bye: there was a thud of hoofs on the greensward, a jingle of bit and spur across the gravel, and the messenger was gone. Barris' pipe went out and he stepped to windward to relight it.

"It is queer," said I, "that your messenger—a battered native,—should speak like a Harvard man."

"He is a Harvard man," said Barris.

"And the plot thickens," said Pierpont; "are the Cardinal Woods full of your Secret Service men, Barris?"

"No," replied Barris, "but the telegraph stations are. How many ounces of shot are you using, Roy?"

I told him, holding up the adjustable steel measuring cup. He nodded. After a moment or two he sat down on a camp-stool beside us and picked up a crimper.

"That telegram was from Drummond," he said; "the messenger was one of my men as you two bright little boys divined. Pooh! If he had spoken the Cardinal County dialect you would n't have known."

"His make-up was good," said Pierpont.

Barris twirled the crimper and looked at the pile of loaded shells. Then he picked up one and crimped it.

"Let 'em alone," said Pierpont, "you crimp too tight."

"Does his little gun kick when the shells are crimped too tight?" enquired Barris tenderly; "well, he shall crimp his own shells then,—where 's his little man?"

"His little man," was a weird English importation, stiff, very carefully scrubbed, tangled in his aspirates, named Howlett. As valet, gilly, gun-bearer, and crimper, he aided Pierpont to endure the ennui of existence, by doing for him everything except breathing. Lately, however, Barris' taunts had driven Pierpont to do a few things for himself. To his astonishment he found that cleaning his own gun was not a bore, so he timidly loaded a shell or two, was much pleased with himself, loaded some more, crimped them, and went to breakfast with an appetite. So when Barris asked where "his little man" was, Pierpont did not reply but dug a cupful of shot from the bag and poured it solemnly into the half filled shell.

Old David came out with the dogs and of course there was a pow-wow when "Voyou," my Gordon, wagged his splendid tail across the loading table and sent a dozen unstopped cartridges rolling over the grass, vomiting powder and shot.

"Give the dogs a mile or two," said I; "we will shoot over the Sweet Fern Covert about four o'clock, David."

"Two guns, David," added Barris.

"Are you not going?" asked Pierpont, looking up, as David disappeared with the dogs.

"Bigger game," said Barris shortly. He picked up a mug of ale from the tray which Howlett had just set down beside us and took a long pull. We did the same, silently. Pierpont set his mug on the turf beside him and returned to his loading.

We spoke of the murder of Professor La Grange, of how it had been concealed by the authorities in New York at Drummond's request, of the certainty that it was one of the gang of gold-makers who had done it, and of the possible alertness of the gang.

"Oh, they know that Drummond will be after them sooner or later," said Barris, "but they don't know that the mills of the gods have already begun to grind. Those smart New York papers builded better than they knew when their ferret-eyed reporter poked his red nose into the house on 58th Street and sneaked off with a column on his cuffs about the 'suicide' of Professor La Grange. Billy Pierpont, my revolver is hanging in your room; I'll take yours too——"

"Help yourself," said Pierpont.

"I shall be gone over night," continued Barris; "my poncho and some bread and meat are all I shall take except the 'barkers.'"

"Will they bark to-night?" I asked.

"No, I trust not for several weeks yet. I shall nose about a bit. Roy, did it ever strike you how queer it is that this wonderfully beautiful country should contain no inhabitants?"

"It 's like those splendid stretches of pools and rapids which one finds on every trout river and in which one never finds a fish," suggested Pierpont.

"Exactly,—and Heaven alone knows why," said Barris; "I suppose this country is shunned by human beings for the same mysterious reasons."

"The shooting is the better for it," I observed.

"The shooting is good," said Barris, "have you noticed the snipe on the meadow by the lake? Why it 's brown with them! That 's a wonderful meadow."

"It 's a natural one," said Pierpont, "no human being ever cleared that land."

"Then it 's supernatural," said Barris; "Pierpont, do you want to come with me?"

Pierpont's handsome face flushed as he answered slowly, "It 's awfully good of you,—if I may."

"Bosh," said I, piqued because he had asked Pierpont, "what use is little Willy without his man?"

"True," said Barris gravely, "you can't take Howlett you know."

Pierpont muttered something which ended in "d—n."

"Then," said I, "there will be but one gun on the Sweet Fern Covert this afternoon. Very well, I wish you joy of your cold supper and colder bed. Take your night-gown, Willy, and don't sleep on the damp ground."

"Let Pierpont alone," retorted Barris, "you shall go next time, Roy."

"Oh, all right,—you mean when there 's shooting going on?"

"And I?" demanded Pierpont, grieved.

"You too, my son; stop quarelling! Will you ask Howlett to pack our kits—lightly mind you, —no bottles,—they clink."

"My flask does n't," said Pierpont, and went off to get ready for a night's stalking of dangerous men.

"It is strange," said I, "that nobody ever settles in this region. How many people live in Cardinal Springs, Barris?"

"Twenty counting the telegraph operator and not counting the lumbermen; they are always changing and shifting. I have six men among them."

"Where have you no men? In the Four Hundred?"

"I have men there also,—chums of Billy's only he does n't know it. David tells me that there was a strong flight of woodcock last night. You ought to pick up some this afternoon."

Then we chatted about alder-cover and swamp until Pierpont came out of the house and it was time to part.

"Au revoir," said Barris, buckling on his kit, "come along, Pierpont, and don't walk in the damp grass."

"If you are not back by to-morrow noon," said

I, "I will take Howlett and David and hunt you up. You say your course is due north?"

"Due north," replied Barris, consulting his compass.

"There is a trail for two miles and a spotted lead for two more," said Pierpont.

"Which we won't use for various reasons," added Barris pleasantly; "don't worry, Roy, and keep your confounded expedition out of the way; there 's no danger."

He knew, of course, what he was talking about and I held my peace.

When the tip end of Pierpont's shooting coat had disappeared in the Long Covert, I found myself standing alone with Howlett. He bore my gaze for a moment and then politely lowered his eyes.

"Howlett," said I, "take these shells and implements to the gun room, and drop nothing. Did Voyou come to any harm in the briers this morning?"

"No 'arm, Mr. Cardenhe, sir," said Howlett.

"Then be careful not to drop anything else," said I, and walked away leaving him decorously puzzled. For he had dropped no cartridges. Poor Howlett!

III.

ABOUT four o'clock that afternoon I met David and the dogs at the spinney which leads into the Sweet Fern Covert. The three setters, Voyou, Gamin, and Mioche were in fine feather,—David had killed a woodcock and a brace of grouse over them that morning,—and they were thrashing about the spinney at short range when I came up, gun under arm and pipe lighted.

"What 's the prospect, David," I asked, trying to keep my feet in the tangle of wagging, whining dogs; "hello, what 's amiss with Mioche?"

"A brier in his foot sir; I drew it and stopped the wound but I guess the gravel 's got in. If you have no objection, sir, I might take him back with me."

"It 's safer," I said; "take Gamin too, I only want one dog this afternoon. What is the situation?"

"Fair sir; the grouse lie within a quarter of a mile of the oak second-growth. The woodcock are mostly on the alders. I saw any number of

snipe on the meadows. There 's something else in by the lake,—I can't just tell what, but the wood-duck set up a clatter when I was in the thicket and they come dashing through the wood as if a dozen foxes was snappin' at their tail feathers."

"Probably a fox," I said; "leash those dogs,—they must learn to stand it. I 'll be back by dinner time."

"There is one more thing sir," said David, lingering with his gun under his arm.

"Well," said I.

"I saw a man in the woods by the Oak Covert,—at least I think I did."

"A lumberman?"

"I think not sir—at least,—do they have Chinamen among them?"

"Chinese? No. You did n't see a Chinaman in the woods here?"

"I—I think I did sir,—I can't say positively. He was gone when I ran into the covert."

"Did the dogs notice it?"

"I can't say—exactly. They acted queer like. Gamin here lay down an whined—it may have been colic—and Mioche whimpered,—perhaps it was the brier."

"And Voyou?"

"Voyou, he was most remarkable sir, and the hair on his back stood up. I did see a ground-hog makin' for a tree near by."

"Then no wonder Voyou bristled. David,

your Chinaman was a stump or tussock. Take the dogs now."

"I guess it was sir ; good afternoon sir," said David, and walked away with the Gordons leaving me alone with Voyou in the spinney.

I looked at the dog and he looked at me.

"Voyou!"

The dog sat down and danced with his fore feet, his beautiful brown eyes sparkling.

"You 're a fraud," I said ; "which shall it be, the alders or the upland? Upland? Good!—now for the grouse,—heel, my friend, and show your miraculous self-restraint."

Voyou wheeled into my tracks and followed close, nobly refusing to notice the impudent chipmunks and the thousand and one alluring and important smells which an ordinary dog would have lost no time in investigating.

The brown and yellow autumn woods were crisp with drifting heaps of leaves and twigs that crackled under foot as we turned from the spinney into the forest. Every silent little stream, hurrying toward the lake was gay with painted leaves afloat, scarlet maple or yellow oak. Spots of sunlight fell upon the pools, searching the brown depths, illuminating the gravel bottom where shoals of minnows swam to and fro, and to and fro again, busy with the purpose of their little lives. The crickets were chirping in the long brittle grass on the edge of the woods, but we left them far behind in the silence of the deeper forest.

"Now!" said I to Voyou.

The dog sprang to the front, circled once, zigzagged through the ferns around us and, all in a moment, stiffened stock still, rigid as sculptured bronze. I stepped forward, raising my gun, two paces, three paces, ten perhaps, before a great cock-grouse blundered up from the brake and burst through the thicket fringe toward the deeper growth. There was a flash and puff from my gun, a crash of echoes among the low wooded cliffs, and through the faint veil of smoke something dark dropped from mid-air amid a cloud of feathers, brown as the brown leaves under foot.

"Fetch!"

Up from the ground sprang Voyou, and in a moment he came galloping back, neck arched, tail stiff but waving, holding tenderly in his pink mouth a mass of mottled bronzed feathers. Very gravely he laid the bird at my feet and crouched close beside it, his silky ears across his paws, his muzzle on the ground.

I dropped the grouse into my pocket, held for a moment a silent caressing communion with Voyou, then swung my gun under my arm and motioned the dog on.

It must have been five o'clock when I walked into a little opening in the woods and sat down to breathe. Voyou came and sat down in front of me.

"Well?" I enquired.

Voyou gravely presented one paw which I took.

"We will never get back in time for dinner," said I, "so we might as well take it easy. It 's all your fault, you know. Is there a brier in your foot?—let 's see,—there! it 's out my friend and you are free to nose about and lick it. If you loll your tongue out you'll get it all over twigs and moss. Can't you lie down and try to pant less? No, there is no use in sniffing and looking at that fern patch, for we are going to smoke a little, doze a little, and go home by moonlight. Think what a big dinner we will have! Think of Howlett's despair when we are not in time! Think of all the stories you will have to tell to Gamin and Mioche! Think what a good dog you have been! There—you are tired old chap; take forty winks with me."

Voyou was a little tired. He stretched out on the leaves at my feet but whether or not he really slept I could not be certain, until his hind legs twitched and I knew he was dreaming of mighty deeds.

Now I may have taken forty winks, but the sun seemed to be no lower when I sat up and unclosed my lids. Voyou raised his head, saw in my eyes that I was not going yet, thumped his tail half a dozen times on the dried leaves, and settled back with a sigh.

I looked lazily around, and for the first time noticed what a wonderfully beautiful spot I had chosen for a nap. It was an oval glade in the heart of the forest, level and carpeted with green

grass. The trees that surrounded it were gigantic; they formed one towering circular wall of verdure, blotting out all except the turquoise blue of the sky-oval above. And now I noticed that in the centre of the greensward lay a pool of water, crystal clear, glimmering like a mirror in the meadow grass, beside a block of granite. It scarcely seemed possible that the symmetry of tree and lawn and lucent pool could have been one of nature's accidents. I had never before seen this glade nor had I ever heard it spoken of by either Pierpont or Barris. It was a marvel, this diamond clear basin, regular and graceful as a Roman fountain, set in the gem of turf. And these great trees,—they also belonged, not in America but in some legend-haunted forest of France, where moss-grown marbles stand neglected in dim glades, and the twilight of the forest shelters fairies and slender shapes from shadow-land.

I lay and watched the sunlight showering the tangled thicket where masses of crimson Cardinal-flowers glowed, or where one long dusty sunbeam tipped the edge of the floating leaves in the pool, turning them to palest gilt. There were birds too, passing through the dim avenues of trees like jets of flame,—the gorgeous Cardinal-Bird in his deep stained crimson robe,—the bird that gave to the woods, to the village fifteen miles away, to the whole county, the name of Cardinal.

I rolled over on my back and looked up at the

sky. How pale,—paler than a robin's egg,—it was. I seemed to be lying at the bottom of a well, walled with verdure, high towering on every side. And, as I lay, all about me the air became sweet scented. Sweeter and sweeter and more penetrating grew the perfume, and I wondered what stray breeze, blowing over acres of lilies could have brought it. But there was no breeze; the air was still. A gilded fly alighted on my hand,—a honey-fly. It was as troubled as I by the scented silence.

Then, behind me, my dog growled.

I sat quite still at first, hardly breathing, but my eyes were fixed on a shape that moved along the edge of the pool among the meadow grasses. The dog had ceased growling and was now staring, alert and trembling.

At last I rose and walked rapidly down to the pool, my dog following close to heel.

The figure, a woman's, turned slowly toward us.

IV.

SHE was standing still when I approached the pool. The forest around us was so silent that when I spoke the sound of my own voice startled me.

"No," she said,—and her voice was smooth as flowing water, "I have not lost my way. Will he come to me, your beautiful dog?"

Before I could speak, Voyou crept to her and laid his silky head against her knees.

"But surely," said I, "you did not come here alone."

"Alone? I did come alone."

"But the nearest settlement is Cardinal, probably nineteen miles from where we are standing."

"I do not know Cardinal," she said.

"Ste. Croix in Canada is forty miles at least,—how did you come into the Cardinal Woods?" I asked amazed.

"Into the woods?" she repeated a little impatiently.

"Yes."

She did not answer at first but stood caressing Voyou with gentle phrase and gesture.

"Your beautiful dog I am fond of, but I am not fond of being questioned," she said quietly. "My name is Ysonde and I came to the fountain here to see your dog."

I was properly quenched. After a moment or two I did say that in another hour it would be growing dusky, but she neither replied nor looked at me.

"This," I ventured, "is a beautiful pool,—you call it a fountain,—a delicious fountain: I have never before seen it. It is hard to imagine that nature did all this."

"Is it?" she said.

"Don't you think so?" I asked.

"I have n't thought; I wish when you go you would leave me your dog."

"My—my dog?"

"If you don't mind," she said sweetly, and looked at me for the first time in the face.

For an instant our glances met, then she grew grave, and I saw that her eyes were fixed on my forehead. Suddenly she rose and drew nearer, looking intently at my forehead. There was a faint mark there, a tiny crescent, just over my eyebrow. It was a birthmark.

"Is that a scar?" she demanded drawing nearer.

"That crescent shaped mark? No."

"No? Are you sure?" she insisted.

"Perfectly," I replied, astonished.

"A—a birthmark?"

"Yes,—may I ask why?"

As she drew away from me, I saw that the color had fled from her cheeks. For a second she clasped both hands over her eyes as if to shut out my face, then slowly dropping her hands, she sat down on a long square block of stone which half encircled the basin, and on which to my amazement I saw carving. Voyou went to her again and laid his head in her lap.

"What is your name?" she asked at length.

"Roy Cardenhe."

"Mine is Ysonde. I carved these dragon-flies on the stone, these fishes and shells and butterflies you see."

"You! They are wonderfully delicate,—but those are not American dragon-flies—"

"No—they are more beautiful. See, I have my hammer and chisel with me."

She drew from a queer pouch at her side a small hammer and chisel and held them toward me.

"You are very talented," I said, "where did you study?"

"I? I never studied,—I knew how. I saw things and cut them out of stone. Do you like them? Some time I will show you other things that I have done. If I had a great lump of bronze I could make your dog, beautiful as he is."

Her hammer fell into the fountain and I leaned over and plunged my arm into the water to find it.

"It is there, shining on the sand," she said, leaning over the pool with me.

"Where," said I, looking at our reflected faces in the water. For it was only in the water that I had dared, as yet, to look her long in the face.

The pool mirrored the exquisite oval of her head, the heavy hair, the eyes. I heard the silken rustle of her girdle, I caught the flash of a white arm, and the hammer was drawn up dripping with spray.

The troubled surface of the pool grew calm and again I saw her eyes reflected.

"Listen," she said in a low voice, "do you think you will come again to my fountain?"

"I will come," I said. My voice was dull; the noise of water filled my ears.

Then a swift shadow sped across the pool; I rubbed my eyes. Where her reflected face had bent beside mine there was nothing mirrored but the rosy evening sky with one pale star glimmering. I drew myself up and turned. She was gone. I saw the faint star twinkling above me in the afterglow, I saw the tall trees motionless in the still evening air, I saw my dog slumbering at my feet.

The sweet scent in the air had faded, leaving in my nostrils the heavy odor of fern and forest mould. A blind fear seized me, and I caught up my gun and and sprang into the darkening woods. The dog followed me, crashing through the undergrowth at my side. Duller and duller grew the

light, but I strode on, the sweat pouring from my face and hair, my mind a chaos. How I reached the spinney I can hardly tell. As I turned up the path I caught a glimpse of a human face peering at me from the darkening thicket,—a horrible human face, yellow and drawn with high-boned cheeks and narrow eyes.

Involuntarily I halted; the dog at my heels snarled. Then I sprang straight at it, floundering blindly through the thicket, but the night had fallen swiftly and I found myself panting and struggling in a maze of twisted shrubbery and twining vines, unable to see the very undergrowth that ensnared me.

It was a pale face, and a scratched one that I carried to a late dinner that night. Howlett served me, dumb reproach in his eyes, for the soup had been standing and the grouse was juiceless.

David brought the dogs in after they had had their supper, and I drew my chair before the blaze and set my ale on a table beside me. The dogs curled up at my feet, blinking gravely at the sparks that snapped and flew in eddying showers from the heavy birch logs.

"David," said I, "did you say you saw a Chinaman today?"

"I did sir."

"What do you think about it now?"

"I may have been mistaken sir——"

"But you think not. What sort of whiskey did you put in my flask today?"

"The usual sir."

"Is there much gone?"

"About three swallows sir, as usual."

"You don't suppose there could have been any mistake about that whiskey,—no medicine could have gotten into it for instance."

David smiled and said, "No sir."

"Well," said I, "I have had an extraordinary dream."

When I said "dream," I felt comforted and reassured. I had scarcely dared to say it before, even to myself.

"An extraordinary dream," I repeated; "I fell asleep in the woods about five o'clock, in that pretty glade where the fountain—I mean the pool is. You know the place?"

"I do not sir."

I described it minutely, twice, but David shook his head.

"Carved stone did you say sir? I never chanced on it. You don't mean the New Spring——"

"No, no! This glade is way beyond that. Is it possible that any people inhabit the forest between here and the Canada line?"

"Nobody short of Ste. Croix; at least I have no knowledge of any."

"Of course," said I, "when I thought I saw a Chinaman, it was imagination. Of course I had been more impressed than I was aware of by your adventure. Of course you saw no Chinaman, David."

"Probably not sir," replied David dubiously.

I sent him off to bed, saying I should keep the dogs with me all night; and when he was gone, I took a good long draught of ale, "just to shame the devil," as Pierpont said, and lighted a cigar. Then I thought of Barris and Pierpont, and their cold bed, for I knew they would not dare build a fire, and, in spite of the hot chimney corner and the crackling blaze, I shivered in sympathy.

"I 'll tell Barris and Pierpont the whole story and take them to see the carved stone and the fountain," I thought to myself; what a marvellous dream it was—Ysonde,—if it was a dream."

Then I went to the mirror and examined the faint white mark above my eyebrow.

V.

ABOUT eight o'clock next morning, as I sat listlessly eyeing my coffee cup which Howlett was filling, Gamin and Mioche set up a howl, and in a moment more I heard Barris' step on the porch.

"Hello, Roy," said Pierpont, stamping into the dining room, "I want my breakfast by jingo! Where 's Howlett,—none of your *café au lait* for me,—I want a chop and some eggs. Look at that dog, he 'll wag the hinge off his tail in a moment——"

"Pierpont," said I, "this loquacity is astonishing but welcome. Where 's Barris? You are soaked from neck to ankle."

Pierpont sat down and tore off his stiff muddy leggings.

"Barris is telephoning to Cardinal Springs,—I believe he wants some of his men,—down! Gamin, you idiot! Howlett, three eggs poached and more toast,—what was I saying? Oh, about Barris; he 's struck something or other which he hopes will locate these gold-making fellows. I had a jolly time,—he 'll tell you about it."

"Billy! Billy!" I said in pleased amazement, "you are learning to talk! Dear me! You load your own shells and you carry your own gun and you fire it yourself—hello! here 's Barris all over mud. You fellows really ought to change your rig—whew! what a frightful odor!"

"It 's probably this," said Barris tossing something onto the hearth where it shuddered for a moment and then began to writhe; "I found it in the woods by the lake. Do you know what it can be, Roy?"

To my disgust I saw it was another of those spidery wormy crablike creatures that Godfrey had in Tiffany's.

"I thought I recognized that acrid odor," I said; "for the love of the Saints take it away from the breakfast table, Barris!"

"But what is it?" he persisted, unslinging his field-glass and revolver.

"I 'll tell you what I know after breakfast," I replied firmly, "Howlett, get a broom and sweep that thing into the road.—what are you laughing at, Pierpont?"

Howlett swept the repulsive creature out and Barris and Pierpont went to change their dew-soaked clothes for dryer raiment. David came to take the dogs for an airing and in a few minutes Barris reappeared and sat down in his place at the head of the table.

"Well," said I, "is there a story to tell?"

"Yes, not much. They are near the lake on

the other side of the woods,—I mean these gold-makers. I shall collar one of them this evening. I have n't located the main gang with any certainty,—shove the toast rack this way will you, Roy,—no, I am not at all certain, but I 've nailed one anyway. Pierpont was a great help, really, —and, what do you think, Roy? He wants to join the Secret Service!"

"Little Willy!"

"Exactly. Oh I 'll dissuade him. What sort of a reptile was that I brought in? Did Howlett sweep it away?"

"He can sweep it back again for all I care," I said indifferently, "I 've finished my breakfast."

"No," said Barris, hastily swallowing his coffee, "it 's of no importance; you can tell me about the beast——"

"Serve you right if I had it brought in on toast," I returned.

Pierpont came in radiant, fresh from the bath.

"Go on with your story, Roy," he said; and I told them about Godfrey and his reptile pet.

"Now what in the name of common sense can Godfrey find interesting in that creature?" I ended, tossing my cigarette into the fireplace.

"It's Japanese, don't you think?" said Pierpont.

"No," said Barris, "it is not artistically grotesque, it 's vulgar and horrible,—it looks cheap and unfinished——"

"Unfinished,—exactly," said I, "like an American humorist——"

"Yes," said Pierpont, "cheap. What about that gold serpent?"

"Oh, the Metropolitan Museum bought it; you must see it, it 's marvellous."

Barris and Pierpont had lighted their cigarettes and, after a moment, we all rose and strolled out to the lawn, where chairs and hammocks were placed under the maple trees.

David passed, gun under arm, dogs heeling.

"Three guns on the meadows at four this afternoon," said Pierpont.

"Roy," said Barris as David bowed and started on, "what did you do yesterday?"

This was the question that I had been expecting. All night long I had dreamed of Ysonde and the glade in the woods, where, at the bottom of the crystal fountain, I saw the reflection of her eyes. All the morning while bathing and dressing I had been persuading myself that the dream was not worth recounting and that a search for the glade and the imaginary stone carving would be ridiculous. But now, as Barris asked the question, I suddenly decided to tell him the whole story.

"See here, you fellows," I said abruptly, "I am going to tell you something queer. You can laugh as much as you please too, but first I want to ask Barris a question or two. You have been in China, Barris?"

"Yes," said Barris, looking straight into my eyes.

"Would a Chinaman be likely to turn lumberman?"

"Have you seen a Chinaman?" he asked in a quiet voice.

"I don't know; David and I both imagined we did."

Barris and Pierpont exchanged glances.

"Have you seen one also?" I demanded, turning to include Pierpont.

"No," said Barris slowly; "but I know that there is, or has been, a Chinaman in these woods."

"The devil!" said I.

"Yes," said Barris gravely; "the devil, if you like,—a devil,—a member of the Kuen-Yuin."

I drew my chair close to the hammock where Pierpont lay at full length, holding out to me a ball of pure gold.

"Well?" said I, examining the engraving on its surface, which represented a mass of twisted creatures,—dragons, I supposed.

"Well," repeated Barris, extending his hand to take the golden ball, "this globe of gold engraved with reptiles and Chinese hieroglyphics is the symbol of the Kuen-Yuin."

"Where did you get it?" I asked, feeling that something startling was impending.

"Pierpont found it by the lake at sunrise this

morning. It is the symbol of the Kuen-Yuin," he repeated, "the terrible Kuen-Yuin, the sorcerers of China, and the most murderously diabolical sect on earth."

We puffed our cigarettes in silence until Barris rose, and began to pace backward and forward among the trees, twisting his grey moustache.

"The Kuen-Yuin are sorcerers," he said, pausing before the hammock where Pierpont lay watching him; "I mean exactly what I say,—sorcerers. I've seen them,—I've seen them at their devilish business, and I repeat to you solemnly, that as there are angels above, there is a race of devils on earth, and they are sorcerers. Bah!" he cried, "talk to me of Indian magic and Yogis and all that clap-trap! Why, Roy, I tell you that the Kuen-Yuin have absolute control of a hundred millions of people, mind and body, body and soul. Do you know what goes on in the interior of China? Does Europe know,—could any human being conceive of the condition of that gigantic hell-pit? You read the papers, you hear diplomatic twaddle about Li Hung Chang and the Emperor, you see accounts of battles on sea and land, and you know that Japan has raised a toy tempest along the jagged edge of the great unknown. But you never before heard of the Kuen-Yuin; no, nor has any European except a stray missionary or two, and yet I tell you that when the fires from this pit of hell have eaten through the continent to the coast, the ex-

plosion will inundate half a world,—and God help the other half."

Pierpont's cigarette went out; he lighted another, and looked hard at Barris.

"But," resumed Barris quietly, "'sufficient unto the day,' you know,—I did n't intend to say as much as I did,—it would do no good,—even you and Pierpont will forget it,—it seems so impossible and so far away,—like the burning out of the sun. What I want to discuss is the possibility or probability of a Chinaman,—a member of the Kuen-Yuin, being here, at this moment, in the forest."

"If he is," said Pierpont, "possibly the gold-makers owe their discovery to him."

"I do not doubt it for a second," said Barris earnestly.

I took the little golden globe in my hand, and examined the characters engraved upon it.

"Barris," said Pierpont, "I can't believe in sorcery while I am wearing one of Sanford's shooting suits in the pocket of which rests an uncut volume of the 'Duchess.'"

"Neither can I," I said, "for I read the *Evening Post*, and I know Mr. Godkin would not allow it. Hello! What 's the matter with this gold ball?"

"What is the matter?" said Barris grimly.

"Why—why—it 's changing color—purple, no, crimson—no, it 's green I mean—good Heavens! these dragons are twisting under my fingers——"

"Impossible!" muttered Pierpont, leaning over me; "those are not dragons——"

"No!" I cried excitedly; "they are pictures of that reptile that Barris brought back—see—see how they crawl and turn——"

"Drop it!" commanded Barris; and I threw the ball on the turf. In an instant we had all knelt down on the grass beside it, but the globe was again golden, grotesquely wrought with dragons and strange signs.

Pierpont, a little red in the face, picked it up, and handed it to Barris. He placed it on a chair, and sat down beside me.

"Whew!" said I, wiping the perspiration from my face, "how did you play us that trick, Barris?"

"Trick?" said Barris contemptuously.

I looked at Pierpont, and my heart sank. If this was not a trick, what was it? Pierpont returned my glance and colored, but all he said was, "It's devilish queer," and Barris answered, "Yes, devilish." Then Barris asked me again to tell my story, and I did, beginning from the time I met David in the spinney to the moment when I sprang into the darkening thicket where that yellow mask had grinned like a phantom skull.

"Shall we try to find the fountain?" I asked after a pause.

"Yes,—and—er—the lady," suggested Pierpont vaguely.

"Don't be an ass," I said a little impatiently, "you need not come, you know."

"Oh, I 'll come," said Pierpont, "unless you think I am indiscreet——"

"Shut up, Pierpont," said Barris, "this thing is serious; I never heard of such a glade or such a fountain, but it 's true that nobody knows this forest thoroughly. It 's worth while trying for; Roy, can you find your way back to it?"

"Easily," I answered; "when shall we go?"

"It will knock our snipe shooting on the head," said Pierpont, "but then when one has the opportunity of finding a live dream-lady——"

I rose, deeply offended, but Pierpont was not very penitent and his laughter was irresistible.

"The lady 's yours by right of discovery," he said, "I 'll promise not to infringe on your dreams,—I 'll dream about other ladies——"

"Come, come," said I, "I 'll have Howlett put you to bed in a minute. Barris, if you are ready, —we can get back to dinner——"

Barris had risen and was gazing at me earnestly.

"What 's the matter?" I asked nervously, for I saw that his eyes were fixed on my forehead, and I thought of Ysonde and the white crescent scar.

"Is that a birthmark?" said Barris.

"Yes—why, Barris?"

"Nothing,—an interesting coincidence——"

"What!—for Heaven's sake!"

"The scar,—or rather the birthmark. It is the print of the dragon's claw,—the crescent symbol of Yue-Laou——"

"And who the devil is Yue-Laou?" I said crossly.

"Yue-Laou,—the Moon Maker, Dzil-Nbu of the Kuen-Yuin;—it 's Chinese Mythology, but it is believed that Yue-Laou has returned to rule the Kuen-Yuin——"

"The conversation," interrupted Pierpont, "smacks of peacocks feathers and yellow-jackets. The chicken-pox has left its card on Roy, and Barris is guying us. Come on, you fellows, and make your call on the dream-lady. Barris, I hear galloping; here come your men."

Two mud splashed riders clattered up to the porch and dismounted at a motion from Barris. I noticed that both of them carried repeating rifles and heavy Colt's revolvers.

They followed Barris, deferentially, into the dining-room, and presently we heard the tinkle of plates and bottles and the low hum of Barris' musical voice.

Half an hour later they came out again, saluted Pierpont and me, and galloped away in the direction of the Canadian frontier. Ten minutes passed, and, as Barris did not appear, we rose and went into the house, to find him. He was sitting silently before the table, watching the small golden globe, now glowing with scarlet and orange fire, brilliant as a live coal. Howlett,

mouth ajar, and eyes starting from the sockets, stood petrified behind him.

"Are you coming," asked Pierpont, a little startled. Barris did not answer. The globe slowly turned to pale gold again,—but the face that Barris raised to ours was white as a sheet. Then he stood up, and smiled with an effort which was painful to us all.

"Give me a pencil and a bit of paper," he said.

Howlett brought it. Barris went to the window and wrote rapidly. He folded the paper, placed it in the top drawer of his desk, locked the drawer, handed me the key, and motioned us to precede him.

When again we stood under the maples, he turned to me with an impenetrable expression. "You will know when to use the key," he said: "Come, Pierpont, we must try to find Roy's fountain."

VI.

AT two o'clock that afternoon, at Barris' suggestion, we gave up the search for the fountain in the glade and cut across the forest to the spinney where David and Howlett were waiting with our guns and the three dogs.

Pierpont guyed me unmercifully about the "dream-lady" as he called her, and, but for the significant coincidence of Ysonde's and Barris' questions concerning the white scar on my forehead, I should long ago have been perfectly persuaded that I had dreamed the whole thing. As it was, I had no explanation to offer. We had not been able to find the glade although fifty times I came to landmarks which convinced me that we were just about to enter it. Barris was quiet, scarcely uttering a word to either of us during the entire search. I had never before seen him depressed in spirits. However, when we came in sight of the spinney where a cold bit of grouse and a bottle of Burgundy awaited each, Barris seemed to recover his habitual good humor.

"Here 's to the dream-lady!" said Pierpont, raising his glass and standing up.

I did not like it. Even if she was only a dream, it irritated me to hear Pierpont's mocking voice. Perhaps Barris understood,—I don't know, but he bade Pierpont drink his wine without further noise, and that young man obeyed with a child-like confidence which almost made Barris smile.

"What about the snipe, David," I asked; "the meadows should be in good condition."

"There is not a snipe on the meadows, sir," said David solemnly.

"Impossible," exclaimed Barris, "they can't have left."

"They have, sir," said David in a sepulchral voice which I hardly recognized.

We all three looked at the old man curiously, waiting for his explanation of this disappointing but sensational report.

David looked at Howlett and Howlett examined the sky.

"I was going," began the old man, with his eyes fastened on Howlett, "I was going along by the spinney with the dogs when I heard a noise in the covert and I seen Howlett come walkin' very fast toward me. In fact," continued David, "I may say he was runnin'. Was you runnin', Howlett?"

Howlett said "Yes," with a decorous cough.

"I beg pardon," said David, "but I 'd rather Howlett told the rest. He saw things which I did not."

"Go on, Howlett," commanded Pierpont, much interested.

Howlett coughed again behind his large red hand.

" What David says is true sir," he began ; " I h'observed the dogs at a distance 'ow they was a workin' sir, and David stood a lightin' of 's pipe be'ind the spotted beech when I see a 'ead pop up in the covert 'oldin a stick like 'e was h'aimin' at the dogs sir "—

" A head holding a stick ? " said Pierpont severely.

" The 'ead 'ad 'ands, sir," explained Howlett, " 'ands that 'eld a painted stick,—like that, sir. 'Owlett, thinks I to meself, this 'ere 's queer, so I jumps in an' runs, but the beggar 'e seen me an' w'en I comes alongside of David, 'e was gone. ' 'Ello 'Owlett,' sez David, ' what the 'ell '—I beg pardon, sir,—' 'ow did you come 'ere,' sez 'e very loud. ' Run ! ' sez I, ' the Chinaman is harryin' the dawgs ! ' ' For Gawd's sake wot Chinaman ? ' sez David, h'aimin' 'is gun at every bush. Then I thinks I see 'im an' we run an' run, the dawgs a boundin' close to heel sir, but we don't see no Chinaman."

" I 'll tell the rest," said David, as Howlett coughed and stepped in a modest corner behind the dogs.

" Go on," said Barris in a strange voice.

" Well sir, when Howlett and I stopped chasin', we was on the cliff overlooking the south meadow. I noticed that there was hundreds of birds there, mostly yellow-legs and plover, and Howlett seen

them too. Then before I could say a word to Howlett, something out in the lake gave a splash —a splash as if the whole cliff had fallen into the water. I was that scared that I jumped straight into the bush and Howlett he sat down quick, and all those snipe wheeled up—there was hundreds,—all a squeelin' with fright, and the wood-duck came bowlin' over the meadows as if the old Nick was behind."

David paused and glanced meditatively at the dogs.

"Go on," said Barris in the same strained voice.

"Nothing more sir. The snipe did not come back."

"But that splash in the lake?"

"I don't know what it was sir."

"A salmon? A salmon could n't have frightened the duck and the snipe that way?"

"No—oh no, sir. If fifty salmon had jumped they could n't have made that splash. Could n't they, Howlett?"

"No 'ow," said Howlett.

"Roy," said Barris at length, "what David tells us settles the snipe shooting for to-day. I am going to take Pierpont up to the house. Howlett and David will follow with the dogs,—I have something to say to them. If you care to come, come along; if not, go and shoot a brace of grouse for dinner and be back by eight if you want to see what Pierpont and I discovered last night."

David whistled Gamin and Mioche to heel and followed Howlett and his hamper toward the house. I called Voyou to my side, picked up my gun and turned to Barris.

"I will be back by eight," I said; "you are expecting to catch one of the gold-makers are you not?"

"Yes," said Barris listlessly.

Pierpont began to speak about the Chinaman but Barris motioned him to follow, and, nodding to me, took the path that Howlett and David had followed toward the house. When they disappeared I tucked my gun under my arm and turned sharply into the forest, Voyou trotting close to my heels.

In spite of myself the continued apparition of the Chinaman made me nervous. If he troubled me again I had fully decided to get the drop on him and find out what he was doing in the Cardinal Woods. If he could give no satisfactory account of himself I would march him in to Barris as a gold-making suspect,—I would march him in anyway, I thought, and rid the forest of his ugly face. I wondered what it was that David had heard in the lake. It must have been a big fish, a salmon, I thought; probably David's and Howlett's nerves were overwrought after their Celestial chase.

A whine from the dog broke the thread of my meditation and I raised my head. Then I stopped short in my tracks.

The lost glade lay straight before me.

Already the dog had bounded into it, across the velvet turf to the carved stone where a slim figure sat. I saw my dog lay his silky head lovingly against her silken kirtle; I saw her face bend above him, and I caught my breath and slowly entered the sun-lit glade.

Half timidly she held out one white hand.

"Now that you have come," she said, "I can show you more of my work. I told you that I could do other things besides these dragon-flies and moths carved here in stone. Why do you stare at me so? Are you ill?"

"Ysonde," I stammered.

"Yes," she said, with a faint color under her eyes.

"I—I never expected to see you again," I blurted out, "—you—I—I—thought I had dreamed——"

"Dreamed, of me? Perhaps you did, is that strange?"

"Strange? N—no—but—where did you go when—when we were leaning over the fountain together? I saw your face,—your face reflected beside mine and then—then suddenly I saw the blue sky and only a star twinkling."

"It was because you fell asleep," she said, "was it not?"

"I—asleep?"

"You slept—I thought you were very tired and I went back——"

"Back?—where?"

"Back to my home where I carve my beautiful images; see, here is one I brought to show you to-day."

I took the sculptured creature that she held toward me, a massive golden lizard with frail claw-spread wings of gold so thin that the sunlight burned through and fell on the ground in flaming gilded patches.

"Good Heavens!" I exclaimed, "this is astounding! Where did you learn to do such work? Ysonde, such a thing is beyond price!"

"Oh, I hope so," she said earnestly, "I can't bear to sell my work, but my step-father takes it and sends it away. This is the second thing I have done and yesterday he said I must give it to him. I suppose he is poor."

"I don't see how he can be poor if he gives you gold to model in," I said, astonished.

"Gold!" she exclaimed, "gold! He has a room full of gold! He makes it."

I sat down on the turf at her feet completely unnerved.

"Why do you look at me so?" she asked, a little troubled.

"Where does your step-father live?" I said at last.

"Here."

"Here!"

"In the woods near the lake. You could never find our house."

"A house!"

"Of course. Did you think I lived in a tree? How silly. I live with my step-father in a beautiful house,—a small house, but very beautiful. He makes his gold there but the men who carry it away never come to the house, for they don't know where it is and if they did they could not get in. My step-father carries the gold in lumps to a canvas satchel. When the satchel is full he takes it out into the woods where the men live and I don't know what they do with it. I wish he could sell the gold and become rich for then I could go back to Yian where all the gardens are sweet and the river flows under the thousand bridges."

"Where is this city?" I asked faintly.

"Yian? I don't know. It is sweet with perfume and the sound of silver bells all day long. Yesterday I carried a blossom of dried lotus buds from Yian, in my breast, and all the woods were fragrant. Did you smell it?"

"Yes."

"I wondered, last night, whether you did. How beautiful your dog is; I love him. Yesterday I thought most about your dog but last night——"

"Last night," I repeated below my breath.

"I thought of you. Why do you wear the dragon-claw?"

I raised my hand impulsively to my forehead, covering the scar.

"What do you know of the dragon-claw?" I muttered.

"It is the symbol of Yue-Laou, and Yue-Laou rules the Kuen-Yuin, my step-father says. My step-father tells me everything that I know. We lived in Yian until I was sixteen years old. I am eighteen now; that is two years we have lived in the forest. Look!—see those scarlet birds! What are they? There are birds of the same color in Yian."

"Where is Yian, Ysonde?" I asked with deadly calmness.

"Yian? I don't know."

"But you have lived there?"

"Yes, a very long time."

"Is it across the ocean, Ysonde?"

"It is across seven oceans and the great river which is longer than from the earth to the moon."

"Who told you that?"

"Who? My step-father; he tells me everything."

"Will you tell me his name, Ysonde?"

"I don't know it, he is my step-father, that is all."

"And what is your name?"

"You know it, Ysonde."

"Yes, but what other name."

"That is all, Ysonde. Have you two names? Why do you look at me so impatiently?"

"Does your step-father make gold? Have you seen him make it?"

"Oh yes. He made it also in Yian and I loved to watch the sparks at night whirling like golden bees. Yian is lovely,—if it is all like our garden and the gardens around. I can see the thousand bridges from my garden and the white mountain beyond—"

"And the people — tell me of the people, Ysonde!" I urged gently.

"The people of Yian? I could see them in swarms like ants—oh! many, many millions crossing and recrossing the thousand bridges."

"But how did they look? Did they dress as I do?"

"I don't know. They were very far away, moving specks on the thousand bridges. For sixteen years I saw them every day from my garden but I never went out of my garden into the streets of Yian, for my step-father forbade me."

"You never saw a living creature near by in Yian?" I asked in despair.

"My birds, oh such tall, wise-looking birds, all over grey and rose color."

She leaned over the gleaming water and drew her polished hand across the surface.

"Why do you ask me these questions," she murmured; "are you displeased?"

"Tell me about your step-father," I insisted. "Does he look as I do? Does he dress, does he speak as I do? Is he American?"

"American? I don't know. He does not dress as you do and he does not look as you do.

He is old, very, very old. He speaks sometimes as you do, sometimes as they do in Yian. I speak also in both manners."

"Then speak as they do in Yian," I urged impatiently, "speak as—why, Ysonde! why are you crying? Have I hurt you?—I did not intend,—I did not dream of your caring! There Ysonde, forgive me,—see, I beg you on my knees here at your feet."

I stopped, my eyes fastened on a small golden ball which hung from her waist by a golden chain. I saw it trembling against her thigh, I saw it change color, now crimson, now purple, now flaming scarlet. It was the symbol of the Kuen-Yuin.

She bent over me and laid her fingers gently on my arm.

"Why do you ask me such things?" she said, while the tears glistened on her lashes. "It hurts me here,—" she pressed her hand to her breast,—"it pains.—I don't know why. Ah, now your eyes are hard and cold again; you are looking at the golden globe which hangs from my waist. Do you wish to know also what that is?"

"Yes," I muttered, my eyes fixed on the infernal color flames which subsided as I spoke, leaving the ball a pale gilt again.

"It is the symbol of the Kuen-Yuin," she said in a trembing voice; "why do you ask?"

"Is it yours?"

"Y—yes."

"Where did you get it?" I cried harshly.

"My—my step-fa——"

Then she pushed me away from her with all the strength of her slender wrists and covered her face.

If I slipped my arm about her and drew her to me,—if I kissed away the tears that fell slowly between her fingers,—if I told her how I loved her—how it cut me to the heart to see her unhappy,—after all that is my own business. When she smiled through her tears, the pure love and sweetness in her eyes lifted my soul higher than the high moon vaguely glimmering through the sun-lit blue above. My happiness was so sudden, so fierce and overwhelming that I only knelt there, her fingers clasped in mine, my eyes raised to the blue vault and the glimmering moon. Then something in the long grass beside me moved close to my knees and a damp acrid odor filled my nostrils.

"Ysonde!" I cried, but the touch of her hand was already gone and my two clenched fists were cold and damp with dew.

"Ysonde!" I called again, my tongue stiff with fright;—but I called as one awaking from a dream—a horrid dream, for my nostrils quivered with the damp acrid odor and I felt the crab-reptile clinging to my knee. Why had the night fallen so swiftly,—and where was I—where?—stiff, chilled, torn, and bleeding, lying flung like a

corpse over my own threshold with Voyou licking my face and Barris stooping above me in the light of a lamp that flared and smoked in the night breeze like a torch. Faugh ! the choking stench of the lamp aroused me and I cried out :

" Ysonde ! "

" What the devil 's the matter with him ? " muttered Pierpont, lifting me in his arms like a child, " has he been stabbed, Barris ? "

VII.

IN a few minutes I was able to stand and walk stiffly into my bedroom where Howlett had a hot bath ready and a hotter tumbler of Scotch. Pierpont sponged the blood from my throat where it had coagulated. The cut was slight, almost invisible, a mere puncture from a thorn. A shampoo cleared my mind, and a cold plunge and alcohol friction did the rest.

"Now," said Pierpont, "swallow your hot Scotch and lie down. Do you want a broiled woodcock? Good, I fancy you are coming about."

Barris and Pierpont watched me as I sat on the edge of the bed, solemnly chewing on the woodcock's wishbone and sipping my Bordeaux, very much at my ease.

Pierpont sighed his relief.

"So," he said pleasantly, "it was a mere case of ten dollars or ten days. I thought you had been stabbed——"

"I was not intoxicated," I replied, serenely picking up a bit of celery.

"Only jagged?" enquired Pierpont, full of sympathy.

"Nonsense," said Barris, "let him alone. Want some more celery, Roy?—it will make you sleep."

"I don't want to sleep," I answered; "when are you and Pierpont going to catch your Gold-maker?"

Barris looked at his watch and closed it with a snap.

"In an hour; you don't propose to go with us?"

"But I do,—toss me a cup of coffee, Pierpont, will you,—that 's just what I propose to do. Howlett, bring the new box of Panatella's,—the mild imported;—and leave the decanter. Now Barris, I 'll be dressing, and you and Pierpont keep still and listen to what I have to say. Is that door shut tight?"

Barris locked it and sat down.

"Thanks," said I, "Barris, where is the city of Yian?"

An expression akin to terror flashed into Barris' eyes and I saw him stop breathing for a moment.

"There is no such city," he said at length, "have I been talking in my sleep?"

"It is a city," I continued, calmly, "where the river winds under the thousand bridges, where the gardens are sweet scented and the air is filled with the music of silver bells——"

"Stop!" gasped Barris, and rose trembling from his chair. He had grown ten years older.

"Roy," interposed Pierpont coolly, "what the deuce are you harrying Barris for?"

I looked at Barris and he looked at me. After a second or two he sat down again.

"Go on, Roy," he said.

"I must," I answered, "for now I am certain that I have not dreamed."

I told them everything; but, even as I told it, the whole thing seemed so vague, so unreal, that at times I stopped with the hot blood tingling in my ears, for it seemed impossible that sensible men, in the year of our Lord 1896 could seriously discuss such matters.

I feared Pierpont, but he did not even smile. As for Barris, he sat with his handsome head sunk on his breast, his unlighted pipe clasped tight in both hands.

When I had finished, Pierpont turned slowly and looked at Barris. Twice he moved his lips as if about to ask something and then remained mute.

"Yian is a city," said Barris, speaking dreamily; "was that what you wished to know, Pierpont?"

We nodded silently.

"Yian is a city," repeated Barris, "where the great river winds under the thousand bridges, —where the gardens are sweet scented, and the air is filled with the music of silver bells."

My lips formed the question, "Where is this city?"

"It lies," said Barris, almost querulously, "across the seven oceans and the river which is longer than from the earth to the moon."

"What do you mean?" said Pierpont.

"Ah," said Barris, rousing himself with an effort and raising his sunken eyes, "I am using the allegories of another land; let it pass. Have I not told you of the Kuen-Yuin? Yian is the centre of the Kuen-Yuin. It lies hidden in that gigantic shadow called China, vague and vast as the midnight Heavens,—a continent unknown, impenetrable."

"Impenetrable," repeated Pierpont below his breath.

"I have seen it," said Barris dreamily. "I have seen the dead plains of Black Cathay and I have crossed the mountains of Death, whose summits are above the atmosphere. I have seen the shadow of Xangi cast across Abaddon. Better to die a million miles from Yezd and Ater Quedah than to have seen the white water-lotus close in the shadow of Xangi! I have slept among the ruins of Xaindu where the winds never cease and the Wulwulleh is wailed by the dead."

"And Yian," I urged gently.

There was an unearthly look on his face as he turned slowly toward me.

"Yian,—I have lived there—and loved there. When the breath of my body shall cease, when the dragon's claw shall fade from my arm,"—he

tore up his sleeve, and we saw a white crescent shining above his elbow,—"when the light of my eyes has faded forever, then, even then I shall not forget the city of Yian. Why, it is my home, —mine! The river and the thousand bridges, the white peak beyond, the sweet-scented gardens, the lilies, the pleasant noise of the summer wind laden with bee music and the music of bells, —all these are mine. Do you think because the Kuen-Yuin feared the dragon's claw on my arm that my work with them is ended? Do you think that because Yue-Laou could give, that I acknowledge his right to take away? Is he Xangi in whose shadow the white water-lotus dares not raise its head? No! No!" he cried violently, "it was not from Yue-Laou, the sorcerer, the Maker of Moons, that my happiness came! It was real, it was not a shadow to vanish like a tinted bubble! Can a sorcerer create and give a man the woman he loves? Is Yue-Laou as great as Xangi then? Xangi is God. In His own time, in His infinite goodness and mercy He will bring me again to the woman I love. And I know she waits for me at God's feet."

In the strained silence that followed I could hear my heart's double beat and I saw Pierpont's face, blanched and pitiful. Barris shook himself and raised his head. The change in his ruddy face frightened me.

"Heed!" he said, with a terrible glance at me; "the print of the dragon's claw is on your fore-

head and Yue-Laou knows it. If you must love, then love like a man, for you will suffer like a soul in hell, in the end. What is her name again?"

"Ysonde," I answered simply.

VIII.

AT nine o'clock that night we caught one of the Goldmakers. I do not know how Barris had laid his trap; all I saw of the affair can be told in a minute or two.

We were posted on the Cardinal road about a mile below the house, Pierpont and I with drawn revolvers on one side, under a butternut tree, Barris on the other, a Winchester across his knees.

I had just asked Pierpont the hour, and he was feeling for his watch when far up the road we heard the sound of a galloping horse, nearer, nearer, clattering, thundering past. Then Barris' rifle spat flame and the dark mass, horse and rider, crashed into the dust. Pierpont had the half stunned horseman by the collar in a second, —the horse was stone dead,—and, as we lighted a pine knot to examine the fellow, Barris' two riders galloped up and drew bridle beside us.

"Hm!" said Barris with a scowl, "it's the 'Shiner,' or I'm a moonshiner."

We crowded curiously around to see the "Shiner." He was red-headed, fat and filthy,

and his little red eyes burned in his head like the eyes of an angry pig.

Barris went through his pockets methodically while Pierpont held him and I held the torch. The Shiner was a gold mine ; pockets, shirt, boot-legs, hat, even his dirty fists, clutched tight and bleeding, were bursting with lumps of soft yellow gold. Barris dropped this "moonshine gold," as we had come to call it, into the pockets of his shooting-coat, and withdrew to question the prisoner. He came back again in a few minutes and motioned his mounted men to take the Shiner in charge. We watched them, rifle on thigh, walking their horses slowly away into the darkness, the Shiner, tightly bound, shuffling sullenly between them.

"Who is the Shiner?" asked Pierpont, slipping the revolver into his pocket again.

"A moonshiner, counterfeiter, forger, and highwayman," said Barris, "and probably a murderer. Drummond will be glad to see him, and I think it likely he will be persuaded to confess to him what he refuses to confess to me."

"Would n't he talk?" I asked.

"Not a syllable. Pierpont, there is nothing more for you to do."

"For me to do? Are you not coming back with us, Barris?"

"No," said Barris.

We walked along the dark road in silence for a while, I wondering what Barris intended to do,

but he said nothing more until we reached our own verandah. Here he held out his hand, first to Pierpont, then to me, saying good-bye as though he were going on a long journey.

"How soon will you be back?" I called out to him as he turned away toward the gate. He came across the lawn again and again took our hands with a quiet affection that I had never imagined him capable of.

"I am going," he said, "to put an end to his gold-making to-night. I know that you fellows have never suspected what I was about on my little solitary evening strolls after dinner. I will tell you. Already I have unobtrusively killed four of these gold-makers,—my men put them under ground just below the new wash-out at the four mile stone. There are three left alive,—the Shiner whom we have, another criminal named 'Yellow,' or 'Yaller' in the vernacular, and the third——"

"The third," repeated Pierpont, excitedly.

"The third I have never yet seen. But I know who and what he is,—I know; and if he is of human flesh and blood, his blood will flow to-night."

As he spoke a slight noise across the turf attracted my attention. A mounted man was advancing silently in the starlight over the spongy meadowland. When he came nearer Barris struck a match, and we saw that he bore a corpse across his saddle bow.

"Yaller, Colonel Barris," said the man, touching his slouched hat in salute.

This grim introduction to the corpse made me shudder, and, after a moment's examination of the stiff, wide-eyed dead man, I drew back.

"Identified," said Barris, "take him to the four mile post and carry his effects to Washington,—under seal, mind, Johnstone."

Away cantered the rider with his ghastly burden, and Barris took our hands once more for the last time. Then he went away, gaily, with a jest on his lips, and Pierpont and I turned back into the house.

For an hour we sat moodily smoking in the hall before the fire, saying little until Pierpont burst out with: "I wish Barris had taken one of us with him to-night!"

The same thought had been running in my mind, but I said: "Barris knows what he 's about."

This observation neither comforted us nor opened the lane to further conversation, and after a few minutes Pierpont said good night and called for Howlett and hot water. When he had been warmly tucked away by Howlett, I turned out all but one lamp, sent the dogs away with David and dismissed Howlett for the night.

I was not inclined to retire for I knew I could not sleep. There was a book lying open on the table beside the fire and I opened it and read a page or two, but my mind was fixed on other things.

The window shades were raised and I looked out at the star-set firmament. There was no moon that night but the sky was dusted all over with sparkling stars and a pale radiance, brighter even than moonlight, fell over meadow and wood. Far away in the forest I heard the voice of the wind, a soft warm wind that whispered a name, Ysonde.

"Listen," sighed the voice of the wind, and "listen" echoed the swaying trees with every little leaf a-quiver. I listened.

Where the long grasses trembled with the cricket's cadence I heard her name, Ysonde; I heard it in the rustling woodbine where grey moths hovered; I heard it in the drip, drip, drip of the dew from the porch. The silent meadow brook whispered her name, the rippling woodland streams repeated it, Ysonde, Ysonde, until all earth and sky were filled with the soft thrill, Ysonde, Ysonde, Ysonde.

A night-thrush sang in a thicket by the porch and I stole to the verandah to listen. After a while it began again, a little further on. I ventured out into the road. Again I heard it far away in the forest and I followed it, for I knew it was singing of Ysonde.

When I came to the path that leaves the main road and enters the Sweet-Fern Covert below the spinney, I hesitated; but the beauty of the night lured me on and the night-thrushes called me from every thicket. In the starry radiance,

shrubs, grasses, field flowers, stood out distinctly, for there was no moon to cast shadows. Meadow and brook, grove and stream, were illuminated by the pale glow. Like great lamps lighted the planets hung from the high domed sky and through their mysterious rays the fixed stars, calm, serene, stared from the heavens like eyes.

I waded on waist deep through fields of dewy golden-rod, through late clover and wild-oat wastes, through crimson fruited sweetbrier, blueberry, and wild plum, until the low whisper of the Wier Brook warned me that the path had ended.

But I would not stop, for the night air was heavy with the perfume of water-lilies and far away, across the low wooded cliffs and the wet meadowland beyond, there was a distant gleam of silver, and I heard the murmur of sleepy waterfowl. I would go to the lake. The way was clear except for the dense young growth and the snares of the moose-bush.

The night-thrushes had ceased but I did not want for the company of living creatures. Slender, quick darting forms crossed my path at intervals, sleek mink, that fled like shadows at my step, wiry weasels and fat musk-rats, hurrying onward to some tryst or killing.

I never had seen so many little woodland creatures on the move at night. I began to wonder where they all were going so fast, why they all hurried on in the same direction. Now

I passed a hare hopping through the brushwood, now a rabbit scurrying by, flag hoisted. As I entered the beech second-growth two foxes glided by me ; a little further on a doe crashed out of the underbrush, and close behind her stole a lynx, eyes shining like coals.

He neither paid attention to the doe nor to me, but loped away toward the north.

The lynx was in flight.

"From what ?" I asked myself, wondering. There was no forest fire, no cyclone, no flood.

If Barris had passed that way could he have stirred up this sudden exodus ? Impossible ; even a regiment in the forest could scarcely have put to rout these frightened creatures.

"What on earth," thought I, turning to watch the headlong flight of a fisher-cat, "what on earth has started the beasts out at this time of night."

I looked up into the sky. The placid glow of the fixed stars comforted me and I stepped on through the narrow spruce belt that leads down to the borders of the Lake of the Stars.

Wild cranberry and moose-bush entwined my feet, dewy branches spattered me with moisture, and the thick spruce needles scraped my face as I threaded my way over mossy logs and deep spongy tussocks down to the level gravel of the lake shore.

Although there was no wind the little waves were hurrying in from the lake and I heard them

splashing among the pebbles. In the pale star glow thousands of water-lilies lifted their half-closed chalices toward the sky.

I threw myself full length upon the shore, and, chin on hand, looked out across the lake.

Splash, splash, came the waves along the shore, higher, nearer, until a film of water, thin and glittering as a knife blade, crept up to my elbows. I could not understand it; the lake was rising, but there had been no rain. All along the shore the water was running up; I heard the waves among the sedge grass; the weeds at my side were awash in the ripples. The lilies rocked on the tiny waves, every wet pad rising on the swells, sinking, rising again until the whole lake was glimmering with undulating blossoms. How sweet and deep was the fragrance from the lilies. And now the water was ebbing, slowly, and the waves receded, shrinking from the shore rim until the white pebbles appeared again, shining like froth on a brimming glass.

No animal swimming out in the darkness along the shore, no heavy salmon surging, could have set the whole shore aflood as though the wash from a great boat were rolling in. Could it have been the overflow, through the Weir Brook, of some cloud-burst far back in the forest? This was the only way I could account for it, and yet when I had crossed the Wier Brook I had not noticed that it was swollen.

And as I lay there thinking, a faint breeze

sprang up and I saw the surface of the lake whiten with lifted lily pads.

All around me the alders were sighing; I heard the forest behind me stir; the crossed branches rubbing softly, bark against bark. Something—it may have been an owl—sailed out of the night, dipped, soared, and was again engulfed, and far across the water I heard its faint cry, Ysonde.

Then first, for my heart was full, I cast myself down upon my face, calling on her name. My eyes were wet when I raised my head,—for the spray from the shore was drifting in again,—and my heart beat heavily; "No more, no more." But my heart lied, for even as I raised my face to the calm stars, I saw her standing still, close beside me; and very gently I spoke her name, Ysonde. She held out both hands.

"I was lonely," she said, "and I went to the glade, but the forest is full of frightened creatures and they frightened me. Has anything happened in the woods? The deer are running toward the heights."

Her hand still lay in mine as we moved along the shore, and the lapping of the water on rock and shallow was no lower than our voices.

"Why did you leave me without a word, there at the fountain in the glade?" she said.

"I leave you!——"

"Indeed you did, running swiftly with your dog, plunging through thickets and brush,—oh—you frightened me."

"Did I leave you so?"

"Yes—after——"

"After?"

"You had kissed me——"

Then we leaned down together and looked into the black water set with stars, just as we had bent together over the fountain in the glade.

"Do you remember?" I asked.

"Yes. See, the water is inlaid with silver stars,—everywhere white lilies floating and the stars below, deep, deep down."

"What is the flower you hold in your hand?"

"White water-lotus."

"Tell me about Yue-Laou, Dzil Nbu of the Kuen-Yuin," I whispered, lifting her head so I could see her eyes.

"Would it please you to hear?"

"Yes, Ysonde."

"All that I know is yours, now, as I am yours, all that I am. Bend closer. Is it of Yue-Laou you would know? Yue-Laou is Dzil-Nbu of the Kuen-Yuin. He lived in the Moon. He is old —very, very old, and once, before he came to rule the Kuen-Yuin, he was the old man who unites with a silken cord all predestined couples, after which nothing can prevent their union. But all that is changed since he came to rule the Kuen-Yuin. Now he has perverted the Xin,—the good genii of China,—and has fashioned from their warped bodies a monster which he calls the Xin. This monster is horrible, for it not only lives in its

own body, but it has thousands of loathsome satellites,—living creatures without mouths, blind, that move when the Xin moves, like a mandarin and his escort. They are part of the Xin although they are not attached. Yet if one of these satellites is injured the Xin writhes with agony. It is fearful—this huge living bulk and these creatures spread out like severed fingers that wriggle around a hideous hand."

"Who told you this?"

"My step-father."

"Do you believe it?"

"Yes. I have seen one of the Xin's creatures."

"Where, Ysonde?"

"Here in these woods."

"Then you believe there is a Xin here?"

"There must be,—perhaps in the lake——"

"Oh, Xins inhabit lakes?"

"Yes, and the seven seas. I am not afraid here."

"Why?"

"Because I wear the symbol ot the Kuen-Yuin."

"Then I am not safe," I smiled.

"Yes you are, for I hold you in my arms. Shall I tell you more about the Xin? When the Xin is about to do to death a man, the Yeth-hounds gallop through the night——"

"What are the Yeth-hounds, Ysonde?"

"The Yeth-hounds are dogs without heads. They are the spirits of murdered children, which

pass through the woods at night, making a wailing noise."

"Do you believe this?"

"Yes, for I have worn the yellow lotus——"

"The yellow lotus——"

"Yellow is the symbol of faith——"

"Where?"

"In Yian," she said faintly.

After a while I said, "Ysonde, you know there is a God?"

"God and Xangi are one."

"Have you ever heard of Christ?"

"No," she answered softly.

The wind began again among the tree tops. I felt her hands closing in mine.

"Ysonde," I asked again, "do you believe in sorcerers?"

"Yes, the Kuen-Yuin are sorcerers; Yue-Laou is a sorcerer."

"Have you seen sorcery?"

"Yes, the reptile satellite of the Xin——"

"Anything else?"

"My charm,—the golden ball, the symbol of the Kuen-Yuin. Have you seen it change,—have you seen the reptiles writhe——?"

"Yes," said I shortly, and then remained silent, for a sudden shiver of apprehension had seized me. Barris also had spoken gravely, ominously of the sorcerers, the Kuen-Yuin, and I had seen with my own eyes the graven reptiles turning and twisting on the glowing globe.

"Still," said I aloud, "God lives and sorcery is but a name."

"Ah," murmured Ysonde, drawing closer to me, "they say, in Yian, the Kuen-Yuin live; God is but a name."

"They lie," I whispered fiercely.

"Be careful," she pleaded, "they may hear you. Remember that you have the mark of the dragon's claw on your brow."

"What of it?" I asked, thinking also of the white mark on Barris' arm.

"Ah don't you know that those who are marked with the dragon's claw are followed by Yue-Laou, for good or for evil,—and the evil means death if you offend him?"

"Do you believe that!" I asked impatiently.

"I know it," she sighed.

"Who told you all this? Your step-father? What in Heaven's name is he then,—a Chinaman!"

"I don't know; he is not like you."

"Have—have you told him anything about me?"

"He knows about you—no, I have told him nothing,—ah, what is this—see—it is a cord, a cord of silk about your neck—and about mine!"

"Where did that come from?" I asked astonished.

"It must be—it must be Yue-Laou who binds me to you,—it is as my step-father said—he said Yue-Laou would bind us——"

"Nonsense," I said almost roughly, and seized the silken cord, but to my amazement it melted in my hand like smoke.

"What is all this damnable jugglery!" I whispered angrily, but my anger vanished as the words were spoken, and a convulsive shudder shook me to the feet. Standing on the shore of the lake, a stone's throw away, was a figure, twisted and bent,—a little old man, blowing sparks from a live coal which he held in his naked hand. The coal glowed with increasing radiance, lighting up the skull-like face above it, and threw a red glow over the sands at his feet. But the face!—the ghastly Chinese face on which the light flickered,—and the snaky slitted eyes, sparkling as the coal glowed hotter. Coal! It was not a coal but a golden globe staining the night with crimson flames,—it was the symbol of the Kuen-Yuin.

"See! See!" gasped Ysonde, trembling violently, "see the moon rising from between his fingers! Oh I thought it was my step-father and it is Yue-Laou the Maker of Moons—no! no! it is my step-father—ah God! they are the same!"

Frozen with terror I stumbled to my knees, groping for my revolver which bulged in my coat pocket; but something held me—something which bound me like a web in a thousand strong silky meshes. I struggled and turned but the web grew tighter; it was over us—all around us, drawing, pressing us into each other's arms

until we lay side by side, bound hand and body and foot, palpitating, panting like a pair of netted pigeons.

And the creature on the shore below! What was my horror to see a moon, huge, silvery, rise like a bubble from between his fingers, mount higher, higher into the still air and hang aloft in the midnight sky, while another moon rose from his fingers, and another and yet another until the vast span of Heaven was set with moons and the earth sparkled like a diamond in the white glare.

A great wind began to blow from the east and it bore to our ears a long mournful howl,—a cry so unearthly that for a moment our hearts stopped.

"The Yeth-hounds!" sobbed Ysonde, "do you hear!—they are passing through the forest! The Xin is near!"

Then all around us in the dry sedge grasses came a rustle as if some small animals were creeping, and a damp acrid odor filled the air. I knew the smell, I saw the spidery crab-like creatures swarm out around me and drag their soft yellow hairy bodies across the shrinking grasses. They passed, hundreds of them, poisoning the air, tumbling, writhing, crawling with their blind mouthless heads raised. Birds, half asleep and confused by the darkness fluttered away before them in helpless fright, rabbits sprang from their forms, weasels glided away

like flying shadows. What remained of the forest creatures rose and fled from the loathsome invasion ; I heard the squeak of a terrified hare, the snort of stampeding deer, and the lumbering gallop of a bear ; and all the time I was choking, half suffocated by the poisoned air.

Then, as I struggled to free myself from the silken snare about me, I cast a glance of deadly fear at the sorcerer below, and at the same moment I saw him turn in his tracks.

"Halt ! " cried a voice from the bushes.

"Barris ! " I shouted, half leaping up in my agony.

I saw the sorcerer spring forward, I heard the bang ! bang ! bang ! of a revolver, and, as the sorcerer fell on the water's edge, I saw Barris jump out into the white glare and fire again, once, twice, three times, into the writhing figure at his feet.

Then an awful thing occurred. Up out of the black lake reared a shadow, a nameless shapeless mass, headless, sightless, gigantic, gaping from end to end.

A great wave struck Barris and he fell, another washed him up on the pebbles, another whirled him back into the water and then,—and then the thing fell over him,—and I fainted.

* * * * * *

* * * * * *

* * * * * *

* * * * * *

This, then, is all that I know concerning Yue-Laou and the Xin. I do not fear the ridicule of scientists or of the press for I have told the truth. Barris is gone and the thing that killed him is alive to-day in the Lake of the Stars while the spider-like satellites roam through the Cardinal Woods. The game has fled, the forests around the lake are empty of any living creatures save the reptiles that creep when the Xin moves in the depths of the lake.

General Drummond knows what he has lost in Barris, and we, Pierpont and I, know what we have lost also. His will we found in the drawer, the key of which he had handed me. It was wrapped in a bit of paper on which was written;

"Yue-Laou the sorcerer is here in the Cardinal Woods. I must kill him or he will kill me. He made and gave to me the woman I loved,—he made her,—I saw him,—he made her out of a white water-lotus bud. When our child was born, he came again before me and demanded from me the woman I loved. Then, when I refused, he went away, and that night my wife and child vanished from my side, and I found upon her pillow a white lotus bud. Roy, the woman of your dream, Ysonde, may be my child. God help you if you love her for Yue-Laou will give,—and take away, as though he were Xangi, which is God. I will kill Yue-Laou before I leave this forest,—or he will kill me.

"FRANKLYN BARRIS."

Now the world knows what Barris thought of the Kuen-Yuin and of Yue-Laou. I see that the newspapers are just becoming excited over the glimpses that Li-Hung-Chang has afforded them of Black Cathay and the demons of the Kuen-Yuin. The Kuen-Yuin are on the move.

Pierpont and I have dismantled the shooting-box in the Cardinal Woods. We hold ourselves ready at a moment's notice to join and lead the first Government party to drag the Lake of the Stars and cleanse the forest of the crab reptiles. But it will be necessary that a large force assembles, and a well-armed force, for we never have found the body of Yue-Laou, and, living or dead, I fear him. Is he living?

Pierpont, who found Ysonde and myself lying unconscious on the lake shore, the morning after, saw no trace of corpse or blood on the sands. He may have fallen into the lake, but I fear and Ysonde fears that he is alive. We never were able to find either her dwelling place or the glade and the fountain again. The only thing that remains to her of her former life is the gold serpent in the Metropolitan Museum and her golden globe, the symbol of the Kuen-Yuin; but the latter no longer changes color.

David and the dogs are waiting for me in the court yard as I write. Pierpont is in the gun room loading shells, and Howlet brings him mug after mug of my ale from the wood. Ysonde bends over my desk,—I feel her hand on my arm,

and she is saying, "Don't you think you have done enough to-day, dear? How can you write such silly nonsense without a shadow of truth or foundation?"

THE SILENT LAND.

" There was never any more inception than there is now,
Nor any more youth or age than there is now ;
And will never be any more perfection than there is now,
Nor any more heaven or hell than there is how."

WALT WHITMAN.

THE SILENT LAND.

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God."

I.

FERRIS and I had had a dispute, a bitter one, and, as usual, Ferris had pushed his cap over his eyes until the hair on the back of his head stuck out.

"You can't do it," he said, shoving both hands up to the wrists in his canvas fishing-coat.

"I'll prove it," said I. "What a stubborn mule you are, Ferris!"

"Stubborn nothing," he retorted, "you and your theories must have your little airing, I suppose, but I don't intend to assist."

"I'm right sometimes," I said.

"Sometimes you're wrong, too," said Ferris. Then he walked off toward the cliffs, whistling, uncompromising, untidy.

"There's a hole in your leggings!" I called after him, but he did not deign to answer me.

"Obstinate ass," I thought, for we were very

fond of each other, "if he wastes his time with the Silver Doctor he'll rue it." Then I looked at Solomon and lighted a cigarette.

Solomon was a bird, an enervating bird of the Ibis species, wrinkled and wizened, like the mummies of his native land, which was Egypt. The bird was mine, a sarcastic tribute from Ferris, and the bird and the sarcasm both bore directly on the only disputes which ever arose between Ferris and myself. The cause of these disputes was a trout-fly, an innocent toy of scarlet and tinsel, known to anglers as the "Red Ibis." I swore by it, Ferris swore at it. In the long winter nights when the streams gurgled under the frozen forests and the lake was a sheet of soggy snow, Ferris and I loafed before the fire pulling tangled masses of leaders and flies about and dragging the silken lines over the rugs to hear the reels click. Every fly known to the brethren of the angle was discussed—every fly except the Red Ibis. We both honestly tried to avoid this bone of contention. We talked of Duns and Hackles, and Spinners and Gnats, but in spite of every precaution the Red Ibis would occasionally rise like a fiery spectre between us, and then we disputed vehemently.

"No angler with a rag of self-respect would use the Ibis," said Ferris, with that obstinate shrug which added gall to the insult, and I—well, the crowning insult came when Ferris sent to Cairo and imported a live Egyptian Ibis for me.

"Pull out his tail feathers when you 're short of Red Ibis," gasped Ferris, weak with laughter, as I stood silently inspecting the bird in my studio.

"I 'll send him to Central Park," said I, swallowing my wrath; but I thought better of it, and Solomon, the wizened, became an important member of my household.

The bird was a mystery. I never cared to encounter his filmy eyes. Centuries seemed to roll away when he unclosed them, visions of tombs and obelisks filled my mind—glimpses of desert sunsets and the warm waters of lazy rivers. His black shrivelled head, bare as a skull, lay like a withered gourd among the garish flame-coloured feathers on his breast.

"Solly," said I, when Ferris disappeared below the cliff, "do you want a frog?"

The bird unclosed one eye. I went to a pail of water in which I kept minnows, and Solomon followed me, solemnly hopping.

"Help yourself, Solly," said I, uncovering the pail.

I called him Solly because I wished to put myself at ease with this relic of Egyptian Royalty. The splendour of Pharo's court had not dimmed this hoary prophet's eye, which was piercing when the sleepy film left it—piercing enough to make me feel thousands of years young, and very bourgeois. In vain I addressed him as Solly, in vain I gave him chocolate creams,—he was the aristocrat, the venerable high-priest of

an Empire dead—and I was his man-servant, his ass, and his ox.

Solomon dabbed once or twice at a sportive minnow, pecked pensively at the handle of the pail, swallowed a pebble or two, and then, ruffling his scarlet feathers, sidled aimlessly back into the sedge by the frog-pond. I watched him for awhile, brooding dreamily among the rushes, but he paid no further attention either to me or to the small green frogs that squatted on the lily-pads or floated half submerged, watching him with enormous eyes.

A noisy blue-jay flitted through the orchard and alighted on a crab-apple tree solely to insult Solomon. He of course was unsuccessful, and his language became so utterly unfit for publication that I moved away, shocked and annoyed.

The sun was very hot. It glittered with a blinding light across the rippling pond, where dragon-flies darted and sailed and chased each other over the water, or flitted among the clouds of dancing midges, searching for prey.

A sweet smell came to me from orchard and sedge; there was an odour of scented rushes in the air, and the lingering summer wind bore puffs of perfume from clover-fields and meadows fragrant with flowering mint. I looked again toward the cliffs. Ferris was not in sight.

"Obstinate mule," I thought, and, picking up my rod and fly-book, I sauntered toward the forest.

"Ferris," said I to myself, "is after that big trout by the Red Rock Rapids, but he 'll never raise him with a Silver Doctor, and he 'll come home in a devil of a temper."

I sat down in a clump of sweet fern and joined my rod. When I had run the silk through the guides and had fastened the nine-foot leader, I opened my fly-book and sought for a Red Ibis fly. There was not one in the book.

"I must send to New York to-morrow," I thought, turning the aluminum leaves impatiently; "fancy my being out of Red Ibis!" I selected a yellow Oak fly for the dropper and a nameless Gnat for the hand-fly, and, drawing the leader down to the reel, started on again, carrying my rod with the tip behind me.

The forest was dim and moist and silent. Where the sunshine fell among the ferns a few flies buzzed in the gilded warmth; but except for this and a strange grey bird which flitted before me silently as I walked, there was no sign of life, nothing stirring, not a rustle among the leaves, not a movement, not a bird-note.

Over moss and dead leaves aglisten in the pale forest light I passed,—over crumbling logs, damp and lichen-covered, half submerged in little pools; and the musty fragrance of the forest mould set me dreaming of dryads, and fauns, and lost altars, whose marbles, stained with tender green, glimmer in ancient forests.

This belt of woods was always silent; I often

wondered why. There were no birds—none except this strange grey creature which kept flitting ahead of me, uttering no note. It was the first bird I had ever seen in the western forest belt—the first bird except Solomon, who occasionally accompanied me on my trips to the long pool in the river which borders the wooded belt on the west.

It was an unknown bird to me,—I could catch fleeting glimpses of it,—and its long slender wings and dark eyes brought no recollections to my mind.

To the north, south, and east the woods were full of thrushes and wood-peckers ; full of game, too—grouse, deer, foxes, and an occasional mink and otter, but the shy wood creatures left the western forest belt alone, and even the trout seemed to shun the dark pools where the river swept the edges of the wood until it curved out again by Lynx Peak. I say the trout shunned it, but there was one, a monstrous fish, wily and subtile, that lived in the long amber pool below. Early in the season Ferris had raised him with a Silver Doctor, and Ferris's madness on the Silver Doctor dated from that moment. His mania for this fly lead him to use it in season and out, and no amount of persuasion or of ridicule moved him.

"Because," said I, "you had a Silver Doctor snapped off by a big fish, do you imagine it 's the only fly in the world?"

"It's good enough for me," he said.

There were two things which Ferris used to say that maddened me. One was, "The Silver Doctor's good enough for me;" the other was, "New York's good enough for me."

We never discussed the latter question after Ferris had alluded to me as a "Latin Quarter Nondescript," but the battle still raged over the merits of the Silver Doctor and the Red Ibis.

When I came to the wooded slope which overhung the river I buttoned my shooting coat and began a cautious descent, trailing my rod carefully. I headed for the foot of the pool, for one of my theories, which ruffled Ferris, was that certain pools should be fished up stream. This was one of those pools, according to my theory; and when I had reached the rocks and had waded into the rushing water, I faced up stream and cast straight out into the rapids which curled among the boulders at the foot of the pool.

At the second cast I hooked a snag and waded out to disengage it. Fumbling about under the foaming water I found my fly imbedded in something which refused to give way. I tugged cautiously and gently; it was useless. Then I rolled up my sleeve and plunged my arm into the water up to the shoulder. This time it did give way; I drew out my arm and held up something glistening and dripping, in which my hook was firmly imbedded. It was a shoe, small, pointed, high-heeled, and buckled with a silver buckle.

"This," said I, "is most extraordinary," and

I sat down on a flat rock, holding the shoe close to my eyes.

"Besnard—Paris," I read stamped on the lining over the heel. And the buckle was of sterling silver. I sat for a moment, thinking.

Our cottage, Ferris's and mine, was the only house in the whole region that I knew of, except the old house in the glade by the White Moss Spring. That was unoccupied and had been for years—a crumbling, abandoned farm, tottering among the young growth of an advancing forest. But as I sat thinking I remembered early in the season having seen smoke above the trees once when we were in the neighbourhood of the White Moss Spring, and I recollected that Ferris had spoken of poachers. We had been too lazy to in-investigate, too lazy even to remember it until, as I sat there holding the small shoe, the incident came back to me, and I wondered whether anybody had taken up an abode in the abandoned farm.

I did n't like it. The forests and streams belonged to Ferris and me, and although up to the present moment it had not been necessary to employ many keepers, I began to fear that our woods were being invaded and that we should soon be obliged to find protection.

I looked at the shoe, turning it over carefully in my hands. It was new—had scarcely been worn at all.

"Pooh," I thought, "the owner of this could scarcely do much damage among the game, but

of course there may be bigger shoes in company with this, and those bigger shoes had better look out!"

My first impulse was to throw the shoe into the underbrush. I started to do this, and then carefully laid it down on a sun-warmed rock.

"Let it dry," I muttered; "it's evidence for Ferris." But as it happened, Ferris was not destined to see the shoe.

II.

I FISHED the pool twice, once up and once down, and heaven knows I fished it conscientiously; but no trout rose to the flies, although I changed the cast half a dozen times and even violated my feelings by tying a Silver Doctor. It was true I glanced up and down the river to see whether Ferris was in sight before I did so.

"The wily old devil won't come up," said I to myself, meaning the trout; "I'll give him a rest for a while." And I sat down on the rock where the pointed shoe was drying in the sun, laying my rod beside me.

"What's the use of speculating about this shoe," I thought, and straightway began to speculate.

The strange grey bird with the slender wings and dark eyes slipped through the undergrowth along the opposite side of the pool, but it uttered no call, and I caught only fleeting glimpses of it at intervals. Once, for a moment, it flitted quite near, and a sudden sense of having seen it before came over me, but after a little thinking I found myself associating it with a rare bird I had once

noticed in Northern France, and of course it was impossible that this could be a French bird.

"It was an association of ideas," said I to myself, looking at the mark in the slim shoe. "Besnard—Paris." And I began speculating upon the owner of the shoe.

"Young? Probably. Slender? Probably. Pretty? The deuce take the shoe," I muttered, picking up my rod. Presently I laid it down again, softly.

"Now, perhaps," said I to myself, "this little shoe has tapped the gravel of the Luxembourg, patted the asphalt of the Boulevard des Italiens, brushed the lawns of the Bois—ah me! ah me! —the devil take the shoe!"

The sun beat down upon the rock; the little shoe in my hand was nearly dry.

"No," said I to myself, "I'll not show it to Ferris. And I'll not shove it into my pocket—no—for if Ferris finds it he'll rag me to death. I'll throw it away." I stood up.

"I'll just throw it away," I repeated aloud to encourage myself, for I did n't want to throw it away.

"One, two, three," said I, with an attempt at carelessness which changed to astonishment as I raised my eyes to the bank above whither I had intended to hurl the shoe.

For an instant I stood rigid, my right hand clutching the shoe, arrested in mid air. Then I placed the shoe very carefully upon the rock beside me and took off my shooting-cap.

"I beg your pardon," said I, "I did not see you."

I stood silent, politely holding my shooting-cap against my stomach. But I was confused, for she had answered me in French, pure Parisian French, and my ideas were considerably unbalanced.

I am afraid I stared a little. I tried not to. She was slender and very young. Her dark eyes, half shadowed under black lashes, made me think of the strange, dark-eyed bird that had followed me. She sat on the crooked trunk of a tree overhanging the bank, her feet negligently crossed, her hands in the pockets of a leather shooting-jacket. I'm afraid to say how short her skirts were,—but of course this is the age of bicycles and shooting-kilts.

"Madame," I said, trying to keep my eyes from one small stockinged foot, "I have found a shoe—"

"My shoe, Monsieur," she said, serenely.

"Permit me, madame," said I—

"Mademoiselle—" said she—

"Permit me,—a thousand pardons, Mademoiselle,—to return to you your shoe."

"It was very stupid of me to lose it," said she.

"It is nearly dry," said I; "will Mademoiselle pardon the uncommitted stupidity of which I was nearly guilty."

"You were going to throw it away," said she.

"I almost perpetrated that unpardonable crime—"

"Give it to me," she said, with a gracious gesture.

Now when she smiled I smiled too, and picking up the shoe waded across the pool to the bank under her.

"May I come up?" I asked.

"Pardi, Monsieur, how else am I to get my shoe?"

I clambered up, hanging to limbs and branches. It was a miracle I did not break my neck.

"Why do you not take the path?" she asked. "Do you not know you might fall—and all for a shoe?"

"But such a shoe—"

"True, the buckle is silver—"

"Which I claim the privilege of buckling," said I, dragging myself up beside her.

She deliberately held out her slim stockinged foot, and I slipped the shoe on it.

The silver buckle was not easily buckled. There were difficulties—for the tongue had become bent and needed straightening.

"You might take the shoe off again to arrange the buckle," she said.

"I can straighten it without that," said I.

When at last the buckle was clasped we had been talking so long that I had told her my name, my residence, my profession, and more or less about Ferris. I don't know why I told her all this. She seemed to be interested. Then I asked her if she lived at the "Brambles."

"The Brambles?" she repeated, looking at her shoes.

"The deserted Farm by the White Moss Spring—"

"Yes—not alone; I have a housekeeper."

"Aged?"

"Very—and fierce. But I shall do as I please."

"Did you buy the house?"

"No. It was empty, and I walked in. Next day they sent my twelve trunks from Lynne Centre. The furniture was good."

"And you have been there for two months?"

"Yes. I have a horse and dog cart too. Rose drives to Lynne Centre twice a week for the marketing. I think I shall keep a cow—I generally do what I please. I choose to amuse myself with you just now."

"This," said I, "is a very strange history; did you know that Mr. Ferris and myself—existed?"

"It is not a strange history,—no, I once saw your house as I passed through the forest belt, but there was nobody there on the lawn except an ordinary person with little side whiskers."

"Howlett!" I exclaimed.

"Comment?" she asked.

"A servant, an Englishman."

"Probably," said she, looking dreamily at me.

Then I told her all about Ferris and myself; how we came every spring to the Clover Cottage

with Howlett, a cook, and three dogs as retinue, how we fished in summer and shot in the autumn, how twice a year men came all the way from Lynne Center to house our hay and repair damages, how the game-keepers lurked at the mouth of the valley, miles to the south, to prevent poachers from entering, but we concluded it was not necessary for keepers to patrol the woods inside the valley.

"Now," I said, "the poachers are in our very midst—here established—and such dangerous poachers, too! What shall we do with them, Mademoiselle?"

"You mean me," she said, with wide open eyes.

"No," said I, "I do not mean you—you are very welcome in our valley."

"But I am sure you do mean me," she said, smiling.

Then we talked of other things, of Paris and France; of trout, and flies, and Ferris, of Normandy, and the beauty of the world; but it was nearly five o'clock before we spoke of love.

"I have never loved," she said, looking at me calmly.

"Oh, how unnecessary!" I thought, for I had believed her clever.

"But," she continued, gravely, "I think it is time that I did."

"I think so too," said I.

"I should like to fall in love," said she; "I have nothing else to do."

"I also am very idle," I said.

"Then," said she, "the opportunity only is lacking."

I think I muttered something about poachers —I was not perfectly cool.

"Now," said she, "I know you mean me!"

"Ah," said I, "I mean a keener poacher than you or I, a free rover more to be dreaded than an army of riflemen."

"Then you don't mean me," she said.

I shook my head.

"Do you know," said she, "I should very much like to be the heroine of a romance."

"I will aid you to be one!" I said, hastily. We had known each other nearly three hours.

"Let us," said she, "pretend that this is the forest of Versailles in the time of Louis Quinze."

"Let us indeed!" I cried, enthusiastically."

"And you are a Count——"

"And you a Marquise——"

"Named Diane; it is my real name."

"Diane."

"And you——"

"My real name is Louis——"

"It will do; you may kiss my hand."

I wondered just where she was going to draw the line. Then, the devil prompting, I entered recklessly into this most extraordinary adventure.

And what an adventure! Words, thoughts even failed me as I looked at her. This wood-

land maid with the wonderful eyes! There was no mistaking the challenge in her eyes, the half-innocent smile, the utter disregard for every human conventionality.

"How," thought I—"how can such a woman wear a childlike face!" I had known coquettes,—many,—but the depth of this strange girl's recklessness I feared to sound—I dreaded almost to understand.

"She is too deep," said I to myself—"too deep for me," and I looked her questioningly in the eyes.

I don't know why or how,—I never shall know probably, but a sudden conviction seized me that she was as innocent as she looked. Imagine a man coming to such a conclusion! I felt inclined to laugh, and yet I was as firmly convinced as though I had known her all my life.

"You may kiss my hand," she said, and held it out to me.

I did. I wished I had n't a moment later, for I tumbled head over heels in love with her and fairly gasped at the idea.

"Lovers in the Court of Louis Quinze resembled us, I think," she said, after a long silence.

"We will try to make the resemblance perfect," said I, taking both her hands in mine.

She bent her head a little,—there was just a shadow of resistance,—then I kissed her on the lips.

There are moments in a man's life when he

does not know whether he is a-foot or a-horseback. I remember that I sat down on the bank and carefully uprooted several ferns. When I had regained control of my voice,—the little maid was very silent,—I asked her to tell me of herself, if it might please her to do so.

"I was born," said the little maid, resting her small head on one hand, "in Rouen. Do you know Rouen?"

"Yes."

"Papa was an officer, and he killed his general when I was seven years old. It was something about Mama; I never saw her again. Then we went to Canada very quickly; Papa died there. I had been in a convent school; I ran away, and went to New York. I am nineteen, and very reckless."

"Yes, Diane."

"I have a great deal of money in banknotes. It was Papa's. I have never counted it—it is in a big trunk. I understand English, but do not care to speak it. I do not care what becomes of me; I wish it were over—this life. You are the first man who ever kissed me. Do you believe me?"

"Yes, Diane.

"I wonder you do. Let us go down to the river where the sunlight falls. The descent is easy——"

"Diane—you must not go——"

"With you— will you give me your hand?"

"Come."

"Did you see that shy grey bird?" said the little maid, hesitating on the slope, her hand in in mine.

I could not see it, for we had already begun the descent.

III.

"WHERE the mischief have you been all day?" demanded Ferris that evening as we sat on the veranda after dinner.

"Well," said I lighting a pipe, "when you had your fit of sulks I went off for a brace of trout."

"Did you see anything worth seeing?"

"I saw no trout," said I.

"Unfortunate, eh?"

"Oh not very," I said, looking at Solomon.

"Not very?"

"Look at that ridiculous bird, Ferris."

"Swallowed a frog the wrong way," said Ferris, watching the solemn contortions of Solomon; "he looks like a little Jew in a crimson overcoat with a stomach ache. What fly did you use, Louis?"

"Everything; could n't raise a fin."

"Oh, you 've been trying that old devil down by the west woods! I should think you 'd let him alone; it 's useless," yawned Ferris.

"I 'm going to try for him every day till I get him," said I, trying not to lie more than necessary: "Of course you 'll not infringe?"

"Infringe! Not much! You can have the whole west woods to your own sweet self; but you 're an idiot!"

"Not at all," said I, thankfully; and in a burst of confidence I confessed that I had used a Silver Doctor.

There was a momentary gleam of triumph in Ferris's eyes, but he was very decent about it and asked me most politely for the loan of a Red Ibis. Oh men of the busy world, learn courtesy from the angler! There are other things you need not learn from anglers.

"My dear fellow," said I, more touched than I had been for a long time, "I have n't a Red Ibis left. I shall write Conroy to-night before I retire. If you really do want an Ibis I will catch Solomon and pluck a plume from his tail feathers."

"I don't want it enough to inconvenience you or hurt Solomon's feelings," said Ferris, laughing.

After a long interval of silent smoking Ferris rose and yawned at the moon.

"Do you know what a Spirit-bird is, Ferris?" I asked, rapping my pipe on the arm of my chair.

"Spirit-bird—the French one—the Oiseau Saint-Esprit? Yes, I 've seen one—in the Vosges."

"Grey—with slim wings and big dark eyes?"

"That 's the bird," said Ferris; "why?"

"Well, I thought I saw one to-day. Of course that 's impossible."

"Of course," said Ferris, yawning again! "I'm going to turn in; good-night, old chap."

"Good-night," said I, tapping nervously on the veranda with my pipe.

Howlett came out a few moments later with my wading-shoes which he had been oiling.

"Well," said I, "are the hob-nails all right?"

"Seving 'ob nails is h'out, sir," replied Howlett, holding up the shoes for my inspection.

"Put them in as soon as they're dry. Did you oil the bamboo? Good. Is my lamp lighted? Put it out—and you need not sit up, Howlett; I'm going for a stroll."

"Thank you sir," said Howlett,—"and Solomon, sir?"

Now it was one of my delights to see Howlett house Solomon. The wily Ibis loved to snoop about in the moonlight, and he was always ready for Howlett when that dignified servant came to round him up.

I looked at Solomon, who stood gloomily brooding among the water-lilies.

"He ought to be in bed," said I.

Howlett descended the veranda steps with arms extended, but Solomon sidled out into the pond. Howlett pleaded earnestly. He flattered and cajoled, but Solomon was obdurate.

"Nothink I say do move 'im, sir!" said Howlett, stiffly; "he is vicious to-night, sir."

"Then take the boat," I said.

Howlett in a boat chasing a sulky Ibis was

one of those rare spectacles that few are permitted to witness. Once a week Solomon turned "vicious" and then, at Ferris's and my suggestion, Howlett took to the boat. A terrestrial Howlett was solemnly ludicrous, but an aquatic Howlett was impossible. Of course Ferris and I never laughed—that is, aloud, but we usually felt rather weak after it was over.

In the course of half an hour Solomon, mad, wet, and rumpled was cornered by Howlett and clasped to his stiff shirt front, muddy, bedraggled, and kicking.

"Are you not mortified, you bad bird?" said I, as Howlett passed toward the kitchen where Kitty the cook was airing his straw-thatched house.

"A vicious bird, sir, good-night, sir," murmured Howlett.

"Good-night, Howlett; breakfast at seven to-morrow," said I, and sauntered out into the moonlit valley.

I had been walking almost half an hour when it occurred to me that I should be in bed.

"What the deuce am I sprinting about the valley at this hour for?" I thought, looking around.

Over the shadowy meadows the night mist hung, silvered by the moonlight, and I heard the meadow-brook rippling through the sedge. Slender birches glimmered among the alders, and all the little poplar leaves were quivering, but I felt no breath of air.

Where the dark forest fringed the meadow I saw the moonbeams sparkling on lonely pools, but the depths of the woodland were black and impenetrable, and the forest itself was vague as the mist that shrouded it.

For a long time I stood, looking at the stars and the mist, and little by little I came to understand why I was there alone.

I knew I should go on, I wished to, but I lingered in the moonlight staring at earth and sky until something moved in the thicket beside me, and I followed it, knowing it was the Spirit-bird.

When I entered the forest I could scarcely see my hand, but I felt a trodden path beneath my feet, and I heard before me the whisper of soft wings, and presently I heard the river, rushing through rocks of the western forest, and when I came to the wooded bank the moonlight fell all around me.

There was a narrow strip in the forest, overgrown with silver birch and poplar and lighted by the moon, but I searched it in vain, up and down, up and down, always with the whisper of soft wings in my ears.

At last I called, "Diane," and before I called again, her hands lay close in mine.

* * * * * *

"I came," said the little maid, "because you were coming."

"Who told you I was coming?"

"Told me? No one told me. Rose is asleep. Why did you come?"

"Why did you, Diane?"

"I? Because you came. How did you find my bower?"

"Your bower, Diane?"

"It is yours I know; I call it mine; I call it the Silent Land."

"It is very silent," I said.

"It is always silent—no birds, not even the noise of the water. Do you think it is sad? There are times when sounds,—the song of living creatures and the countless movements of things that live, trouble me. Then I come here. There are flowers."

"The air is very sweet, too sweet. What is the perfume? The trees are heavy with fragrance. Ah!—are you tired, Diane?"

"No—it is the odour of blossoms; I sleep here sometimes."

"Your hair is loose—how long it is! Is it the perfume from your hair—is it your breath—"

"The blossoms are very sweet; the moon has gone."

"There is a star,—how soft your breath is."

"I do not see the star; where, Louis?"

"It is there;—clouds are veiling it;—there is a mist over all—"

"It is my hair—over your eyes."

IV.

"HOWLETT," said I, one warm afternoon, "Solomon is unendurable: he follows me everywhere, and I wish you to see that he minds his own business."

"A hobstinate bird, sir," said Howett, "and vicious when crossed,—which I scorn 'is h'anger, —beg pardon sir,—for 'e's took to biting wen 'is vittles disagrees."

"Has he bitten you?"

"Twice, sir,—which 'appily my h'eyes is hun-injured, though h'aimed at by 'is beak."

"This is intolerable," said I; "you must punish him, Howlett."

"'Ow, sir?"

"Tie him up when he bites. Have those flies come from Conroy's?"

"Nothink 'as came, sir."

"Where is Mr. Ferris?"

"Mr. Ferris is a whipping of the h'Amber Pool sir, with three sea-trout to the good and a brace of square tails. Solomon followed 'im, sir, and is h'observing the sport."

"Then I can get away without that red feath-

ered Paul Pry tiptoeing after me," I thought, and sent Howlett for my rod-case.

"Tell Mr. Ferris, when he returns, that I may not be back until dinner," I said, when Howlett brought the case.

I selected a four-ounce split bamboo, pocketed my fly-book and a tin box of floating flies for dry fishing, picked up a landing-net, and walked away toward the western woodland, whistling. I had not fished for three weeks, although every day I went away into the western woods with rod and creel. Ferris laughed at my infatuation for the long pool where the great fish lay and jeered at me when I returned evening after evening with no trout, although the river, except the western stretch, was full of trout. He had never come to the pool,—I should have seen him from the Silent Land if he had,—but Solomon sneaked after me on several occasions. Once I caught him craning his neck and peering into the bower,—our bower—and as I did not care to have him pilot Ferris thither, I hustled him off.

The woods were fragrant and warm, stained by the afternoon sun; the quiet murmur of the brook came to me from leafy thickets as I walked, and I heard the river rushing in the distance and the summer wind among the pines. White clouds shimmered in the blue above, sailing, sailing God knows where, but they passed across the azure, one by one, drifting to the south, and I watched them with the vague longing that comes to men who watch white sails at sea.

I had turned my steps toward the long pool, for I had decided to fish that afternoon, wishing to redeem my words to Ferris—at least in part; but as I stepped across the trail I heard the sound of wings, and a shadow glided in front of me toward the forest. It was always so from the first, and now, as always, I turned away, following unquestioningly the Spirit-bird. The noise of the river ceased as I entered the Silent Land. For an instant the grey bird hovered high in the sunshine, then left me alone.

I threw myself full length upon the blossoming bank and waited, chin on hand. And as I waited, she came noiselessly across the moss, so quietly, so silently that I saw her only when her fingers touched mine.

"It has been a long time," we said; and; "Did you sleep?" and; "When did you awake?"

Then we asked each other a thousand little questions which are asked when lovers meet, and we answered as lovers answer. We spoke of the Spirit-bird as we always did, wondering, and she told me how that morning it had tapped upon her window as the day broke.

"Rose did not hear it," she said, "but I was already awake and thinking."

"I awoke at sunrise too," I said; "for a moment I thought it was a swallow in the chimney that fluttered so—"

"The Spirit-bird flies swiftly when Love is dreaming,"—that is a very old proverb of Nor-

mandy. What shall we do, Louis—there is so much to do and so little time in life !—I brought my lute—ah ! you are laughing ! "

"The lute is such an old-fashioned toy ; I did n't know you played. Will you sing too, Diane ? Something very old, older than the lute."

"I learned a song this morning because I thought you would care for it. That is why I dared to bring my lute into the Silent Land. The song is called, "Tristesse."

Then the little maid sat up among the blossoms and touched the soft strings, singing :

"J'ai perdu ma force et ma vie,
Et mes amis et ma gaité ;
J'ai perdu jusqu' à la fierté
Qui faisait croire à mon génie.

. . . . .

Quand j'ai connu la Vérité
J'ai cru que c'était une amie ;
Quand je l'ai comprise et sentie,
J'en etais déjà dégoûté.

. . . . .

Et pourtant elle est éternelle
Et ceux qui se sont passés d'elle
Ici-bas ont tout ignoré.

. . . . .

Dieu parle, il faut qu'on lui réponde ;
Le seul bien qui me reste au monde
Est d'avoir quelquefois pleuré.

. . . . .

"That is all," said the little maid.

"Sing, Diane," I said, but I scarcely heard my own voice.

She laughed and bent above me with a graceful gesture. "Not that," she said, "for you at least are not sad. There is a chansonnette,—shall I sing again?—then be very still, here at my feet. Do you not think my lute is sweet?"

> "Je voudrais pour moi qu'il fut toujours fête
> Et tourner la tête
> Aux plus orgueilleux ;
> Être en même temps de glace et de flamme,
> La haine dans l'âme,
> L'amour dans les yeux."

. . . . .

"You, Diane?" I whispered; but she smiled, and the mystery of love veiled her dark eyes; and she sang:

> "Je ne voudrais pas à la contredanse,
> Sans quelque prudence
> Livrer mon bras nu
> Puis, au cotillion, laisser ma main blanche
> Trainer sur la manche
> Du premier venu."

. . . . .

> "Si mon fin corset, si souple et si juste,
> D'un bras trop robuste
> Se sentait serré,
> J'aurais, je l'avoue, une peur mortelle
> Qu'un bout de dentelle
> N'en fut déchiré."

. . . . .

She looked at me with soft, unfathomable eyes and touched the lute. When I moved she started from her reverie with a gay little nod to me :

> " Quand on est coquette, il faut être sage,
> L'oiseau de passage
> Qui vole à plein cœur
> Ne dort pas en l'air comme une hirondelle,
> Et peut, d'un coup d'aile
> Briser une fleur ! "

" Sing," I said in a changed voice.

" I have sung," she said, and laid her lute in my hands. But I knew nothing of minstrelsy and lay silent, idly touching the strings.

She had fashioned for her fair head a wreath of sweet-fern twined with clustered buds, white as snow and faintly perfumed.

" So I am crowned," she said, " a princess in the Silent Land. Where I step, all things green shall flourish ; where I turn my eyes, blossoms shall open in the summer wind ;—am I not queen ? "

" Will you not sing again, Diane ? "

" No, it pleases me to hear a legend now. You may begin, Louis."

" Which—the Were-wolf or the Man in Purple Tatters or the—"

" No, no—something new."

" The Seventh Seal ? "

" Begin it."

" And when he opened the Seventh Seal there was silence in Heaven—"

"Dear Saints, have we not silence enough in the Silent Land? Tell me about battles."

"'And the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.' I could tell you about battles, Diane."

"Tell me,—don't move your arm,—tell me of battles, Louis."

"There was once a King in Carcosa," I began. But the little maid was already asleep.

I thought I heard a step in the undergrowth and listened.

The forest was silent.

V.

WHEN we awoke it was night. Down from the dark heavens a great star fell, burning like a lamp. Above the low-hanging branches, sombre, drooping, heavy with fragrance, a misty darkness lay like a vast veil spread.

In the stillness I heard her quiet breathing, but we did not speak.

Silence is a Prophet, unveiling mysteries.

Then, through the forest, we heard the sound of wings, and as we moved, stepping together into the shadows, the moon rose above Lynx Peak, gigantic, golden, splendid.

So we passed out of the forest into the star-lit night.

VI.

THE skies were leaden, the watery clouds hung low over the valley, and a wet wind blew from the west, ruffling the long pool where Diane stood. Kilted and capped in tweeds, creel swinging with every movement of the rod which swayed and bent with her bending wrist, she moved from ripple to shallow, wading noiselessly while the silken line whistled and the gay flies chased each other across the wind-lashed pool.

We spoke in a low voice, glancing at each other when the light cast struck the water.

"Under the alders Diane—" I said; "have you changed the Grey Dun for the Royal?"

"No, what is your new cast?"

"Emerald and Orange Miller—I shall tie an Alder-fly in place of the Miller. Do you think the water warrants a cast of three?"

"It is rough; I don't know,—Louis, was that an offer?"

"I think it was the spray from the rapids. Shall we move up a little? Do you feel the chill of the water?"

"I am cold to my knees," said the little maid, "the river is rising I think—ah, what was that?"

"Nothing,—you touched a floating leaf in the swirl."

"Splash!" A great fish flopped over in the pool, a trout, lazy, unwieldy, monstrous.

"Oh! he missed it!" cried Diane, turning a little white.

"Cast again," I whispered, tossing my rod onto the sandy beach and unslinging my landing-net.

Trembling a little with excitement she cast across the swirl, once, twice, twenty times, but the monster was invisible. Somewhere in the dusky depths of that amber well the fierce fish lay watching the lightly dropping flies, unmoved. Then we changed the cast; I emptied my fly-book, but nothing stirred except the hurrying water, curling, gurgling, tumbling through the rocks. Finally I broke the silence.

"Diane, it was the spinner that he rose to. He's after something redder. Have you a Scarlet Ibis?"

"No—have you?"

I almost groaned, for Conroy's flies had not arrived, and I had n't an Ibis in the world.

After a while she reeled in her silken line, and we waded to the sandy beach and sat down.

"Oh, the pity of it," sighed Diane; "never have I seen such a trout before. I suppose it is useless, Louis."

I sat moodily poking holes in the sand with the butt of my landing-net.

We spoke of other things for a time, sinking our voices below the roar of the river. Presently a sunbeam stole through the vapour above, lighting the depths of the dark pool. And all at once we saw the trout, hanging just above the pebbly bottom; we saw the scarlet fins move, the great square tail waving gently in the current, the mottled spotted back, the round staring eyes. The swelling of the gills was scarcely perceptible, the broad mouth hardly moved.

For a long time we sat silent, fascinated; then something stirred behind us on the beach and we slowly turned. It was Solomon.

"Ciel!" faltered Diane, "what is that?"

"My bird—an Egyptian Ibis," I whispered, laughing silently; "he has followed me, after all."

Solomon ruffled his scarlet plumes, blinked at me, scratched his head with his broad foot, pecked at a bit of mica, and took two solemn steps nearer.

"Diane," said I, suddenly, "I 'll get a red fly for you; don't move—the bird will come close to us."

But Solomon was in no hurry. Inch by inch he sidled nearer, dallying with bits of moss and shining pebbles, often pausing to reflect, but gradually approaching, for his curiosity concerning Diane was great.

"He looks as if he had stepped off an obelisk," murmured Diane; "I have seen hieroglyphics that resembled him. Oh, what a prehistoric head —so old, so old!"

"His name is Solomon," I whispered. "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. I 'm going to have a small bit of Solomon's glory—sh—h! ah! I 've got him!"

It was over in a second, and I do not believe it was painful. There was a flurry of sand, a furious flapping of flame-coloured wings, a squawk! a smothered laugh—nothing more.

Mortified, furious, Solomon marched off, shaking the river sand from wing and foot, and Diane and I, with tears of laughter in our eyes, wound the scarlet feather about a spare hook, tied it close with a thread from my coat, and whipped it firmly to the shank. I looped the improvised fly to Diane's leader, and she shook the line free. The reel sang a sweet tune as she drew the silk through the guides, and presently she motioned me to follow her out into the rippling shallows, and I went, swinging my landing-net to my shoulder. She cast once. The fly struck the swirl and sank a little, but she drew it to the surface and the current swept it under the alders. For a moment it sank again; then the ripples parted, and a broad crimson-flecked side rolled just below the surface of the water. At the same moment the light rod curved, deeply quivering, the reel screamed like the wind in the chimney,

and the straining line cut through the water, moving up the pool with lightning speed.

"Strike!" I cried, and she struck heavily, but the reel sang out like a whistling buoy, and the fish tumbled into the churning water under the falls at the head of the pool.

"Now," said Diane, with a strange quiet in her voice, "I suppose he is gone, Louis."

But the vicious tug and long, fierce strain contradicted her, and I stepped back a pace or two to let her fight the battle to the bitter end.

The struggle was splendid. Once I believe she became a little frightened,—the rod was staggering under the furious fish,—and she spoke in a queer, small voice: "Are you there, Louis?"

"I am here, Diane."

"Close behind?"

"Close behind."

She said nothing more until the great fish lay floating within reach of my net.

"Now!" she gasped.

It was done in a second; and, as I bore the deep-laden net to the beach, I caught a fleeting glimpse of a figure among the trees on the bank above. Diane was kneeling breathlessly on a rock beside me; she did not see the figure. I did, for an instant. It was Ferris.

VII.

DINNER was over. Ferris and I lingered silently over the Burgundy, and Howlett hovered in the corner with a decanter of port until Ferris shook his head.

It had been a silent dinner. Ferris tried to be cordial, and failed. Then he tried to be indifferent, with better success. We exchanged a word or two concerning a new keeper who was to be stationed at the notch in the north, and I spoke to Howlett about cleaning the lamps.

Neither of us mentioned rods or trout, although Howlett had served us a delicious sea-trout that evening which had fallen to Ferris's rod, over which we ordinarily should have exulted.

Ferris of course knew that I had seen him among the trees on the bank above the long pool. It was my place to speak; we both understood that, but I did not. What was there to say? Suppose I should go back to the beginning and tell him—not all, but all that I was bound in honour to tell him. What would he think if I spoke of the Spirit-bird, of the Silent Land, of my long deception? An explanation was due him—I felt that with a

vague sense of anger and humiliation. For weeks I had abandoned him ; I never thought about his being lonely, but I knew now that he had felt it deeply. Oh, it was the underhand part of the business that sickened me, the daily deceit, the double dealing. Ferris was no infant. A word would have been enough. I had never by sign or speech spoken that word which would at least have set me right with him, and which I could have spoken honourably. And moreover, if I had spoken that word,—no, not a word even, a look would have been enough,—Ferris would never have entered the western forest belt.

We sat dawdling over our wine in the glow of the long candles while the fire crackled in the chimney place ; for the evening was chilly, and Solomon brooded sullenly before the blaze. Howlett, noiseless and pompous, glided from side-board to table, decorously avoiding the evil jabs from Solomon's curved bill, until Ferris woke up and told him he might retire, which he did with a modest " good-night, sir," and a haughty glance at Solomon. A half hour of strained silence followed. I leaned on the table, my head on my hands, watching the candle light reflected on the fragile wine glasses. Myriads of little flames glistened on the crystal bowls, deep stained with the red wine's glow. The fire snapped and sparkled on the hearth, and Solomon slept, his wizened head buried in the depths of his flaming plumage.

And as we sat there, there came a faint tapping at the curtained window. Ferris did not hear it I did, for it was the Spirit-bird.

"I must go," said I, rising suddenly.

"Where?" said Ferris.

I looked at him stupidly for a moment, then sank back into my chair.

Solomon stirred in his slumber and I heard the wind rising in the chimney.

Ferris leaned across the table and touched my sleeve.

I looked at him silently.

"I must speak," he said; "are you ready?"

I did not reply.

"Sadness and silence have no place here, between you and me. Shall I tell you a story I once read?"

"I am half asleep," I muttered.

"This is the story," he said, unheeding my words. "There was once a King in Carcosa——"

My hand fell heavily upon the table.

"——And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies——"

"For God's sake, Ferris——"

"Yes," he said, "for God's sake."

We sat staring at each other across the table, and if my face was as white as his I do not know, but my hand trembled among the glasses till they tinkled.

"I was born in France," he said at last. "You did not know it, for I never told you. What do

you know about me after all? Nothing. What have years of friendship taught you about my past? Nothing. Now learn. My father was shot dead by an inferior officer in Rouen. The assassin escaped to Canada where—I found him. He died by his own hand—from choice. I did not know he had a child."

The dull fear at my heart must have looked from my eyes. Ferris nodded.

"Yes, you know the rest," he said; "the shame and disgrace of the suicide drove the child away—anywhere to escape it—anywhere—here, into the wilderness the woman fled where she hath a place prepared of God."

The Spirit-bird was tapping on the window, I heard the noise of wings beating against the pane.

"I must go," I said, and my voice sounded within me as from a great distance.

"Vengeance is God's," said Ferris, quietly: "I am guilty."

"I must go," I repeated, steadying myself with my hand on the table.

The noise of wings filled my ears. I knew the summons.

"Do you not hear?" I cried.

"The wind," said Ferris.

Then the door slowly opened from without, the long candles flared in the wind, and the ashes stirred and drifted among the embers on the hearth. And out of the night came a slender

figure, with dark eyes wide, and timid hands outstretched—outstretched until they fell into my own and lay there.

"I came from the Silent Land," she said; "the bird lead me; see, it has entered with me, Louis."

"It is my wife who has entered," I said quietly to Ferris, and the little maid clung close to me, holding out one slim hand to Ferris.

There was an interval of silence.

"Father Gregory will breakfast with us to-morrow," said Ferris to me.

"A Priest?"

"Open the window," smiled Ferris; "there is a small grey bird here."

So I opened the window and it flew away.

"Good-night," whispered the little maid, and kissed her hand to the open window.

"Diane!"

She came to me quietly. Ferris had vanished; Solomon peered dreamily at us with filmy eyes.

"The Spirit-bird has gone," she said.

Then, with her arms about my neck, I raised her head, touching her white brow with my lips.

* * * * * *

When my wife read as far as you have read, she picked up the embroidery which she had dropped beside her on the table.

"Do you like my story?" I asked.

But she only smiled at me from under her straight eyebrows.

The next morning I received her ultimatum; I am to cease writing about beautiful women of doubtful antecedents who inhabit forest glades, I am to stop making fun of Howlett, I am to curb my passion for rod and gun, and, if I insist on writing about my wife, I am to tell the truth concerning her. This I have promised Ysonde to do, and I shall try to, in "The Black Water."

THE BLACK WATER.

"Lorsque la coquette Espérance
Nous pousse le coude en passant,
Puis a tire-d'aile s'élance,
Et se retourne en souriant ;

"Où va l'homme ! Où son coeur l'appelle !
L'hirondelle suit le zephyr,
Et moins légère est l'hirondelle
Que l'homme qui suit son désir."

THE BLACK WATER.

"Oh! could you view the melodie
  Of ev'ry grace,
And musick of her face,
  You'd drop a teare,
Seeing more harmonie
  In her bright eye,
Then now you heare."

LOVELACE.

I.

YSONDE swung her racquet. Her laughter was very sweet. A robin on the tip of a balsam-tree cocked his head to listen; a shy snow-bird peered at her through the meadow grass.

"What are you laughing at?" I asked, uneasily. I spoke sharply—I had not intended to. The porcupine on the porch lifted his head, his rising quills grating on the piazza; a drab-coloured cow, knee deep in the sedge, stared at me in stupid disapproval.

"I beg your pardon, Ysonde," I said, sulkily, for I felt the rebuke of the cow. Then Ysonde

laughed again; the robin chirped in sympathy, and the snow-bird crept to the edge of the tennis-court.

"Deuce," I said, picking up a ball, "are you ready?"

She stepped back, making me a mocking reverence. Her eyes were bluer than the flowering flax behind her.

I had intended to send her a swift service, and I should have done so had I not noticed her eyes.

"Deuce," I repeated, pausing to recover the composure necessary for good tennis. She made a gesture with her racquet. The service was a miserable failure. I drove the second ball into the net, and then, placing the butt of my racquet on the turf, sat down on the rim.

"Vantage out," said I, gritting my teeth; "what were you laughing at, Ysonde?"

"Vantage out," she repeated; "I am not laughing."

"You were," I said; "you are now."

She went to the boxwood hedge, picked out one ball and sent it back; then she drove the other over the net and retired to her corner swinging her racquet. I did not move.

"You are spoiling your racquet," she said.

I was sitting on it. I knew better.

"And your temper," she said, sweetly.

"Vantage out," I repeated, and raised my tennis-bat for a smashing service. The ball whisted close to the net, and the white dust flew from her

court, but her racquet caught it fair and square and I heard the ring of the strings as the ball shot along my left alley and dropped exactly on the service line. How I got it I don't know, but the next moment a puff of dust rose in her vantage court, there was a rustle of skirts, a twinkle of small tennis shoes, and the ball rocketed, higher, higher, into the misty sunshine.

"Oh," gasped Ysonde, and bit her lip.

The ball began to come down. I had time to laugh before it struck,—to laugh quietly and twirl my short mustache.

"I shall place that ball," said I, "where you will not find it easily"; and I did, deliberately.

For a second Ysonde was disappointed, I could see that, but I imagined there was the slightest tremour of relief in her voice when she said:

"Brute force is useless, Bobby; listen to the voice of the Prophetess."

"I hear," I said, "the echo of your voice in the throat of every bird."

"Which is very pretty but unfair," said Ysonde, looking at the snow-birds beside her. "It is unfair," she repeated.

"Yes," said I, "it is unfair; are you ready?"

"Let us finish the game this afternoon," she suggested; "look at these snow-birds, Bobby; if I raise my racquet it will frighten them."

"And you imagine," said I, "that these snow-birds are going to interrupt the game—this game?"

"What a pity to frighten them; see—look how close they come to me? Do you think the little things are tamed by hunger?"

"Some creatures are not tamed by anything," I said.

"Are you hungry?" she asked, innocently.

I was glad that I suppressed my anger.

"Ysonde," I said, "you know what this game means to me—to us."

"I know nothing about it," she said, hastily, retreating to her corner; "play—it's deuce you know."

"I know," I replied, and sent a merciless ball shooting across her deuce court.

"Vantage in," I observed, trying not to smile.

A swift glance from her wide eyes, a perceptible tremble of the long lashes—that was all; but I knew what I knew, for I have hunted wild creatures.

The porcupine on the piazza rose, sniffed, blinked in the sunlight, and lumbered down the steps, every quill erect.

"Billy! Go back this minute!" said Ysonde.

The quills on Billy's back flattened.

"Billy," I repeated, "go and climb a tree."

"If you speak to him he will bristle again," said Ysonde, walking over to the porcupine.

"Billy, my child, climb this pretty balsam tree for the gentleman; come—you are interrupting the game, and the gentleman is impatient."

"The gentleman is very impatient, Billy," I said.

I saw Ysonde colour—a soft faint tint, nothing more; I saw Billy receive a gentle impulse—oh, very gentle indeed, from the point of her slender tennis shoes. So the porcupine was hustled up the balsam-tree, where he lay like an old mat, untidy, mortified, nursing his wrath, while two blue-birds tittered among the branches above him.

Ysonde came back and stood in the game court.

"It is vantage, I believe," she said, indifferently.

"Out," said I, with significance. Ysonde looked at me.

"Out," I repeated.

"Play," she said, desperately.

"No," I replied, sitting down upon the edge of my racquet again—I knew better—"let us clearly understand the consequences first."

She swung her racquet and looked me full in the eyes.

"What consequences?" she said.

"The consequences incident upon my winning this set."

"What consequences?" she insisted, defiantly.

"The forfeit," said I.

"When you win the set we will discuss that," she said. "Do you imagine you will win?"

She was a better player than I; she could give me thirty on each game.

"Yes," I said, and I believe the misery in my voice would have moved a tigress to pity.

Now perhaps it was because there is nothing of the tigress about Ysonde, perhaps because I showed my fear of her—I don't know which—but I saw her scarlet lips press one upon the other, and I saw her eyes darken like violet velvet at night.

"Play," she said; "I am ready."

The first ball struck the net; the racquet turned in my nerveless hand, and she smiled.

"Play!" I cried, and the second ball bit the lime dust at her feet. I saw the flash of her racquet, I saw a streak of gray lightning, and I lifted my racquet, but something struck me in the face,—the tennis-balls were heavy and wet,—and I staggered about blindly, faint with pain.

"Oh, Bobby!" cried Ysonde, and stood quite still.

"I'm a duffer," I muttered, trying to open my eye, but the pain sickened me. I placed my hand over it and looked out upon the world with one eye. The drab-coloured cow was watching me; she was chewing her cud; the porcupine had one sardonic eye fixed upon me; the robin, balanced on the tip of the balsam, mocked me. It was plain that the creatures were all on her side. The wild snow-birds scarcely moved as Ysonde hastened across the court to my side. I heard the blue-birds tittering over head, but I did not care; I had heard the tones of Ysonde's voice, and I was glad that I had been banged in the

eye. It was true she had only said, "Oh, Bobby!"

"Is it very painful?" she asked, standing close beside me.

"Yes," I replied, seriously.

"Let me look," she said, laying one hand on the sleeve of my cricket shirt.

"Billy will rejoice at this," said I, removing my handkerchief so she could see the eyes. The pain was becoming intense. With my uninjured eye I could see how white her hand was.

She stood still a moment; my arm grew warm beneath her hand.

"It will cheer Billy," I suggested; "did I tell you that he bit me yesterday and I whacked him? No? Well, he did, and I did."

"How can you!" she murmured; "how can you speak of that ridiculous Billy when you may have—have to be blind?"

"Nonsense," I said, with a shiver.

She crossed the turf to the spring and brought her handkerchief back soaking and cold as ice. I felt her palm on my cheek as she adjusted it. It was smooth, like an apricot.

"Hold it there," I said, bribing my conscience; "it is very pleasant." She thought I meant the wet handkerchief.

"If—if I have ruined your sight": she began.

Now it was on the tip of my tongue to add—"and yet you are going to ruin my life by beating me at tennis," but my conscience revolted.

" Do you think it is serious ?" she asked, in a voice so low that I bent my head involuntarily. She mistook the gesture for one of silent acquiescence. A tear—a large warm one—fell on my wrist ; I thought it was a drop of water from the handkerchief at first. Then I opened my uninjured eye and saw her mistake.

" You misunderstood," I said, wearily. " I don't believe what the oculist told me ; the eye will be all right."

" But he warned you that a sudden blow would——"

" Might——"

" Oh—did he say might ?"

" Yes—but it won't. I 'm all right—don't take away your hand ; are you tired ?"

" No, no," she said, " shall I get some fresh water ?"

" Not yet—don't go. The game was at deuce, was n't it ?"

Ysonde was silent.

" Was it deuce ? Does that point count against me ?" I insisted.

" How can you think of the game now ?" said Ysonde, in a queer voice—like the note of a very young bird.

I sat down on the turf, and the handkerchief fell from my eye. Ysonde hastened to the spring and returned carrying the heavy stone jar full of water. It must have strained her delicate wrist—she said it did not ; and, kneeling beside me,

she placed the cold bit of cambric over my eye.

"Thank you," I said; "will you sit beside me on the turf?" Both of my eyes were aching and closed, but I heard her skirts rustle and felt the momentary pressure of her palm on my cheek.

"Are you seated?" I asked.

"Yes, Bobby."

"Then tell me whether I lost that point."

"How can I tell," she answered; "I would willingly concede it if it were not——"

"For the forfeit," I added; "then you think I did lose the point?"

"Does your eye pain very much?" she asked.

"Yes," said I, truthfully. Perhaps it was ungenerous, but I dared not reject such an ally as truth. I opened one eye and looked at Ysonde. She was examining a buttercup.

"All buttercups look as though they had been carefully varnished," said she, touching one with the tip of her middle finger.

"Did I win the set?" I began again.

"Oh—no—not the set!" she protested.

"Then I lost that point?"

"Oh! why will you dwell upon tennis at such a moment!"

"Because," said I, "it means so much to me."

I suppose there was something in my voice that frightened her.

"Forgive me," I said, bitterly ashamed, for I had broken our compact, not directly, but in sub-

stance. "Forgive me, Ysonde," I said, looking at the porcupine with my left eye.

"Ridiculous Billy," for that was his name, stared at me with the insolence born of safety, and his white whiskers twitched in derision.

"You old devil," I thought, remembering the scar on my ankle.

"Where did he bite you?" asked Ysonde unconsciously reading my thoughts. It was a trick of hers.

"In the ankle,—it was nothing. I would rather have him bite the other ankle than get any more of his quills into me!" I replied. "See how the snow-birds have followed you. They are there among the wild strawberries."

She turned her head.

"Hush!" she whispered, raising one palm. It was pinker than the unripe berries. There was an ache in my heart as well as in my eyes, so I said something silly; "There was an old man who said, Hush! I perceive a young bird in this bush——"

"When they said, Is it small? he replied, Not at all! It is four times as big as the bush!" repeated Ysonde, solemnly. We both laughed, but I read a gratitude in her eyes which annoyed me.

"We digress," I said, "speaking of the game——"

"Oh, but we were not speaking of the game!" she said, half-alarmed, half-smiling; "there! I thought you were going to be sensible, Bobby."

"I am. I only wish to know whether I lost that game."

"You know the rules," she said.

"Yes—I know the rules."

"If it were not for the forfeit, I should not insist," she continued, returning to her buttercup. "It seems unfair to take the point;—does the eye pain, Bobby?"

"Not so much," I replied, sticking to the truth to the bitter end. My ally was becoming a nuisance.

"Let me see it," she said, gently removing the handkerchief. The eye must have looked bad, for her face changed.

"Oh, you poor fellow," she said, and I fairly revelled in the delight of my own misery.

"Then I lost that point," said I, stifling conscience.

She replaced the handkerchief. Her hand had become suddenly steady.

"No," she said, "you did not lose the point,—I concede it."

I wondered whether my ears were tricking me.

"Then—if I won the point—I won the set," I said.

"Yes."

"And the forfeit——"

"The forfeit was that I should kiss you," said Ysonde, gravely.

"That was not all——"

"No,—you are to be allowed to tell me that

you love me," continued Ysonde in calm, even tones.

"Then," said I, flushing uncomfortably, "when will you pay the forfeit?"

"Now, if you wish it. Shall I kiss you?"

She leaned on the turf, one hand hidden by the buttercups. She had dropped the handkerchief, and I picked it up and held it to my eye with my left hand. Then, with my right hand, I took her right hand, listlessly drooping beside her, and I looked her full in the eyes.

"When we made the wager," I said, "we were boy and girl. That was almost twenty-four hours ago. You need not kiss me, Ysonde."

"A kiss means more at our age," she said.

"We were very silly," said I.

"It should mean love," she said, faintly.

"Indeed it should," I said.

Ysonde sat straight up among the field flowers.

"I do not love," she said.

"I know it," I replied gaily, and I let the bandage drop from my eye. "The pain is all gone," I said, closing my left eye to see whether my vision was impaired.

I was totally blind in my right eye.

For an instant the shock staggered me. I don't know how long I sat, mouth open, staring at the sun with one sound, one sightless eye. Ysonde, her chin on her hands, lay with her face turned toward the White Lady, a towering peak in the east.

" Come," I said, rising, " your aunt will be impatient; dinner has been served this half hour."

She sprang to her feet,—she had been in a reverie,—and gave me a long look which I could not define.

" And your eye does n't pain ?" she asked, after a moment.

" No," I said, for the pain had disappeared with the sight; " I am all right except a headache."

" And you can see perfectly well ?"

" Perfectly."

It was at this point that truth and I parted; for what was a lost eye that it should cause her a moment's regret ?

II.

IT was about this time that the oculist came to Holderness and visited me at the Rosebud Inn. I was in a dark room; Ysonde thought it better, believing darkness a cure for headache.

When the oculist walked in—his name was Keen,—he said, "What the devil are you doing here?"

"I am blind in one eye—will it be noticeable?" I asked.

"Banged in the eye?" he enquired, opening the shutters.

"Banged in the eye," I repeated, as he bent over me.

His examination lasted scarcely ten seconds. After a moment he rose and closed the shutters, and I stood up in the darkness.

"Will it disfigure me?" I asked again.

"No,—an oculist could tell the difference perhaps. You may go out in three weeks."

"Blind?"

"Nonsense," growled Keen, "you have another eye yet."

"But I am an artist," I said in a low voice, "is there hope?"

I heard Keen sit down in the room, and his rocking-chair squeaked through five minutes of the bitterest darkness I ever knew. I could stand it no longer, so I rose and felt my way towards the rocking-chair,—I wanted to touch him—I was terrified. Well, it only lasted a few moments—most men pass through crises—I was glad he did not attempt to pity me.

" It was Miss——" he began.

" Hush ! " I whispered. " Who told you, Keen ? "

" She did," he replied. " Of course, she need never know you are——"

" Blind," I said,—" No, she need not know it."

I heard him feeling for the door.

" Turn your back," he said.

I did so.

" Three weeks ? " I enquired over my shoulder.

" Yes—don't smoke."

" What the devil shall I do ? " I said, savagely.

" Think on your sins, old chap,"—we had studied together in the Latin Quarter—" think of Pepita——"

" I won't," I cried. Keen hummed in a mischievous voice,

" Quand le sommeil sur ta famille
Autour de toi s'est repondu,
O Pépita, charmante fille,
Mon amour, à quoi penses-tu ? "

"Keen," I said, "I 'll break your head, if I am one-eyed."

"I 'm a married man," he replied, "and I refuse your offer; that 's better, I like to hear the old ring in your voice, Bobby—keep a stiff upper lip. Surgery and painting are not the only things we learned in the Quarter."

I heard the door close behind him, then turned and groped my way toward the bed.

* * * * * *

How I ever lived through those three weeks!—Well, I did, and every fresh pipe of Bird's-eye tasted sweeter for my disobedience.

"Write him," I dictated through the closed door to Ysonde,—"write him that I am smoking six pipes a day as he directed." After all, if I was going to be blind in one eye, I did not care whether tobacco hastened the blow, and I was glad to poke a little fun at Keen.

Ysonde could not imagine why the doctor had recommended smoking—she had heard that it weakened the sight, but she wrote as I directed, merely expressing her distrust in Keen, which amused me, for he is now one of the most famous oculists in the world.

"Yes," said I, through the key-hole, "Keen is young, and has much to learn, but I dare not disobey orders. How is your aunt?"

"My aunt is well, thank you, Bobby; did you like the sherbet she made?"

"Yes—that 's six times you have asked me."

I was wearying of lying. The sherbet reposed among the soapsuds of my toilet jar.

Ysonde's aunt, a tall aristocratic beauty, whose perfectly arched eye-brows betrayed the complacent vacancy of her mind, had actually prepared, with her own fair hands, a sherbet for me. I cannot bear sweets of any kind.

"Aunt Lynda will make another to-morrow," cooed Ysonde through the key-hole.

"Thank her for me," said I faintly; "Ysonde, I am coming out to-night."

"It is not yet three weeks!" cried Ysonde.

"It will be three weeks to-morrow at 1 p.m. My eyes won't suffer at night. I should like to smell the woods a little. Will you walk with me this evening?"

"If Aunt Lynda will allow me," said Ysonde. After a moment she added: "I will ask her now"; and I heard her rise from her chair outside my door.

When she came back, I was lying face downwards on my bed, miserable, dreading the hour when I should first face my own reflection in a mirror. I heard her step on the stairs, and I jumped up and groped my way toward the door.

"Bobby," she called softly.

"Ysonde," I answered, with my mouth close to the key-hole. She started—I heard her—for she did not know I was so near. I bent my head to listen.

"Aunt Lynda says you are foolish to go out before to-morrow——"

"The evening won't hurt me."

"But suppose—only suppose your disobedience should cost you the sight of your eye?"

"It won't," said I.

"Think how I should feel?"

"It won't," I repeated. The perspiration suddenly dampened my forehead, and I wiped it away.

"Can't you wait?" she pleaded.

"No. Have you your aunt's permission to walk with me this evening?"

"Yes," she said. "Shall I read to you a little while?"

For an hour I listened to her voice, and if it was Lovelace or Herrick or Isaac Walton, I do not know upon my soul, but I do know that my dark room was filled with the delicious murmur; and I heard the trees moving in the evening wind and the twitter of sleepy birds from the hedge. It might have been the perfume from the roses under my window—perhaps it was the fragrance of her hair—she bent so close to my door outside—but a sweet smell tinctured the darkness about me, stealing into my senses; and I rose and opened my blinds a little way.

It was night. I heard the rocky river rushing through the alders and the pines swaying on the ridge. The ray from the moon which silvered the windows caused my eyes no pain.

I listened. Through the low music of her voice crept the song of a night-thrush. A breeze stirred the roses under my window; the music of voice and thrush was stilled. Then, in the silence, some wild creature cried out from the mountain side.

"Âme damnée!" I muttered; for my soul was heavy with the dread of the coming morning.

"What are you murmuring in there by yourself?" whispered Ysonde, through the door.

"Nothing—was it a lynx on Noon Peak?"

"I heard nothing," she said.

"Nor I," said I, opening the door.

The light from the lamp dazzled but did not hurt me. She laid down the book and came swiftly toward me.

"Now," said I, "we will walk under the stars—with your aunt's permission."

I heard her sigh as she took my arm; "Bobby, I am so glad your eye is well. What could you have done if you had lost the sight of an eye?"

III.

THE morning was magnificent. A gentleman with symmetrical whiskers named Blylock, and I were standing on the verandah of the Rosebud Inn. Blylock's mind was neutral. His lineage was long, his voice modulated, his every action acutely impersonal. The subdued polish of Harvard was reflected from his shoes to his collar. When he smoked he smoked judiciously, joylessly.

"And you lost the fish?" said I.

"Yes," said Blylock, with colourless enthusiasm.

"In the West Branch?"

"Near the Forks," said Blylock. "Do you know the pool?"

I regretted that I did not. He had once asked me whether I knew the Stryngbenes of Beacon Street, and I had replied with the same regret. Now he learned that I was culpably ignorant of the pool at the West Branch Forks.

Blylock looked at the mountains. The White Lady was capped with mist, but except for that there was not a cloud in the sky. The Gilded

Dome towered, clear cut as a cameo, against the pure azure of the northern horizon; Lynx Peak, jagged and cold, shot up above the pines of Crested Hawk, whose sweeping base was washed by the icy river.

"Do you think he might weigh five pounds?" I asked.

"Possibly," replied Blylock; "I regret exceedingly that I lost him."

"But, thank God, Plymouth Rock still stands!" was what I felt he expected me to say. I did not; I merely asked him if he had ever experienced emotion. "Why, of course," he answered seriously, but when I begged him to tell me when, he suspected a joke and smiled. If I had a son who smiled like that I would send him to Tony Pastor's. Oh, that smile!—gentle, vacant, blank as the verses of a Brook Farm Bard, bleaker than Bunker Hill.

"For sweet charity's sake," said I, "tell me why you do it, Blylock."

"Do what?" he asked.

"Oh," said I wearily, "nothing—lose a five-pound trout, for instance."

"I had on a brown hackle," said Blylock; "it was defective."

"It bust," said I, brutally, "did you curse?"

"No," replied Blylock. Ysonde came out and we took off our shooting-caps.

"Put them on again directly," said Ysonde, nestling deep into the collar of her jacket;

"is it too cold for the trout to rise, Mr. Blylock?"

Blylock looked at the sky and then at his finger tips. There was a seal ring on one of his fingers which I was tired of seeing.

I listened to his even voice, I noticed his graceful carriage—I even noticed the momentary flush on his cold cheeks. Oh, how tired I was of looking at him; it wearied me as it wearies me to read advertisements in the cars of the elevated railroad. But I liked him.

"Blylock," said I, "get a gait on you, and we 'll whip the stream to the Intervale before dinner."

"The water will be cold," said Ysonde. "You ought to have waders."

Now Ysonde knew that I had no waders. I loathed them. Blylock always wore waders.

"Thank you," said Blylock, "I will not neglect to wear them."

I looked at Ysonde and met her eyes.

"Oh," said I, spoiling everything with intentional obstinacy, "Mr. Blylock never forgets his waders." For a moment the colour touched her cheek, but she treated me much better than I deserved.

"Bobby," said Ysonde, "remember that you have been ill, and if you wade the river in knickerbockers you will be obliged to eat sherbert again."

So she knew the mystery of the soapsuds.

"I have no waders, Ysonde," I said humbly, "do you think I had better not go?"

"You know best," she said indifferently; and I got my deserts to the placid satisfaction of Blylock.

Ysonde walked away to join her aunt and I loafed about, sniffing the breeze, sulky, undecided, until Blylock appeared with rod and creel.

"Going?" enquired Blylock.

"No, I shall paint," I said, after a moment's silence.

He joined Ysonde and her aunt, and I saw them all walking toward the trail that crosses the river by the White Cascade. Blylock had undertaken to teach Ysonde to cast. I was surprised when she accepted, for I myself had taught her to cast. However I never asked any explanation and she never offered any—to my secret annoyance.

It was just two weeks that I had been out of the dark room. I was totally blind in my right eye, but nobody except Keen and myself knew it. I was becoming used to it—I was only too thankful that the eye, to all appearances, was as perfect as the other eye. But I dreaded to begin painting again. I feared that everything might be colourless and lop-sided, that I should be a ruined man as far as my profession was concerned. I had put off the beginning of work from sheer cowardice. Nobody but an artist can appreciate my mental suffering;—nobody but an artist knows

that two eyes are little enough to see with. Had the accident destroyed the balance of my sight? Would my drawing be exaggerated, unstable, badly constructed, out of proportion? Would my colour be weak or brutally crude? I decided to find out without further delay, so when Ysonde and her aunt and Blylock had disappeared, I went to my room, gathered up my well-worn sketching kit, screwed two canvases into the holder, and marched manfully out the door into the sunlit forest.

Ridiculous Billy followed me. This capricious porcupine had taken a violent fancy to me, from the moment I emerged from the dark room. Of course I preferred his friendship to his enmity—I still bore a red scar on my ankle—but what soothed me most was his undisguised hatred of Blylock. Billy bit him whenever he could, and the blood of Bunker Hill appealed to Heaven from the piazza of the Rosebud Inn!

Blylock took it very decently—the porcupine was Ysonde's property—but although he himself suffered in silence, and Ysonde darned his golf-stockings as partial reparation, I always fancied that his blood was importuning Heaven, and, remembering George III, I trembled for Ridiculous Billy.

Sometimes I was sorry for Blylock, sometimes I was not, especially when Ysonde darned his golf-stockings. Blylock was Lynda Sutherland's cousin, but I demonstrated to Ysonde that this

did not concern her. Sometimes I wished that Blylock would go back to Beacon Street, and yet I had grown fond of him in a way.

The porcupine followed me into the forest, poking his rat-like muzzle into every soft rotten stump, twitching his white whiskers. A red squirrel followed him from tree to tree, chattering and squealing with rage, but Billy lumbered along, stolid, blasé, entirely wrapped up in his own business. What that business was I dared not enquire, for Billy's malicious eyes boded evil for interlopers, and I respected his privacy.

Walking along the fragrant brown trail, barred with sunlight, I recalled that cold gray morning in camp when Sutherland—Lynda's late lamented—waking from the troubled dreams incident on an overdose of hot whiskey and water, called to me, to take "that thing away!" "That thing" was Billy. From his nest among the pine-clad ridges, he had smelled our pork, and being a free-born American, he had descended to appropriate it. In the gray of the morning, through the smouldering camp-fire smoke, I saw Billy in the act of removing the pork from the crotches of a spruce tree.

"What is it? Take it away for God's sake!" bellowed Sutherland, associating Billy with other grotesque phantoms incident on overdoses.

"It 's a porcupine," said I.

"Pink?" faltered Sutherland.

"Go to sleep, you brute," I muttered, not ad-

dressing the porcupine. I took a poncho, a thick one, and ran the porcupine down. Then I enveloped him in the blanket, and got a rope about his neck, tied him to a tree and examined my wounds. One of our guides helped me pull the spines from my person, and that night the other guide led Ridiculous Billy into the settlement which consists of the Rosebud Inn and three barns.

The taking of Billy preceded Sutherland's death by twenty-four hours; he was mauled by a panther whose cubs he was investigating. His wife, Lynda, who had secured a few month's reprieve from his presence, and who first heard of his death at Fortress Monroe, came north with Ysonde. Sutherland was buried in New York, and two weeks later Lynda and Ysonde came to the Rosebud Inn. All this happened three years ago, and during those three years, Billy, gorgeous with a silver collar, had never forgiven me for removing him from his native wilds. His attitude toward the household was unmistakable. Lynda he avoided, Ysonde he followed with every mark of approbation, Blylock he loathed, and now, he had taken this sudden shine to me.

Billy and I followed the trail, solemnly, deliberately. The trail was a blind one, now plain, brown and gold with trampled wet leaves, now invisible, a labyrinth of twisted moose-bush and hemlock, badly blazed. But we knew our business, Billy and I, for presently we crossed a swift

brook, darkling among mossy hollows, and turning to the right, entered a moist glade all splashed with dewy sunlight.

"Here," said I, unstrapping my camp-stool, "is a woodland Mecca"; and I drove my white umbrella deep into the bank, where the brook widened in sunny shallows.

Billy eyed me a moment, rolled a pine-cone over with his nose, and mounted a tree. I liked to watch him mount trees. He did not climb, he neither scrambled nor scratched, he simply flowed up the trunk.

"Pleasant dreams," said I, as he curled up in the first moss-covered crotch; and I began to set my palette.

In the fragrant sun-soaked glade the long grass, already crisp as hay, was vibrating with the hum of insects. Shy forest butterflies waved their soft wings over the Linnea, long-legged gnats with spotted wings danced across the fern patches, and I saw a great sleepy moth hanging from a chestnut twig among the green branches overhead. His powdery wings, soft as felt, glistened like gilded dust.

"An Imperial Moth," said I to myself, for I was glad to recognize a friend. Then a wood-thrush ruffled his feathers under the spreading ferns, and I saw a baby rabbit sit up and wriggle its nose at me.

"Lucky for you I 'm not a fox," said I, picking up a pointed sable brush; and I drew the out-

line of the chestnut tree, omitting the porcupine in the branches.

When I had indicated a bit of the forest beyond the glade, using a pointed brush dipped in Garance Rose foncée, I touched in a mousey shadow or two, scrubbed deep warm tones among my trees, using my rag when I pleased, and then, digging up a brushful of sunny greens and yellows, slapped it boldly on the foreground. Over this I drew a wavering sky reflection, indicated a sparkle among the dewy greens, scrubbed more sunlight into the shallow depths of the brook, and leaned back with a nervous sigh. What had God taken from me when he took the light from my eye? I pondered in silence while round me the brown-winged forest flies buzzed and hummed and droned an endless symphony. To me, with my single trembling eye, my painted foreground seemed aglow with sunlight, and the depths of the quiet forest, wrapped in hazy mystery, appeared true and just, slumbering there upon my canvas.

The brook prattled to me of dreams and splendid hopes, the pines whispered of fame, the ferns rustled and nodded consolation. I raised my head. High in the circle of quivering blue above, a gray hawk hung, turning, turning, turning in silence.

A light step sounded among the fallen leaves. Slowly I turned, my sight dazzled by the sky, but before my eye had found its focus I heard her low laughter and felt her touch on my arm.

"You were asleep," she said, "you must not deny it, do you hear me?"

"I was not asleep," I answered, rising from my camp-stool.

"Then you are blind,—why I have been standing there for two minutes."

"Two minutes? then I believe that I must be blind," said I, turning so that I could see her better. She stood on my right.

"I expected to be challenged," said she; "I did not hear your qui vive."

Then she sat down on my camp-stool and gazed at my canvas with amazement.

I watched her in silence, proud of my work, happy that she should recognize it, for she knew good work every time. After a while I began to chafe at her silence, and I bent my head to see her face. I shall never forget the pained surprise in her eyes nor the quiver of her voice as she said:

"Bobby, this is childish, what on earth do you mean by such work?"

The blow had fallen. At first I was stunned. Then terror seized me, and I grasped a low swinging branch to steady myself, for I felt as though I were falling.

"Bobby," she cried, "you are white—are you ill?"

"No," said I, "that sketch was only a joke,—to tease you."

"It is a very stupid joke," she said coldly; "I

cannot understand how an artist could bring himself to do such a thing."

"It was a poor joke," said I, red as fire, "pardon me, Ysonde, I don't know what possessed me to paint like that."

She picked up my paint rag and swept it across the face of my canvas; then turning to me:

"Now you are forgiven; come and talk to me, Bobby."

The sun climbed to the zenith and still we sat there, she with her round white chin on her wrist, I at her feet.

Billy, who had descended from his perch in the chestnut tree as soon as he heard Ysonde's voice, rambled about us, snuffling and snooping into every tuft of fern, one evil eye fixed on us, one on the red squirrel who chattered and twitched his brush, and rushed up and down a big oak tree in a delirium of temper.

"No," replied Ysonde to my question, "Mr. Blylock did not fish; he talked to Lynda most of the time. I came here because I had an intuition that you were going to paint."

"But," said I, "how did you know I was coming here? I never before painted in this glade."

"I don't know how I knew it," said Ysonde, slowly.

"Witchcraft?" I asked.

"Possibly," she said, with an almost imperceptible frown.

"I have noticed already," I said, "that you

have a mysterious faculty for reading my thoughts and divining my intentions. Are you aware of it?"

"No," she said shortly.

"But you have," I persisted.

"You flatter yourself, Bobby. I am not thinking of you every minute."

"Suppose," said I, after a moment's silence, "that you loved me——"

"I shall not suppose so," she answered haughtily.

"Let us suppose, then," said I, "that I love you——"

"Really, Bobby, you are more than tiresome."

I thought for a while in silence. The wood-thrush, who had come quite close to Ysonde—all wild creatures loved her—began to sing. The baby rabbit sat up to listen and wriggle its nose, and the speckled gnats danced giddily.

"Suppose," said I, with something in my voice that silenced her, "suppose that you loved me, and that I had lost my eye. Would you still love me?"

"Yes," said Ysonde, with an effort.

"And suppose," I continued, "I had been born with an eye blind; could you have loved such a man?"

"I do not think I could," she answered truthfully.

"Probably not," I repeated, biting the stem of a wild strawberry. After a moment I looked up

into the sky. The hawk was not there; but I was not looking for the hawk.

"Come," said I, rising, "dinner must be ready and your aunt should not be kept waiting."

I gathered up my sketching kit, tenderly perhaps, for I should never use it again, and whistled Billy to heel,—which he did when he chose.

Perhaps it was something in my face—I don't know—but Ysonde suddenly came up to me and took both my hands.

"Are you going to be sensible, Bobby?" she asked. Her face was very serious.

"Yes, Ysonde," I said.

But she did not seem satisfied—there came a faint glow on her face—it may have been a sunbeam—and she dropped my hands and whistled to Billy.

"Come!" she cried, with a tinge of anger in her voice that I had never before heard,—"heel, Billy!"

But as Billy lingered, sniffing and rooting among the ferns, she picked up a twig and struck Billy on the nose. The blow was gentle—it would not have hurt a mosquito—but I was astounded, for it was the first time I had ever seen her lift her hand in anger to any living creature. Perplexed and wondering I followed her through the forest, my locked colour-box creaking on my shoulder.

IV.

"TO him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath," said I, knocking my pipe against the verandah railing.

"Scripture," said Blylock, approvingly.

"For this is the law and the prophets," I continued, grateful that the Bible had received Boston's approval.

"Scripture," repeated Blylock, with the smile of a publisher mentioning the work of a very young author.

"Exactly," I replied, "also the Koran; I forget whether Tupper mentions it."

"Probably," said Blylock seriously.

"Probably," I repeated, inserting a straw in the stem of my pipe. Ysonde frowned at me. "Blylock," I continued, smiling at nothing, "have you read Emerson?"

"Heavens!" murmured Blylock under his breath.

I had aroused him. I made it a point to stir him up once every day, satisfied to allow him to relapse into his normal Beacon Street trance afterward.

"Your scriptural quotation," said Ysonde, with a dangerous light in her eyes, "would indicate that you have suffered a loss."

"From him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath," I repeated; "yes, having nothing, I have lost all I have, which," I continued, "is of course nothing. But I am encroaching on Brook Farm,—and the Koran——"

"And on the patience of your friends," said Ysonde; "don't try to be epigrammatic, Bobby."

There was a glass of water standing on a table to my right. I did not see it, my right eye being sightless, and I knocked it over. I was confused and startled at this—it brought back to me my misfortune so cruelly that I apologized more than was necessary, and received a puzzled stare from Ysonde. I noted it and chafed helplessly. Lynda Sutherland came out on the porch, and I rose and brought her a chair.

"The moonlight reminds me of Venice," said Lynda, turning her lovely face to the moon.

We all agreed with her, although we knew it was nonsense, for we all had lived in Venice. If she had said it reminded her of peach ice-cream, we would have agreed. She was too beautiful for one to analyze what she said—she was too beautiful to analyze it herself. I remembered with a shock that the late lamented had once referred to his wife's being "d——nd ornamental," and I was glad the panther had clawed his besotted soul from his body. But Sutherland had never said a

[illegible] thing in his life; drunkard that he was, he [illegible] spoke the truth.

"Lynda," cooed Ysonde, "do you think that we might camp for a few days with Bobby and Mr. Blylock? They are going to the Black Water to-morrow and Mr. Blylock asked us."

"We take two guides," added Blylock, vaguely.

"We will only stay three days," said I.

"We [illegible] supper," suggested Blylock.

"And [illegible] for breakfast," said I.

"I [illegible]," pleaded Ysonde.

Blylock [illegible], and I saw Lynda look at him.

"Is there any danger?" she asked.

I was [illegible] the question was not addressed to me.

"I think not," said Blylock turning around, "I carry a rifle."

"Three [illegible] Hill," I said, "there is nothing to shoot—"

"Except [illegible]," observed Blylock dryly.

At this [illegible] I expected to hear Lynda refuse to go. She did not, although she looked at Blylock a little [illegible]fully. He, serenely unconscious, examined his seal ring in silence. Possibly Lynda [illegible] believe that panthers ranged so near the [illegible]; perhaps she was not un-

thers ranging between the Gilded Dome and Crested Hawk. Sometimes they get as far as Noon Peak and the White Lady, sometimes even as far as Lynx Peak, but I never heard of anything bigger than a lynx being seen near the Black Water."

"I have been in these forests every summer and autumn for twenty years," said Blylock, "and I never saw either panther or lynx; have you?" he ended, turning toward me. Then, recollecting that I had witnessed the mauling of the late lamented, he turned rosy, and I was pleased to see that he was capable of experiencing two whole emotions in one evening.

I did not answer—it was not necessary, of course. I could show him the panther skin in my studio some day when I wanted to take a rise out of him. It measured nine feet from tip to tip—it might have measured more had the panther had time to nourish himself with Sutherland.

Now Ysonde must have read what was passing in my mind, for she looked shocked and nestled closer to Lynda.

"What is a lynx," demanded Lynda, shivering.

"There are two species found here," replied Blylock, glad to change the subject, "one the big grey Canada lynx, the other the short-tailed American lynx——"

"Otherwise Bob-cat, Lucivee, and wild-cat," I interposed; "they make a horrid noise in the woods and are harmless."

"If you let them alone," added Blylock, conscientious to the end.

"Which we will," said Ysonde, gaily, "we are going, are we not, Lynda?"

"No," said Lynda, firmly.

But the next morning when the first sunbeams scattered the mist which clung to copse and meadow, and sent it rolling up the flanks of the Gilded Dome, Lynda said, "Yes," and possibly her pretty mountain costume tipped the balance in Ysonde's favour, for Lynda looked like a fin-de-siècle Diana in that frock and she knew it, bless her fair face!

The guides, Jimmy Ellis and Buck Hanson, were tightening straps and rolling blankets on the lawn outside.

"Buck," said I, "how many pounds do you take in?"

"Fifty, sir," drawled Buck, wiping the sweat from his face with the back of his hand.

"And you, Jimmy?" I asked.

"Abaout forty, sir," replied Ellis, seriously.

"I cal'late," added Buck, "the ladies will want extry blankets."

"They will," I replied, "the wind is hauling around to the northwest." Then I took a step nearer and dropped my voice.

"Any panthers seen lately, Jimmy?"

"I hain't seed none," replied Ellis.

"What was it killed the white heifer two weeks ago?"

"Waal," replied Jimmy reflecting a little, "I cal'late t 'war a cat."

"It maught be a b'ar," said Buck, "I seed one daown to Drake's clearin' last week come Sabbath."

"Sho!" drawled Ellis, returning to his blankets.

"I understand," said I, "that Ezra Field found a thirty-pound trap missing last week."

"Whar?" asked Hanson.

"Back of the gum-camp on Swift River," I replied.

Ellis looked cynical and Hanson laughed, the silent confiding laughter of the honest.

"Ezry was scairt haf tu deth by a Bob-cat, onct, into Swift River Forks," said Ellis; "he sees things whar there hain't nawthin'."

"Do you think," said I, after a long pull at my pipe, "that panthers ever attack? I mean, when you let their cubs alone."

"Hain't never seed no panther," replied Buck.

"You saw Mr. Sutherland when he was brought in three years ago."

"Yes sir—you and Cy Holman toted him in."

"Well, you saw the panther we brought in also, did n't you?"

"Yes sir,—but that was a daid panther," replied Buck, prosaically.

I laughed and walked toward the piazza.

"All I want to know is whether you fellows have heard that these creatures are bothering

honest people who mind their business,'' I said over my shoulder; and both the big guides laughed, and answered "No fear o' that sir!"

Half an hour later we were on the trail to the Black Water.

The morning was perfect, the air keen as September breezes on the moors, and the mottled sunlight spotted our broad trail which twisted and curved through the tangled underbrush along the bank of a mountain stream.

Blylock and Ysonde were well ahead, the latter swinging a light steelshod mountain stick; next came Lynda, beautiful and serene, approving the beauty of the forest in pleased little platitudes. I followed close behind, silent, spellbound by the splendour of the forest, charmed by the soft notes of the nesting thrushes and the softer babble of Lynda and the brook.

Broad dewy leaves slapped our faces, filmy floating spiders' meshes crossed our chins and cheeks and tickled Ysonde's pretty nose."

"You may walk ahead," she said to Blylock, "and break the spiders' webs for me."

"With pleasure," said Blylock, seriously, and I saw him take the lead, his single eyeglass gleaming in the sunshine.

"It is written," said I, flippantly, "that the first shall be last, and the last shall be first;—I believe that I should take the lead."

"Please do," said Ysonde, coolly, "it is your proper place."

Now Ysonde had never before said anything to me quite as sharp as that, although doubtless I had often invited it.

"Do you want me to go?" I asked inanely.

"If you care to clear the path, I would not object," said Ysonde.

"For you and Lynda," said I, feeling that I was speaking regardless of either sound or sense.

"——And for Mr. Blylock," added Ysonde, quietly.

"With pleasure," said I, vaguely wishing my tongue might stop wagging before I said something hopelessly foolish, "I shall clear the way for you—and Mr. Blylock."

I had said it; even Lynda raised her lovely eyes to me in disapproval. As for Ysonde, her face wore that pained expression that I dreaded to see—I had never seen it before but once—in the glade—and I felt that my proper place was among the wits of a country store. A boor in the kitchen of the Rosebud Inn would have had more instinctive tact—unless he was jealous!—that is the word!—I was jealous—vulgarly jealous of Blylock. Perhaps Ysonde read the shame in my face, perhaps she had divined my thoughts as she did when she chose, but she saw I was miserable, disgusted with myself, and she raised me to her own level with a smile so sweet and chivalrous that I felt there was manhood left in me yet.

"Bobby," she said, "you promised to show me how to blaze a trail. Have you forgotten?"

I dropped out of the path to the right, she to the left; Lynda passed us to join Blylock who was waiting, the two big guides tramped by, their boots creaking on the trodden leaves. I drew the light hatchet from my belt, removed the leather blade-cover, and started on.

"This is all it is," I said, and struck a light shaving from the bark of a hemlock, cutting it at the base with the next stroke so that the bit of bark fell, leaving a white scar on the tree trunk.

"Always on both sides," said I, repeating the stroke on the other side of the tree. "Will you try it, Ysonde?"

She took the hatchet in her small gloved hand, and the chips flew along the trail until I begged her to spare the forest.

"But the trees don't die!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Bobby, you 're joking; am I overdoing it?"

"A little," said I, "a blind man could follow this forest boulevard."

"You are blind," she said, calmly.

"Blind?" I cried with a start.

"——To your own interests, Bobby. Aunt Lynda likes you, but she does n't like to hear you speak flippantly. If you destroy her trust in you, she will not let us walk together when we please."

We moved on in silence for a while, until Ysonde, tired of blazing, handed me the hatchet.

"Yes," said I, "I am blind—I cannot lead you—on any trail."

"Nor I you," she said simply.

I did not reply, for who but I should know that through the fragrant forest, bathed in sun and dew, the blind led on the blind.

"You have formed a habit," said Ysonde, "of muttering to yourself. Are you afraid to have me know your thoughts?"

"Yes," said I, turning, "I am afraid."

She did not answer, but I saw her colour deepen, and I feared that I had spoken bitterly.

"I was thinking that I had forgotten my flask," I continued gaily.

"Mr. Blylock has your flask—you were not thinking of that," said Ysonde.

"Well," said I, "then tell me of what I was thinking; you know you can read my thoughts—when you take the trouble," I added prudently.

"Bobby," said Ysonde, "I would take more trouble for your sake than you dream of."

I stopped short in the trail and faced her, but she passed me impatiently. I saw her bite her lips as she always did when annoyed.

The chestnut, oak, and dappled beech-woods were giving place to pines and hemlocks as we wheeled from the Gilded Dome trail into the narrower trail that leads over the long divide to the Black Water. Along the rushing stream alder and hazel waved, silver birches gleamed deep-set in tangled depths, and poplars rose along the water's edge, quivering as the breezes freshened, every glistening leaf a-tremble.

Under foot, brown pine-needles spread a polished matting over the forest mould, for we had entered the pine belt and the long trail had just begun.

The breeze in the pines ! it will always make me think of Ysonde. Wild wind-swept harmonies swelling from the windy ridge, the whisper and sigh and rush of water, the grey ledges, the deep sweep of precipices where lonely rivers glimmer, lost in the sea of trees,—these I remember as I think of Ysonde, these and more too,—the dome of green, the fragments of sky between mixed branches, the silence, broken by a single birdnote.

* * * * * *

The trail crossed a sunny glade, mossy and moist, bordered by black birch thickets and carpeted with winter-green. Ysonde leaned upon her steel-shod staff and looked at her own reflection in the placid spring pool, shining among the ferns.

"I am very much tanned," she said.

"Are you thirsty," I asked.

"There is a little freckle beside my nose," observed Ysonde.

"It is becoming," I said truthfully.

"Yes, I am thirsty," said Ysonde, "—what do you know about freckles ?"

I handed her a cup of water; she drank a little, looked over the rim of the cup reflectively, drank a little more, sighed, smiled, and poured what was left of the water upon the moss.

" A libation to the gods," she explained.

" To which ? " I asked.

" Ah, she said ; I had not thought of that. Well, then, to—to—"

I looked at her and she tossed the cup to me saying, " I shall not tell you. I am getting into the habit of telling you everything."

" But—but the gentleman's name ? " I urged.

" No, no ! Goodness ! may I not have a secret, all my own ? "

" Very well," said I, " you pour out libations to a gentleman god and I shall even up matters. Here 's to the lady ! "

" Minerva, of course. You are so wise," suggested Ysonde.

" It 's neither to Minerva nor to the owl," said I, " it 's to the Lady Aphrodite."

" Pooh ! " said Ysonde, " you are not clever ; Hermes might——"

" Might what ? "

" Be careful, Bobby, your sleeve is getting wet——"

" Might what ? "

" Now how should I know," exclaimed Ysonde, " mercy, I 'm not a little Greek maiden ! "

I strapped the cup to my belt, tightened the buckle of my rod-case, lighted my pipe, and sat down on a log.

" Well, Master Bobby," said Ysonde in that bantering voice which she used when perfectly happy.

"Well, Mistress Ysonde," said I.

"Are you going to lose the others?"

I pointed to the foot of the long slope, where, among the tree trunks, something blue fluttered.

"It 's Lynda's veil," said Ysonde, "and there is Mr. Blylock, also; they are sitting down."

"True," said I, "let us rest also. We have been hours on the trail. Here is a dry spot on this log."

Ysonde sat down. Now whenever Ysonde seated herself there was something in the pose of her figure that made me think of courts and kings and coronations. The little ceremony of seating herself ended, I resumed my seat also, feeling it a privilege accorded only to the very great. I told her this and she pretended to agree with me.

"You must be something at court," she said, "you cannot be an earl, for earls are blond and slender; you cannot be a count, for counts are dark and dapper; nor a duke, for dukes are big and always red in the face; you might be a baron —no, they are fierce and merciless——"

"So am I."

"No you 're not. You can't be a marquis either, for they are plausible and treacherous——"

"Then I 'll be a Master of 'Ounds," I insisted, "let the title go by the board."

She agreed, and I was installed Master of Staghounds to her petite Majesty—this position permitting me to sit occasionally in her presence.

"I am thirsty again," said Ysonde.

I brought her a cup of ice-cold water into which I dropped a dozen wild strawberries. She touched a berry with the tip of her pink tongue, which was bad manners, and I told her so.

"What do you know about Queen's etiquette?" she said disdainfully, and, finding the berries ripe, she ate three and smiled at me.

A thrush came fearlessly to her very feet and drank from the spring; a mottled wood-toad made futile efforts to clamber up the log into her lap, and two red lizards peeped at her from a cleft in the boulder beside us.

"It 's queer," said I, watching the scrambling toad, "how you seem to fascinate all wild creatures. Shall I poke the toad away?"

"No, I am not afraid; I am very glad they all come to me."

"You were possibly a dryad once," I hazarded.

"Possibly. And you?"

"Probably the oak tree that sheltered you."

"Sheltered me?"

There is something in the note of a very young bird that I have noticed in Ysonde's voice, but now, as she laughed—oh, such soft, sweet laughter,—it seemed to me as though the bird had grown, and its note trembled with purer, truer melody.

"Sheltered me! I imagine it!" she said, with a wonderful sweetness in her eyes. "Hark! Mr. Blylock is calling!"

She rose with capricious grace as I answered

Blylock in a view-halloo which awoke the echoes among the cliffs above us.

When we came up to them Lynda linked her arm in Ysonde's, and Blylock and I pushed ahead after the plodding guides.

Blylock and I discussed trout-flies and casts and philosophy with an occasional question to the guides, and as we moved I could hear the light laughter of Lynda and the clear voice of Ysonde singing old songs that were made in France when hawk's-bells tinkled in castle courts and tasselled palfreys pawed the drawbridge.

It was noon when we entered the Scaur Valley, and luncheon was grateful; but before the leading guide entered the spotted trail which swings to the west above the third spur of Crested Hawk, the sun had dropped into the notch between Mount Eternity and the White Lady, and the alpen-glow crimsoned every peak as we threw down our packs and looked out across the Black Water. "Here," said I, "our journey ends; Princess Ysonde,"—I took her gloved hand,—"be seated, for below you lies the Black Water—yours by right of conquest."

"I cal'late 't 'l be right cold to-night, Ma'am," said Buck Hanson.

"Yes," said Ysonde listlessly.

V.

NIGHT fell over the Black Water before the shelter was raised, but the great camp-fire lighted up the cleared space among the trees, and I saw Ellis staggering in under loads of freshly-stripped bark for our roof. Buck Hanson finished thatching the exposed ends with hemlock and spruce. The partition, a broad sheet of heavy bark, separated the lean-to into two sections, one for Lynda and Ysonde, the other for Blylock, myself, and the guides.

I had roamed about the underbrush, lopping off balsam twigs for our bedding which Blylock brought in and spread over the pine-needle floor.

When Ellis finished roofing the hut with his thick rolls of bark I sent him to the spring below with the camp kettle, and picking up an axe, called to Buck to follow.

"I should very much like," said Blylock solemnly, "to chop a tree into sections adequate for the camp fire."

"Take the axe and my blessing," said I, "I hate to chop."

"It 's very good of you," said Blylock, follow-

ing Buck into the forest where our firelight glimmered red on rugged trunks towering into the blackness above.

Ysonde came creeping out of her compartment, her eyes and cheeks brilliant in the fire's glare.

"Lynda is lying down," she said, "is n't supper nearly ready? How delicious our bed of balsam smells; what are you doing with your trout rod?"

I knotted the nine-foot leader to the line, slipped on an orange miller for a dropper, tied a big coachman three feet above it, and picked up my landing-net.

"What is home without a dinner?" I asked, "and what is dinner without a trout? Come down to that rock which hangs over the Black Water, and you shall see your future dinner leaping in the moonlight."

"Bobby the poet," said Ysonde, steadying herself by my arm in the dark descent to the lake. "Poet Bobby, there is no moon on the Black Water."

"Look," said I, pointing to a pale light in the sky above the White Lady, "the moon will come up over that peak in ten minutes; give me your hand, it 's very dark."

Clinging closely to my arm, she moved through the undergrowth until we felt the firm flat rock under our feet. The rock ran straight out into the water at right angles from the shore like a pier.

"Be careful—oh, be careful," she urged, "you almost walked off into the water there where the shadows lie so black."

"Then hold me," said I diplomatically, and I felt her warm hands close tightly on my left arm.

The moon peeped over the shoulder of the White Lady as I made my first cast into the darkness ahead, and I saw my leader strike the water, now placidly rocking like a lake of molten silver.

"Oh-h!" cried Ysonde, softly, "oh, the wondrous beauty of it all."

In the silence I heard the thwack of an axe from the woods above and Blylock's voice quite plainly. The water lapped the edges of the rock below us, catching thin gleams from the shining sheet beyond, and my silk line whistled and whimpered like a keen wind lashing the sea.

Then a wonderful thing occurred. Out of the depths of the burnished water a slim shape shot, showering the black night with spray. Splash! A million little wavelets hurried away into the darkness, crowding, sparkling, dancing in widening circles, while the harsh whirr of the reel rang in my ears, and the silk line melted away like a thread of smoke. The rod staggered in my hand.

"Ysonde, there are two on now!" I whispered.

"Give me the rod!" she said, excitedly. I handed it to her, and for a moment she felt the splendid strain. Then the fish gave a deep surge

to the west, and she gasped and pushed the rod into my hands.

"Living wild things struggling for life," she sighed. "Oh, hurry, Bobby,—it pains me so!" and she pressed both hands to her breast.

For a second the joy of the battle left me. I had an impulse to fling the rod into the Black Water; but I am a hunter by instinct.

Deeper and deeper surged the fish, and the rod swayed and bent until the tip brushed my knuckles.

"Oh, kill the creatures," murmured Ysonde, "it is all so fierce and cruel,—I never thought you were like that!"

"I am," I muttered, checking a savage sweep toward the north,—"quick, Ysonde—pass me my net."

She did so, and I crawled down to the water's edge, shortening my line at every step. It was soon over; I washed my hands in the black water, and flung the fish back into the landing-net.

"Now," said I, tossing rod and net over my shoulder, "we will go to dinner; lean on my shoulder;—how brutal you must think me, Ysonde."

"Yes," said Ysonde.

She passed me—perhaps it was the moonlight that whitened her cheeks—and I saw her enter the circle of red firelight as Lynda came forward to meet her.

"Hello, Ellis!" I called.

"Hallo, sir!" came back from the spring among the rocks below, and Jimmy Ellis appeared, carrying a chunk of pork.

"Two," I said, turning the trout out of the landing-net.

"Good fish, sir," drawled Ellis, "mor'n 'nuff for dinner, I suspicion."

"Split them," said I, "broil both as only you can broil them. Spring all right?"

"Sweet an' full. Dinner is ready above."

Blylock came down with a blazing pine knot to inspect the fish, and I heard him rigging his rod ten minutes later as I walked into camp and sat down, glowing from a dip in the tin bucket below.

Lynda and Ysonde were nibbling away at broiled trout, hot toast, and potted pheasant.

"Dear me," said Lynda, "I really must not eat like this, I have had three cups of bouillon to begin with. Ysonde says you are the cleverest angler in the world."

"That, of course," said Ysonde, "may be an exaggeration, for I have seen very few anglers."

"Oh, you 're not exaggerating one bit," I assured her. "Is there any toast over there?"

Lynda deigned to serve me with hot bouillon and Ysonde tossed a slice of toast to me, scandalizing her aunt.

"You little savage," said Lynda, reproachfully.

"Any trout left?" I asked. "Where is Mr. Blylock?"

"Here 's the trout," smiled Ysonde, serving me a bit of the crisp pink fish. "Mr. Blylock said 'ha!' several times when he saw your two trout and went down to the rock flourishing his rod very recklessly."

"Mr. Blylock never flourishes anything," observed Lynda.

"No, he waved it as Merlin might have waved——"

"Why, Ysonde!" said Lynda, warmly.

I was discreet enough to finish my toast in silence; I was very happy.

"Now, Sir Fisherman," said Ysonde, "a cup of this white wine with your trout? What! a whole bottle? Oh, Lynda, look at him!"

"I see him," said Lynda, sleepily, "I wonder what time it is."

Buck and Jimmy, having finished their dinner, which included a trout between them and a gallon or so of coffee, piled half a dozen logs on the fire, backed them with half a tree trunk, said good-night very politely, and ambled away with the dishes and a pail of boiling water. Ten minutes later Blylock came in with three fair-sized fish, which Lynda admired and I encored, and then Lynda and Ysonde rose with deep reverences, and mockingly prayed to be allowed to retire.

Buck and Jimmy were already sound asleep.

"If they snore," said I, "there will be murder done on Black Water shore."

Blylock lighted a cigar and I my pipe.

"I never sleep well in camp the first night," said I.

"No?" asked Blylock, politely.

"No, you old jay," said I, for I was becoming very fond of Blylock. That broke the back of Beacon Street for the moment, and Blylock blossomed out as a story-teller without equal. I laughed till it hurt me, softly, of course, and still Blylock, imperturbable, bland, told story after story, until I marvelled, between my spasms of laughter, at the make-up of this Bostonian. At last he went to bed, mildly suggesting that I follow his example, which I did after I finished my pipe, although I knew I should sleep but little.

About ten o'clock Buck Hanson snored. I leaned over Blylock, already fast asleep, and poked the wretched Buck until he stopped. Ten minutes later Ellis began a solo which I have never since heard equalled.

"Great heavens!" I muttered, and jabbed him viciously with my rod-butt, but Jimmy Ellis did n't wake, and before I knew it, Buck Hanson, taking a mean advantage, chimed in with a snort that would have done credit to a rogue elephant. This was not all. I dread to record it, but I am trying to tell the truth in this story—I pray the lady to pardon me if I suggest that from the other side of the bark partition came a sound,—delicate, discreet, but continuous, in short, a gentle—no! no! I can never bring myself to

write it down. I am no brute, Madam—and, after all, only men snore.

A black fly got into my neck and bothered me; later a midge followed the example of his erring colleague. To slay them both was my intention, and in doing so I awoke Blylock, who sleepily protested. This was exasperating, and I told him so, but he was asleep again before I finished. Why on earth I should never be able to sleep more than an hour or so on my first night in camp,—I who have camped in the forest for years, —I never can understand.

I endured the concerted snores of the whole camp as long as I could, then I crawled to the fire outside, hauled two fresh logs into the blaze, swathed myself in my blankets, lighted a fresh pipe, and sat down with my feet to the heat and my back against a sapling.

Outside the wavering ring of firelight the blackness was so profound, so hoplessly impenetrable that I wondered whether a storm was rolling up behind the Scaur. Trees, brush, rocks, and ledges —the whole huge forest, root and branch, seemed woven together into curtains of utter darkness which wavered, advanced, and receded with the ever dying, ever leaping flames. There was no storm, for I saw stars on the strip of darkness above—little pale stars, timidly glimmering in the depths of a vast vault. The moon had long ago passed behind the Scaur — that sullen mass of menacing ledges, blackening the fathomless

stretch of the Black Water. There were noises in the forest, stealthy steps and timid scratchings —now faint, as if across the rocking lake, now nearer, now so sudden and sharp that I involuntarily leaned forward, striving to pierce the outer circle of gloom beyond the fire ring. Once something brushed and rustled among the leaves behind me, and I saw a grey snake glide into the warm glow by my feet.

"Get out," I whispered, with a gesture of annoyance.

The serpent slowly raised its head, flashed a forked tongue at me, swayed a moment, then noiselessly moved on into the night.

"Salut! O mon Roi!" said a low voice behind me, and Ysonde crept out of her fragrant bed of balsam, and curled up in her blanket at my feet.

"Oh, dear," she sighed, "I am so sleepy, but I can't sleep. Why is it, Bobby?—I have n't closed my eyes once."

"Then," said I, under my breath, "it was not you who——"

"Sh-h! Lynda might hear you."

"Not probable, judging from symptoms."

"You 're impertinent, Bobby—hark! do you hear? What was it?"

"Anything from a toad to a porcupine; the forest is always full of sounds. Are you warm, Ysonde?"

"Yes,—and so sleepy that—ah! what was that?"

"Anything from a wood-mouse to a weasel."

" I don't believe it."

" A fawn, perhaps—I heard deer among the pitcher-plants at the head of the Black Water a few minutes ago."

" Gentle things," murmured Ysonde, " I wish they would come close to me; I love them—I love everything."

" And everything on earth and sea loves you, Ysonde."

Her lids were drooping, and she smiled, half asleep.

" Bobby," she murmured, " I believe I could sleep here by you—you make me sleepy."

Her head drooped and rested on my blanket. After a moment—it may have been an hour—I whispered, bending above her : " Do you sleep, Ysonde ?" and again, " do you sleep ? "

The stars flickered and died in the heavens, the flames sank lower, lower, and the great black night crept into the camp, smothering the fading fire with pale shadows, vague and strange, moving, swaying, until my eyes closed and I slept.

Was it a second—was it an hour ? I sat bolt upright staring at the dying embers before me. A bit of charred log fell in with a soft crash sending a jet of sparks into the air, where they faded and went out. Went out ? There were two—two big green sparks that had not faded with the others, and I, half asleep, watched them, vaguely curious. Ah ! they are moving now—no, they are still again, close together.

The hair stirred on my head, my heart ceased, thumped once, stopped—it seemed hours,—and leaped into my throat, almost stifling me with its throbbing. I was not dreaming, for I felt the sweat trickling in my eyebrows, and the roots of my hair were cold and damp.

Ysonde moved in her slumber, frowned and raised her hand.

A low snarl came from the shadows. Slowly the power of thinking returned to me, but my eye never left those two green sparks, now blazing like lamps there in the darkness.

When would the thing spring? Would I have time to fling Ysonde behind me? Would it spring if I called to Blylock? Blylock had a rifle. Would it spring if I moved, or if Ysonde moved again? Gently, scarcely stirring, I tried to free my knees, and the creature snarled twice.

"It 's against all precedent in these woods," I thought, "for any of the cat tribe to dare attack a camp." A sudden anger took possession of me, a fury of impatience, and quick as the thought, I sprang among the embers and hurled a glowing branch straight into the creature's eyes. What happened after that I can scarcely tell; I know a heavy soft mass struck me senseless, but my ears at moments ring yet with that horrid scream which seemed to split and tear the night asunder, wavering, quavering, long after I was hurled on my back, and my eyes seemed stark open in oceans of blood.

VI.

WHEN I came to my senses it was still dark —or so it seemed to me. After a while I felt a hand shifting the bandage which pressed heavily over both eyes, and in a moment or two somebody raised me by the shoulders, somebody else by the knees, and I heard Blylock cock his rifle, and say: "Give me that torch, Buck, and walk faster."

"Blylock," I gasped, "they 're lugging me in as I lugged in Sutherland—mauled by a panther," and I laughed miserably.

"Hello!" said Blylock, in a low voice, "I thought you'd brace up; are you bleeding much?"

"I don't know," I muttered; "what, in hell 's the matter?"

"Matter!" repeated Blylock, "the forest has gone mad—it 's preposterous, but the woods are full of bob-cats, troops of 'em, and the skulking brutes have actually got the nerve to follow us."

"Can't I walk?" I groaned. "Where is Ysonde?"—for I was beginning to remember.

"Walk?—yes, if you want to bleed to death—

the ladies are here between me and the guides who are toting you."

"Ysonde," I murmured, "pardon me for my profanity—I am dazed—where are you?"

"Here, Bobby," whispered Ysonde—"close beside you; don't talk, dear, you are very much hurt."

"Are you speaking to me, Ysonde?" I said, doubting my senses.

"To you, Bobby," she whispered close to my ear, "did n't you know that I loved you? Ah, try to live and you will know!"

My strength was ebbing fast, but I think I muttered something that she understood, for the light touch of her hand was on my cheek, and I felt it tremble. Somebody gave me water,—I was choking,—and my burning lips shrank and cracked beneath the cool draught. I could hear Jimmy Ellis muttering to Buck Hanson, and Hanson's replies.

"Look out, Buck, here 's a rut,—Mr. Blylock, can you dip your pine knot this side?—so fashion, —steady, Buck."

"Steady, it is,—hold up his legs,—Mr. Blylock, throw a stun by that windfall,—there 's a lucivee sneakin' araound in behind——"

Crack! spoke Blylock's rifle, and then I heard Buck's nasal drawl: "A stun is jest 's good, Mr. Blylock, they 're scairt haf tu deth—I suspicion it 's the pork they 're after!"

"Throw that pork into the woods, Jimmy,"

said Blylock, "we'll be in before long. Good heavens! how dark it is—lay him down and throw that pork away—there may be a panther among them."

"There be," drawled Buck, "I seen him."

"You did? Why did n't you say so! I can't waste cartridges on those infernal lynxes."

"I sez to you, Mr. Blylock, sez I, throw stuns, it's jest as good," replied Buck, placidly; and I was lifted again, fore and aft.

"It's incredible," grumbled Blylock; "what's got into all these moth-eaten lynxes and mangy panthers; I've been twenty years in these woods, and I never before saw even a tom-cat."

"I ain't seed nothing like this,—there's three 'r four bob-cats raound us now, and I ha'n't never seed but one so close before,—Jimmy was there that night. I jest disremember if it was abaout gummin' time——"

Crack! went Blylock's rifle, and I heard a whine from the thickets on the left.

"Thet's the panther—let him hev it again," said Ellis.

Again the rifle cracked.

"The darned cuss!" drawled Buck; "shoot again, Mr. Blylock!"

"No need," said Ellis—"listen! There he goes lopin' off. Hear him snarl!"

"Hit, I guess," said Buck, and we moved on.

Once I heard Buck complain that a particularly bold lynx kept trotting along the trail behind,

"smellin' and sniffin' almighty close to my shins," he asserted, and there certainly was an awful yell when Blylock wheeled in his tracks and fired. I heard Ellis laughing, and Buck said, "haow them lucivees du screech!"

"Worse 'n a screech-owl," added Ellis.

That is the last thing I remembered until I woke in my bed in the Rosebud Inn.

The bandage was still on my eyes,—I felt too weak to raise a finger,—and the rest of my body seemed stiff and hard as wood. I heard somebody rocking in a rocking-chair and I spoke.

"I am here," said Ysonde,—but her voice seemed choked and unsteady.

"What time is it?" I asked, incoherently.

"Half past eleven," said Ysonde.

"I am hungry," said I, and that was my last effort until they brought me a bowl of beef broth with an egg in it, and I had managed to swallow it all.

I heard the door close, and for a moment I thought I was alone, but presently the rocking-chair creaked, and I called again: "Ysonde."

"I am here."

"What is the matter with me?"

"You have been ill."

"How long?"

"Two days, Bobby. You will get well—the claws poisoned you. Try to sleep now."

"What claws?"

"The—the panther's—don't you remember?"

"No—yes, a little. Where are the lynxes? Where is Blylock?"

Ysonde laughed softly.

"Mr. Blylock has gone to Boston on important business. I will tell you all about it when you can get up. He 's to be married."

"And Lynda?"

"Lynda is downstairs. Shall I call her?"

"No."

The next day I drank more broth, and two days later I sat up,— it took me half an hour and some groans to do so.

"I think," said I, listening to the rocking-chair, "that it is high time I saw something. Lift my bandage, please, Ysonde."

"Only one side," she said, and lowered the cloth that concealed my right eye—the sightless one.

There was a silence, a wretched moment of suspense, and then Ysonde cried: "What—what is it—can't you see—can't you see me!—Oh, Bobby!"

When I spoke I hardly knew what I said, but it was something about Keen's assuring me that nobody but an oculist could tell that I was blind in my right eye. I remember I felt very angry at Keen, and demanded to know how Ysonde could see that my right eye was sightless. I am glad I was spared the agony of her face—I would willingly have been spared the agony of her voice as she cried. "Did I do that?"

I tried to move, but her arms were about me,—I tried to explain, but her warm mouth closed my lips; I only thought that it was very pleasant to be blind.

The eyes of an oculist and the eyes of love see everything. Who says that love is blind?

Her tears fell on my cheeks; when she asked pardon, I answered by asking pardon, and she—but, after all, that is our own affair.

"And my left eye," said I, "is that gone, too?"

"Almost well," said Ysonde, "it was a sympathetic shock, or something; I was afraid the claws had struck it, but Dr. Keen——"

"Keen!"

"Yes—he 's gone to Holderness now. Don't you remember his being here with Dr. Conroy, the surgeon?"

"No," said I, "I was too badly mauled. I have been clawed by a panther, then?"

"A little," said Ysonde, with gentle sarcasm.

After a moment I inquired about the present health of the panther, and was assured that he was probably flourishing his tail in excellent spirits somewhere among the Scaur crags.

"Then Blylock did n't hit him?"

"He hit something, for I heard it scream—Oh, my darling, what a horrible night!—and you dying, as I believed, and the tangled brush, and the flare of the torch, and the firing"—

* * * * * *

"Are you thirsty?—your lips are burning," said Ysonde.

* * * * * *

I have a joke on Keen—James Keen, the great oculist, the wise, the infallible,—and I trust he will swallow his medicine like a little man when he reads this. It happened in this way.

I was sitting under the trees by the Tennis Court with Ysonde, watching the snow-birds fluttering in the meadow grass, and listening to the robin who, boldly balanced on the tip of his spruce tree, was doing his best. The blue-birds were teaching their young to navigate the air, twittering and tittering at the efforts of their youngsters, a truly frivolous family. The drab-coloured cow had also done her best, and the result was a miniature copy of herself, also an expert cud-chewer.

Billy—Ridiculous Billy, the white-whiskered and malicious, was spread in the low forks of an apple tree, a splendid representation of a disreputable door-mat.

Lynda sat at the bay-window in the Rosebud Inn, embroidering something in white and gold. She also succeeded in doing her best in her own line, which was to look more beautiful every day. I saw Blylock's shadow behind her.

"When are they to be married, Ysonde?" I asked for the fiftieth time.

"On the twenty-seventh,—oh, Bobby, it's shocking to keep forgetting—and we're to be best man and bride's maid, too!"

The sun dazzled my left eye, and I closed it for a second. Then a miraculous thing happened, an everlasting joke on Keen, for, although I had closed my sound eye, and, by rights, should have been blind as a bat, I was nothing of the kind.

"My right eye—Ysonde—I can see!—Do you understand? I can see!" I stammered.

Oh, it was glorious—glorious as the joyous wonder in Ysonde's eyes!—it was a miracle. I don't care what Keen says about it having happened before, or about it happening once in ten thousand cases, and I don't care a brass farthing for his subsequent observations concerning the optic nerve, and partial paralysis, and retinas, and things,—it was and must remain one of God's miracles, and that is enough for Ysonde and for me.

"We will go to the glade and repaint my picture which you erased," said I.

She understood and forgave me, for I hardly knew what I was saying.

"Come," she said—her eyes were wonderfully sweet, and bluer than the flowering flax around us.

So, with her hand in mine, we walked up the scented path to the Rosebud Inn, Billy lumbering along behind us, twitching his hoary whiskers.

IN THE NAME OF THE MOST HIGH.

" Il n'est pas nécessaire qu'il y ait de l'amour dans un livre pour nous charmer, mais il est nécessaire qu'il y ait beaucoup de tendresse."

J. JOUBERT.

IN THE NAME OF THE MOST HIGH.

I.

ON the third day toward noon the fire slackened; the smoke from the four batteries on the bluff across the north fork of the river slowly lifted, drifting to the east. The Texas riflemen kept up a pattering fusilade until one o'clock, then their bugles rang " Cease firing," and the echoes of the last sulky shot died out against the cliffs.

Keenan, crouching behind one of his hot guns, could see the Texas sharpshooters retiring to the bluff, little grey shadows in the scrub-oak thicket gliding, flitting like wild hedge-birds toward the nest of cannon above.

" Don't let 'em get away like that !" shouted Douglas, " give it to them in the name of God !"

And Keenan smiled, and sent the Texans a messenger in the name of God—a messenger

which fell thundering from the sky above them, crushing the face of the iron-stained cliff and the lives of those who had clustered there to breathe a little.

" Amen," said Keenan, patting his gun.

Douglas crawled out of a hole in the rocks and drew himself up to the edge of the breastworks. Cleymore emerged from a shallow rifle-pit and walked slowly along the intrenchments, motioning his men back into their burrows.

" Because," he said, " a hole in the hill is worth two in your head—get into that ditch, Morris !—Cunningham, if you don't duck that red head of yours, I 'll dock it ! "

" Captain Cleymore," said Douglas, lowering his field-glass, " two batteries have limbered up, and are trotting toward the cemetery——"

" May they trot into it, and stay there ! " said Keenan, examining the wreck of an ammunition chest in the ditch.

Cleymore studied the bluff with his marine glasses for a while, then called to Keenan: " How many guns have you now ? "

" Four," shouted Keenan from the ditch; " all my horses are shot except two mules——" A burst of laughter cut him short—his own tattered artillerymen, to their credit, did not smile, but Douglas and Kellogg laughed and rows of grinning faces emerged from holes and pits along the ditch until Cleymore shouted, " Down ! " and his infantry disappeared, chuckling. Keenan, red in the

face, turned to his battery-men who were running the guns forward, and put his own ragged shoulder to the wheel. Cleymore sat down on a stone and watched a lank artilleryman splicing the dented staff of the battery guidon.

"I guess that 'll dew, Capting," he drawled, holding the staff out to Cleymore, who took it and rubbed the polished wood with his sleeve.

"It will do, Pillsbury," he said, "where is O'Halloran?"

"Shot in the stummick," said the private, "and unable tew work."

"Dead?"

"I pre-sume likely he 's daid, sir," returned Pillsbury through his nose.

"I 've got a man for the guidon," called Keenan from the ditch, and a fat freckled cannoneer waddled forward and stood at attention.

"Look out!" sang out Douglas from his post on the breastworks, and "Down!" cried Cleymore, as a shell rose in the air over them and the boom of a gun rolled across the river from the bluff. The scream of the shell ceased; a white cloud shot with lightning appeared in the air above them, and a storm of shrapnel swept the breastworks. Cleymore sprang to his feet, but the fat cannoneer remained on the ground.

"Get up," said Cleymore, cautiously, "Pillsbury lift him; is he dead?"

"I guess," said Pillsbury, "he 's sufferin' from a hereditary disease."

"Eh? What disease?" snapped Cleymore, stepping forward.

"I guess it 's death," said Pillsbury, with an expressionless wink.

Cleymore stared at him through his eyeglasses, then turned on his heel.

"I wish," grumbled Keenan, "that the wounded would make less noise. Douglas, send them another bucket of water, will you? Is the surgeon dead?"

"Dying," said Kellogg,—"never mind, Douglas, I 'll see to the water; keep your glass on their batteries; what are they doing now?"

"Nothing," replied Douglas, "wait a bit—ah! here come their sharpshooters again!"

"To hell with them!" muttered Keenan savagely, for his battery-men had been cruelly scourged by the sharpshooters, and he almost foamed with rage when he looked over into the ditch at the foot of the mound. The odour from the ditch had become frightful.

"Look down there, Captain," he called to Cleymore, his voice trembling with passion, but Cleymore only nodded sadly. He was watching something else. A figure in the uniform of a staff-officer, filthy with grime and sweat, had crawled through what was left of the covered bridge across the South Fork, and was wriggling his way toward the débris of Keenan's battery. Cleymore watched him with puckered eyes.

"What do you want, sonny?" he asked, as

the staff officer crept past him,—"orders? Give 'em to me—keep to the ground, you fool," he added, as a flight of bullets swept overhead. The staff-officer lifted a flushed face, scratched and smeared with dust and sweat, and attempted a salute.

"Colonel Worth's compliments to Colonel Randal—" he began, but was interrupted by Cleymore: "Colonel Randal 's in the ditch below with most of his regiment piled on top of him. What are your orders?—hold on to the bridge till hell freezes?—I thought so,—I 'm Cleymore, Captain in the 10th New York Sharpshooters, yonder 's what 's left of us, and there 's two dozen of Colonel Randal's Rhode Islanders among 'em, too. Major Wilcox has got a hole in his face, and can't speak—you see what 's left of Keenan's battery—four guns, and few to serve 'em except my riflemen. Is n't General Hooker in sight?"

The staff-officer raised his blue eyes to the wreck of the battery, and then looked questioningly at Cleymore. The latter lay moodily twisting and untwisting the stained leather thong whipped about his sword hilt.

"I 'm ranking officer here," he said, "the rest are dead. My compliments to General Kempner, and tell him his orders shall be obeyed. Both bridges are mined. Murphy is watching for Longstreet—What are you shivering for?"

"Ague," said the staff-officer in a low voice.

Cleymore spat out a mouthful of dust that a

bullet had flung in his face, and wiped his glasses on his sleeve. "Who are you from, anyway?" he demanded. "I don't take orders from Colonel Worth."

"General Kempner is dead," said the staff-officer simply.

Keenan came up chewing a twig and whistling.

"Captain Cleymore," said the staff-officer, "my horse has been shot and Colonel Worth is waiting. Will you point out to me the quickest way back?"

"Back!" broke in Keenan, "you can't get back, my boy!"

"I must," said the youngster, without glancing at the artillery officer.

"Oh, if it 's a case of must," said Cleymore indifferently, "come ahead," and he rose to his knees and peered across the swollen South Fork, now a vast torrent of mud.

Crack! Crack! rang the rifles from the opposite shore, and the little staff-officer's cap was jerked from his head and rolled down the embankment into the river. Keenan cursed.

"Come on, sonny," said Cleymore, scrambling down the embankment to the ditch. The ditch was choked with mangled bodies in blue, flung one over the other amid smashed gun-wheels, caissons, knapsacks, and rifles; and the staff-officer hesitated for an instant at the brink.

"Jump!" called Cleymore, "here! Get down behind this rock and keep your nose out of sight;

those Texas gentlemen waste few bullets; are you hit?"

"No," said the little staff-officer.

"Bull luck; did you see Randal's men? The shells did it—look there."

He pointed the length of the ditch. The staff-officer turned pale. Everywhere corpses,—mere heaps of blue rags, stained yellow by dust and black with stiff blood, everywhere dented canteens, twisted muskets, unsavory scattered clothing, worn shoes, and shrunken blue caps. A big black horse, bloated and dusty lay with both hind legs stark in the air; under him were dead men, mostly Keenan's, by the red stripes on the faded trousers.

Cleymore pulled his short blond moustache and turned to the staff-officer.

"You see that slaughter pen," he said; "tell Colonel Worth."

The staff-officer felt for his cap, remembered it had been shot off his head, and looked gravely at Cleymore.

"I have four guns and two hundred and twenty odd men," said the latter; "if they bring back their batteries, an hour or two will see us all in the ditch below with Randal; if they don't we can hold on to the South Fork bridge I fancy. Do you know why they withdrew their batteries?"

"No,—unless it was to shell Colonel Worth's cavalry. His men are in the woods behind the railroad. If you can hold the bridge until night

they will keep the line open. Colonel Worth is waiting. I must go back now, Captain."

Cleymore leaned along the edge of the protecting ledge and handed his field-glasses to the boy.

"Now," he said, "you can see the bend in the river. There are three pines on the bank above —see?"

"Yes."

"Take the foot-path by those pines until you come to a burnt barn. Follow the river after that and if the iron bridge is n't blown up yet you can get across; if it is blown up you can't join Colonel Worth."

"But—a—a boat——"

"A boat in that?"

They looked at the foaming torrent, thundering among the rocks. After a moment the staff-officer pointed to the shot-torn bridge below them.

"Oh," said Cleymore, "you came that way, did n't you? Well, miracles happen, and that was one of them, but if you try to get back that way, the performance won't be encored, and you can bet your curly head on that, my son."

"It 's the shortest way," said the little staff-officer.

"Yes, the shortest way to Kingdom come," said Cleymore, disgusted; "if you 're not shot, the Texans will catch you."

They were crouching on the hot dried grass, side by side. The sweat poured down Cleymore's forehead washing the powder grime into thick

patches over his young face. He threw his blackened jacket open at the throat, rubbed his forehead with his sleeve and said, "Whew!"

"It 's the shortest way," repeated the other, rising to his knees.

"You can't go," said Cleymore, sharply, "the bridge is mined and Murphy may blow it up any moment."

The youth handed back the field-glass with a smile. For a moment their eyes met, then Cleymore's flushed face turned a bright crimson and he caught his breath, murmuring "I 'm blest!"

"Captain Cleymore," said the staff-officer coolly, "you are detaining me from my duty. Have I your permission to leave?"

They eyed each other steadily.

"You must not go," said Cleymore in a curious, husky voice, "let me send a man——"

"Have I your leave?"

"Come back," cried Cleymore, "I won't give it!"—but the youngster sprang to his feet, touched his curly head in quick salute, and started on a run toward the covered bridge, holding his sabre close to his thigh.

"Drop!" shouted Cleymore, and began to swear under his breath, but the youngster ran on, and to Cleymore's amazement, the rifles of the fierce Texans on the other side of the river were silent.

On and still on ran the boy, until, with a sigh of astonishment and relief, Cleymore saw him

push in among the handful of blue-clad engineers at the end of the bridge; but he went no further, for they stopped him with levelled bayonets, shaking their heads and gesticulating, and suddenly Cleymore noticed that the bridge was afire at the further end.

"Murphy 's fired the bridge!" he called out to Kellogg on the plateau above.

Kellogg's head appeared over a shattered gun limber. "Then Longstreet 's coming, you bet!"

"I suppose so, can't you see anything? Call Douglas."

The Texas rifles cracked again. Kellogg did not answer. "Can't you see any movement near the woods?" demanded Cleymore from his rock. Then he looked carefully at Kellogg's head, appearing to rest between two bits of sod, and he saw, in the middle of the forehead, a round dark spot from which a darker line crept slowly down over the nose.

After a second or two he turned from the dead eyes staring fixedly at him, and looked across the river where the rifles were spitting death. The round white blotches of smoke hung along the river bank like shreds of cotton floating. Then he glanced toward the bridge again. There was a commotion there; a group of excited soldiers around a slender figure, bareheaded, gesticulating.

"What 's that hop o' my thumb up to now?" he muttered excitedly, and raised his field-glass.

"By Jingo! Trying to cross the bridge, and it 's afire!"

For a moment he knelt, his eye glued to the field-glasses, then with an angry exclamation he turned toward the floating rifle-smoke along the opposite bank. The chances were that he 'd be hit, and he knew it, but he only muttered pettishly; "Young fool," and started, stooping low, toward the swaying knot of men at the bridge.

The chances were ten to one that he 'd be hit, and he was, but he only straightened up and ran on. The minié-balls came whining about his head, the blood ran down into his boot, and filled it so that he slopped as he ran. And after all he was too late, for, as he panted up to the bridge, far down the covered way he saw the youngster speeding over the smoking rafters.

"Stop him!" he gasped.

A soldier raised his rifle, but Cleymore jerked it down.

"Not that way," he said, leaning back on his sword.

Along the dry timbered tunnel crept the boy, for the fire was all about him now. Once he fell but rose again.

"Has the mine been fired—the powder trail?" asked Cleymore, in a dull voice.

A soldier nodded and opened his mouth to speak, but a deafening roar drowned his voice and gave Cleymore his answer.

"Is that all?" asked Cleymore again, as the

smoke rushed skyward, and the ground trembled and cracked beneath them.

"One more," said a sergeant curtly, as Captain Murphy hurried up. The whole further section of the bridge had crumbled into the torrent below. The smoke swept through the tunnel, and when it lifted Cleymore caught a glimpse of a figure dragging itself back from the gulf ahead. The soldiers saw it too.

"He *would* go," said one of them, as though speaking to himself.

Cleymore tore off his jacket and held it before his face.

"You can't do it!" cried Murphy, horrified.

"Let go—I must," said Cleymore quietly, "cut the match, if you can."

"The other mines are on fire! In the name of God, Cleymore!" urged the engineer officer, holding him back by both shoulders.

"Damn you, Murphy, let me go!" cried Cleymore fiercely; "let go, I say."

"I will not, Cleymore; we can't lose you for a fool of a boy——"

"But it's a woman!" roared Cleymore, wrenching himself free.

II.

AS he ran through the smoke-choked bridge, bright little flames shot from the crackling timbers, and he felt the hot breath of the furnace underneath. And all the time he kept repeating as he ran, "I 'm a fool, I 'm a fool, it 's all up now"; but he hurried on, shielding his face with his braided jacket, feeling his way through the flurries of smoke and sparks until a whirl of flame blocked his way; and on the edge of the burning depths he found what he was looking for.

She was very slender and light, in her ragged uniform, and he lifted her and wrapped his jacket about her head. Then he started back, increasing his speed as the black smoke rolled up from the planks under foot, but it was easier than he had dared dream of, for she revived, and when Murphy loomed up in the gloom, and steadied them with an arm, he laughed aloud from sheer nervousness. Then a terrific explosion threw him on his face, but Murphy helped him up, and he seized his burden again and staggered toward the hill where Keenan's guns were already

thundering, and the crack—crack—crackle of rifles echoed and re-echoed from rock to cliff.

"You 're hit," said Douglas, as he entered the entrenchment.

"I know it," said Cleymore, hastily scanning the rifle-pits, "keep the men under cover, Douglas—what 's up? Wait, I 'll be there in a second. Here, Pillsbury, take this wo—this officer to my burrow and stay there until I come!"

Douglas, lying close to the top of the breastworks, glasses levelled, began to speak in a monotonous voice: "The two batteries have returned and are unlimbering to the west; they seem to have cavalry too; a heavy column is moving parallel to the railroad—infantry and ammunition convoy; more infantry coming through the cemetery; I can see more on the hill beyond; the batteries have unlimbered—look out!"

"Down!" shouted Cleymore, but the shells sailed high overhead and plunged into the muddy torrent of the South Fork.

"Keenan," he called, "do you want volunteers?"

"Not yet—damn the Texans!" bawled Keenan through the increasing din.

Douglas began, "Cleymore, they are—" and fell over stone dead.

Cleymore heard the minié-balls' thud! thud! as they struck the dead body, half flung across the breastwork, and Keenan, maddened by the bullets which searched his dwindling files, bel-

lowed hoarsely, as one by one his guns flashed and roared, "Now! In the name of God, lads, to hell with them!"

Like red devils in the pit the cannoneers worked at their guns, looming through the infernal smoke pall stripped to their waists. Keenan, soaked with sweat and black from eyes to ankle, raged like a fiend from squad to squad while his guns crashed and the whole hill vomited flame.

Thicker and blacker rolled the smoke from the battery emplacement, until it shrouded the hill. Then out of the darkness reeled Keenan howling for volunteers and weeping over the loss of another gun.

"Three left?" motioned Cleymore faintly with his lips.

"Three! Number four dismounted and all killed; send me some of your infantry!" and the artilleryman plunged into the blazing furnace again. Below them the grass and abatis caught fire and the smarting smoke of green wood almost blinded Cleymore. Murphy and his engineers were at work among the crackling logs, but after a while the dull blows of their axes died away and Cleymore knew they were dead.

"More men for the guns!" roared Keenan from the darkness, and a dozen Rhode Islanders tumbled out of their burrows and groped their way into the battery. In another moment Keenan came staggering out again, gasping like a fish and waving his arms blindly.

"They 've got another gun, Cleymore,—only two now,—more men for the guns!"

Cleymore, half fainting from the loss of blood, motioned to his men for volunteers; and they came, cheering for old New York, and vanished, engulfed in the battery smoke.

The hill was swept by fierce cyclones of lead; bullets flew in streams, whistling, hurtling among the rocks, rebounding into the rifle-pits, carrying death to those below. Great shells tore through the clouds, bursting and shattering the cliff overhead. A whirlwind of flame from the burning bridge swept over the hillside, hiding the river and the heights opposite, and the burning abatis belched smoke and torrents of sparks. Cleymore sat down near the burrow, and picked the bits of cloth from the long tear which the bullet had made in his flesh above the knee. The last of the engineer company came toiling up from the railroad bridge, and the lieutenant nodded to his question, "Yes, the bridge is blown out of the water. Where can I put my men in, Captain?"

Cleymore pointed to the pits, and they went into them, cheering shrilly. A moment later a shell fell into one of the crowded pits and exploded, throwing out a column of sand and bodies torn limb from limb. Only one gun was firing now from Keenan's battery, but from that one gun the lightning sped continuously, fed by a constantly renewed stream of volunteers. Cleymore, watching Keenan, thought that he had

really gone mad. Perhaps he had, and perhaps that is why Heaven directed a bullet to his brain, before the loss of his last gun should kill him with grief. Then a shell smashed up the muzzle of the last gun, and the remnants of the servants dragged themselves away to lie panting like hounds on the scorched earth, or die inch by inch from some gaping wound.

"The jig is up," said Cleymore aloud to himself.

For a quarter of an hour the enemy's guns rained shells into the extinct crater—the tomb of Keenan and his cannon. Then, understanding that Keenan had been silenced forever, their fire died out, and Cleymore could hear bugles blowing clearly in the distance.

He staggered to his feet and called to his men, but of the 10th New York Rifles, only thirty came stumbling from the pits. Pillsbury also answered the call, sauntering unconcernedly from the burrow whither he had carried Cleymore's charge.

All around them the wounded were shrieking for water, and Cleymore aided his men to carry them to the spring which flowed sparkling from the rocks above. It was out of the question to remove them,—it was useless to think of burying the dead. The three days' struggle for the hill had ended, and now all the living would have to leave,—all except one.

"Pillsbury," said Cleymore, "take my men, and strike for the turnpike due north. I can't

walk—I am too weak yet, but you have time to get out. March!"

The men refused, and Pillsbury called for a litter of rifles, but a volley whistled in among them and they reeled.

"Save thet there flag!" shouted Pillsbury, "I 've got the guidon!"

Cleymore lay on the ground motionless, and when they lifted him his head fell back.

"Daid," said Pillsbury, soberly, "poor cuss!"

A rifleman threw his jacket over Cleymore's face, and started running down the hill to where the colour-guard was closing around a bundle of flags, black and almost dropping from the staffs.

"Save the colours!" they cried, and staggered on toward the north.

III.

IT may have been thirst, it may have been the groans of the wounded that roused Cleymore. He was lying close by the rivulet that ran from the rock spring, and he plunged hands and head into it and soaked his fill.

The wound on his leg had stiffened, but to his surprise he found it neatly dressed and bandaged. Had aid arrived?

"Hello!" he called.

The deep sigh of a dying man was his only answer. He hardly dared to look around. The air was stifling with the scent of blood and powder and filthy clothing, and he rose painfully to his feet and tottered into the cool burrow among the rocks.

His blanket and flask lay there, but before he raised the flask to his lips he lifted the corner of the blanket nervously. Underneath stood a small oblong box, into which was screwed an electric button. Two insulated wires entered the ground directly in front of the box, which was marked in black letters, "Watson's Excelsior Soap."

Cleymore replaced the blanket, swallowed a

mouthful of whiskey and lay down, utterly exhausted. It was late in the afternoon when he awoke from the pain in his leg, but somebody had bandaged it again while he slept, and he was able to move out into the intrenchments. Most of the wounded were dead—the rest were dying in silence. He did what he could for Cunningham who joked feebly and watched Morris with quiet eyes. Morris died first, and Cunningham, hearing the death-rattle in his comrade's throat, murmured: "Phin he lived he bate me, but oi 'll give him a race to the Saints fur his money! Is Dick Morris dead now?"

"Dead," said Cleymore.

"Thin, good-bye, Captain dear," whispered Cunningham.

At first Cleymore thought he was sleeping.

The evening fell over the hilltop, and the last of the wounded shivered and died with drawn face upturned to the driving clouds. Cleymore covered the boy's face—he was scarcely sixteen—and sat down with his back against a rock.

The wreck of Keenan's battery rose before him in the twilight, stark and mute, silhouetted against the western horizón. Lights began to sparkle along the opposite river bank, and now, from the heights, torches swung in semi-circles signalling victory for the army of the South, death and disaster to the North. Far away over the wooded hills dull sounds came floating on the breeze, the distant rhythmic cadence of volley firing. There

were fires too, faint flares of light on the horizon where Thomas was "standing like a rock." On a nearer slope a house and barn were burning, lighting up the stumps and rocks in the clearing, and casting strange shadows over the black woods. In the gathering twilight someone came down the cliffs at his back, treading carefully among the shellsplit fragments, and Cleymore saw it was the little staff-officer. She did not see him until he called her.

"I want to thank you for dressing that scratch of mine," he said, rising.

"You are very welcome," she said, "is it better?"

"Yes—and you?"

"You saved my life," she said.

"But are you burnt—you must have been——"

"No—only stifled. Are the wounded alive? I did what I could."

"They are dead," said Cleymore. She unhooked her sabre, and sat down beside him looking off over the valley.

After a silence he said: "I suppose you are one of our spies—I have heard of the women spies, and I once saw Belle Boyd. How did you happen to take the place of an aide-de-camp?"

"Am I to tell all my secrets to an infantry captain?" she said, with a trace of a smile in her blue eyes.

"Oh, I suppose not," he answered, and relapsed into silence.

Presently she drew a bit of bacon and hard-tack from her pouch and quietly divided it. They both drank from the rivulet after the meal was finished. She brushed the water from her lips with a sun-tanned hand, and looking straight at Cleymore, said: "The hill below the abatis is mined, is it not?"

"Now, really," said Cleymore, "am I to tell all my secrets to a girl spy?" She stared at him for a moment, and then smiled.

"I know it already," she said.

"Oh," said Cleymore, "and do you know where the wires are buttoned?"

"Wires?" she exclaimed.

"Of course. Be thankful that poor Murphy's mines at the bridge were old-fashioned. If there had been wires there, you would not be sitting here."

"And you have stayed to fire this mine?" she said at length.

"Yes."

"The bridges are gone, and the river is impassable. It will be days before Longstreet's men can cross."

"I know it," said Cleymore, "but when they come, I 'll be here—and so will the mine."

The spy dropped her clasped hands into her lap.

"I 'll blow them to hell!" said Cleymore savagely, glaring at the silent dead around him. Then he begged her pardon for forgetting himself,

and leaned against the rock to adjust his eye-glasses.

"That would be useless butchery," said the girl, earnestly.

"That will do," said Cleymore, in a quiet voice.

The girl shrank away as though she had been struck. Cleymore noticed it, and said: "If you are a Government spy, you are subject to army regulations. I would rather treat you as a woman, but I cannot while you wear that uniform or hold a commission. How, in Heaven's name, did you come to enter the service? You can't be eighteen—you are of gentle breeding?"

"I am a spy!" she exclaimed, "and I thank God, and I hate the enemies of my country!"

"Amen," said Cleymore, wondering at her fierce outburst.

"Do you not hate the Confederates?" she demanded.

"No," he answered, gravely, "but I hate the rebellion."

"But you must hate your enemies; I do."

"I don't; it makes me sick to see them go down—splendid fellows,—Americans, and to think that such troops might have stood shoulder to shoulder with our own, under the same flag, against the world!—aye, against ten worlds! I hate the rebels? By Heaven, no! Think of Thomas and Grant and Lee and Jackson leading a united army against those thieving French in

Mexico! Think of Sherman and Sheridan and Johnston and Stuart facing the fat-brained treachery of England! I tell you I respect the rebels. Look at that heap of dead! Look at those smashed guns! Look at me—the defeated commander, crouching in this slaughter pen, waiting to spring a mine—and die. The men who reduced me to this have my respect as soldiers and my love and admiration as Americans, but if I could blow them all to the four winds by one touch of an electric button, I 'd do it, and bless the chance!" The girl trembled at his fervour.

"That is a strange creed," she murmured.

"Creed? The Union, in the Name of God—that 's my creed!"

IV.

THE next day it rained. The rebel batteries flung a dozen shells among Keenan's ruined guns, but, receiving no answer, ceased firing. Cleymore was stiff and ill, but he managed to reach the intrenchment and rest his field-glasses against a rock. The four batteries were in motion, filing along the river bank toward the cemetery where a flag drooped above a marquee, the headquarters of some general. The Texan Riflemen were moving about the scrub-oak, showing themselves fearlessly, and a battalion of engineers was hard at work on the smouldering piers of the bridge. Dark masses of troops appeared on the distant hillsides as far as the eye could reach, and along the railroad track cavalry were riding through the rain.

All day long Cleymore watched the rebel army, and at night he shared his hard-tack and bacon with the girl. They spoke very little to each other, but when Cleymore was looking at the rebels her eyes never left him. Once, when he crept into his cave to swallow a drop of brandy, she hurried from rifle-pit to rifle-pit, evidently

searching for something, but when again he reappeared she was seated listlessly against the rocky wall, her blond head buried in her hands. And that night too, when he was tossing in feverish slumber, she passed like a shadow through the intrenchment, over rocks, down among the dead in the hollows, her lantern shining on distorted faces and clenched hands.

The next day the rain still fell; the engineers were steadily at work on the ruined bridge, but the river had swollen enormously, and Cleymore could not see that they had progressed. He went back to his cave and dropped on the blanket, the box marked "Watson's Excelsior Soap" at his side. The girl brought him a bit of hard-tack and a cup of water. It was the last crumb left in the camp, except three biscuits which she had in her own pockets. She did not tell him so.

Toward midnight he fell asleep, and when she saw that he slept, she bent over him and looked into his face, lighting a match. Then she softly raised the blanket and saw his arm encircling a box marked "Watson's Excelsior Soap." As she stooped to touch the wires he stirred in his sleep and smiled, and she shrank away, covering her eyes with her hands. The next day she brought Cleymore his biscuit and cup of water, for his strength was ebbing, and he could scarcely crawl to the breastworks. She ate nothing herself. The engineers were progressing a little, the sun shone on the wasted hills, and the music of a

Confederate band came in gusts across the river from the cemetery.

"They are playing 'Dixie,'" said the girl; but Cleymore only sighed and pulled the dirty blanket over his face. The next day she brought him his biscuit, there was but one left now, and he, not knowing, asked for another, and she gave him the last.

About noon he called to her, and she helped him to the breastworks and held his field-glasses. The engineers had made alarming progress, for the river was falling rapidly.

"They 'll be over to-morrow," he said.

When he was lying in his blanket once more, he beckoned her to come close beside him.

"Are you ill?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"You are so white and frail—I thought you might be ill."

"Oh, no," she said.

"Have you plenty to eat?"

"Plenty."

"When are you going?"

"Going?" she faltered.

"You must go, of course," he said, querulously, "they will be over the river to-morrow."

"And you?" said the girl.

"It 's my business to stay here."

"And—fire the mine?"

"And fire the mine," he repeated.

"What is the use? They will enter all the same."

"Not all of them," said Cleymore, grimly.

"No—not all of them—a hundred half-starved young fellows will be mangled—a hundred mothers will be childless—but what matter, Captain Cleymore?"

"What matter," he repeated,—"my orders are to defend this hill until hell freezes over, and I am going to do it." Then, again, he wearily asked pardon for his words.

Toward evening she saw he was sleeping; his eye-glasses had fallen beside him on the blanket. Almost timidly she picked them up, held them a moment, then bent her head and touched them with her lips.

The morning broke in a burst of splendid sunlight. Over the river the rebel bands were playing when Cleymore's hot eyes unclosed, but he could not rise from his blanket.

The girl brought him a cup of water and held it while he drank.

"There are no more biscuits," she said.

"I shall not need them," he murmured, "what are the rebels doing?"

"They are massing to cross. The bridge is almost ready."

"And I 'm ready," he said, "good-bye."

The girl knelt beside him and took both of his hands in hers. "I am not going," she said.

"I order you," he muttered.

" I refuse," she answered gently.

A hectic flush touched the hollows under his eyes and he raised his head. " I order you to leave these works," he said angrily.

" And I refuse," she repeated gently.

A burst of music from the river bank came up to them as their eyes met in mute conflict. Cleymore's hand instinctively felt for the button and the wires, then he gave a great cry and sat up among his rags, and the girl rose slowly to her feet beside him.

" Traitor! " he gasped, and pointed at her with shaking hands.

She turned perfectly white for a moment, then a wan smile touched her lips, and she quietly drew a revolver from her jacket.

" I am not a traitor," she said, " I am a Confederate spy, and I cut those wires last night. You are my prisoner, Captain Cleymore."

The silence was broken by the noise from the bands, now massing about the further end of the completed bridge. Cleymore bent silently over the ruined wires, touched the button, then, turning savagely, whipped his revolver to his head and pulled the trigger. The hammer struck an empty cylinder, and he flung it from him with a sob.

In an instant the girl was on her knees beside him, raised him in her arms, holding his head on her shoulder.

" Is it so hard to surrender to a woman ? " she

asked, " see, I give you my revolver—here—now shoot me down at your feet ! I cut those wires ! Shoot fearlessly—Ah, do you think I care for my life ? "

Cleymore raised his head a little.

" I surrender," he sighed, and fainted.

Then there came a great sound of cheering from below, the drums rattled, and the music of the bugles swelled nearer and nearer, until a crash of eager feet sounded among the branches of the abatis and a figure clad in grey leaped upon the breastworks and drove the steel point of a standard into the gravel.

" In the name of God ! " he shouted in a voice choked with emotion.

" Let him pray," muttered the dusty veterans of Longstreet's infantry as they wheeled into the parallels, " he 's one of Jackson's men."

And all these things were done in the Name of the Most High.

THE BOY'S SISTER.

"Le plus grand tort de la plupart des maris envers leurs femmes, c'est de les avoir épousées."

THE BOY'S SISTER.

"Je ne me sens jamais plus seul que lorsque je livre mon coeur à quelque ami."

MAUPASSANT.

I.

GARLAND'S profession took him to Ten Pin Corners. His profession was to collect butterflies for the Natural History Museum of New York. "Uncle Billy," who kept the Constitution Hotel at Ten Pin Corners, thought "bug huntin'" was a "dampoor bizness, even fur a dood,"—and perhaps it was—but that is none of your business or mine. Garland lived at the Constitution Hotel. The hotel did small honour to its name, in fact it would have ruined any other constitution. It was ruining Garland's by degrees, but a man of twenty-five does n't notice such things. So Garland swallowed his saleratus biscuits and bolted pork and beans, and was very glad that he was alive.

He had met the male population of Ten Pin Corners over the bar at the Constitution Hotel,—

it being a temperance state—and there he had listened to their views on all that makes life worth living.

He tried to love his fellow-countrymen. When Orrin Hayes spat upon the stove and denounced woman's suffrage—when Cy Pettingil, whose wife was obliged to sign his name for him, agreed profanely—when the Hon. Hanford Perkins, A. P. A., demonstrated the wickedness of Catholicism, and proffered vague menaces against Rome, Garland conscientiously repressed a shudder.

"They are my countrymen, God bless 'em," he thought, smiling upon the free-born.

Uncle Billy's felonious traffic in the "j'yfull juice," did not prevent his attendance at town meeting, nor his enthusiastic voice against local option.

"I ain't no dum fool," he observed to Garland, "let the wimmen hev their way."

"But don't you think," suggested Garland, "that a liberal law would be better?"

"Naw," replied Uncle Billy.

"But don't you think even a poor law should be observed until wise legislation can find a remedy?"

"Naw," said Uncle Billy, and closed the subject.

Sometimes Uncle Billy would come out on the verandah where Garland was sitting in the sun, fussing over some captured caterpillar. His invariable salute was, "More bugs? Gosh!"

Once he brought Garland a cockroach, and suggested the bar-room as a new and interesting collecting ground, but Garland explained that his business did not include such augean projects, and the thrifty old man was baffled.

"What 's them bugs good fur?" he demanded at length. Garland explained, but Uncle Billy never got over the impression that Garland's real business was the advertising of Persian Powder. Most of the prominent citizens of Ten Pin Corners came to Garland to engage his services as potato-beetle exterminator, measuring-worm destroyer, and general annihilator of mosquitos, and to each in turn he carefully explained what his profession was.

They were skeptical—sometimes sarcastic. One thing, however, puzzled them; he had never been known to try to sell anybody Persian Powder, for, possessed with the idea that he was some new species of drummer, they found this difficult to reconcile with their suspicions.

"Bin a-buggin', haint ye?" was the usual salute from the free-born whom he met in the fields; and when Garland smiled and nodded, the free-born would expectorate and chuckle, "Oh, yew air slick, Mister Garland, yew 're more 'n a Yankee than I be."

Ten Pin Corners was built along both sides of the road; the Constitution Hotel stood at one extremity of the main street, the Post Office at the other. Garland once asked why the place

was called Ten Pin Corners, and Uncle Billy told him a lie about its having been named from his, Uncle Billy's, palatial ten pin alley.

"Then why not Ten Pin Alley?" asked Garland.

"Cuz it ain't no alley," sniffed Uncle Billy.

"But," persisted Garland, "why Corners?"

"Becuz there haint no corners," said Uncle Billy evasively, and retired to his bar, thirsty and irritated. "Asks enough damfool que-estions t' set a man crazy," he confided to the Hon. Hanford Perkins; "I 've hed drummers an' drummers at the Constitooshun, but I h'aint seen nothin' tew beat him."

The Hon. Hanford Perkins looked at Uncle Billy and spat gravely upon the stove, and Uncle Billy spat also, to put himself on an equality with the Hon. Hanford Perkins.

Concerning the mendacity of Uncle Billy there could be no question. Ten Pin Corners had been originally Ten Pines Corners. Half a mile from the terminus of the main street stood a low stone house. It was included in the paternal government of Ten Pin Corners, and it was from this house, surrounded by ten gigantic pines, and from the four cross-roads behind it, now long disused and overgrown with grass and fireweed, that the village name degenerated from Ten Pines to Ten Pin.

Thither Garland was wont to go in the evenings, for the pines were the trysting places of

moths—grey moths with pink and black under wings, brown moths with gaudy orange under wings, rusty red moths flecked with silver, nankeen yellow moths, the product of the measuring-worm, big fluffy moths, little busy moths, and moths that you and I know nothing about. The sap from the pines attracted some of these creatures, the lily garden in front of the stone house attracted others, and the whole combination attracted Garland. Also there lived in the stone house a boy's sister.

One afternoon when Uncle Billy's continued expectoration and Cy Pettingil's profanity had driven Garland from the hotel, he wandered down into a fragrant meadow, butterfly net in one hand, trout rod in the other, and pockets stuffed with cyanide jar, fly-book, sandwiches, and *Wilson on Hybrids*.

The stream was narrow and deep, for the most part flowing silently between level banks fragrant with mint and scented grass; but here and there a small moss-grown dam choked the current into a deeper pool below, into which poured musical waterfalls.

There were trout there, yellow, speckled, and greedy, but devious in their ways, and uncertain as April mornings. There were also frogs there, solemn green ones that snapped at the artificial flies and came out of the water with slim limbs outstretched and belly glistening.

"It 's like pulling up some nude dwarf, when

they grab the fly,'' wrote Garland to his chief in New York, '' really they look so naked and indecent.'' Otherwise Garland was fond of frogs; he often sat for hours watching them half afloat along the bank or squatting majestically upon some mossy throne.

That afternoon he had put on a scarlet ibis fly, and the frogs plunged and lunged after it, flopping into the pools and frightening the lurking trout until Garland was obliged to substitute a yellow fly in self defence. But the trout were coy. One great fellow leaped for the fly, missed it, leaped again to see what was wrong, and finding out, fled into the depths, waving his square tail derisively. Garland walked slowly down the brook, casting ahead into the stream, sometimes catching his fly in the rank grass, sometimes deftly defeating the larcenous manœuvres of some fat frog, and now and then landing a plump orange-bellied trout among the perfumed mint, where it flopped until a merciful tap on the nose sent its vital spark into Nirvana and its crimson flecked body into Garland's moss-lined creel.

Once or twice he dropped his rod in the grass to net some conceited butterfly that flaunted its charms before the serious-minded clover bees, but he seldom found anything worth keeping, and the butterfly was left to pursue its giddy interrupted flight.

As he passed, walking lightly on the flowering turf, the big black crickets sang to him, the katy-

dids scraped for him, and the grasshoppers, big and little, brown, green, and yellow, hopped out of the verdure before him, a tiny escort of outriders.

It was nearly four o'clock in the afternoon when he came to the last pool, before the meadow brook flows silently into the woods where slim black trout lurk under submerged rocks and mosquitos swoop thankfully upon the wanderer.

On the bank of the pool sat a beautiful boy watching a cork floating with the current.

"Hello," said Garland, "you ought to be in school, Tip."

The boy looked at Garland through gilded tangled curls. "Can't you see I 'm fishin'?" he said in a whisper.

"I see," said Garland, "but you know your sister would n't allow it. Why did you stay away from school, Tip?"

The angelic eyes were lowered a moment, then the boy carefully raised his pole, and, seeing the bait intact, dropped it into the water again.

"Bill Timerson biffed me," said the child.

"If Willy Timerson struck you, you should not stay away from school," he said; "did you—er—hit him back?"

"Did I?"

"Did you?" repeated Garland, repressing a smile.

"Heu! Why, Mister Garland, I slammed that d—n mug of his ——"

"Tip!" said Garland.

The boy hung his head and looked at the cork. Garland sat down beside him and lighted his pipe.

After a moment he said: "Tip, I thought you promised me not to swear."

The boy was silent.

"Did you?" said Garland.

"Yes," replied the boy, sullenly.

"Well?" persisted Garland.

"I lied," said the boy.

"You forgot," said Garland, quietly, "you don't lie, Tip."

The boy looked at him shyly, then turned to his cork again.

"Tip," said Garland, "what do you think of these?" he opened his creel and Tip looked in.

"Hell!" said the child softly.

"What!" interrupted Garland.

"There!" said Tip calmly, "I lied again; lam me one in the snoot, Mister Garland."

Garland touched the boy lightly on the forehead. "You will try," he said, trying to conceal the despair in his voice.

"Yes," cried the child fervently, "I will, Mr. Garland, so help me—I mean, cross my heart!" After a moment he added, "I—I brought you a green worm—here it is——"

"Hello! A Smerinthus, eh? Much obliged, Tip; where did you get it?"

"Sister found it on the piazza,—she said mebbe you 'd want it," replied the child lifting his line

again; "say, Mister Garland, Squire Perkins says you 're loony."

"What," laughed Garland.

"Solemn," continued the child, "he says you was onct a book agent or a drummer, but you 're loony now and can't work."

"The Hon. Hanford Perkins, Tip?" asked Garland, laughing frankly.

"Yep, ole Perkins hisself."

"To whom did he eulogize me, Tip?"

"What, sir?"

"To whom did he say this?"

"To sister—an' Celia turned her back on him; I seen it. Are you loony?"

Garland was laughing but managed to say, no.

"That 's what I said," said Tip, scowling at the water, "and I said you 'd kick the hel—you 'd kick the stuffins outen him if he said it much more. Will you, Mr. Garland?"

"I—I don't know," said Garland, trying to control his mirth, "you must n't say that sort of thing, you know, Tip."

"I know it," said Tip, resignedly, "I hove 'n apple through his hat though,—last night."

Then Garland explained to Tip all about the deference due to age, but so pleasantly that the child listened to every word.

"All right," he said, "I 'll let the ole man be,—I was plannin' to bust a window," he continued, with a trace of regret, "but I won't!" he cried in a climax of pious resignation.

Garland watched a distant butterfly critically for a moment, then picked up his rod and creel and shook the ashes from his pipe.

"Goin' to see Cis?" inquired Tip.

"Hem! Hum! I—er—may pass by that way," replied Garland.

"You won't tell her that I smashed Bill Timerson?"

"Of course not," said Garland, "that 's for you to tell her."

"I won't," said the child doggedly.

"Very well," said Garland, walking away.

Tip watched him, but he did not turn, and the child's face became troubled.

"I will tell, Mr. Garland!" he called across the meadow.

"All right, Tip," answered Garland, cheerily.

II.

BEFORE Garland came in sight of the low stone house he caught the fragrance of the lilies. The sun glittered low on the horizon, long luminous shadows stretched over meadow and pasture, and a thin blue haze floated high among the feathery tops of the pines about the house. A white nanny-goat of tender age, tethered on the velvet turf, cried "me—h! me—h!" watching him with soft silly eyes. Except for the kid, and a Maltese cat asleep on the porch, there was no sign of life about the house. Garland turned and looked out over the pastures. A spot of greyish-pink was moving down there. He watched it for a moment, quietly refilling his pipe, then dropped his rod and net upon the turf, and threw himself on the ground beside them. From time to time he raised his eyes from the pages of *Wilson on Hybrids* to note the progress of the pink spot in the distant pasture.

Wilson was most interesting on hybrids. What Wilson had to say was this: "There can be no doubt that hybrid forms of these two splendid butterflies, Nymphalis Arthemis and Nymphalis

Ephestion, exist in the localities frequented by these species. In the little village of Ten Pin Corners, Professor Wormly discovered an unknown hybrid, which, unfortunately, he was unable to capture or describe."

This was what Wilson had to say on hybrids.

This was what Garland thought: "I 'd give fifty dollars to capture one of these hybrids ;—I wonder what Celia is doing in the pasture? It may not have been a hybrid ; it may only have been a variety. Celia is milking the Alderney, that 's what she 's doing. Still Wormly ought to know what he 's about. Celia has finished milking ; now it 's the Jersey's turn. I should like to see a hybrid of Arthemis and—hello! Celia has finished, I fancy." Then he laid down his book and carefully retied his necktie.

When Celia arrived and placed her milk pail on the porch, Garland jumped to his feet with hypocritical surprise.

"You are milking early," he said, "did you just come from the pasture?"

The girl looked at her pail and nodded. The sunlight gilded her arms, bare to the shoulder, and glittered in a fierce halo around her burnished hair. She had her brother's soft blue eyes, fringed with dark lashes, but the beauty of her mouth was indescribable. Garland, as usual, offered to take the milk pail, and she, as usual, firmly declined.

"You never let me," he said, "I wanted to

bring it up from the pasture, but I knew what you 'd say."

"Then you saw me in the pasture," she asked.

"Er—er—yes," he admitted.

"I saw you too," she said, and sat down in the red sunlight under the pines.

Garland sat down also, and made an idle pass at a white butterfly with his net.

"Have you caught any new butterflies to-day?" she asked, bending to tie her shoe-string.

"No, nothing new," he answered. She straightened up, brushed a drop or two of milk from the hem of her pink skirt, passed a slim hand over her crumpled apron, and leaned back against the tree trunk, touching her hair lightly with her fingers.

"Last night," she said, "a great green miller-moth came around the lamp. I caught him for you."

"A Luna," he said, "thank you, Celia."

"Luna," she repeated gravely, "is he rare?"

She had picked up a few phrases from Garland and used them with pretty conscientiousness.

"No," said Garland, "not very rare—but I will keep this one."

"I caught some more, too," she continued, "a yellow miller—"

"Moth, Celia."

"Miller-moth—"

"No—a moth—"

"A yellow moth," she continued serenely, "that had eyes on its wings."

"Saturnia Io," said Garland.

"Io," repeated the girl, softly, "is it rare?"

"It is rare here. I will keep it."

The Maltese cat lifted its voice and rubbed its arched back against the milk pail. Its name was Julia and Garland called it to him.

"Julia has a saucer of milk on the porch; she is only teasing," said Celia.

But Julia's voice was sustained and piercing, and Garland rose laughing and poured a few drops of warm fresh milk into the half-filled saucer. Then Julia exposed the depth of her capriciousness; she sniffed at the milk, walked around it twice, touched the saucer playfully, patted a stray leaf with velvet paw, and then suddenly pretending that she was in danger of instant annihilation from some impending calamity, pranced into the middle of the lawn, crooked her tail, rushed half way up a tree-trunk, slid back, and finally charged on the tethered kid with swollen tail and ears flattened.

Garland went back to his seat on the turf. "It is the way of the world," he said gaily.

Celia picked up a pine cone and sniffed daintily at the dried apex.

"Julia was not hungry; she only wanted attention," he added.

"Some people are hungry for attention too,—and never get it," said Celia.

Garland knew what she meant. It was common gossip among the free-born who congregated about the saliva stricken stove at Uncle Billy's or sat on musty barrels in the Post Office store.

"But," said Garland, "you do not want *his* attention,—now."

"No," she said indifferently, "I do not want it now,—it is too late."

"Then don't let 's think about it," said Garland quickly.

"Think! think!" she answered without impatience, "what else can I do?"

"And you think of him?" he asked.

"No, not of him, but of his injustice," she said quietly.

They had talked sometimes on the subject—he never knew just how it came about. Perhaps his interest in Tip had moved her to the confidence, if it could be called a confidence, for all the free-born were unbidden participants in the secret. The story was commonplace enough. When Celia was sixteen, four years back, she lived with an elect uncle in the manufacturing town of Highfield, forty miles down the river. One day a road company with more repertoire than cash, stranded at Bowles' Opera House and drifted back by highway and byway toward Boston. One member of the company, however, did not drift back. His

name was Clarence Minster and he said he had found salvation, which was true in one sense, for Celia's elect uncle clawed him into the fold and having cleansed his soul, gave him a job to cleanse the stable at very few dollars a month. Celia was young and simple and pitiful. She also possessed five hundred dollars of her own. So Clarence Minster first ran away with her and then with most of her five hundred dollars. Unfortunately the marriage was legal, and the uncle implacable, so Celia took her brother Tip in one hand, and a thinned-out pocket-book in the other, and went to her dead parent's home, the stone house at Ten Pin Corners. She sometimes heard of Minster, never from him. He had struck the public taste as "Dick Willard," the hero of the lachrymose melodrama, "Honour," and his photographs were occasionally seen in Highfield store windows.

This was Celia's story—part of it. The other part began as she began to listen to Garland, and to bring him delicate winged moths that sought her chamber lamp as she bent over Tip's patched clothes. Something also was beginning for Garland; he felt it growing as he moved among the lilies in the dusk while Celia held the bullseye lantern, and the great sphinx moths hovered over the pinks. He felt it in the crystal clear mornings when sleepy butterflies clung to the late lilacs, and Celia moved far afield through raspberries and yellow buttercups. He felt it now, as he lay beside her among level shadows and gilt-tipped

verdure—he felt it and wondered whether it was love. Perhaps Celia could have told him, I don't know, but it was plain enough to the tethered kid and the Maltese cat, to the drifting swallows, and the orioles in the linden tree besides the well-sweep. It was simple and self-evident to the Alderney, lowing at the bars, to the Jersey staring stolidly at Celia, to the robins, the hedge birds —yes, to the tireless crickets chirping from every tussock.

Now whether or not it was equally plain to Tip as he came trudging up the gravel walk, I do not know.

He said, " Hello, Cis," and came and kissed her —a thing he did not often do voluntarily. " I smashed Bill Timerson in the jaw," he continued, " and he told the teacher, and I dasn't go back." Then he glanced humbly at Garland.

Celia had tears in her eyes, and she also turned instinctively to Garland. " Speak to him, please," she said, " I can do nothing."

" Yes you can," said Tip—" you and Mr. Garland together. I 've told him."

" Tip will go back to school to-morrow," said Garland, " and take his thrashing."

Tip looked doubtful.

" And," continued Garland, " as Bill Timerson is older and stronger than Tip, Tip will continue to punch him whenever assaulted."

" Oh—no ! " pleaded Celia.

" Let him," said Garland, smiling. Tip threw

his arms around his sister's neck and kissed her again, and she held him tightly to her milk-stained apron.

"Mr. Garland knows," she whispered, "my darling, try to be good."

III.

GARLAND leaned back in his chair in the dingy bar-room of the Constitution Hotel. His abstracted gaze wandered from Uncle Billy to a framed chromo on the wall, a faithful reproduction of some catchup bottles, a boiled lobster and a platter of uninviting oysters. The Hon. Hanford Perkins was speaking—he had been speaking for half an hour. For years, like Peffer, he had been telling the Government what to do, but his patience, unlike Peffer's, was exhausted, and now he had decided to let the country go to the devil. He wrote no more letters to the *Highfield Banner*, he sulked, and an ungrateful country never even knew it At times, however, under the kindly stimulus of Uncle Billy's "j'y-full juice," he condescended to address the free-born in the bar-room of the Constitution Hotel. He was doing it now. He had touched upon silver with the elephantine dexterity of a Populist, he had settled the tariff to the satisfaction of Ten Pin Corners, he spoke of the folly of maintaining a navy, and dismissed the army with a masterly sarcasm in which the phrase, "fuss 'n feathers"

was dwelt upon. Uncle Billy, in the popular attitude of a cherub, elbows on the bar, gazed at him with undisguised admiration. Cy Pettingil, fearful that he was not on an equality with the drummer in the corner, spat upon the stove until he was. Then the drummer told an unclean story which was a success, but the Hon. Hanford Perkins, feeling slighted at the loss of attention, told a scandalous bit of gossip which threw the drummer's story into the shade.

Garland stirred restlessly, and opened *Wilson on Hybrids* again. He had been reading for a moment or two when a name caught his ear, and he closed his book and raised his eyes.

The Hon. Hanford Perkins was speaking, and Garland leaned over and touched his coat sleeve.

"You are speaking of a woman," he said, "that is not the tone to use nor is this the place to discuss any woman."

"Hey?" said the Hon. Hanford, with a laugh, and winked at Uncle Billy.

"I guess he can say what he dam pleases in my house," said Uncle Billy, expectorating; "the girl 's not yourn."

"The girl," added Cy Pettingil, "is a damned little——"

Then Garland took Cy Pettingil by the throat, swung him around the room twice, and kicked him headlong into the billiard-table, under which Pettingil hastily scrambled.

"Now," said Garland to the Honourable Hanford Perkins, "do you want to follow Pettingil? If you do, just wag that bunch of whiskers on your chin again."

The drummer in the corner smiled uneasily, picked up his sample case and key, and said good-night in an uncertain voice to Garland. Uncle Billy's eyes were fixed upon Garland with a fascinated stare, and his jaw slowly dropped. The Hon. Hanford Perkins cast one amazed glance at Pettingil, another at Uncle Billy, and waddled majestically out into the street.

When Garland had picked up his book and left the hotel, Cy Pettingil crawled from beneath the billiard-table and approached Uncle Billy. He expectorated and leaned on the bar, but no amount of ejected saliva could re-establish him in his own estimation—he felt this bitterly.

"I 'll git the law on him," he said after a moist silence, and rubbed his red hand over his chin. "I 'll hev the law onto him," he repeated; but Uncle Billy was non-committal.

"Gimme a little bug-juice," said Cy, after an uncomfortable silence, and tossed a quarter upon the bar, with ostentatious carelessness,—"I 'm dry, Billy."

"Yew be?" said Uncle Billy, "wall, yew don't git no bug-juice nor nawthin' here."

"Hey!" said Pettingil.

"Naw," said Uncle Billy, scornfully, and retired to the depths of the bar.

Garland walked slowly down the road in the twilight, switching the grass with the bamboo staff of his butterfly-net, angry with himself and nauseated with the free-born. And as he walked he was aware of a light touch on his arm, and a lighter footstep by his side. It was Tip.

"I—I was in the hallway of the hotel," said Tip, eagerly, "'n' I seen what you done to Cy Pettingil——"

"What were you doing there?" said Garland sharply.

"Buyin' salt for Cis,—oh! I just love you, Mister Garland!" And before Garland could raise his eyes, Tip had flung himself into his arms sobbing: "I ain't big enough to lick all the loafers in town, but I lick all their sons, and Cis says I am growin' fast. Oh, you do love me and Cis, don't you, Mister Garland?"

"Yes," said Garland, gravely, and kissed his wet face. Then he took him by the hand and told him how low and mean a bar-room fight was, and that he must never tell Celia what had happened. He tried to explain to him what was necessary to resent, and what was not; he spoke sympathetically as he always did, and Tip absorbed every word.

"Now let us forget it," said Garland, "Tip, your grammar is very uncertain. Why do you not try to speak as your sister does?"

"The boys I play with don't speak that way," said Tip.

"Neither does Cy Pettingil,—he speaks as you do," said Garland.

Tip's hand trembled and clasped Garland's tighter. "Learn me what to say, Mister Garland," he said after a silence.

"I will," replied Garland, "how would you like to go to school in Boston?"

"When?"

"Next winter."

"Can Cis come too?"

"I—had n't thought,—you can't leave her, can you, Tip?"

"No," said Tip.

"Well—we 'll see—you need not speak of this to your sister; I will—er—discuss the question with her later," said Garland.

Celia was standing under the pines as they walked up the gravel path. She knew his footsteps and came up on the verandah to greet him.

"Why, you are all over white!" she said; "has Tip spilled the salt on you?"

"Tip and I hugged each other to the detriment of the salt," said Garland laughing and brushing the white grains from his coat.

"Tip, dear, have you been naughty?" asked Celia.

"Nope," said Tip so promptly that even Celia laughed, and Tip retired to bed, glowing with virtuous resolves. Celia went up to his room and waited until he had said his prayers. She was troubled by the fervency of his prayer for

Garland, but joined faintly in the Amen, and covered Tip with the white sheets.

"Mr. Garland says he loves you, Cis," said Tip, holding up his lips to be kissed. Celia caught her breath and laid one hand on the bed-post.

"Tip," she faltered.

"Yep—an' me, too," said Tip, blissfully.

He fell asleep soon; Celia stood and watched him in the moonlight. She was thinking of Garland; Tip was dreaming of him.

When she came down, Garland was busy among the lilies with bullseye lantern and butterfly net, and she took a chair on the verandah and watched him. Two "Imperial" moths had fallen to his lot, perfect specimens, and he was happy, for had not Professor Wormly cautiously deplored the absence of this species in the whole country?

"One on Wormly," laughed Garland, dropping the great yellow and violet-brown moths from his cyanide-jar into her lap, "are they not pretty, Celia?"

Since Garland had come, Celia had seen beauty through his eyes where ever his eyes saw it; the shadows on the pasture, the long light over the hills, the massed pines red in the sunset, the morning meadow sheeted with cobwebs. For the first time in her innocent life she had turned to watch the colour in the evening sky, she had stooped to lift a clover-drunk butterfly and examine the rainbow span of its wings, she lingered at

the bars, listening to the music of the meadow brook along the alders. So when he asked her if the moths were beautiful, she smiled and saw that they were; and when he asked her to hold his lantern among the lilies, she prettily consented.

Up and down they moved, to and fro through the lilies and clustered pinks, but the moonlight was too clear and the swift sphinx moths did not visit the garden that night.

He was standing still, looking at the lilies, and she was swinging the lantern idly. "About Tip," he said abruptly, "do you think the school here is good for him?"

"I know it is not," she said sadly.

"His English is alarming," said Garland.

"I know it—what can I do?"

"I don't know; if he goes to school he will play with those children, I suppose."

"He was such a well-bred child," said Celia, "before—before we came here. He talked when he was three. I seem to have little influence over him."

"You have a great deal—not in that way perhaps. Suppose you take Tip out of school, Celia."

"What would become of him?" exclaimed Celia in gentle alarm.

"It 's better than leaving him there. I—er—I might help him a bit."

"But—it 's very, very kind of you—but you will go away before winter—will you not?"

"I don't know," said Garland, and instinctively laid his hand on hers. At the contact, her cheeks flamed in the darkness.

"Celia," he said, "I do not want to go."

Her face was turned from him. After a moment his fingers unclosed and her impassive hand fell to her side. The swift touch left him silent and awkward. He tried to speak lightly again but could not. Finally he folded his net, extinguished the lantern and said good-night. Long after he had disappeared she stood among the lilies, her hands softly clasped to her breast.

IV.

"HEU!" sniffed Uncle Billy, as he poured out a glass of beer for himself behind the fly-soiled bar at the Constitution Hotel, "there hain't a man araound taown dass say a word abaout the Minster girl when Mister Garland 's a settin' here."

"Mister Garland 's a skunk !" said Cy Pettingil, morosely.

"He ain't the skunk that yew be, Cy Pettingil," retorted Uncle Billy, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand.

Garland came in a moment later, satchel in hand, and laid a roll of bills on the bar. Uncle Billy moistened his thumb with his tongue, counted them, and shoved them into his waistcoat pocket. "C'rect," he said, shifting his quid, "what can I dew for yew, sir?"

"Send this satchel with my trunk," said Garland, "good-bye, Uncle Billy."

Uncle Billy emerged from the bar, wiped his right hand on his trousers and extended it.

"Good luck, an' many bugs to yew, Mister Garland. I 'm real cut up that yew air goin',

sir; ennything in the bug line thet I hev I 'll send t' Noo York."

"Thank you, Uncle Billy," said Garland, and walked out of the hotel, gloves in one hand, cane in the other.

Cy Pettingil sneered when he was gone, but, receiving no sympathy from Uncle Billy, went home and nagged at his wife, a pale woman weighed down with trouble and American pastry —until she retorted. Then he struck her.

Garland walked on past the church and schoolhouse, through the sweet-briar lane by the Post Office, and, taking the path above the cemetery, followed it until he came in sight of the stone house among the pines. The Maltese cat trotted out to greet him, the tethered kid stared at him from the lawn, but Celia was invisible, and he stood hesitating under the woodbine on the porch. He had never entered Celia's house. She had never asked him in, and he knew that she was right. He sat down under the pines and looked off over the pastures where the Alderney and Jersey were feeding along the brookside.

Garland had come to say good-bye. There was nothing that he could do for Tip; Celia was not able to send him to a better school, nor could she have afforded to go with him. Even if she should accept an offer to send Tip to school, what would she do there alone in that scandal nest of the freeborn? So Garland sat poking pine cones with his stick and crumpling his gloves in his brown

hand until a tangle of sun-warmed curls rose over the fence and Tip appeared, smoking a cigarette. When he saw Garland he dropped the cigarette and looked the other way, whistling.

"Come, Tip," said Garland, wearily, "let 's have it out before Celia comes."

Tip went to him at once.

"Who gave you that cigarette?" asked Garland.

"No one, I made it."

"Tobacco?"

"No, sir, sweet-fern and corn silk."

"That is not much better. Tip, are you going to stop this?"

The child picked up a pine cone, examined it carefully, and tossed it toward the Maltese cat.

"Answer me," said Garland.

The child was silent.

"Very well," said Garland.

"I promise!" cried Tip,—"I won't never smoke nothing,—don't go away, Mr. Garland!"

"Is that your word of honour, Tip?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right," said Garland, smiling, "now you have promised me not to drink or smoke until you are twenty-one. I know I can trust you, and I am very happy. You need not tell Celia of this."

"I—I will if you want?" said Tip, humbly.

"No,—it will only worry her—and you have promised now. What did you do in school to-day?"

"I punched Jimmy Bro——"

"I did not ask for an account of your athletic victories," said Garland, "I merely wished to know in what particular branch of the applied sciences you excelled."

"Wh—a—at, sir?"

"Were you perfect in reading?"

"N—no, sir."

"In writing?"

"No—o—"

"In arithmetic?"

Tip stirred restlessly, and looked at the Maltese cat. Then he brightened and said, "A skunk got into the cellar while school was goin'. Teacher told us all about skunks an' anermals."

"Oh," said Garland, "an object lesson in natural history?"

"Yep. Skunk ain't its real name, its real name is Methodist Americanus——"

"What 's that?" exclaimed Garland.

"Methodist Americanus——"

"Mephetis Americanus, Tip," said Garland gravely.

"Oh! I thought the man what named it might have had a uncle like mine——"

"Tip!"

"Yes, sir?"

"That will do," said Garland seriously.

The child nodded contentedly and began an elaborate series of evolutions, the object of which was to capture the Maltese cat. The cat was perfectly aware of this; she allowed the boy to ap-

proach her until his hand was within an inch of her back; then she ran a few feet, cocked her ears, switched her tail, and pretended to forget him. After a while they disappeared behind the lilac bushes at the end of the verandah, and Garland leaned back against the tree and poked at pine cones again.

The sun sank lower and lower, flooding the pastures, tinging the calm meadow pools with the splendour of its fading glory. In the evening glow the turf burned like golden tapestry, the swallows twittered among the chimneys or drifted and rose high in the quiet air, and the chickens looked up with restless peeps to their roost in the lilac branches. An orange light, ever deepening, dyed the edges of the pools where the ripples of a rising fish or a low dipping gnat disturbed the surface reflection of the placid evening sky. From palest green to grey the horizon changed until, like a breath creeping over a window, a rosy flush stained the zenith. And the sun had set.

With sunset Celia came, walking slowly over the grass that shone in the shadows with a green almost metallic. She started slightly when Garland moved in the shade of the pines, but came to him, offering her hand.

"Then you are going," she said simply.

"Yes,—I am going. My train leaves at nine to-night. How did you know?"

She glanced at his gloves and stick and smiled gently.

"I am going," he said, "because they want me in New York. Some day I will come back——"

A ghost of a smile touched her lips again. He moved impatiently nearer, and she looked at his troubled eyes.

"Shall I come back?" he asked awkwardly.

"Yes—come; Tip will welcome you——"

"And you?"

"I,"—she said softly—"I don't know."

"What troubles you?" he said; but she turned her head toward the sunset. "What troubles you?" he said again;—"is—is *he* coming?"

She dropped her head.

"When?" asked Garland in a hard voice.

"To-night."

Something of the horror in her face as she turned it was reflected in his own. This, then, was the reward for her quiet struggle for life; this was the reward,—the return of this miserable actor whom she had learned to loathe—her husband! Whew! the stench of perfume and grease paint seemed to fill his nostrils; he could see the smooth fat face shaved blue, as he had seen it behind the footlights in the metropolis, the bull neck, the professional curly head!

Then he set his teeth and dug his stick into the turf at his feet. The girl moved a step from him.

"Celia," he said unsteadily, "have you ever thought of divorce?"

"Yes."

They were silent again. The whistle of a distant train startled Garland from his reverie and he picked up his gloves and buttoned his coat. It was the incoming train from New York. With a frightened glance at him she held out her hand, murmuring good-bye, and turned toward the house, but he stepped swiftly to her side and touched her arm.

Oh, the terror in the eyes that met his,—and the kiss,—as she clung to his breast in the twilight there—the kiss that solved all problems, that broke down barriers and made the way plain and clear,—the way that they should travel together through life and the life to come.

And so they went away into the world together, and Tip went with them, one dimpled hand in Garland's, one clasping the Maltese cat close to his breast.

THE CRIME.

"'How,' says he, blessing himself, 'would I whip this child . . . . if it were my child.'"

SAMUEL PEPYS.

THE CRIME.

> "Heark! Oh, heark! you guilty trees,
> In whose gloomy galleries
> Was the cruellest murder done
> That e're yet eclipst the sunne."

I.

NOW it happened one day in the early Springtime when the sky was china blue and filmy clouds trailed like lace across the disk of a pale sun, that I, Henry Stenhouse, nineteen years of age, well and sound in mind and body, decided to commit a crime.

The crime which I contemplated was murder. For three years past I had watched the object of my pursuit; I had peered at him at night as he lay sleeping, I had crept stealthily to his home, evening after evening, waiting for a chance to kill him. I had seen him moving about on his daily business, growing fatter and sleeker, serene, sly, self-centred, absorbed in his own affairs, yet keeping a keen, shrewd eye upon strangers. For

he mistrusted strangers; those who passed by him, not even noticing him, he mistrusted less than he did others who came to him with smiles and outstretched hands.

He never accepted anything from anybody. A strange step or the sound of a strange voice made him shy and suspicious. But he was cold and selfish, cold-blooded as a fish—in fact he—but I had better tell you a little more about him first. He was my enemy; I determined to kill him, and perhaps he read it in my drawn face and sparkling eyes, for, as I stepped toward him, the first time, he turned and fled—fled straight across the Clovermead River.

And although I searched the river banks up and down and up and down again, I saw no more of him that day.

When I went home, excited, furious, I made passionate preparations to kill him. All night long I tossed feverishly in my tumbled bed, longing, aching for the morning. When the morning came I stole out of the house and bent my steps towards the river, for I had reason to believe that he lived somewhere in that neighbourhood. As I crept along, the early morning sun glittered on something that I clutched with nervous fingers. It was a weapon.

This happened three years ago; I did not find him that morning although I searched until the shadows fell over meadow and thicket. That night too found me on his trail, but the calm

Spring moon rose over Clovermead village and its pale light fell on no scene of blood.

So for three years I trailed him and stalked him, always awaiting the moment to strike,—praying for an opportunity to slay; but he never gave me one. He was fierce and shifty, swift as lightning when aroused, but the battle that I offered he declined. Oh, he was deep,—deep and crafty, cold-blooded as a fish,—in fact, he was a fish, Mine Enemy, the Trout.

Do you imagine that the killing of Mine Enemy was a crime? No, my friend—that, properly done, was what is known as sport; improperly done, it is murder;—there, the murder 's out! I was going to catch the trout with bait!

You, dear brethren of the angle, brave fly-fishermen, all, wet or dry, turn not from me with loathing! Hear my confession, the confession of one who was tempted, listened, fell, and fished for a trout with a worm!

Anyway, it 's your own fault if you throw down this book and beat your breasts with cruel violence. I told you that my story was to be the story of a crime, and if you don't like to read about crimes, you had no business to begin this tale. There are worse crimes too,—some people habitually fish with bait; some net fish, and there exist a few degraded objects in human shape who snare trout with a wicked wire loop on the end of a sapling.

Now I don't propose to tell you about these

things, I am no depraved realist, so thank your stars that the crime I contemplated was no worse than it was, and listen to the story of an erring brother. Mea culpa !

I was only nineteen, a student at the State School of Engineering, and in my senior year. What I did in engineering was barely sufficient to carry me through my examination; what I did in shooting and trout fishing might have furnished material for a sporting library. I had no particular aversion to my profession; my father before me had been a mining engineer. I was not entirely ignorant either ; I knew mica-chist from malachite, and I could—but that 's of no consequence now. It is true, however, that instead of applying myself to the studies of my profession I spent a great deal of time contributing to a New York sporting journal called the *Trigger*. I produced a couple of columns a week on such subjects as "German Trout *versus* Natives," "Do Automatic Reels Pay ?" and "Experiments with the Amherst Pheasant." But my article entitled "The Enemies of the Spawning-Beds," won me recognition, and I became a regular contributor to the *Trigger*.

How I ever passed my examinations is one of those mysteries that had better remain uninvestigated. I don't remember that I studied or attended many lectures. I was too busy, shooting or fishing, or writing for the *Trigger*.

Also there existed a girls' boarding-school a mile away.

This school was run by two old maids, the Misses Timmins. It was the Timmins sisters' aim in life to prevent the members of their school from coming into contact with the engineers from Clovermead; therefore we knew them all.

The means of communication were varied and ingenious, for the little maidens at the boarding-school were quite as enthusiastic as we were. We never went through the formality of an introduction,—it was not expected; we spoke when we had the chance, and thanked fortune for the chance.

There was, however, one weird custom laid down by the boarding-school maidens, a tradition which had existed as long as the school; and this was well understood by the Clovermead Engineers. It was this: no youth could expect to spoon with any Timmins maiden unless he first declared his intentions by serenading her.

We were not all blessed with a high order of musical ability,—I played a harmonica,—but we were willing to try. I had tried several times. The results were very sweet,—I don't mean in a musical way.

So between the boarding-school and the *Trigger* I found little leisure, and the less leisure I had the less I felt inclined to occupy it with engineering problems. Besides, there was the big trout to think of, Mine Enemy, whom I had sworn to drag from the depths of that most delicious of streams, the Clovermead River.

During these three years while I persistently

fished for Mine Enemy (and goodness knows I had never before beheld so lusty a trout!) every fly known to anglers, and many flies unknown to anybody but myself, I tried on that impassive fish.

And he grew fatter and fatter.

I remember well the day of the temptation. I was sitting at the foot of the big oak tree that spreads above the pool where Mine Enemy lurked. Wearied with casting, I had sought the shadow of the oak and had lighted a cigarette to change my luck. And as I sat on the cool turf, I was aware of an angle worm, travelling along at my feet on business of its own. Scarcely conscious of what I did, I picked up a twig and tossed the little worm over the bank.

Then, in a moment, I was sorry, for I never willingly bother little things. I watched the worm sinking slowly into the crystalline depths of the pool.

When at last the little worm struck the bottom I suppose it was both astonished and indignant for it began to twist and turn and shoot out like a telescope over the gravelly bottom.

I was sorry, as I say, and I hoped it might make its way to the bank again and bore into it.

Several inquisitive minnows, half as long as the angle worm, gathered around it staring and opening their diminutive mouths. Then, all at once, the minnows darted away, scattering in every direction, and a huge shadow fell upon the gravel,

a trout, monstrous, lazy, slowly gliding out from the dark bank to where the worm wriggled, pushing its pink head among the pebbles.

Very deliberately the great fish opened his mouth—not very wide—and the little worm was gone. For five minutes the trout lay there, and I watched him, scarcely daring to breathe. After a while I cautiously reached for my rod, freed the line and leader, bent a little forward, and cast over the fish. Lightly as snowflakes falling on window panes, the flies drifted onto the placid surface of the pool. The trout did not stir.

It was at this moment that temptation overtook me; my sinful eyes roved over the turf where the angle worm had been, and, brethren, forgive me! —I lusted after bait!!

"It will be so easy," whispered the tempter, "no one will ever know!"

"Get behind me, Satan," said I.

"But it's so easy,—and the big trout will never touch artificial flies!"

"Avaunt Apollyon!" I groaned while the sweat stood in beads on my eyebrows.

So I overcame the devil, and went away to avoid further contention. And Heaven rewarded me with the sight of a pretty girl playing a guitar at her window.

She was so pretty that the fact alone was reward enough, but Heaven never does things by halves, Madame, and when for an instant I paused by the brier hedge to listen, the pretty girl gave me one

of those swift, provoking sidelong glances, and then, touching her guitar, looked innocently up into the sky.

And this is what she sang :

> "Young am I, and yet unskilled
> How to make a lover yield ;
> How to keep and how to gain,
> When to love and when to feign !"
>
> "Take me, take me some of you
> While I yet am young and true ;
> He that has me first is blest,
> For I may deceive the rest."

And the guitar went *strum !* tum-tum ! *strum !* tum-tum ! tinkle-tinkle-tinkle-*strum !* tum-tum!

"The little innocent thing," I thought, and looked at her through the hedge.

She was not so very young; she might have been my own age. She was sitting in one of the windows of the dormitory which belonged to the Misses Timmins' Select Boarding-school for Young Ladies !

Evidently the Misses Timmins were not in the immediate neighbourhood.

"Dear little innocent thing," I repeated to myself.

I moved slightly. She looked at me with that dreamy confiding look that stirs the pulses of some people. I am one of those people.

"She is lonely," said I to myself, "it is the duty—nay, the precious privilege of the happy to sympathize with the lonely."

There was a bud of sweet-brier beside my cheek. I picked it, sniffed it pensively, and looked at the girl in the window.

She looked at me, glanced down at her guitar, thrummed a little, sighed a little, and ate a bon-bon.

Ah, that sigh!—gentle, troubling, irresistible.

"She," thought I to myself, "shall be my goddess,—this humble dormitory shall be my temple, this window my shrine! Hither will I come to worship and bring burnt offerings,—almonds and bon-bons. This village will not be so dull after all," I thought to myself.

"What time," said I, speaking very gently, for I did not wish to disturb the Misses Timmins with my rude voice, —"what time, Mademoiselle, would it be advisable for an enamoured lover to serenade the delicious object of his adoration?"

"We retire at half-past nine, fair sir," said the maiden innocently.

I knew I was not mistaken. The poor child was lonely.

"Heavens!" said I,—"driven to retire at half past nine! Are—er—the—Misses Timmins—er—fierce?"

"They are deaf," said the maiden, with a child-like smile.

"Ah,—unhappy ladies! This is a fine old

building, a noble façade. Are you fond of architecture?"

"My window is the one I am sitting in," said the maid with simple confidence, "I could let down a string in case you had matters of grave import or state despatches to communicate."

"Ahem!" said I, "have you a string there now?"

"Yes, fair sir."

So I slid through the hedge and stood under her window holding up my creel.

"I have," said I, "a few small brook trout here—nothing to boast of—but if you would accept——"

"Indeed you are too kind——"

"They may vary the monotony of prunes and weak tea for supper——"

"Fair sir, I see you have known other boarding-school maidens!"

"Foi de gentilhomme!" I protested.

"Which is not pronounced the way we pronounce French here," she said,—"let me see the trout."

I opened the creel.

"I will accept," said the girl graciously, and let down a string, to which I fastened my creel.

"You are very daring—how do you know that the whole school are not watching?"

"Because," said I, "this is the afternoon when the whole school takes a solemn ramble into the country."

" I am not rambling," she said.

" All do not ramble on days of recreation," I replied significantly.

" You know a great deal about this boarding-school, fair sir. I suppose you also know I am confined to my room as a disciplinary precaution."

" Monstrous ! " I cried, suppressing my satisfaction.

" I only made a cider cocktail," she said.

" Monstrous! " I repeated, " cider cocktails are no good."

By this time she had lowered the creel to me again and I slung it on my shoulders and picked up my rod from the lawn.

" I will bring offerings," I said, " do you like bon-bons, gentle maiden ? "

" Yes, and pickles," she said gravely.

" And music ? "

" Sometimes—not too classical——"

" I will serenade you ! " I cried enthusiastically, —" you say the Misses Timmins are deaf ? "

" Shame on you ! you know they are. What do you play ? I am not sure that I will accept a serenade."

" The banjo and the harmonica—not both at once. I play the harmonica best, but I can't sing to it at the same time, you know. Shall I come ? "

" Y—es. Are you fond of pickled peaches ? I can let some down to you."

I was on the point of accepting a pickled peach,

—I would have accepted a pickled turnip from her,—when, out of the tail of my eye, I saw the tops of multi-coloured sunshades appearing above the crest of the hill, and I knew that the Misses Timmins were returning with their flock.

"You must go!" she whispered hurriedly,—"go quickly!"

"Good-bye,—good-night," I said, "you are the loveliest, sweetest——"

"Quick,—what?"

"Angel,—divine, glorious,—er——"

"Oh, hasten! What?"

"And I love you!"

"You must n't say that;—must you? Oh, hurry and say it again—if you must——"

"Oh, I must!" I cried, heedless of all the Timminses on earth, "I really must——"

"My name is May Thorne—go quickly now."

"Mine is Harry Stenhouse—the deuce! they 're at the gate!"

They were.

Scarcely had I slipped around the building before I heard the chatter and laughter of girls and the patter of feet on the gravel walk. I had heard it before under similar circumstances. But there was a back gate; and I went. Now see how virtue is its own reward! I had resisted the devil and—he gave me another chance.

II.

"YES," said I to myself, remembering how I had piously ascribed my reward to Heaven,—"yes, I was mistaken. I should have said: 'The devil, Madame, never does things by halves.'"

I looked back at the dormitory door. One of the Misses Timmins was snipping roses from the porch trellis.

"To eke out the meagre evening meal," I thought; "poor little maid—poor little May! Only nanny-goats eat roses, and an empty stomach rejoiceth not in perfumes."

This sounded to me like an Eastern proverb. It smacked well, and I repeated it to myself luxuriously.

"Some day," thought I, "when I am famous, and people begin to write books to prove that I'm not, I'll marry May,—if I like her as well as I do now—and she likes me,—ahem!" I'd forgotten that part.

"There is something about this little maid," I mused, "that touches my better nature; something too subtle to analyze, and anyway, I'm not

good at that sort of analysis. She is fond of eating trout, I 'm fond of catching them. Clearly we were designed for each other,—if only for an hour or so."

By this time I had reached my own gate, and stood pensively regarding a pair of tiny chipping birds that were absorbed in the excitement of a violent Spring courtship.

"Certainly," said I to myself, "I am infatuated, and I 'm proud of it. Any man would be—any man whose mind was not all mouse-coloured and neutral."

In the mellow evening light the pools of rain water glimmered like sheets of gold. Two swallows sat on a telegraph wire twittering to each other of the coming summer, two migrating blue-jays stopped in the apple tree by the porch to chatter scandal. A pair of belated white butterflies fluttered sleepily about the lower branches of the lilac bushes.

"They 're probably married also," thought I, "and now they 're going home to bed. Everything that runs or flies or hops seems to be mated—except me. True, I don't fly—unless from the Misses Timmins."

I opened my creel and looked moodily into it. Fishing, after all, was cold comfort compared to stealing an interview with a winsome maid who ate bon-bons to guitar accompaniment.

"May," said I to myself, softly, "May,—might,—May makes might and might makes right—

pshaw! I 'll not go bothering my conscience with every little incident that comes up." I had some consideration for my conscience; I knew how tired it was.

The rain water in the long road ruts glimmered with a deeper orange light. A bat fluttered around the darkening foliage of the maples; a cricket creaked from door-sill.

"The bat," thought I, "is looking for a little lady-bat; the cricket is serenading; I think that I 'll follow their example. I wish I could play on my harmonica and sing at the same time."

About ten o'clock that night, the moon being well up, I went out onto the porch and looked at it until I felt sufficiently sentimental to sit on the damp grass under May's window and make music as I understood it. So I took my banjo under my arm, dropped my harmonica into my coat pocket, and tip-toed off down the road as many a better man had done before me, and would continue to do as long as that boarding-school existed.

O delicious night in early Spring! Lured by the balm in the soft night winds, all the little field creatures had come out of their holes in meadow and pasture, in orchard and thicket, and were scraping away on monotonous shrill melodies, accentuated by the treble of hundreds of tree toads.

In every shadowy orchard Katydids performed countless encores to the bass "bravos!" of the great bull-frogs along the mill-brook's reedy banks. All living things did their part to cele-

brate the coming Summer, even a distant skunk added his mite to the spicy night. Personally I preferred the roadside lilacs, but it 's all a matter of taste, and George the Fourth liked his oysters over-ripe.

"If these bull-frogs," thought I, "keep up their sonorous tom-toms, it will ruin my serenade —I know it, from experience."

By this time I had reached the dormitory hedge.

"A brassy cornet would be lost in this hubbub," I mused bitterly, looking up at the third window on the second floor.

I thumbed the bass string of my banjo doubtfully, paused, cleared my throat, included frogs, toads, katydids, and crickets in one general and comprehensive anathema, and sang this rehashed song:

> "Ye little loves that round her wait
> To bring me tidings of my fate,
> As May upon her pillow lies,
> Ah! gently whisper—Harry dies."
>
> "If this will not her pity move,
> And the proud fair disdains to love,
> Smile and say 't is all a lie,
> And haughty Henry scorns to die!"

"Bother take it," I muttered, "I should n't have sung that last verse—it may offend her. That 's the trouble about those old songs; you

never can tell what you 're singing until you 've put your foot in it."

This mixed metaphor was probably due to the confusion in my mind, for what with the frogs and a lurking fear of the Misses Timmins, I was not as cool as I might have been.

While I was singing, two or three windows were softly raised, and now more were being raised, and I caught glimpses of shadowy white-draped figures leaning from sills or dodging behind curtains.

And now *her* window opened softly; I saw a shape between the curtains and the sweet notes of a guitar came throbbing out into the night.

"Miss Thorne," I whispered, "ask those young ladies to go in, please. They always come and bother."

Some of them took the hint. I did not care for the rest, for time was precious, and I feared the Timmins! So I told Miss Thorne in a hollow, passionate whisper that it was out of the question for me to try to live without her,—and a few other facts calculated to melt solid rocks into tears. But when I desired to be informed concerning her constancy, she interrupted me.

"What was that last verse you sang?" she asked.

"Oh, that was only one of those old songs, you know; I did n't intend——"

"One of those old songs? Very well. Listen to this one then, and be assured of my constancy."

"The time that is to come, is not;
How then can it be mine?
The present moment 's all my lot,
And that, as fast as it is got,
Harry, is only thine!

"Then talk not of inconstancy,
False hearts and broken vows;
If I, by miracle, can be
This live-long minute true to thee,
'T is all that Heaven allows."

It was a pretty revenge for my parrot-like repetition of a verse that was out of place, but when, from a neighbouring window, another voice cried "Brava May! serves him right!" I was annoyed and protested in hoarse whispers.

Then all those little maids began to make fun of me. I thought I could distinguish May's silvery mocking laughter, and, hurt and angry, I shook the dew of the lawn from my shoes, and went away, nursing my wrath and my hurt pride.

"That 's what one gets," I mused, "that 's what a man gets by meddling with things that don't concern him! I was an ass to make eyes at her. I was doubly an ass to think that she would care for good music—I was a triple ass to sing that idiotic old song. It was a too-cock-sure-independent—well don't-if-you-don't-want-to! sort of song, and women don't like that. Women are all alike—it is only circumstances that change them. I wish I had sense enough to let 'em

alone! The confounded song hurt her vanity—that 's what 's the matter!"

I sat down on a flat rock by the roadside and blew a dismal strain from my harmonica. It comforted me a little, so I played "Sir Daniel O'Donnel" and "Casey's Lament."

The weird strains of the latter wrung howls from a dog in a stable near by, so I changed to a pleasanter air to save his feelings. But my heart was heavy; I eyed the moon furtively and moped.

"Those feather-headed girls always come and listen every time a fellow tries to do a little wooing on his own account," I muttered; "Barclay had the same experience, so did Kendall and Gordon. I 'll be hanged if I repeat this fiasco—it 's cursedly silly, anyway, and I don't care whether it's customary and traditional. I 'll not play circus for any woman on earth!"

I wiped my harmonica on my handkerchief and played "Bannigan's Barracks" in a minor key. The dog in the stable howled intermittently.

I could see the dark mass of the dormitory out of the corner of my eye. A candle flickered behind one of the windows, I could not tell which, from where I was sitting.

And, as I eyed it askance, tooting resignedly the while, I saw somebody appear at the great gate, open it, and move swiftly out and up the moonlit road toward me.

"Some of those girls have told a Timmins, and she 's coming to do me!" I thought. "I don't

care. Miss Thorne made me ridiculous, and I 'll not see her again, and I 'm on the public highway! Let the Misses Timmins advance!"

So I struck up a lively quickstep on my harmonica, and blinked innocently at the moon. The figure was close to me now, I saw it, but I tootled away, regardless.

"Mr. Stenhouse!"

I turned slowly.

"Oh, I know it is terribly imprudent, and if I 'm caught I 'll be sent home, but I heard your harmonica — oh, such dismal strains! — and I thought if only I could see you for a second to tell you that it was not I that laughed, for I think your serenade was — was perfectly charming — there!"

We were standing face to face in the moonlight.

At last I said: "I was a fool to sing that song; I 'm sorry, Miss Thorne."

"Oh, it was not the song as much as it was that you said—you gave me to understand quite frankly that you had—had been to the school before. You said 'the girls always bothered——'"

"Did I say that?"

"Yes,—it was most humiliating for—for me."

"Oh, I 'm a perfect idiot," I admitted.

She looked down at her slippers—they had been hurriedly and carelessly tied—and I noticed it and knelt to repair the oversight.

"I was in such haste," she said. "Is it true that you have serenaded the dormitory before?"

"Not the dormitory——"

"You know what I mean; have you?"

"All the fellows do," I said, vaguely.

She tapped her foot on the gravel.

"Those strings are sufficiently tied," she said, "tell me whom you serenaded?"

"I can't do that, Miss Thorne."

"Why? Then tell me when it was."

"When? Oh, last year, before I ever imagined such a girl as you existed. It 's a silly custom, anyway——"

"It is n't,—it 's charming—when the man has any tact. It 's the tradition of the school that no girl shall spoon with a man who has n't serenaded her, and I do not expect to break the traditions of my school——"

"Only the rules, Miss Thorne?"

"Only the rules—and a heart or two!"

"Or *two!*"

"Faith, sir," she said maliciously, "did you think you were the only one?"

"Yes," said I, "I did."

"And you tell me deliberately that you had serenaded other girls there before I came—I don't know how many, perhaps a dozen, twenty, fifty, the whole school!"

"What!" I cried, bewildered.

"Oh, I don't care," she said, "I only wished to show you what men are and what their selfishness requires of women,—to sacrifice everything while they sacrifice nothing."

"And you don't care?" I asked.

"No, Mr. Stenhouse."

"Then why did you risk everything to come and tell me?"

"W—what?" she stammered.

"Miss Thorne," said I, very gravely, "your school is noted for its escapades. It is known in the village, not as the 'Misses Timmins's Select Boarding-School for Young Ladies,' but as 'The Devil's Own.' We engineer students are a reckless lot, also. We are, to put it plainly, a godless crew, but this—this is somehow different. I am beginning to believe that our thoughtless folly—yours and mine, may leave one of us miserable for life."

"Me?"

"Who knows? I can only speak for myself,—I—I have changed already,—yes, in these few moments that we stood here face to face—"

"What do you mean?" she said mockingly.

"I mean that in another minute I shall love you—in another second!"

"Are you serious?" she demanded incredulously. Then, "Oh, I thought you jolly and clever, and you prove to be soft and silly! Master Harry, you bore me!"

"Do I?" I answered angrily. "Well, I 'll never do it again, and I was a fool to believe you would understand anything but chocolate-creams and dormitory flirting!"

"Not only soft and silly, but a boor," she said. "Good-night. No, you need not walk to the gate with me—I never wish to set eyes on you again."

III.

ON the first day of June I passed my final examinations at the great Engineering School at Clovermead, and was then ready to let myself loose on the mining regions of a deluded world.

The commencement exercises bored me; I went fishing most of the time, or else stayed in my rooms writing "Dry Fly Casting as a Fine Art" for the *Trigger*. In the long fragrant evenings I took lonely walks by the river or sat under the oak playing minor airs on my harmonica.

At the end of the first week in June the commencement exercises were over, the visiting hordes from New York and Boston had flitted away to Newport or Bar Harbor, the Government officers went back to Washington and West Point, and the little village of Clovermead lay in the sunshine, white, sweet-scented, deserted.

The Misses Timmins's "Select Boarding-School for Young Ladies" had its commencement—a rainbow affair—and dissolved, leaving, as residue, an empty school-house and a dormitory dedicated to silence.

I did n't go to their commencement, not because I was not invited, for most of the fellows went anyway. No, since my last serenade, I had shunned the school and all it works.

It was true that I lingered in the village of Clovermead after my fellow-students had departed, not, as I frequently explained to myself, to catch a last glimpse of Miss Thorne, but to catch that veteran trout in the Clovermead River. "I shall never see Miss Thorne again," I said to myself, "and I 'm glad of it."

So on the day of her commencement I went fishing, very far off and I passed a miserable day. It rained, among other things.

The next morning the sun shone in at my window and I looked out into the village with a strange weight at my heart. I did not feel hungry, but went to breakfast, determined to let nothing disturb me or my appetite. As I touched the sugar-tongs to the sugar, a faint whistle came on the June wind from the distant railroad station.

"There go the young ladies from the boarding-school," said my landlady; "do take one of these shirred eggs, Mr. Stenhouse."

"Thank you," said I, with a queer sensation in my throat.

"May has gone," I was thinking. After a while I said aloud : "what of it !"

"I beg your pardon," said my landlady, smiling.

"I beg yours—it was nothing; I was only thinking that I was alone in the village."

"I hope you will stay," she said, fingering the black-edged handkerchief in her lap.

"You are very good," I replied; "I shall stay until I catch that big trout in the river."

"Then poor luck to you!" smiled the kindly old lady, "what time will you have your dinner, Mr. Stenhouse?"

I went back to my room and sat down by the window. A flowering branch of late apple blossoms scraped across the sash as I threw it open and leaned out.

For a long while I listened to the droning of bees among the half-opened buds, thinking that the warmth had fled from the sunshine and the scent was gone from mead and sedge.

And "why?" I repeated to myself again and again, until a sullen anger seized me and I tramped up and down my room, my hands buried in the canvas pockets of my shooting coat.

"Now," said I to myself, "this is d——d foolishness. I 'll just go and try for that trout, and I 'll catch him too," I added, gritting my teeth to dull the pain in my heart,—"I 'll catch him by fair means or foul,—yes, by jingo! I 'll use a worm!" No, I felt no horror for the deed I was about to commit. All that was base and depraved in my nature had risen with my better feelings to combat a depression, a sorrow, that was so sudden, so deep, that I hardly understood it.

Under such circumstances the truly good come out strong,—in novels; others do something wrong to occupy their minds. Wallowing dulls the capability of suffering,—for a time. It is much practised by weak and strong, contemporary fiction to the contrary.

So it happened one day in early June, when the sky was china blue and filmy clouds trailed like lace across the disk of a pale sun, that I, Henry Stenhouse, well and sound in mind and body, decided to commit a crime.

I started down the road, swinging my creel over my shoulder and whistling, buoyed up by that false exhilaration which always took possession of me when I felt myself on good terms with the devil. In my pocket nestled my luncheon, a small flask of Bordeaux, fly-book, harmonica, reel, and a *tin bait box*.

Imagine what it costs me to write this!

Well it 's written,—and on I went, whistling "Sir Daniel O'Donnel," as though I had not a care in the world and love was but an old wive's tale.

Yet, whistle as I would, I could not close my eyes to the caustic criticism of the sunny world on my solitary condition. Robins hopped about the pastures in pairs, blue-birds flew from sapling to fence, in pairs, yellow butterflies whirled over the clover in dozens and dozens of pairs, and the very trees, the silver birches, the maples and elms, all seemed to grow in pairs. Two by two

I counted oak and beach, nestling in each others shadows, two by two the twinkling silver aspens seemed to wink at me with every leaf.

I alone was alone.

"Because," said I to myself, "I 've got brains"; but the boast fell only on the idle unbelieving ears of the corn, too young to understand or sympathize.

A great tenderness was in my heart, but I crushed it out, and turned into the fields, treading my way through rustling corn where June breezes lingered, whispering.

When I struck the hazel patch I felt better, and I whistled "Sir Daniel O'Donnel" again.

A wood-thrush, striving to imitate me, produced an unconscious masterpiece; a cat-bird mewed unceasingly from the deeper growth. Both had mates.

I took the hidden path through the beechwoods until I came to a big pine. Here, following a trail, known to myself, I entered the denser woods, crossed the two spring brooks that feed the river, and after a few minutes rapid walking came to the oak which spreads above the limpid silvery pool, the abode of Mine Enemy.

"As long as I have sunk to the level of a pothunter," said I, treading softly over the moss, "I might as well do the thing thoroughly."

Very cautiously I produced an angle-worm from my box, baited my hook, cast the infernal machine into the pool, and then, placing my rod on the

bank, put a flat stone on the butt and sat down to smoke. When I had finished my cigarette I lay down, stretching out on the moss under the oak tree.

And as I sprawled on my back looking skyward, I was aware of a pair of stockings,—black stockings,—hanging from a limb directly over my head.

Astonished and indignant I lay perfectly still, staring at the stockings. They had been wet but now were rapidly drying, swinging gently in the warm June wind.

"This is pleasant!" I thought; "some credulous country wench has taken my pool for a foot-bath. I 'll not put up with it, by jingo! Have fishermen no rights? Is this a picnic ground? Is that river a resort for barefooted giggling girls?"

If there were any people splashing and paddling about among the stones down the river, I knew that every trout within range would be paralyzed with fright. I sat up and tried to see through the foliage which bordered the shallow river where it curved into the woods.

"They 're down there," I muttered, "and I bet they 've done the business for every trout between here and the falls. Idiots!"

I looked up at the stockings. They were certainly silk, I could see that. The sun bronzed the pointed toes, now almost dry. And while I looked there came a faint sound of splashing close

by, just where the river narrows to curve into the woods. Something bright was glistening down there between the branches, something white that moved slowly up stream, nearer and nearer, now plainly in view through the leaves.

It was a young woman in a light summer gown with a big straw hat on her head, and she was slowly and deliberately wading through the shallow water toward my pool.

She seemed to be enjoying it ; the swift water rippled around her ankles dashing her skirts with spray, as she lifted her wet pink feet carefully over the sharp rocks and deeper channels. Her skirt, gathered naïvely in both hands, fluttered perhaps a trifle higher than it might have done under other circumstances. It was a pretty innocent picture, but it was out of place in my trout pool, and I stood up, determined to expostulate. After a second I sat down again, somewhat suddenly. The black stockings waved triumphantly above my head. I looked at them, bewildered, utterly upset. The young lady in the water was Miss Thorne.

Before I could decide what to do, she came in sight around the trees, stepping daintily over the sandy shallows. I dared not move. She did not look up.

"What the mischief shall I do?" I thought, keeping very still so that no movement should attract her eyes to the oak on the bank above. I could not retreat and leave my rod, I dared not

creep to the pool to recover it. Besides, I did n't want to go away.

She had sat down on a sunny rock, just below me, and was stirring the sandy bottom with her little toes. It was, as I said, a pretty picture, sweet and innocent, but utterly fatal to my peace of mind. I wondered what she 'd do next, and lay silent, scarcely breathing.

"If she turns her back," I thought, "I 'll get up and go. I 'm no eavesdropper, and I 'll go,— only I hope she won't give me the chance."

She had drawn a book from the folds of her skirt, and, as I lay there without sound or motion, she began to read, repeating aloud to herself the passages that pleased her.

> "I am the magic waterfall
> Whose waters leap from fathomless and living springs,
> Far in the mist-hung silence of the Past."

She paused, turning the leaves with languid capriciousness, then :

> "I fill the woods with songs ; the trees,
> Through whose twigs flow prophecies,
> I deck with vestments green."

And again she read :

> "The shower has freshened the song of the bird
> And budded the bushes
> And gilded the maple and tasselled the linden and willow,
> Staining with green the forest-fringed path."

She sat silent, idly touching the fluttering pages. Then she raised her head, singing softly odd bits of songs to herself—to the thrushes around her.

A great belted kingfisher flashed past, a blurr of blue and white against the trees. His loud harsh rattle startled her for an instant.

And, as she turned to watch his flight along the winding stream, I rose and slipped noiselessly into the forest. Before I had taken a dozen steps, however, I remembered my rod, and halted irresolutely. Looking back through the thicket fringe, I saw that she had turned my way again, and it was out of the question to recover it without being seen.

"If she only had her stockings on," I sighed.

Should I wait, taking discreet observations occasionally? Should I go and let the rod take care of itself? Suppose the big trout should seize hold and drag it into the river? Suppose Miss Thorne should step on the barbed hook with her bare little feet! At the thought I turned hastily back in my own tracks, halted again, started on, wavered, took one irresolute step, and stopped.

I could see her now quite plainly without being seen. She had tossed her book up on the moss, and was picking her way along the ascending bank, holding on to branch and root.

"She 's coming for her stockings, that 's what she 's doing," I thought.

Until she had safely passed the pool where the hook lay, I kept my eyes on her. After that I

waited until I saw her reach up to the oak-limb for the stockings; then I looked the other way.

I gave her ten minutes to complete her toilet, holding my watch in my hand.

Once she sang pensively that puzzling but pathetic old ballad:

> "'Mother, may I go out to swim?'
> 'Yes, my darling daughter,—
> Hang your hose on a hickory limb,
> But don't go near the water.'"

The ten minutes were up at last. "Now," said I to myself, "shall I look? No—yes—no indeed! —I don't know,—I'll just see whether——"

I turned around.

She had left the shelter of the oak and was hurrying down the bank toward my rod, with every appearance of excitement.

"I'll bet there's a fish on it," said I to myself; "by jingo! there is!—and it's bending and tugging as if a porpoise had the line! It'll be into the river in a moment! There! It's gone!"

But I was mistaken, for Miss Thorne grasped it just as it slid over the edge of the bank.

"She'll break it! I'll bet it's my big fish! There! She's pulling the fish out—she's trying to drag the fish up! I can't stand this! It's no use—I've got to go."

When she saw me hastening down the slope she did not cry out, neither did she drop the rod,

but her blue eyes grew very large and round. And as I hurried up she gave one last convulsive tug and hauled up, over, and on to the bank an enormous trout, flapping and bouncing among the leaves.

In a second I had seized the fish—it took all the strength of my arm to hold him—and the rest was soon over. There he lay, a monarch among trout, glistening, dappled, crimson-flecked. I walked down to the water's edge, washed my hands mechanically, and slowly climbed back again.

"I did n't know it was your rod," she said. "I only saw a big fish on it, and I pulled it out."

"I—I thought you had left Clovermead," I stammered.

"I thought you had also," she said; "all the others have gone. To-morrow I go; my guardian is coming."

"To-morrow?"

"Yes; at eight o'clock in the morning."

There was an awkward pause. I glanced askance at the fish, already ashamed of my work, dreading to know what she thought of a man who fished with bait.

"It is a large trout," she said timidly; "it is a wonder that I did n't break your rod and line. You see I never before caught a trout."

"And—and you would not—you don't think less of a man because he fishes with bait?" I asked, red with shame.

"I? Why, no. What else would you use?"

"Flies," I said, desperately. "You know it."

"Flies? Can you catch enough?"

"I mean artificial flies," I said. "You don't understand, you can't conceive the depth of depravity that leads a man to catch a trout as I 've caught this,—can you? It 's simple murder."

"But," said Miss Thorne, with a puzzled glance at the fish, "I thought that I caught him."

"I—I baited the hook," I faltered.

"Then," said she, "it 's a clear case of collusion, and we 're both responsible."

We looked at each other for an instant. She sighed, almost imperceptibly.

"I am very sorry for what I said that night," I began. "You can't think how it has troubled me ever since. I have suffered a great deal—er—and I 'm deucedly miserable, Miss Thorne."

"I forgive you," she said sweetly. "Why did you not ask me before?"

"Because," said I, "being an idiot I did n't dare."

"It made me very unhappy," she said. "I should not have spoken so——"

"Oh, you were quite right!" I cried; "it was my fault entirely."

"No indeed!"

"It was, really."

"And to think I should have spoken so after the trout you gave me and the serenade——"

"If the music had been as good as the trout——"

"It was,—it was charming; and you said some things that first afternoon under my window——"

"I meant them!—I mean them now a thousand-fold!"

The crimson stained her cheeks. She half turned toward the river.

"I think," she said, "that I am late for luncheon."

Very humbly I produced my flask of Bordeaux, my cold chicken, bread, and hot-house pears. She looked at them, her head on one side.

"It is not very much," I ventured,—"for two."

"I think it will do," she said reflectively; "there are some cresses by the brook. I am fond of cresses. Have you pepper and salt?"

I rummaged in my pockets, produced the harmonica, a package of tobacco, a spare reel, a knife, a steel hunting watch, a cigarette case, a box of dry flies, a match-case, a box of leaders, and finally a neat little parcel of pepper and salt.

She watched me with perfect gravity.

"If you please," she said, "you may go and play on your harmonica under that oak tree while I arrange the table. Will you?"

"Can't I help you?" I murmured, giddy with happiness.

"No. Go and play 'Sir Daniel O'Donnell.'"

I watched her, tooting fitfully the while, and presently she called to me that luncheon was ready, and asked me to lend her my handkerchief to dry her hands.

We drank in turn from the flask, gravely begging pardon for the *goutte sans façon*.

But the luncheon! There never was such a luncheon served in the palaces of Stamboul! I ate ambrosia—some name it chicken—and I drank nectar—foolish people would have called it Bordeaux, and I sat opposite to and looked in the blue eyes of the sweetest maid in the world.

And so we sat and chatted on, I knowing little of what was said save that it was her voice, always her voice in my ears and every word was melody. The swift droop of the long lashes on the pure curved cheeks, the gentle caress in every movement, the light glinting on tawny hair, on stray curling strands blown across her eyes—these I remember.

The shadows came and laid their long shapes on the sands of the shore, the trees darkened where the massed foliage swept in one unbroken sheet above the moss; the red west blazed.

Once a fish splashed among the weeds; a wood-duck steered fearlessly past, peering and turning, sousing its gorgeous neck in the shallow stream.

At last she sprang up, touching her hair with light swift fingers, and shaking her skirts full breadth.

"I must go."

"So soon?"

"Yes. Shall I say good-bye now for to-morrow?"

"Say it."

"Good-bye, then."

"Is that all?"

"Good-bye——"

"Nothing more?"

"Oh, what—what else?" she murmured; "I can say no more."

"I can," said I.

"You must not—ah, do you mean it?"

"Yes. I love you."

"Then we will go back—together," she said, innocently, and came close up to me, laying her white hands in mine.

* * * * * *

"Ah," said I, as we entered the road by the dormitory, "the trout is a noble one, but, May, it was murder that was done on Clovermead water."

"And theft," she said, with a faint smile, "where is my heart, if you please?"

And we looked long, smiling into each other's eyes.

* * * * * *

It all happened years ago. I have never touched bait to hook since, but I confess that I do still, at times, play "Sir Daniel O'Donnell" on the harmonica. May permits it, especially when the children beg me; and, as they are teasing me now, I shall probably play it to-night.

A PLEASANT EVENING.

" Et pis, doucett'ment on s'endort,
On fait sa carne, on fait sa sorgue,
On ronfle, et, comme un tuyau d'orgue,
L'tuyau s'met à ronfler pus fort. . . ."

ARISTIDE BRUANT.

A PLEASANT EVENING.

I.

AS I stepped upon the platform of a Broadway cable-car at Forty-second Street, somebody said; " hello, Hilton, Jamison 's looking for you."

" Hello, Curtis," I replied, " what does Jamison want ? "

" He wants to know what you 've been doing all the week," said Curtis, hanging desperately to the railing as the car lurched forward ; " he says you seem to think that the *Manhattan Illustrated Weekly* was created for the sole purpose of providing salary and vacations for you."

" The shifty old tom-cat ! " I said, indignantly, " he knows well enough where I 've been. Vacation ! Does he think the State Camp in June is a snap ? "

" Oh," said Curtis, " you 've been to Peekskill ? "

" I should say so," I replied, my wrath rising as I thought of my assignment.

" Hot ? " inquired Curtis, dreamily.

" One hundred and three in the shade," I answered. " Jamison wanted three full pages and three half pages, all for process work, and a lot of line drawings into the bargain. I could have faked them—I wish I had. I was fool enough to hustle and break my neck to get some honest drawings, and that 's the thanks I get ! "

" Did you have a camera ? "

" No. I will next time—I 'll waste no more conscientious work on Jamison," I said sulkily.

" It does n't pay," said Curtis. " When I have military work assigned me, I don't do the dashing sketch-artist act, you bet ; I go to my studio, light my pipe, pull out a lot of old *Illustrated London News*, select several suitable battle scenes by Caton Woodville—and use 'em too."

The car shot around the neck-breaking curve at Fourteenth Street.

" Yes," continued Curtis, as the car stopped in front of the Morton House for a moment, then plunged forward again amid a furious clanging of gongs, " it does n't pay to do decent work for the fat-headed men who run the *Manhattan Illustrated*. They don't appreciate it."

" I think the public does," I said, " but I 'm sure Jamison does n't. It would serve him right if I did what most of you fellows do—take a lot of Caton Woodville's and Thulstrup's drawings, change the uniforms, ' chic ' a figure or two, and turn in a drawing labelled ' from life.' I 'm sick of this sort of thing anyway. Almost every day this week I 've been chasing myself over that

tropical camp, or galloping in the wake of those batteries. I 've got a full page of the ' camp by moonlight,' full pages of ' artillery drill ' and ' light battery in action,' and a dozen smaller drawings that cost me more groans and perspiration than Jamison ever knew in all his lymphatic life ! "

" Jamison 's got wheels," said Curtis,—" more wheels than there are bicycles in Harlem. He wants you to do a full page by Saturday."

" A what ? " I exclaimed, aghast.

" Yes he does—he was going to send Jim Crawford, but Jim expects to go to California for the winter fair, and you 've got to do it."

" What is it ? " I demanded savagely.

" The animals in Central Park," chuckled Curtis.

I was furious. The animals ! Indeed ! I 'd show Jamison that I was entitled to some consideration ! This was Thursday; that gave me a day and a half to finish a full-page drawing for the paper, and, after my work at the State Camp I felt that I was entitled to a little rest. Anyway I objected to the subject. I intended to tell Jamison so—I intended to tell him firmly. However, many of the things that we often intended to tell Jamison were never told. He was a peculiar man, fat-faced, thin-lipped, gentle-voiced, mild-mannered, and soft in his movements as a pussy cat. Just why our firmness should give way when we were actually in his presence, I have never quite been able to determine. He said very

little—so did we, although we often entered his presence with other intentions.

The truth was that the *Manhattan Illustrated Weekly* was the best paying, best illustrated paper in America, and we young fellows were not anxious to be cast adrift. Jamison's knowledge of art was probably as extensive as the knowledge of any "Art editor" in the city. Of course that was saying nothing, but the fact merited careful consideration on our part, and we gave it much consideration.

This time, however, I decided to let Jamison know that drawings are not produced by the yard, and that I was neither a floor-walker nor a hand-me-down. I would stand up for my rights ; I 'd tell old Jamison a few things to set the wheels under his silk hat spinning, and if he attempted any of his pussy-cat ways on me, I 'd give him a few plain facts that would curl what hair he had left.

Glowing with a splendid indignation I jumped off the car at the City Hall, followed by Curtis, and a few minutes later entered the office of the *Manhattan Illustrated News.*

"Mr. Jamison would like to see you, sir," said one of the compositors as I passed into the long hallway. I threw my drawings on the table and passed a handkerchief over my forehead.

"Mr. Jamison would like to see you, sir," said a small freckle-faced boy with a smudge of ink on his nose.

"I know it," I said, and started to remove my gloves.

"Mr. Jamison would like to see you, sir," said a lank messenger who was carrying a bundle of proofs to the floor below.

"The deuce take Jamison," I said to myself. I started toward the dark passage that leads to the abode of Jamison, running over in my mind the neat and sarcastic speech which I had been composing during the last ten minutes.

Jamison looked up and nodded softly as I entered the room. I forgot my speech.

"Mr. Hilton," he said, "we want a full page of the Zoo before it is removed to Bronx Park. Saturday afternoon at three o'clock the drawing must be in the engraver's hands. Did you have a pleasant week in camp?"

"It was hot," I muttered, furious to find that I could not remember my little speech.

"The weather," said Jamison, with soft courtesy, "is oppressive everywhere. Are your drawings in, Mr. Hilton?"

"Yes. It was infernally hot and I worked like a nigger——"

"I suppose you were quite overcome. Is that why you took a two days' trip to the Catskills? I trust the mountain air restored you—but—was it prudent to go to Cranston's for the cotillion Tuesday? Dancing in such uncomfortable weather is really unwise. Good-morning, Mr. Hilton, remember the engraver should have your drawings on Saturday by three."

I walked out, half hypnotized, half enraged. Curtis grinned at me as I passed—I could have boxed his ears.

" Why the mischief should I lose my tongue whenever that old tom-cat purrs ! " I asked myself as I entered the elevator and was shot down to the first floor. " I 'll not put up with this sort of thing much longer—how in the name of all that 's foxy did he know that I went to the mountains ? I suppose he thinks I 'm lazy because I don't wish to be boiled to death. How did he know about the dance at Cranston's ? Old cat ! "

The roar and turmoil of machinery and busy men filled my ears as I crossed the avenue and turned into the City Hall Park.

From the staff on the tower the flag drooped in the warm sunshine with scarcely a breeze to lift its crimson bars. Overhead stretched a splendid cloudless sky, deep, deep blue, thrilling, scintillating in the gemmed rays of the sun.

Pigeons wheeled and circled about the roof of the grey Post Office or dropped out of the blue above to flutter around the fountain in the square.

On the steps of the City Hall the unlovely politician lounged, exploring his heavy under jaw with wooden toothpick, twisting his drooping black moustache, or distributing tobacco juice over marble steps and close-clipped grass.

My eyes wandered from these human vermin to the calm scornful face of Nathan Hale, on his pedestal, and then to the grey-coated Park po-

liceman whose occupation was to keep little children from the cool grass.

A young man with thin hands and blue circles under his eyes was slumbering on a bench by the fountain, and the policeman walked over to him and struck him on the soles of his shoes with a short club.

The young man rose mechanically, stared about, dazed by the sun, shivered, and limped away. I saw him sit down on the steps of the white marble building, and I went over and spoke to him. He neither looked at me, nor did he notice the coin I offered.

"You 're sick," I said, "you had better go to the hospital."

"Where?" he asked vacantly—"I 've been, but they would n't receive me."

He stooped and tied the bit of string that held what remained of his shoe to his foot.

"You are French," I said.

"Yes."

"Have you no friends? Have you been to the French Consul?"

"The Consul!" he replied; "no, I have n't been to the French Consul."

After a moment I said, "You speak like a gentleman."

He rose to his feet and stood very straight, looking me, for the first time, directly in the eyes.

"Who are you?" I asked abruptly.

"An outcast," he said, without emotion, and limped off thrusting his hands into his ragged pockets.

"Huh!" said the Park policeman who had come up behind me in time to hear my question and the vagabond's answer; "don't you know who that hobo is?—An' you a newspaper man!"

"Who is he, Cusick?" I demanded, watching the thin shabby figure moving across Broadway toward the river.

"On the level you don't know, Mr. Hilton?" repeated Cusick, suspiciously.

"No, I don't; I never before laid eyes on him."

"Why," said the sparrow policeman, "that 's 'Soger Charlie';—you remember—that French officer what sold secrets to the Dutch Emperor."

"And was to have been shot? I remember now, four years ago—and he escaped—you mean to say that is the man?"

"Everybody knows it," sniffed Cusick, "I 'd a-thought you newspaper gents would have knowed it first."

"What was his name?" I asked after a moment's thought.

"Soger Charlie——"

"I mean his name at home."

"Oh, some French dago name. No Frenchman will speak to him here; sometimes they curse him and kick him. I guess he 's dyin' by inches."

I remembered the case now. Two young French cavalry officers were arrested, charged with selling plans of fortifications and other military secrets to the Germans. On the eve of their conviction, one of them, Heaven only knows how, escaped and turned up in New York. The other was duly shot. The affair had made some noise, because both young men were of good families. It was a painful episode, and I had hastened to forget it. Now that it was recalled to my mind, I remembered the newspaper accounts of the case, but I had forgotten the names of the miserable young men.

"Sold his country," observed Cusick, watching a group of children out of the corner of his eyes—"you can't trust no Frenchman nor dagoes nor Dutchmen either. I guess Yankees are about the only white men."

I looked at the noble face of Nathan Hale and nodded.

"Nothin' sneaky about us, eh, Mr. Hilton?"

I thought of Benedict Arnold and looked at my boots.

Then the policeman said, "Well, solong, Mr. Hilton," and went away to frighten a pasty-faced little girl who had climbed upon the railing and was leaning down to sniff the fragrant grass.

"Cheese it, de cop!" cried her shrill-voiced friends, and the whole bevy of small ragamuffins scuttled away across the square.

With a feeling of depression I turned and

walked toward Broadway, where the long yellow cable-cars swept up and down, and the din of gongs and the deafening rumble of heavy trucks echoed from the marble walls of the Court House to the granite mass of the Post Office.

Throngs of hurrying busy people passed up town and down town, slim sober-faced clerks, trim cold-eyed brokers, here and there a red-necked politician linking arms with some favourite heeler, here and there a City Hall lawyer, sallow-faced and saturnine. Sometimes a fireman, in his severe blue uniform, passed through the crowd, sometimes a blue-coated policeman, mopping his clipped hair, holding his helmet in his white-gloved hand. There were women too, pale-faced shop girls with pretty eyes, tall blonde girls who might be typewriters and might not, and many, many older women whose business in that part of the city no human being could venture to guess, but who hurried up town and down town, all occupied with *something* that gave to the whole restless throng a common likeness—the expression of one who hastens toward a hopeless goal.

I knew some of those who passed me. There was little Jocelyn of the *Mail and Express*; there was Hood, who had more money than he wanted and was going to have less than he wanted when he left Wall Street; there was Colonel Tidmouse of the 45th Infantry, N.G.S.N.Y., probably coming from the office of the *Army and Navy Journal*, and there was Dick Harding

who wrote the best stories of New York life that have been printed. People said his hat no longer fitted,—especially people who also wrote stories of New York life and whose hats threatened to fit as long as they lived.

I looked at the statue of Nathan Hale, then at the human stream that flowed around his pedestal.

"Quand même," I muttered and walked out into Broadway, signalling to the gripman of an uptown cable-car.

II.

I PASSED into the Park by the Fifth Avenue and 59th Street gate; I could never bring myself to enter it through the gate that is guarded by the hideous pigmy statue of Thorwaldsen.

The afternoon sun poured into the windows of the New Netherlands Hotel, setting every orange-curtained pane a-glitter, and tipping the wings of the bronze dragons with flame.

Gorgeous masses of flowers blazed in the sunshine from the grey terraces of the Savoy, from the high grilled court of the Vanderbilt palace, and from the balconies of the Plaza opposite.

The white marble façade of the Metropolitan Club was a grateful relief in the universal glare, and I kept my eyes on it until I had crossed the dusty street and entered the shade of the trees.

Before I came to the Zoo I smelled it. Next week it was to be removed to the fresh cool woods and meadows in Bronx Park, far from the stifling air of the city, far from the infernal noise of the Fifth Avenue omnibuses.

A noble stag stared at me from his enclosure

among the trees as I passed down the winding asphalt walk. "Never mind, old fellow," said I, "you will be splashing about in the Bronx River next week and cropping maple shoots to your heart's content."

On I went, past herds of staring deer, past great lumbering elk, and moose, and long-faced African antelopes, until I came to the dens of the great carnivora.

The tigers sprawled in the sunshine, blinking and licking their paws; the lions slept in the shade or squatted on their haunches, yawning gravely. A slim panther travelled to and fro behind her barred cage, pausing at times to peer wistfully out into the free sunny world. My heart ached for caged wild things, and I walked on, glancing up now and then to encounter the blank stare of a tiger or the mean shifty eyes of some ill-smelling hyena.

Across the meadow I could see the elephants swaying and swinging their great heads, the sober bison solemnly slobbering over their cuds, the sarcastic countenances of camels, the wicked little zebras, and a lot more animals of the camel and llama tribe, all resembling each other, all equally ridiculous, stupid, deadly uninteresting.

Somewhere behind the old arsenal an eagle was screaming, probably a Yankee eagle; I heard the "tchug! tchug!" of a blowing hippopotamus, the squeal of a falcon, and the snarling yap! of quarrelling wolves.

" A pleasant place for a hot day ! " I pondered bitterly, and I thought some things about Jamison that I shall not insert in this volume. But I lighted a cigarette to deaden the aroma from the hyenas, unclasped my sketching block, sharpened my pencil, and fell to work on a family group of hippopotami.

They may have taken me for a photographer, for they all wore smiles as if " welcoming a friend," and my sketch block presented a series of wide open jaws, behind which shapeless bulky bodies vanished in alarming perspective.

The alligators were easy ; they looked to me as though they had not moved since the founding of the Zoo, but I had a bad time with the big bison, who persistently turned his tail to me, looking stolidly around his flank to see how I stood it. So I pretended to be absorbed in the antics of two bear cubs, and the dreary old bison fell into the trap, for I made some good sketches of him and laughed in his face as I closed the book.

There was a bench by the abode of the eagles, and I sat down on it to draw the vultures and condors, motionless as mummies among the piled rocks. Gradually I enlarged the sketch, bringing in the gravel plaza, the steps leading up to Fifth Avenue, the sleepy park policeman in front of the arsenal—and a slim, white-browed girl, dressed in shabby black, who stood silently in the shade of the willow trees.

After a while I found that the sketch, instead

of being a study of the eagles, was in reality a composition in which the girl in black occupied the principal point of interest. Unwittingly I had subordinated everything else to her, the brooding vultures, the trees and walks, and the half indicated groups of sun-warmed loungers.

She stood very still, her pallid face bent, her thin white hands loosely clasped before her. "Rather dejected reverie," I thought, "probably she 's out of work." Then I caught a glimpse of a sparkling diamond ring on the slender third finger of her left hand.

"She 'll not starve with such a stone as that about her," I said to myself, looking curiously at her dark eyes and sensitive mouth. They were both beautiful, eyes and mouth—beautiful, but touched with pain.

After a while I rose and walked back to make a sketch or two of the lions and tigers. I avoided the monkeys—I can't stand them, and they never seem funny to me, poor dwarfish, degraded caricatures of all that is ignoble in ourselves.

"I 've enough now," I thought ; "I 'll go home and manufacture a full page that will probably please Jamison." So I strapped the elastic band around my sketching block, replaced pencil and rubber in my waistcoat pocket, and strolled off toward the Mall to smoke a cigarette in the evening glow before going back to my studio to work until midnight, up to the chin in charcoal grey and Chinese white.

Across the long meadow I could see the roofs of the city faintly looming above the trees. A mist of amethyst, ever deepening, hung low on the horizon, and through it, steeple and dome, roof and tower, and the tall chimneys where thin fillets of smoke curled idly, were transformed into pinnacles of beryl and flaming minarets, swimming in filmy haze. Slowly the enchantment deepened; all that was ugly and shabby and mean had fallen away from the distant city, and now it towered into the evening sky, splendid, gilded, magnificent, purified in the fierce furnace of the setting sun.

The red disk was half hidden now ; the tracery of trees, feathery willow and budding birch, darkened against the glow; the fiery rays shot far across the meadow, gilding the dead leaves, staining with soft crimson the dark moist tree trunks around me.

Far across the meadow a shepherd passed in the wake of a huddling flock, his dog at his heels, faint moving blots of grey.

A squirrel sat up on the gravel walk in front of me, ran a few feet, and sat up again, so close that I could see the palpitation of his sleek flanks.

Somewhere in the grass a hidden field insect was rehearsing last summer's solos ; I heard the tap ! tap ! tat-tat-t-t-tat ! of a woodpecker among the branches overhead and the querulous note of a sleepy robin.

The twilight deepened ; out of the city the

music of bells floated over wood and meadow; faint mellow whistles sounded from the river craft along the north shore, and the distant thunder of a gun announced the close of a June day.

The end of my cigarette began to glimmer with a redder light; shepherd and flock were blotted out in the dusk, and I only knew they were still moving when the sheep bells tinkled faintly.

Then suddenly that strange uneasiness that all have known—that half-awakened sense of having seen it all before, of having been through it all, came over me, and I raised my head and slowly turned.

A figure was seated at my side. My mind was struggling with the instinct to remember. Something so vague and yet so familiar—something that eluded thought yet challenged it, something—God knows what! troubled me. And now, as I looked, without interest, at the dark figure beside me, an apprehension, totally involuntary, an impatience to *understand*, came upon me, and I sighed and turned restlessly again to the fading west.

I thought I heard my sigh re-echoed—I scarcely heeded; and in a moment I sighed again, dropping my burned-out cigarette on the gravel beneath my feet.

"Did you speak to me?" said some one in a low voice, so close that I swung around rather sharply.

"No," I said after a moment's silence.

It was a woman. I could not see her face clearly, but I saw on her clasped hands, which lay listlessly in her lap, the sparkle of a great diamond. I knew her at once. It did not need a glance at the shabby dress of black, the white face, a pallid spot in the twilight, to tell me that I had her picture in my sketch-book.

"Do—do you mind if I speak to you?" she asked timidly. The hopeless sadness in her voice touched me, and I said: "Why, no, of course not. Can I do anything for you?"

"Yes," she said, brightening a little, "if you—you only would."

"I will if I can," said I, cheerfully; "what is it? Out of ready cash?"

"No, not that," she said, shrinking back.

I begged her pardon, a little surprised, and withdrew my hand from my change pocket.

"It is only—only that I wish you to take these,"—she drew a thin packet from her breast,—"these two letters."

"I?" I asked astonished.

"Yes, if you will."

"But what am I to do with them?" I demanded.

"I can't tell you; I only know that I must give them to you. Will you take them?"

"Oh, yes, I 'll take them," I laughed, "am I to read them?" I added to myself, "It 's some clever begging trick."

"No," she answered slowly, "you are not to

read them ; you are to give them to somebody."

"To whom ? Anybody ?"

"No, not to anybody. You will know whom to give them to when the time comes."

"Then I am to keep them until further instructions ?"

"Your own heart will instruct you," she said, in a scarcely audible voice. She held the thin packet toward me, and to humour her I took it. It was wet.

"The letters fell into the sea," she said; "There was a photograph which should have gone with them but the salt water washed it blank. Will you care if I ask you something else ?"

"I ? Oh, no."

"Then give me the picture that you made of me to-day."

I laughed again, and demanded how she knew I had drawn her.

"Is it like me ?" she said.

"I think it is very like you," I answered truthfully.

"Will you not give it to me ?"

Now it was on the tip of my tongue to refuse, but I reflected that I had enough sketches for a full page without that one, so I handed it to her, nodded that she was welcome, and stood up. She rose also, the diamond flashing on her finger.

"You are sure that you are not in want ?" I asked, with a tinge of good-natured sarcasm.

"Hark!" she whispered; "listen!—do you hear the bells of the convent!"

I looked out into the misty night.

"There are no bells sounding," I said, "and anyway there are no convent bells here. We are in New York, mademoiselle"—I had noticed her French accent—"we are in Protestant Yankee-land, and the bells that ring are much less mellow than the bells of France."

I turned pleasantly to say good-night. She was gone.

III.

"HAVE you ever drawn a picture of a corpse?" inquired Jamison next morning as I walked into his private room with a sketch of the proposed full page of the Zoo.

"No, and I don't want to," I replied, sullenly.

"Let me see your Central Park page," said Jamison in his gentle voice, and I displayed it. It was about worthless as an artistic production, but it pleased Jamison, as I knew it would.

"Can you finish it by this afternoon?" he asked, looking up at me with persuasive eyes.

"Oh, I suppose so," I said, wearily; "anything else, Mr. Jamison?"

"The corpse," he replied, "I want a sketch by to-morrow—finished."

"What corpse?" I demanded, controlling my indignation as I met Jamison's soft eyes.

There was a mute duel of glances. Jamison passed his hand across his forehead with a slight lifting of the eyebrows.

"I shall want it as soon as possible," he said in his caressing voice.

What I thought was, "Damned purring pussy-cat!" What I said was, "Where is this corpse?"

"In the Morgue—have you read the morning papers? No? Ah,—as you very rightly observe you are too busy to read the morning papers. Young men must learn industry first, of course, of course. What you are to do is this: the San Francisco police have sent out an alarm regarding the disappearance of a Miss Tufft—the millionaire's daughter, you know. To-day a body was brought to the Morgue here in New York, and it has been identified as the missing young lady,—by a diamond ring. Now I am convinced that it is n't, and I 'll show you why, Mr. Hilton."

He picked up a pen and made a sketch of a ring on a margin of that morning's *Tribune.*

"That is the description of her ring as sent on from San Francisco. You notice the diamond is set in the centre of the ring where the two gold serpents' *tails* cross!

Now the ring on the finger of the woman in the Morgue is like this," and he rapidly sketched another ring where the diamond rested in the *fangs* of the two gold serpents.

"That is the difference," he said in his pleasant, even voice.

"Rings like that are not uncommon," said I, remembering that I had seen such a ring on the finger of the white-faced girl in the Park the evening before. Then a sudden thought took

shape—perhaps that was the girl whose body lay in the Morgue !

"Well," said Jamison, looking up at me, "what are you thinking about ?"

"Nothing," I answered, but the whole scene was before my eyes, the vultures brooding among the rocks, the shabby black dress, and the pallid face,—and the ring, glittering on that slim white hand !

"Nothing," I repeated, "when shall I go, Mr. Jamison ? Do you want a portrait—or what ?"

"Portrait,—careful drawing of the ring, and, —er—a centre piece of the Morgue at night. Might as well give people the horrors while we're about it."

"But," said I, "the policy of this paper——"

"Never mind, Mr. Hilton," purred Jamison, "I am able to direct the policy of this paper."

"I don't doubt you are," I said angrily.

"I am," he repeated, undisturbed and smiling ; "you see this Tufft case interests society. I am —er—also interested."

He held out to me a morning paper and pointed to a heading.

I read : "Miss Tufft Dead ! Her Fiancé was Mr. Jamison, the well known Editor."

"What!" I cried in horrified amazement. But Jamison had left the room, and I heard him chatting and laughing softly with some visitors in the press-room outside.

I flung down the paper and walked out.

"The cold-blooded toad!" I exclaimed again and again;—"making capital out of his fiancée's disappearance! Well, I—I 'm d—nd! I knew he was a bloodless, heartless, grip-penny, but I never thought—I never imagined——" Words failed me.

Scarcely conscious of what I did I drew a *Herald* from my pocket and saw the column entitled: "Miss Tufft Found! Identified by a Ring. Wild Grief of Mr. Jamison, her Fiancé."

That was enough. I went out into the street and sat down in City Hall Park. And, as I sat there, a terrible resolution came to me; I would draw that dead girl's face in such a way that it would chill Jamison's sluggish blood, I would crowd the black shadows of the Morgue with forms and ghastly faces, and every face should bear something in it of Jamison. Oh, I 'd rouse him from his cold snaky apathy! I 'd confront him with Death in such an awful form, that, passionless, base, inhuman as he was, he 'd shrink from it as he would from a dagger thrust. Of course I 'd lose my place, but that did not bother me, for I had decided to resign anyway, not having a taste for the society of human reptiles. And, as I sat there in the sunny park, furious, trying to plan a picture whose sombre horror should leave in his mind an ineffaceable scar, I suddenly thought of the pale black-robed girl in Central Park. Could it be her poor slender body that lay among the shadows of the grim Morgue! If ever

brooding despair was stamped on any face, I had seen its print on hers when she spoke to me in the Park and gave me the letters. The letters! I had not thought of them since, but now I drew them from my pocket and looked at the addresses.

"Curious," I thought, "the letters are still damp; they smell of salt water too."

I looked at the address again, written in the long fine hand of an educated woman who had been bred in a French convent. Both letters bore the same address, in French:

"CAPTAIN D'YNIOL.
(Kindness of a Stranger.)"

"Captain d'Yniol," I repeated aloud—"confound it, I 've heard that name! Now, where the deuce—where in the name of all that 's queer——" Somebody who had sat down on the bench beside me placed a heavy hand on my shoulder.

It was the Frenchman, "Soger Charlie."

"You spoke my name," he said in apathetic tones.

"Your name!"

"Captain d'Yniol," he repeated; "it is my name."

I recognized him in spite of the black goggles he was wearing, and, at the same moment, it flashed into my mind that d'Yniol was the name of the traitor who had escaped. Ah, I remembered now!

"I am Captain d'Yniol," he said again, and I saw his fingers closing on my coat sleeve.

It may have been my involuntary movement of recoil,—I don't know,—but the fellow dropped my coat and sat straight up on the bench.

"I am Captain d'Yniol," he said for the third time, "charged with treason and under sentence of death."

"And innocent!" I muttered, before I was even conscious of having spoken. What was it that wrung those involuntary words from my lips, I shall never know, perhaps—but it was I, not he, who trembled, seized with a strange agitation, and it was I, not he, whose hand was stretched forth impulsively, touching his.

Without a tremor he took my hand, pressed it almost imperceptibly, and dropped it. Then I held both letters toward him, and, as he neither looked at them nor at me, I placed them in his hand. Then he started.

"Read them," I said, "they are for you."

"Letters!" he gasped in a voice that sounded like nothing human.

"Yes, they are for you,—I know it now——"

"Letters!—letters directed to *me?*"

"Can you not see?" I cried.

Then he raised one frail hand and drew the goggles from his eyes, and, as I looked, I saw two tiny white specks exactly in the centre of both pupils.

"Blind!" I faltered.

"I have been unable to read for two years," he said.

After a moment he placed the tip of one finger on the letters.

"They are wet," I said; "shall—would you like to have me read them?" For a long time he sat silently in the sunshine, fumbling with his cane, and I watched him without speaking. At last he said, "Read, Monsieur," and I took the letters and broke the seals.

The first letter contained a sheet of paper, damp and discoloured, on which a few lines were written:

"My darling, I knew you were innocent—" Here the writing ended, but, in the blur beneath, I read: "Paris shall know—France shall know, for at last I have the proofs and I am coming to find you, my soldier, and to place them in your own dear brave hands. They know, now, at the War Ministry—they have a copy of the traitor's confession—but they dare not make it public—they dare not withstand the popular astonishment and rage. Therefore I sail on Monday from Cherbourg by the Green Cross Line, to bring you back to your own again, where you will stand before all the world, without fear, without reproach."

"ALINE."

"This—this is terrible!" I stammered; "can God live and see such things done!"

But with his thin hand he gripped my arm again, bidding me read the other letter; and I shuddered at the menace in his voice.

Then, with his sightless eyes on me, I drew the other letter from the wet, stained envelope. And before I was aware—before I understood the purport of what I saw, I had read aloud these half effaced lines:

"The *Lorient* is sinking—an iceberg—mid-ocean—good-bye—you are innocent—I love——"

"The *Lorient!*" I cried; "it was the French steamer that was never heard from—the *Lorient* of the Green Cross Line! I had forgotten—I——"

The loud crash of a revolver stunned me; my ears rang and ached with it as I shrank back from a ragged dusty figure that collapsed on the bench beside me, shuddered a moment, and tumbled to the asphalt at my feet.

The trampling of the eager hard-eyed crowd, the dust and taint of powder in the hot air, the harsh alarm of the ambulance clattering up Mail Street,—these I remember, as I knelt there, helplessly holding the dead man's hands in mine.

"Soger Charlie," mused the sparrow policeman, "shot his-self, did n't he, Mr. Hilton? You seen him, sir,—blowed the top of his head off, did n't he, Mr. Hilton?"

"Soger Charlie," they repeated, "a French dago what shot his-self;" and the words echoed in my ears long after the ambulance rattled away, and the increasing throng dispersed, sullenly, as

a couple of policemen cleared a space around the pool of thick blood on the asphalt.

They wanted me as a witness, and I gave my card to one of the policemen who knew me. The rabble transferred its fascinated stare to me, and I turned away and pushed a path between frightened shop girls and ill-smelling loafers, until I lost myself in the human torrent of Broadway.

The torrent took me with it where it flowed—East? West?—I did not notice nor care, but I passed on through the throng, listless, deadly weary of attempting to solve God's justice—striving to understand His purpose—His laws—His judgments which are "true and righteous altogether."

IV.

"MORE to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold. Sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb!"

I turned sharply toward the speaker who shambled at my elbow. His sunken eyes were dull and lustreless, his bloodless face gleamed pallid as a death mask above the blood-red jersey—the emblem of the soldiers of Christ.

I don't know why I stopped, lingering, but, as he passed, I said, "Brother, I also was meditating upon God's wisdom and His testimonies."

The pale fanatic shot a glance at me, hesitated, and fell into my own pace, walking by my side. Under the peak of his Salvation Army cap his eyes shone in the shadow with a strange light.

"Tell me more," I said, sinking my voice below the roar of traffic, the clang! clang! of the cable-cars, and the noise of feet on the worn pavements—"tell me of His testimonies."

"Moreover by them is Thy servant warned and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand His errors? Cleanse Thou me from secret faults. Keep back Thy servant

also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. Then shall I be upright and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight,—O Lord! My strength and my Redeemer!"

"It is Holy Scripture that you quote," I said; "I also can read that when I choose. But it cannot clear for me the reasons—it cannot make me understand——"

"What?" he asked, and muttered to himself.

"That, for instance," I replied, pointing to a cripple, who had been *born* deaf and dumb and horridly misshapen,—a wretched diseased lump on the sidewalk below St. Paul's Churchyard,—a sore-eyed thing that mouthed and mowed and rattled pennies in a tin cup as though the sound of copper could stem the human pack that passed hot on the scent of gold.

Then the man who shambled beside me turned and looked long and earnestly into my eyes. And after a moment a dull recollection stirred within me—a vague something that seemed like the awakening memory of a past, long, long forgotten, dim, dark, too subtle, too frail, too indefinite—ah! the old feeling that all men have known—the old strange uneasiness, that useless struggle to remember when and where it all occurred before.

And the man's head sank on his crimson jersey,

and he muttered, muttered to himself of God and love and compassion, until I saw that the fierce heat of the city had touched his brain, and I went away and left him prating of mysteries that none but such as he dare name.

So I passed on through dust and heat ; and the hot breath of men touched my cheek and eager eyes looked into mine. Eyes, eyes,—that met my own and looked through them, beyond—far beyond to where gold glittered amid the mirage of eternal hope. Gold ! It was in the air where the soft sunlight gilded the floating moats, it was under foot in the dust that the sun made gilt, it glimmered from every window pane where the long red beams struck golden sparks above the gasping gold-hunting hordes of Wall Street.

High, high, in the deepening sky the tall buildings towered, and the breeze from the bay lifted the sun-dyed flags of commerce until they waved above the turmoil of the hives below — waved courage and hope and strength to those who lusted after gold.

The sun dipped low behind Castle William as I turned listlessly into the Battery, and the long straight shadows of the trees stretched away over greensward and asphalt walk.

Already the electric lights were glimmering among the foliage although the bay shimmered like polished brass and the topsails of the ships glowed with a deeper hue, where the red sun rays fall athwart the rigging.

Old men tottered along the sea-wall, tapping the asphalt with worn canes, old women crept to and fro in the coming twilight,—old women who carried baskets that gaped for charity or bulged with mouldy stuffs,—food, clothing ?—I could not tell ; I did not care to know.

The heavy thunder from the parapets of Castle William died away over the placid bay, the last red arm of the sun shot up out of the sea, and wavered and faded into the sombre tones of the afterglow. Then came the night, timidly at first, touching sky and water with grey fingers, folding the foliage into soft massed shapes, creeping onward, onward, more swiftly now, until colour and form had gone from all the earth and the world was a world of shadows.

And, as I sat there on the dusky sea-wall, gradually the bitter thoughts faded and I looked out into the calm night with something of that peace that comes to all when day is ended.

The death at my very elbow of the poor blind wretch in the Park had left a shock, but now my nerves relaxed their tension and I began to think about it all,—about the letters and the strange woman who had given them to me. I wondered where she had found them,—whether they really were carried by some vagrant current in to the shore from the wreck of the fated *Lorient.*

Nothing but these letters had human eyes encountered from the *Lorient*, although we believed that fire or berg had been her portion ; for there

had been no storms when the *Lorient* steamed away from Cherbourg.

And what of the pale-faced girl in black who had given these letters to me, saying that my own heart would teach me where to place them ?

I felt in my pockets for the letters where I had thrust them all crumpled and wet. They were there, and I decided to turn them over to the police. Then I thought of Cusick and the City Hall Park and these set my mind running on Jamison and my own work,—ah ! I had forgotten that,—I had forgotten that I had sworn to stir Jamison's cold, sluggish blood ! Trading on his fiancée's reported suicide,—or murder ! True, he had told me that he was satisfied that the body at the Morgue was not Miss Tufft's because the ring did not correspond with his fiancée's ring. But what sort of a man was that !—to go crawling and nosing about morgues and graves for a full-page illustration which might sell a few extra thousand papers. I had never known he was such a man. It was strange too—for that was not the sort of illustration that the *Weekly* used ; it was against all precedent—against the whole policy of the paper. He would lose a hundred subscribers where he would gain one by such work.

"The callous brute !" I muttered to myself, "I 'll wake him up—I 'll——"

I sat straight up on the bench and looked stead-

ily at a figure which was moving toward me under the spluttering electric light.

It was the woman I had met in the Park.

She came straight up to me, her pale face gleaming like marble in the dark, her slim hands outstretched.

"I have been looking for you all day—all day," she said, in the same low thrilling tones,—"I want the letters back; have you them here?"

"Yes," I said, "I have them here,—take them in Heaven's name; they have done enough evil for one day!"

She took the letters from my hand; I saw the ring, made of the double serpents, flashing on her slim finger, and I stepped closer, and looked her in the eyes.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"I? My name is of no importance to you," she answered.

"You are right," I said, "I do not care to know your name. That ring of yours——"

"What of my ring?" she murmured.

"Nothing,—a dead woman lying in the Morgue wears such a ring. Do you know what your letters have done? No? Well I read them to a miserable wretch and he blew his brains out!"

"You read them to a man!"

"I did. He killed himself."

"Who was that man?"

"Captain d'Yniol——"

With something between a sob and a laugh she seized my hand and covered it with kisses, and I, astonished and angry, pulled my hand away from her cold lips and sat down on the bench.

"You need n't thank me," I said sharply; "if I had known that,—but no matter. Perhaps after all the poor devil is better off somewhere in other regions with his sweetheart who was drowned,—yes, I imagine he is. He was blind and ill,—and broken-hearted."

"Blind?" she asked gently.

"Yes. Did you know him?"

"I knew him."

"And his sweetheart, Aline?"

"Aline," she repeated softly,—"she is dead. I come to thank you in her name."

"For what?—for his death?"

"Ah, yes, for that."

"Where did you get those letters?" I asked her, suddenly.

She did not answer, but stood fingering the wet letters.

Before I could speak again she moved away into the shadows of the trees, lightly, silently, and far down the dark walk I saw her diamond flashing.

Grimly brooding, I rose and passed through the Battery to the steps of the Elevated Road. These I climbed, bought my ticket, and stepped out to the damp platform. When a train came I crowded in with the rest, still pondering on my

vengeance, feeling and believing that I was to scourge the conscience of the man who speculated on death.

And at last the train stopped at 28th Street, and I hurried out and down the steps and away to the Morgue.

When I entered the Morgue, Skelton, the keeper, was standing before a slab that glistened faintly under the wretched gas jets. He heard my footsteps, and turned around to see who was coming. Then he nodded, saying: "Mr. Hilton, just take a look at this here stiff—I 'll be back in a moment—this is the one that all the papers take to be Miss Tufft,—but they 're all off, because this stiff has been here now for two weeks."

I drew out my sketching-block and pencils.

"Which is it, Skelton?" I asked, fumbling for my rubber.

"This one, Mr. Hilton, the girl what 's smilin'. Picked up off Sandy Hook, too. Looks as if she was asleep, eh?"

"What 's she got in her hand—clenched tight? Oh,—a letter. Turn up the gas, Skelton, I want to see her face."

The old man turned the gas jet, and the flame blazed and whistled in the damp, fetid air. Then suddenly my eyes fell on the dead.

Rigid, scarcely breathing, I stared at the ring, made of two twisted serpents set with a great diamond,—I saw the wet letters crushed in her

slender hand,—I looked, and—God help me !—I looked upon the dead face of the girl with whom I had been speaking on the Battery!

"Dead for a month at least," said Skelton, calmly.

Then, as I felt my senses leaving me, I screamed out, and at the same instant somebody from behind seized my shoulder and shook me savagely —shook me until I opened my eyes again and gasped and coughed.

"Now then, young feller!" said a Park policeman bending over me, "if you go to sleep on a bench, somebody 'll lift your watch !"

I turned, rubbing my eyes desperately.

Then it was all a dream—and no shrinking girl had come to me with damp letters,—I had not gone to the office—there was no such person as Miss Tufft,—Jamison was not an unfeeling villain,—no, indeed !—he treated us all much better than we deserved, and he was kind and generous too. And the ghastly suicide ! Thank God that also was a myth,—and the Morgue and the Battery at night where that pale-faced girl had —ugh !

I felt for my sketch-block, found it; turned the pages of all the animals that I had sketched, the hippopotami, the buffalo, the tigers—ah ! where was that sketch in which I had made the woman in shabby black the principal figure, with the brooding vultures all around and the crowd in the sunshine—? It was gone.

I hunted everywhere, in every pocket. It was gone.

At last I rose and moved along the narrow asphalt path in the falling twilight.

And as I turned into the broader walk, I was aware of a group, a policeman holding a lantern, some gardeners, and a knot of loungers gathered about something,—a dark mass on the ground.

"Found 'em just so," one of the gardeners was saying, "better not touch 'em until the coroner comes."

The policeman shifted his bull's-eye a little; the rays fell on two faces, on two bodies, half supported against a park bench. On the finger of the girl glittered a splendid diamond, set between the fangs of two gold serpents. The man had shot himself; he clasped two wet letters in his hand. The girl's clothing and hair were wringing wet, and her face was the face of a drowned person.

"Well, sir," said the policeman, looking at me; "you seem to know these two people—by your looks——"

"I never saw them before," I gasped, and walked on, trembling in every nerve.

For among the folds of her shabby black dress I had noticed the end of a paper,—my sketch that I had missed!

THE MAN AT THE NEXT TABLE.

" Awed and afraid I cross the border-land.
Oh, who am I that I dare enter here
Where the great artists of the world have trod ? "

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

THE MAN AT THE NEXT TABLE.

"The caricaturist is a freebooter. Public tolerance grants him letters of marque. . . . "

MARMADUKE HUMPHREY.

" Ainsi rien ne se passe, rien de vraiment immortel et d'éternellement doux que dans notre âme."

I.

IT was high noon in the city of Antwerp. From slender steeples floated the mellow music of the Flemish bells, and in the spire of the great cathedral across the square the cracked chimes clashed discords until my ears ached.

When the fiend in the cathedral had jerked the last tuneless clang from the chimes, I removed my fingers from my ears and sat down at one of the iron tables in the court. A waiter with his face shaved blue, brought me a bottle of Rhine wine, a tumbler of cracked ice, and a siphon.

" Does Monsieur desire anything else ? " he inquired.

" Yes—the head of the cathedral bell-ringer; bring it with vinegar and potatoes," I said, bit-

terly. Then I began to ponder on my great-aunt and the Crimson Diamond.

The white walls of the Hotel St. Antoine rose in a rectangle around the sunny court, casting long shadows across the basin of the fountain. The strip of blue overhead was cloudless. Sparrows twittered under the eaves; the yellow awnings fluttered, the flowers swayed in the summer breeze, and the jet of the fountain splashed among the water plants. On the sunny side of the piazza the tables were vacant ; on the shady side, I was lazily aware that the tables behind me were occupied, but I was indifferent as to their occupants, partly because I shunned all tourists, partly because I was thinking of my great-aunt.

Most old ladies are eccentric, but there is a limit, and my great-aunt had overstepped it. I had believed her to be wealthy ;—she died bankrupt. Still, I knew there was one thing she did possess, and that was the famous "Crimson Diamond." Now, of course, you know who my great-aunt was.

Excepting the Koh-i-noor, and the Regent, this enormous and unique stone was, as everybody knows, the most valuable gem in existence. Any ordinary person would have placed that diamond in a safe-deposit. My great-aunt did nothing of the kind. She kept it in a small velvet bag, which she carried about her neck. She never took it off, but wore it dangling openly on her heavy silk gown.

In this same bag she also carried dried catnip leaves of which she was inordinately fond. Nobody but myself, her only living relative, knew that the Crimson Diamond lay among the sprigs of catnip in the little velvet bag.

"Harold," she would say, "do you think I'm a fool? If I place the Crimson Diamond in any safe-deposit vault in New York, somebody would steal it sooner or later." Then she would nibble a sprig of catnip and peer cunningly at me. I loathed the odour of catnip and she knew it. I also loathed cats. This also she knew and of course surrounded herself with a dozen. Poor old lady! On the 1st day of March, 1896, she was found dead in her bed in her apartments at the Waldorf. The doctor said she died from natural causes. The only other occupant of her sleeping room was a cat. The cat fled when we broke open the door, and I heard that she was received and cherished by some people in a neighboring apartment.

Now, although my great-aunt's death was due to purely natural causes, there was one very startling and disagreeable feature of the case. The velvet bag, containing the Crimson Diamond, had disappeared. Every inch of the apartment was searched, the floors torn up, the walls dismantled, but the Crimson Diamond had vanished. Chief of Police Conlin detailed four of his best men on the case, and as I had nothing better to do, I enrolled myself as a volunteer. I

also offered $25,000 reward for the recovery of the gem. All New York was agog.

The case seemed hopeless enough, although there were five of us after the thief. McFarlane was in London, and had been for a month, but Scotland Yard could give him no help, and the last I heard of him he was roaming through Surrey after a man with a white spot in his hair. Harrison had gone to Paris. He kept writing me that clues were plenty and the scent hot, but as Dennet, in Berlin, and Clancy, in Vienna, wrote me the same thing, I began to doubt these gentlemen's ability.

"You say," I answered Harrison, "that the fellow is a Frenchman, and that he is now concealed in Paris; but Dennet writes me by the same mail that the thief is undoubtedly a German, and was seen yesterday in Berlin. To-day I received a letter from Clancy, assuring me that Vienna holds the culprit, and that he is an Austrian from Trieste. Now for Heaven's sake," I ended, "let me alone and stop writing me letters until you have something to write about."

The night clerk of the Waldorf had furnished us with our first clue. On the night of my aunt's death he had seen a tall, grave-faced man, hurriedly leave the hotel. As the man passed the desk, he removed his hat and mopped his forehead, and the night clerk noticed that in the middle of his head there was a patch of hair, as white as snow.

We worked this clue for all it was worth, and, a month later, I received a cable dispatch from Paris, saying that a man, answering to the description of the Waldorf suspect, had offered an enormous crimson diamond for sale to a jeweller in the Palais Royal. Unfortunately the fellow took fright and disappeared before the jeweller could send for the police, and since that time, McFarlane in London, Harrison in Paris, Dennet in Berlin, and Clancy in Vienna, had been chasing men with white patches on their hair until no gray-headed patriarch in Europe was free from suspicion. I myself had sleuthed it through England, France, Holland and Belgium, and now I found myself in Antwerp at the Hotel St. Antoine without a clue that promised anything except another outrage on some respectable white-haired citizen. The case seemed hopeless enough, unless the thief tried again to sell the gem. Here was our only hope, for, unless he cut the stone into smaller ones, he had no more chance of selling it than he would have had if he had stolen the Venus of Milo and peddled her about the rue de Seine. Even were he to cut up the stone, no respectable gem collector or jeweller would buy a crimson diamond without first notifying me; for although a few red stones are known to collectors, the colour of the Crimson Diamond was absolutely unique, and there was little probability of an honest mistake.

Thinking of all these things I sat sipping my

Rhine wine in the shadow of the yellow awnings. A large white cat came sauntering by and stopped in front of me to perform her toilet until I wished she would go away. After a while she sat up, licked her whiskers, yawned once or twice, and was about to stroll on, when, catching sight of me, she stopped short and looked me squarely in the face. I returned the attention with a scowl because I wished to discourage any advances towards social intercourse which she might contemplate ; but after a while her steady gaze disconcerted me, and I turned to my Rhine wine. A few minutes later I looked up again. The cat was still eyeing me.

"Now what the devil is the matter with the animal," I muttered, "does she recognize in me a relative ?"

"Perhaps," observed a man at the next table.

"What do you mean by that ?" I demanded.

"What I say," replied the man at the next table.

I looked him full in the face. He was old and bald and appeared weak-minded. His age protected his impudence. I turned my back on him. Then my eyes fell on the cat again. She was still gazing earnestly at me.

Disgusted that she should take such pointed public notice of me, I wondered whether other people saw it ; I wondered whether there was anything peculiar in my own personal appearance. How hard the creature stared. It was most embarrassing.

"What has got into that cat ?" I thought.

"It 's sheer impudence. It 's an intrusion, and I won't stand it!" The cat did not move. I tried to stare her out of countenance. It was useless. There was aggressive inquiry in her yellow eyes. A sensation of uneasiness began to steal over me—a sensation of embarrassment not unmixed with awe. All cats looked alike to me, and yet there was something about this one that bothered me—something that I could not explain to myself, but which began to occupy me.

She looked familiar—this Antwerp cat. An odd sense of having seen her before—of having been well acquainted with her in former years slowly settled in my mind, and, although I could never remember the time when I had not detested cats, I was almost convinced that my relations with this Antwerp tabby had once been intimate if not cordial. I looked more closely at the animal. Then an idea struck me,—an idea which persisted and took definite shape in spite of me. I strove to escape from it, to evade it, to stifle and smother it; an inward struggle ensued which brought the perspiration in beads upon my cheeks,—a struggle short, sharp, decisive. It was useless—useless to try to put it from me,—this idea so wretchedly bizarre, so grotesque and fantastic, so utterly inane,—it was useless to deny that the cat bore a distinct resemblance to my great-aunt!

I gazed at her in horror. What enormous eyes the creature had!

" Blood is thicker than water," said the man at the next table.

" What does he mean by that ? " I muttered, angrily swallowing a tumbler of Rhine wine and seltzer. But I did not turn. What was the use ?

" Chattering old imbecile," I added to myself, and struck a match, for my cigar was out; but as I raised the match to relight it, I encountered the cat's eyes again. I could not enjoy my cigar with the animal staring at me, but I was justly indignant, and I did not intend to be routed. " The idea ! forced to leave for a cat ! " I sneered, " we will see who will be the one to go ! " I tried to give her a jet of seltzer from the siphon, but the bottle was too nearly empty to carry far. Then I attempted to lure her nearer, calling her in French, German, and English, but she did not stir. I did not know the Flemish for " cat."

" She 's got a name, and won't come," I thought. " Now, what under the sun can I call her ? "

" Aunty," suggested the man at the next table.

I sat perfectly still. Could that man have answered my thoughts ?—for I had not spoken aloud. Of course not—it was a coincidence,—but a very disgusting one.

" Aunty," I repeated mechanically, " aunty, aunty—good gracious, how horribly human that cat looks ! " Then somehow or other, Shakespeare's words crept into my head and I found

myself repeating: "the soul of his grandam might happily inhabit a bird; the soul of his grandam might happily inhabit a bird; the soul of—nonsense!" I growled—"it is n't printed correctly! One might possibly say, speaking in poetical metaphor, that the soul of a bird might happily inhabit one's grandam—" I stopped short, flushing painfully. "What awful rot!" I murmured, and lighted another cigar. The cat was still staring; the cigar went out. I grew more and more nervous. "What rot!" I repeated. "Pythagoras must have been an ass, but I do believe that there are plenty of asses alive to-day who swallow that sort of thing."

"Who knows," sighed the man at the next table, and I sprang to my feet and wheeled about. But I only caught a glimpse of a pair of frayed coat-tails and a bald head vanishing into the dining-room. I sat down again, thoroughly indignant. A moment later the cat got up and went away.

II.

DAYLIGHT was fading in the city of Antwerp. Down into the sea sank the sun, tinting the vast horizon with flakes of crimson, and touching with rich deep undertones the tossing waters of the Scheldt. Its glow fell like a rosy mantle over red-tiled roofs and meadows; and through the haze the spires of twenty churches pierced the air like sharp, gilded flames. To the west and south the green plains, over which the Spanish armies tramped so long ago, stretched away until they met the sky; the enchantment of the afterglow had turned old Antwerp into fairyland; and sea and sky and plain were beautiful and vague as the night mists floating in the moats below.

Along the sea-wall from the Rubens Gate, all Antwerp strolled, and chattered, and flirted and sipped their Flemish wines from slender Flemish glasses or gossiped over krugs of foaming beer.

From the Scheldt came the cries of sailors, the creaking of cordage, and the puff! puff! of the ferry-boats. On the bastions of the fortress opposite a bugler was standing. Twice the mellow notes of the bugle came faintly over the water,

then a great gun thundered from the ramparts, and the Belgian flag fluttered along the lanyards to the ground.

I leaned listlessly on the sea-wall and looked down at the Scheldt below. A battery of artillery was embarking for the fortress. The tub-like transport lay hissing and whistling in the slip, and the stamping of horses, the rumbling of gun and caisson, and the sharp cries of the officers came plainly to the ear.

When the last caisson was aboard and stowed, and the last trooper had sprung jingling to the deck, the transport puffed out into the Scheldt, and I turned away through the throng of promenaders, and found a little table on the terrace, just outside of the pretty café. And as I sat down, I became aware of a girl at the next table —a girl all in white—the most ravishingly and distractingly pretty girl that I had ever seen. In the agitation of the moment I forgot that I was a woman-hater, I forgot my name, my fortune, my aunt, and the Crimson Diamond—all these I forgot in a purely human impulse to see clearly; and to that end I removed my monocle from my left eye. Some moments later I came to myself and feebly replaced it. It was too late; the mischief was done. I was not aware at first of the exact state of my feelings,—for I had never before been in love—but I did know that at her request I would have been proud to stand on my head, or turn a flip-flap into the Scheldt.

I did not stare at her, but I managed to see her most of the time when her eyes were in another direction. I found myself drinking something which a waiter brought presumably upon an order which I did not remember having given. Later I noticed that it was a loathsome drink which the Belgians call "American Grog," but I swallowed it and lighted a cigarette. As the fragrant cloud rose in the air, a voice, which I recognized with a chill, broke into my dream of enchantment. Could *he* have been there all the while,—there sitting beside that vision in white? His hat was off, and the ocean breezes whispered about his bald head. His frayed coat-tails were folded carefully over his knees, and between the thumb and forefinger of his left hand he balanced a bad cigar. He looked at me in a mildly cheerful way, and said, "I know now."

"Know what?" I asked, thinking it better to humour him, for I was convinced that he was mad.

"I know why cats bite."

This was startling. I had n't the vaguest idea what to say.

"I know why," he repeated; "can you guess why?" There was a covert tone of triumph in his voice and he smiled encouragement. "Come, try and guess," he urged.

I was uneasy, but I told him with stiff civility that I was unequal to problems.

"Listen, young man," he continued, folding his coat-tails closely about his legs—"try to

reason it out; why should cats bite? Don't you know? I do."

He looked at me anxiously.

"You take no interest in this problem?" he demanded.

"Oh, yes."

"Then why do you not ask me why?" he said, looking vaguely disappointed.

"Well," I said in desperation, "why do cats bite?—hang it all!" I thought, "it 's like a burnt-cork show, and I 'm Mr. Bones and he 's Tambo!"

Then he smiled gently. "Young man," he said, "cats bite because they feed on cat-nip. I have reasoned it out."

I stared at him in blank astonishment. Was this benevolent looking old party poking fun at me? Was he paying me up for the morning's snub? Was he a malignant and revengeful old party, or was he merely feeble-minded? Who might he be? What was he doing here in Antwerp—what was he doing now!—for the bald one had turned familiarly to the beautiful girl in white.

"Elsie," he said, "do you feel chilly?" The girl shook her head.

"Not in the least, papa."

"Good Lord!" I thought—"her father!"

"I have been to the Zoo to-day," announced the bald one, turning toward me.

"Ah, indeed," I observed,—"er—I trust you enjoyed it."

"I have been contemplating the apes," he continued, dreamily. "Yes, contemplating the apes."

I said nothing, but tried to look interested.

"Yes, the apes," he murmured, fixing his mild eyes on me. Then he leaned toward me confidentially and whispered; "can you tell me what a monkey thinks?"

"I can not," I replied, sharply.

"Ah," he sighed, sinking back in his chair, and patting the slender hand of the girl beside him, "ah, who can tell what a monkey thinks?" His gentle face lulled my suspicions, and I replied very gravely; "who can tell whether they think at all?"

"True, true! Who can tell whether they think at all; and if they do think, ah! who can tell what they think?"

"But," I began, "if you can't tell whether they think at all, what 's the use of trying to conjecture what they *would* think if they *did* think?"

He raised his hand in deprecation. "Ah, it is exactly that which is of such absorbing interest, exactly that! It is the abstruseness of the proposition which stimulates research—which stirs profoundly the brain of the thinking world. The question is of vital and instant importance. Possibly you have already formed an opinion."

I admitted that I had thought but little on the subject.

"I doubt," he continued, swathing his knees in his coat-tails,—"I doubt whether you have given much attention to the subject lately discussed by the Boston Dodo Society of Pythagorean Research."

"I am not sure," I said politely, "that I recall that particular discussion. May I ask what was the question brought up?"

"The Felis Domesticus question."

"Ah, that must indeed be interesting! And —er—what may be the Felis Do—do——"

"Domesticus—not Dodo. Felis Domesticus, the common or garden cat."

"Indeed," I murmured.

"You are not listening," he said.

I only half heard him; I could not turn my eyes from her face.

"Cat!" shouted the bald one, and I almost leaped from my chair. "Are you deaf?" he inquired, sympathetically.

"No—oh no!" I replied, colouring with confusion; "you were—pardon me—you were—er —speaking of the Dodo. Extraordinary bird that——"

"I was not discussing the Dodo," he sighed— "I was speaking of cats."

"Of course," I said.

"The question is," he continued, twisting his frayed coat-tails into a sort of rope—"the question is, how are we to ameliorate the present condition and social status of our domestic cats——"

"Feed 'em," I suggested.

He raised both hands. They were eloquent with patient expostulation. "I mean their spiritual condition," he said.

I nodded, but my eyes reverted to that exquisite face. She sat silent, her eyes fixed on the waning flecks of colour in the western sky.

"Yes," repeated the bald one, "the spiritual welfare of our domestic cats——"

"Toms and Tabbies?" I murmured.

"Exactly," he said, tying a large knot in his coat-tails.

"You will ruin your coat," I observed.

"Papa!" exclaimed the girl, turning in dismay, as that gentleman gave a guilty start, "stop it at once!"

He smiled apologetically and made a feeble attempt to conceal his coat-tails.

"My dear," he said, with gentle deprecation, "I am so absent-minded—I always do it in the heat of argument."

The girl rose, and, bending over her untidy parent, deftly untied the knot in his flapping coat. When he was disentangled, she sat down and said, with a ghost of a smile; "he is so very absent-minded."

"Your father is evidently a great student," I said, pleasantly. How I pitied her, tied to this lunatic!

"Yes, he is a great student," she said, quietly.

"I am," he murmured, "that 's what makes

me so absent-minded. I often go to bed and forget to sleep." Then looking at me he asked me my name, adding, with a bow, that his name was P. Royal Wyeth, Professor of Pythagorean Research and Abstruse Paradox.

"My first name is Penny—named after Professor Penny of Harvard," he said, "but I seldom use my first name in connection with my second, as the combination suggests a household remedy of penetrating odour."

"My name is Kensett," I said, "Harold Kensett of New York."

"Student?"

"Er—a little——"

"Student of diamonds?"

I smiled. "Oh, I see you know who my great-aunt was," I said.

"I know her," he said.

"Ah,—perhaps you are unaware that my great-aunt is not now living——"

"I know her," he repeated, obstinately.

I bowed. What a crank he was!

"What do you study? You don't fiddle away all your time, do you?" he asked.

Now that was just what I did, but I was not pleased to have Miss Wyeth know it. Although my time was chiefly spent in shooting and fishing, I had once, in a fit of energy, succeeded in stuffing and mounting a woodcock, so I evaded a humiliating confession by saying that I had done a little work in ornithology.

"Good!" cried the Professor, beaming all over. "I knew you were a fellow scientist. Possibly you are a brother member of the Boston Dodo Society of Pythagorean Research. Are you a Dodo?"

I shook my head. "No, I am not a Dodo."

"Only a jay?"

"A—what?" I said, angrily.

"A jay. We call the members of the Junior Ornithological Jay Society of New York, jays, just as we refer to ourselves as Dodos. Are you not even a jay?"

"I am not," I said, watching him suspiciously.

"I must convert you, I see," said the Professor, smiling.

"I 'm afraid I do not approve of Pythagorean research," I began, but the beautiful Miss Wyeth turned to me very seriously, and looking me frankly in the eyes, said:

"I trust you will be open to conviction."

"Good Lord!" I thought, "can she be another crank." I looked at her steadily. What a little beauty she was. She also then belonged to the Pythagoreans—a sect I despised. Everybody knows all about the Pythagorean craze, its rise in Boston, its rapid spread, and its subsequent consolidation with Theosophy, Hypnotism, the Salvation Army, the Shakers, the Dunkards, and the Mind Cure Cult, upon a business basis. I had hitherto regarded all Pythagoreans with the same scornful indifference which I accorded to the

Faith Curists; being a member of the Catholic Church I was scarcely prepared to take any of them seriously. Least of all did I approve of the "business basis," and I looked very much askance indeed at the "Scientific and Religious Trust Company," duly incorporated and generally known as the Pythagorean Trust, which, consolidating with Mind Curists, Faith Curists, and other flourishing Salvation Syndicates, actually claimed a place among ordinary Trusts, and at the same time pretended to a control over man's future life. No, I could never listen—I was ashamed of even entertaining the notion, and I shook my head.

"No, Miss Wyeth, I am afraid I do not care to listen to any reasoning on this subject."

"Don't you believe in Pythagoras?" demanded the Professor, subduing his excitement with difficulty, and adding another knot to his coat-tails.

"No," I said, "I do not."

"How do you know you don't?" enquired the Professor.

"Because," I said, firmly, "it is nonsense to say that the soul of a human being can inhabit a hen!"

"Put it in a more simplified form!" insisted the Professor; "do you believe that the soul of a hen can inhabit a human being?"

"No, I don't!"

"Did you ever hear of a hen-pecked man?" cried the Professor, his voice ending in a shout.

I nodded, intensely annoyed.

"Will you listen to reason, then?" he continued, eagerly.

"No," I began, but I caught Miss Wyeth's blue eyes fixed on mine with an expression so sad, so sweetly appealing, that I faltered.

"Yes, I will listen," I said, faintly.

"Will you become my pupil?" insisted the Professor.

I was shocked to find myself wavering, but my eyes were looking into hers, and I could not disobey what I read there. The longer I looked the greater inclination I felt to waver. I saw that I was going to give in, and, strangest of all, my conscience did not trouble me. I felt it coming—a sort of mild exhilaration took possession of me. For the first time in my life I became reckless—I even gloried in my recklessness.

"Yes, yes," I cried, leaning eagerly across the table, "I shall be glad—delighted! Will you take me as your pupil?" My single eye-glass fell from its position unheeded. "Take me! Oh, will you take me?" I cried. Instead of answering, the Professor blinked rapidly at me for a moment. I imagined his eyes had grown bigger, and were assuming a greenish tinge. The corners of his mouth began to quiver, emitting queer, caressing little noises, and he rapidly added knot after knot to his twitching coat-tails. Suddenly he bent forward across the table until his nose almost touched mine. The pupils of his eyes ex-

panded, the iris assuming a beautiful changing golden-green tinge, and his coat-tails switched violently. Then he began to mew.

I strove to rouse myself from my paralysis—I tried to shrink back, for I felt the end of his cold nose touch mine. I could not move. The cry of terror died in my straining throat, my hands tightened convulsively; I was incapable of speech or motion. At the same time my brain became wonderfully clear. I began to remember everything that had ever happened to me—everything that I had ever done or said. I even remembered things that I had neither done nor said, I recalled distinctly much that had never happened. How fresh and strong my memory! The past was like a mirror, crystal clear, and there, in glorious tints and hues, the scenes of my childhood grew and glowed and faded, and gave place to newer and more splendid scenes. For a moment the episode of the cat at the Hotel St. Antoine flashed across my mind. When it vanished, a chilly stupor slowly clouded my brain; the scenes, the memories, the brilliant colours, faded, leaving me enveloped in a grey vapour, through which the two great eyes of the Professor twinkled with a murky light. A peculiar longing stirred me,—a strange yearning for something—I knew not what—but, oh ! how I longed and yearned for it ! Slowly this indefinite, incomprehensible longing became a living pain. Ah, how I suffered!—and how the vapours seemed to crowd around me. Then, as at

a great distance, I heard her voice, sweet, imperative :

" Mew ! " she said.

For a moment I seemed to see the interior of my own skull, lighted as by a flash of fire; the rolling eye-balls, veined in scarlet, the glistening muscles quivering along the jaw, the humid masses of the convoluted brain,—then awful darkness—a darkness almost tangible—an utter blackness, through which now seemed to creep a thin silver thread, like a river crawling across a world —like a thought gliding to the brain—like a song, a thin, sharp song which some distant voice was singing—which I was singing.

And I knew that I was mewing !

I threw myself back in my chair and mewed with all my heart. Oh, that heavy load which was lifted from my breast ! How good, how satisfying it was to mew ! And how I did mew !

I gave myself up to it, heart and soul; my whole being thrilled with the passionate outpourings of a spirit freed. My voice trembled in the upper bars of a feline love song, quavered, descended, swelling again into an intimation that I brooked no rival, and ended with a magnificent crescendo.

I finished, somewhat abashed, and glanced askance at the Professor and his daughter, but the one sat nonchalantly disentangling his coat-tails, and the other was apparently absorbed in the distant landscape. Evidently they did not

consider me ridiculous. Flushing painfully, I turned in my chair to see how my gruesome solo had affected the people on the terrace. Nobody even looked at me. This, however, gave me little comfort, for, as I began to realize what I had done, my mortification and rage knew no bounds. I was ready to die of shame. What on earth had induced me to mew? I looked wildly about for escape—I would leap up—rush home to bury my burning face in my pillows, and later in the friendly cabin of a homeward-bound steamer. I would fly—fly at once! Woe to the man who blocked my way! I started to my feet, but at that moment I caught Miss Wyeth's eyes fixed on mine.

"Don't go," she said.

What in Heaven's name lay in those blue eyes! I slowly sank back into my chair.

Then the Professor spoke. "Elsie, I have just received a dispatch."

"Where from, Papa?"

"From India. I 'm going at once."

She nodded her head, without turning her eyes from the sea. "Is it important, papa?"

"I should say so. The cashier of the Trust has eloped with an Astral body, and has taken all our funds, including a lot of first mortgages on Nirvana. I suppose he 's been dabbling in futures, and was short in his accounts. I shan't be gone long."

"Then good-night, papa," she said, kissing

him, "try to be back by eleven." I sat stupidly staring at them.

"Oh, it's only to Bombay—I shan't go to Thibet to-night,—good-night, my dear," said the Professor.

Then a singular thing occurred. The Professor had at last succeeded in disentangling his coat tails, and now, jamming his hat over his ears, and waving his arms with a bat-like motion, he climbed upon the seat of his chair, and ejaculated the word "Presto!" Then I found my voice.

"Stop him!" I cried, in terror.

"Presto! Presto!" shouted the Professor, balancing himself on the edge of his chair and waving his arms majestically, as if preparing for a sudden flight across the Scheldt; and, firmly convinced that he not only meditated it but was perfectly capable of attempting it, I covered my eyes with my hands.

"Are you ill, Mr. Kensett?" said the girl, quietly.

I raised my head indignantly. "Not at all, Miss Wyeth, only I'll bid you good-evening, for this is the 19th century, and I'm a Christian."

"So am I," she said. "So is my father."

"The devil he is," I thought.

Her next words made me jump.

"Please do not be profane, Mr. Kensett."

How did she know I was profane? I had not spoken a word! Could it be possible she was

able to read my thoughts? This was too much, and I rose and bowed stiffly.

"I have the honour to bid you good-evening," I began, and reluctantly turned to include the Professor, expecting to see that gentleman balancing himself on his chair. The Professor's chair was empty.

"Oh," said the girl, faintly, "my father has gone."

"Gone! Where?"

"To—to India, I believe."

I sank helplessly into my own chair.

"I do not think he will stay very long—he promised to return by eleven," she said, timidly.

I tried to realize the purport of it all. "Gone to India? Gone! How? On a broomstick? Good Heavens!" I murmured, "am I sane?"

"Perfectly," she said, "and I am tired; you may take me back to the hotel."

I scarcely heard her; I was feebly attempting to gather up my numbed wits. Slowly I began to comprehend the situation, to review the startling and humiliating events of the day. At noon, in the court of the Hotel St. Antoine, I had been annoyed by a man and a cat. I had retired to my own room and had slept until dinner. In the evening I met two tourists on the sea-wall promenade. I had been beguiled into conversation—yes, into intimacy with these two tourists! I had had the intention of embracing the faith of Pythagoras! Then I had mewed like a cat with all

the strength of my lungs. Then the male tourist vanishes—and leaves me in charge of the female tourist, alone and at night in a strange city! And now the female tourist proposes that I take her home!

With a remnant of self-possession I groped for my eye-glass, seized it, screwed it firmly into my eye, and looked long and earnestly at the girl. As I looked, my eyes softened, my monocle dropped, and I forgot everything in the beauty and purity of the face before me. My heart began to beat against my stiff white waistcoat. Had I dared—yes, dared to think of this wondrous little beauty, as a female tourist? Her pale sweet face, turned toward the sea, seemed to cast a spell upon the night. How loud my heart was beating. The yellow moon floated, half dipping in the sea, flooding land and water with enchanted lights. Wind and wave seemed to feel the spell of her eyes, for the breeze died away, the heaving Scheldt tossed noiselessly, and the dark Dutch luggers swung idly on the tide with every sail adroop.

A sudden hush fell over land and water, the voices on the promenade were stilled; little by little the shadowy throng, the terrace, the sea itself vanished, and I only saw her face, shadowed against the moon.

It seemed as if I had drifted miles above the earth, through all space and eternity, and there was nought between me and high Heaven but

that white face. Ah, how I loved her ! I knew it—I never doubted it. Could years of passionate adoration touch her heart—her little heart, now beating so calmly with no thought of love to startle it from its quiet and send it fluttering against the gentle breast ? In her lap her clasped hands tightened,—her eyelids drooped as though some pleasant thought was passing. I saw the colour dye her temples, I saw the blue eyes turn, half-frightened to my own, I saw—and I knew she had read my thoughts. Then we both rose, side by side, and she was weeping softly, yet for my life I dared not speak. She turned away, touching her eyes with a bit of lace, and I sprang to her side and offered her my arm.

"You cannot go back alone," I said.

She did not take my arm.

"Do you hate me, Miss Wyeth ?"

"I am very tired," she said, "I must go home."

"You cannot go alone."

"I do not care to accept your escort."

"Then—you send me away ?"

"No," she said, in a hard voice. "You can come if you like." So I humbly attended her to the Hotel St. Antoine.

III.

AS we reached the Place Verte and turned into the court of the hotel, the sound of the midnight bells swept over the city, and a horse-car jingled slowly by on its last trip to the railroad station.

We passed the fountain, bubbling and splashing in the moonlit court, and, crossing the square, entered the southern wing of the hotel. At the foot of the stairway she leaned for an instant against the banisters.

"I am afraid we have walked too fast," I said.

She turned to me coldly. "No,—conventionalities must be observed. You were quite right in escaping as soon as possible."

"But," I protested, "I assure you——"

She gave a little movement of impatience. "Don't," she said, "you tire me—conventionalities tire me. Be satisfied,—nobody has seen you."

"You are cruel," I said, in a low voice—"what do you think I care for conventionalities——"

"You care everything,—you care what people think, and you try to do what they say is good

form. You never did such an original thing in your life as you have just done."

"You read my thoughts," I exclaimed, bitterly—"it is not fair——"

"Fair or not, I know what you consider me,—ill-bred, common, pleased with any sort of attention. Oh! Why should I waste one word—one thought on you!"

"Miss Wyeth,—" I began, but she interrupted me.

"Would you dare tell me what you think of me?—Would you dare tell me what you think of my father?"

I was silent. She turned and mounted two steps of the stairway, then faced me again.

"Do you think it was for my own pleasure that I permitted myself to be left alone with you? Do you imagine that I am flattered by your attention—do you venture to think I ever could be? How dared you think what you did think there on the sea-wall?"

"I cannot help my thoughts!" I replied.

"You turned on me like a tiger when you awoke from your trance. Do you really suppose that you mewed? Are you not aware that my father hypnotized you?"

"No—I did not know it," I said. The hot blood tingled in my finger tips, and I looked angrily at her.

"Why do you imagine that I waste my time on you?" she said. "Your vanity has answered

that question,—now let your intelligence answer it. I am a Pythagorean; I have been chosen to bring in a convert, and you were the convert selected for me by the Mahatmas of the Consolidated Trust Company. I have followed you from New York to Antwerp, as I was bidden, but now my courage fails, and I shrink from fulfilling my mission, knowing you to be the type of man you are. If I could give it up—if I could only go away,—never, never again to see you! Ah, I fear they will not permit it!—until my mission is accomplished. Why was I chosen,—I, with a woman's heart and a woman's pride. I—I hate you!"

"I love you," I said, slowly.

She paled and looked away.

"Answer me," I said.

Her wide blue eyes turned back again, and I held them with mine. At last she slowly drew a long-stemmed rose from the bunch at her belt, turned, and mounted the shadowy staircase. For a moment I thought I saw her pause on the landing above, but the moonlight was uncertain. After waiting for a long time in vain, I moved away, and in going raised my hand to my face, but I stopped short, and my heart stopped too, for a moment. In my hand I held a long-stemmed rose.

With my brain in a whirl I crept across the court and mounted the stairs to my room. Hour after hour I walked the floor, slowly at first, then more

rapidly, but it brought no calm to the fierce tumult of my thoughts, and at last I dropped into a chair before the empty fireplace, burying my head in my hands.

Uncertain, shocked, and deadly weary, I tried to think,—I strove to bring order out of the chaos in my brain, but I only sat staring at the long-stemmed rose. Slowly I began to take a vague pleasure in its heavy perfume, and once I crushed a leaf between my palms, and, bending over, drank in the fragrance.

Twice my lamp flickered and went out, and twice, treading softly, I crossed the room to relight it. Twice I threw open the door, thinking that I heard some sound without. How close the air was,—how heavy and hot! And what was that strange, subtle odour which had insensibly filled the room? It grew stronger and more penetrating, and I began to dislike it, and to escape it I buried my nose in the half-opened rose. Horror! The odour came from the rose,—and the rose itself was no longer a rose—not even a flower now,—it was only a bunch of catnip; and I dashed it to the floor and ground it under my heel.

"Mountebank!" I cried in a rage. My anger grew cold—and I shivered, drawn perforce to the curtained window. Something was there—outside. I could not hear it, for it made no sound, but I knew it was there, watching me. What was it? The damp hair stirred on my head. I

touched the heavy curtains. Whatever was outside them sprang up, tore at the window, and then rushed away.

Feeling very shaky, I crept to the window, opened it, and leaned out. The night was calm. I heard the fountain splashing in the moonlight and the sea winds soughing through the palms. Then I closed the window and turned back into the room; and as I stood there a sudden breeze, which could not have come from without, blew sharply in my face, extinguishing the candle and sending the long curtains bellying out into the room. The lamp on the table flashed and smoked and sputtered; the room was littered with flying papers and catnip leaves. Then the strange wind died away, and somewhere in the night a cat snarled.

I turned desperately to my trunk and flung it open. Into it I threw everything I owned, pell-mell, closed the lid, locked it, and seizing my mackintosh and travelling bag, ran down the stairs, crossed the court and entered the night office of the hotel. There I called up the sleepy clerk, settled my reckoning, and sent a porter for a cab.

"Now," I said, "what time does the next train leave?"

"The next train for where?"

"Anywhere!"

The clerk locked the safe, and carefully keeping the desk between himself and me, motioned the office boy to look at the time-tables.

" Next train, 2.10. Brussels—Paris," read the boy.

At that moment the cab rattled up by the curbstone, and I sprang in while the porter tossed my traps on top. Away we bumped over the stony pavement, past street after street lighted dimly by tall gas-lamps, and alley after alley brilliant with the glare of villainous all-night café-concerts, and then, turning, we rumbled past the Circus and the Eldorado, and at last stopped with a jolt before the Brussels Station.

I had not a moment to lose. " Paris! " I cried, —" first-class ! " and, pocketing the book of coupons, hurried across the platform to where the Brussels train lay. A guard came running up, flung open the door of a first-class carriage, slammed and locked it, after I had jumped in, and the long train glided from the arched station out into the starlit morning.

I was all alone in the compartment. The wretched lamp in the roof flickered dimly, scarcely lighting the stuffy box. I could not see to read my time-table, so I wrapped my legs in the travelling rug and lay back, staring out into the misty morning. Trees, walls, telegraph poles, flashed past, and the cinders drove in showers against the rattling windows. I slept at times, fitfully, and once, springing up, peered sharply at the opposite seat, possessed with the idea that somebody was there.

When the train reached Brussels, I was sound

asleep, and the guard awoke me with difficulty.

"Breakfast, sir?" he asked.

"Anything," I sighed, and stepped out to the platform, rubbing my legs and shivering. The other passengers were already breakfasting in the station café, and I joined them and managed to swallow a cup of coffee and a roll.

The morning broke, grey and cloudy, and I bundled myself into my mackintosh for a tramp along the platform. Up and down I stamped, puffing a cigar, and digging my hands deep in my pockets, while the other passengers huddled into the warmer compartments of the train or stood watching the luggage being lifted into the forward mail carriage. The wait was very long; the hands of the great clock pointed to six, and still the train lay motionless along the platform. I approached a guard, and asked him whether anything was wrong.

"Accident on the line," he replied; "Monsieur had better go to his compartment and try to sleep, for we may be delayed until noon."

I followed the guard's advice, and crawling into my corner, wrapped myself in the rug and lay back watching the rain-drops spattering along the window-sill. At noon, the train had not moved, and I lunched in the compartment. At four o'clock in the afternoon the station-master came hurrying along the platform, crying "montez! montez! Messieurs—Dames, s'il vous plait,"—

and the train steamed out of the station and whirled away through the flat, treeless Belgian plains. At times I dozed, but the shaking of the car always awoke me, and I would sit blinking out at the endless stretch of plain, until a sudden flurry of rain blotted the landscape from my eyes. At last, a long, shrill whistle from the engine, a jolt, a series of bumps, and an apparition of red trousers and bayonets warned me that we had arrived at the French frontier. I turned out with the others, and opened my valise for inspection, but the customs officials merely chalked it without examination, and I hurried back to my compartment amid the shouting of guards and the clanging of station bells. Again I found that I was alone in the compartment, so I smoked a cigarette, thanked Heaven, and fell into a dreamless sleep.

How long I slept I do not know, but when I awoke, the train was roaring through a tunnel. When again it flashed out into the open country, I peered through the grimy rain-stained window and saw that the storm had ceased and stars were twinkling in the sky. I stretched my legs, yawned, pushed my travelling cap back from my forehead, and stumbling to my feet, walked up and down the compartment until my cramped muscles were relieved. Then I sat down again, and, lighting a cigar, puffed great rings and clouds of fragrant smoke across the aisle.

The train was flying ; the cars lurched and

shook, and the windows rattled accompaniment to the creaking panels. The smoke from my cigar dimmed the lamp in the ceiling and hid the opposite seat from view. How it curled and writhed in the corners, now eddying upward, now floating across the aisle like a veil. I lounged back in my cushioned seat watching it with interest. What queer shapes it took. How thick it was becoming—how strangely luminous ! Now it had filled the whole compartment, puff after puff crowding upward, waving, wavering, clouding the windows, and blotting the lamp from sight. It was most interesting. I had never before smoked such a cigar. What an extraordinary brand ! I examined the end, flicking the ashes away. The cigar was out. Fumbling for a match to relight it, my eyes fell on the drifting smoke curtain, which swayed across the corner opposite. It seemed almost tangible. How like a real curtain it hung, grey, impenetrable. A man might hide behind it. Then an idea came into my head, and it persisted until my uneasiness amounted to a vague terror. I tried to fight it off—I strove to resist—but the conviction slowly settled upon me that something was behind that smoke veil,—something which had entered the compartment while I slept.

"It can't be," I muttered, my eyes fixed on the misty drapery, "the train has not stopped."

The car creaked and trembled. I sprang to my feet, and swept my arm through the veil of

smoke. Then my hair slowly rose on my head. For my hand touched another hand, and my eyes had met two other eyes.

My senses reeled. I heard a voice in the gloom, low and sweet, calling me by name; I saw the eyes again, tender and blue; soft fingers touched my own.

"Are you afraid?" she said.

My heart began to beat again, and my face warmed with returning blood.

"It is only I," she said, gently.

I seemed to hear my own voice speaking as if at a great distance; "you here—alone?"

"How cruel of you," she faltered, "I am not alone." At the same instant my eyes fell upon the Professor, calmly seated by the further window. His hands were thrust into the folds of a corded and tasselled dressing-gown, from beneath which peeped two enormous feet encased in carpet slippers. Upon his head towered a yellow night cap. He did not pay the slightest attention to either me or his daughter, and, except for the lighted cigar which he kept shifting between his lips, he might have been taken for a wax dummy.

Then I began to speak, feebly, hesitating like a child.

"How did you come into this compartment? You—you do not possess wings, I suppose. You could not have been here all the time. Will you explain—explain to me? See, I ask you very humbly, for I do not understand. This is

the 19th century, and these things don't fit in. I'm wearing a Dunlap hat—I've got a copy of the *New York Herald* in my bag,—President Cleveland is alive and everything is so very commonplace in the world! Is this real magic? Perhaps I'm filled with hallucinations. Perhaps I'm asleep and dreaming. Perhaps you are not really here—nor I—nor anybody, nor anything!"—

The train plunged into a tunnel, and when again it dashed out from the other end, the cold wind blew furiously in my face from the further window. It was wide open; the Professor was gone.

"Papa has changed to another compartment," she said, quietly; "I think perhaps you were beginning to bore him."

Her eyes met mine and she smiled faintly.

"Are you very much bewildered?"

I looked at her in silence. She sat very quietly, her white hands clasped above her knee, her curly hair glittering to her girdle. A long robe, almost silvery in the twilight, clung to her young figure; her bare feet were thrust deep into a pair of shimmering eastern slippers.

"When you fled," she sighed, "I was asleep and there was no time to lose. I barely had a moment to go to Bombay, to find Papa, and return in time to join you. This is an East Indian costume."

Still I was silent.

"Are you shocked?" she asked simply

"No," I replied in a dull voice, "I'm past that."

"You are very rude," she said, with the tears starting to her eyes.

"I do not mean to be. I only wish to go away—away somewhere and find out what my name is."

"Your name is Harold Kensett."

"Are you sure?" I asked, eagerly.

"Yes,—what troubles you?"

"Is everything plain to you? Are you a sort of prophet and second sight medium? Is nothing hidden from you?" I asked.

"Nothing,"—she faltered. My head ached and I clasped it in my hand.

A sudden change came over her. "I am human,—believe me!"—she said with piteous eagerness; "indeed I do not seem strange to those who understand. You wonder, because you left me at midnight in Antwerp and you wake to find me here. If, because I find myself reincarnated, endowed with senses and capabilities which few at present possess;—if I am so made, why should it seem strange? It is all so natural to me. If I appear to you—"

"Appear!!!"

"Yes—"

"Elsie!" I cried, "can you vanish?"

"Yes," she murmured,—"does it seem to you unwomanly?"

"Great Heaven!" I groaned.

"Don't," she cried, with tears in her voice,—"oh, please don't! Help me to bear it! If you only knew how awful it is to be different from other girls,—how mortifying it is to me to be able to vanish,—oh, how I hate and detest it all!"

"Don't cry," I said, looking at her pityingly.

"Oh dear me!" she sobbed. "You shudder at the sight of me because I can vanish."

"I don't!" I cried.

"Yes you do! You abhor me,—you shrink away! Oh why did I ever see you,—why did you ever come into my life,—what have I done in ages past, that now, reborn, I suffer cruelly—cruelly!"

"What do you mean!" I whispered. My voice trembled with happiness.

"I?—nothing—but you think me a fabled monster."

"Elsie,—my sweet Elsie," I said, "I don't think you a fabled monster;—I love you,—see—see—I am at your feet,—listen to me, my darling,"—

She turned her blue eyes to mine. I saw tears sparkling on the curved lashes.

"Elsie, I love you," I said again.

Slowly she raised her white hands to my head and held it a moment, looking at me strangely. Then her face grew nearer to my own, her glittering hair fell over my shoulders, her lips rested on mine.

In that long sweet kiss, the beating of her heart answered mine, and I learned a thousand truths, wonderful, mysterious, splendid,—but when our lips fell apart,—the memory of what I learned departed also.

"It was so very simple and beautiful," she sighed, "and I—I never saw it. But the Mahatmas knew—ah, they knew that my mission could only be accomplished through love."

"And it is," I whispered, "for you shall teach me,—me your husband."

"And—and you will not be impatient? You will try to believe?"

"I will believe what you tell me, my sweetheart."

"Even about—cats?"

Before I could reply the further window opened and a yellow nightcap, followed by the Professor, entered from somewhere without. Elsie sank back on her sofa, but the Professor needed not to be told, and we both knew he was already busily reading our thoughts.

For a moment there was dead silence,—long enough for the Professor to grasp the full significance of what had passed. Then he uttered a single exclamation; "Oh!"

After a while, however, he looked at me for the first time that evening, saying; "Congratulate you, Mr. Kensett, I 'm sure;"—tied several knots in the cord of his dressing-gown, lighted a cigar, and paid no further attention to either of

us. Some moments later he opened the window again and disappeared. I looked across the aisle at Elsie.

"You may come over beside me," she said, shyly.

IV.

IT was nearly ten o'clock and our train was rapidly approaching Paris. We passed village after village wrapped in mist, station after station hung with twinkling red and blue and yellow lanterns, then sped on again with the echo of the switch bells ringing in our ears.

When at length the train slowed up and stopped, I opened the window and looked out upon a long wet platform, shining under the electric lights.

A guard came running by, throwing open the doors of each compartment, and crying, "Paris next! Tickets, if you please."

I handed him my book of coupons from which he tore several and handed it back. Then he lifted his lantern and peered into the compartment saying: "Is Monsieur alone?"

I turned to Elsie.

"He wants your ticket—give it to me."

"What 's that?" demanded the guard.

I looked anxiously at Elsie.

"If your father has the tickets—" I began, but was interrupted by the guard who snapped, "Monsieur will give himself the trouble to remember that I do not understand English."

"Keep quiet!" I said sharply in French, "I am not speaking to you."

The guard stared stupidly at me, then at my luggage, and finally, entering the car, knelt down and peered under the seats. Presently he got up, very red in the face, and went out slamming the door. He had not paid the slightest attention to Elsie, but I distinctly heard him say, "only Englishmen and idiots talk to themselves!"

"Elsie," I faltered, "do you mean to say that guard could not see you?"

She began to look so serious again that I merely added, "never mind, I don't care whether you are invisible or not, dearest."

"I am not invisible to you," she said; "why should you care?"

A great noise of bells and whistles drowned our voices, and amid the whirring of switch bells, the hissing of steam, and the cries of "Paris! All out!" our train glided into the station.

It was the Professor who opened the door of our carriage. There he stood, calmly adjusting his yellow nightcap and drawing his dressing-gown closer with the corded tassels.

"Where have you been?" I asked.

"On the engine."

"*In* the engine I suppose you mean," I said.

"No I don't; I mean *on* the engine,—on the pilot. It was very refreshing. Where are we going now?"

"Do you know Paris?" asked Elsie, turning to me.

"Yes. I think your father had better take you to the Hotel Normandie on the rue de l'Echelle—"

"But you must stay there too!"

"Of course—if you wish—"

She laughed nervously.

"Don't you see that my father and I could not take rooms—now? You must engage three rooms for yourself."

"Why?" I asked stupidly.

"Oh dear—why because we are invisible."

I tried to repress a shudder. The Professor gave Elsie his arm and, as I studied his ensemble, I thanked Heaven that he was invisible.

At the gate of the station I hailed a four-seated cab, and we rattled away through the stony streets, brilliant with gas jets, and in a few moments rolled smoothly across the Avenue de l'Opera, turned into the rue de l'Echelle, and stopped. A bright little page, all over buttons, came out, took my luggage, and preceded us into the hallway.

I, with Elsie on my arm and the Professor shuffling along beside me, walked over to the desk.

"Room?" said the clerk, "we have a very desirable room on the second fronting the rue St. Honoré—"

"But we—that is I want three rooms—three separate rooms!" I said.

The clerk scratched his chin. "Monsieur is expecting friends?"

"Say yes," whispered Elsie, with a suspicion of laughter in her voice.

"Yes," I repeated feebly.

"Gentlemen of course?" said the clerk looking at me narrowly.

"One lady."

"Married, of course?"

"What's that to you?" I said sharply, "what do you mean by speaking to us—"

"Us!"

"I mean to me," I said, badly rattled; "give me the rooms and let me get to bed, will you?"

"Monsieur will remember," said the clerk coldly, "that this is an old and respectable hotel."

"I know it," I said, smothering my rage.

The clerk eyed me suspiciously.

"Front!" he called with irritating deliberation, "show this gentleman to apartment ten."

"How many rooms are there!" I demanded.

"Three sleeping rooms and a parlor."

"I will take it," I said with composure.

"On probation," muttered the clerk insolently.

Swallowing the insult I followed the bell-boy up the stairs, keeping between him and Elsie, for I dreaded to see him walk through her as if she were thin air. A trim maid rose to meet us and conducted us through a hallway into a large apartment. She threw open all the bed-room doors and said, "Will Monsieur have the goodness to choose?"

"Which will you take," I began, turning to Elsie.

"I! Monsieur!" cried the startled maid.

That completely upset me. "Here," I muttered, slipping some silver into her hand, "now for the love of Heaven run away!"

When she had vanished with a doubtful "Merci, Monsieur," I handed the Professor the keys and asked him to settle the thing with Elsie.

Elsie took the corner room, the Professor rambled into the next one, and I said good night and crept wearily into my own chamber. I sat down and tried to think. A great feeling of fatigue weighted my spirits.

"I can think better with my clothes off," I said, and slipped the coat from my shoulders. How tired I was. "I can think better in bed," I muttered, flinging my cravat on the dresser and tossing my shirt studs after it. I was certainly very tired. "Now," I yawned, grasping the pillow and drawing it under my head, "now, I can think a bit," but before my head fell on the pillow, sleep closed my eyes.

I began to dream at once. It seemed as though my eyes were wide open and the Professor was standing beside my bed.

"Young man," he said, "you 've won my daughter and you must pay the piper!"

"What piper?" I said.

"The pied piper of Hamlin, I don't think," replied the Professor vulgarly, and before I could

realize what he was doing he had drawn a reed pipe from his dressing-gown and was playing a strangely annoying air. Then an awful thing occurred. Cats began to troop into the room, cats by the hundred, toms and tabbys, grey, yellow, Maltese, Persian, Manx, all purring and all marching round and round, rubbing against the furniture, the Professor, and even against me. I struggled with the nightmare.

"Take them away!" I tried to gasp.

"Nonsense," he said, "here is an old friend."

I saw the white tabby cat of the Hotel St. Antoine.

"An old friend," he repeated, and played a dismal melody on his reed.

I saw Elsie enter the room, lift the white tabby in her arms and bring her to my side.

"Shake hands with him," she commanded.

To my horror the tabby deliberately extended a paw and tapped me on the knuckles.

"Oh!" I cried in agony, "this is a horrible dream! Why, oh, why can't I wake!"

"Yes," she said, dropping the cat, "it is partly a dream but some of it is real. Remember what I say, my darling; you are to go to-morrow morning and meet the twelve o'clock train from Antwerp at the Gare du Nord. Papa and I are coming to Paris on that train. Don't you know that we are not really here now, you silly boy? Good night then. I shall be very glad to see you."

I saw her glide from the room, followed by the Professor, playing a gay quick-step, to which the cats danced two and two.

"Good night sir," said each cat, as it passed my bed; and I dreamed no more.

When I awoke, the room, the bed had vanished; I was in the street, walking rapidly; the sun shone down on the broad white pavements of Paris, and the streams of busy life flowed past me on either side. How swiftly I was walking! Where the devil was I going? Surely I had business somewhere that needed immediate attention. I tried to remember when I had awakened, but I could not. I wondered where I had dressed myself; I had apparently taken great pains with my toilet, for I was immaculate, monocle and all, even down to a long-stemmed rose nestling in my button-hole. I knew Paris and recognized the streets through which I was hurrying. Where could I be going? What was my hurry? I glanced at my watch and found I had not a moment to lose. Then as the bells of the city rang out mid-day, I hastened into the railroad station on the Rue Lafayette and walked out to the platform. And as I looked down the glittering track, around the distant curve shot a locomotive followed by a long line of cars. Nearer and nearer it came while the station gongs sounded and the switch-bells began ringing all along the track.

"Antwerp express!" cried the Sous-Chef de

Gare, and as the train slipped along the tiled platform I sprang upon the steps of a first-class carriage and threw open the door.

"How do you do, Mr. Kensett," said Elsie Wyeth, springing lightly to the platform. "Really it is very nice of you to come to the train." At the same moment a bald, mild-eyed gentleman emerged from the depths of the same compartment carrying a large covered basket.

"How are you, Kensett?" he said. "Glad to see you again. Rather warm in that compartment—no I will not trust this basket to an expressman; give Miss Wyeth your arm and I'll follow. We go to the 'Normandie' I believe?"

All the morning I had Elsie to myself, and at dinner I sat beside her with the Professor opposite. The latter was cheerful enough, but he nearly ruined my dinner for he smelled strongly of catnip. After dinner he became restless and fidgeted about in his chair until coffee was brought, and we went up to the parlour of our apartment. Here his restlessness increased to such an extent that I ventured to ask him if he was in good health.

"It's that basket—the covered basket which I have in the next room," he said.

"What's the trouble with the basket?" I asked.

"The basket's all right—but the contents worry me."

"May I inquire what the contents are?" I ventured.

The Professor rose.

"Yes," he said, "you may inquire of my daughter." He left the room but reappeared shortly, carrying a saucer of milk.

I watched him enter the next room which was mine.

"What on earth is he taking that into my room for?" I asked Elsie. "I don't keep cats."

"But you will," she said.

"I? never!"

"You will if I ask you to."

"But—but you won't ask me."

"But I do."

"Elsie!"

"Harold!"

"I detest cats."

"You must not."

"I can't help it."

"You will when I ask it. Have I not given myself to you? Will you not make a little sacrifice for me?"

"I don't understand—"

"Would you refuse my first request?"

"No," I said miserably, "I will keep dozens of cats—"

"I do not ask that; I only wish you to keep one."

"Was that what your father had in that basket?" I asked suspiciously.

"Yes, the basket came from Antwerp."

"What! The white Antwerp cat!" I cried.

"Yes."

"And you ask me to keep that cat? Oh Elsie!"

"Listen!" she said, "I have a long story to tell you; come nearer, close to me. You say you love me?"

I bent and kissed her.

"Then I shall put you to the proof," she murmured.

"Prove me!"

"Listen. That cat is the same cat that ran out of the apartment in the Waldorf when your great-aunt ceased to exist—in human shape. My father and myself, having received word from the Mahatmas of the Trust Company, sheltered and cherished the cat. We were ordered by the Mahatmas to convert you. The task was appalling—but there is no such thing as refusing a command, and we laid our plans. That man with a white spot in his hair was my father—"

"What! Your father is bald."

"He wore a wig then. The white spot came from dropping chemicals on the wig while experimenting with a substance which you could not comprehend."

"Then—then that clue was useless; but who could have taken the Crimson Diamond? And who was the man with the white spot on his head who tried to sell the stone in Paris?

"That was my father."

"He—he—st—took the Crimson Diamond?!" I cried aghast.

"Yes and no. That was only a paste stone that he had in Paris. It was to draw you over here. He had the real Crimson Diamond also."

"Your father?"

"Yes. He has it in the next room now. Can you not see how it disappeared, Harold? Why, the cat swallowed it!"

"Do you mean to say that the white tabby swallowed the Crimson Diamond?"

"By mistake. She tried to get it out of the velvet bag, and, as the bag was also full of catnip, she could not resist a mouthful, and unfortunately just then you broke in the door and so startled the cat that she swallowed the Crimson Diamond."

There was a painful pause. At last I said;

"Elsie, as you are able to vanish, I suppose you also are able to converse with cats."

"I am," she replied, trying to keep back the tears of mortification.

"And that cat told you this?"

"She did."

"And my Crimson Diamond is inside that cat?"

"It is."

"Then," said I firmly, "I am going to chloroform the cat."

"Harold!" she cried in terror, "that cat is your great-aunt!"

I don't know to this day how I stood the shock of that announcement, or how I managed to listen, while Elsie tried to explain the transmi-

gration theory, but it was all Chinese to me. I only knew that I was a blood relation of a cat, and the thought nearly drove me mad.

"Try, my darling, try to love her," whispered Elsie, "she must be very precious to you—"

"Yes, with my diamond inside her," I replied faintly.

"You must not neglect her," said Elsie.

"Oh no, I 'll always have my eye on her—I mean I will surround her with luxury—er, milk and bones and catnip and books—er—does she read?"

"Not the books that human beings read. Now go and speak to your aunt, Harold."

"Eh! How the deuce—"

"Go, for my sake try to be cordial."

She rose and led me unresistingly to the door of my room.

"Good Heavens!" I groaned, "this is awful."

"Courage, my darling!" she whispered, "be brave for love of me."

I drew her to me and kissed her. Beads of cold perspiration started in the roots of my hair, but I clenched my teeth and entered the room alone. The room was dark and I stood silent, not knowing where to turn, fearful lest I step on the cat, my aunt! Then through the dreary silence I called; "Aunty!"

A faint noise broke upon my ear, and my heart grew sick, but I strode into the darkness calling hoarsely :—

"Aunt Tabby! it is your nephew!"

Again the faint sound. Something was stirring there among the shadows,—a shape moving softly along the wall, a shade which glided by me, paused, wavered, and darted under the bed. Then I threw myself on the floor, profoundly moved, begging, imploring my aunt to come to me.

"Aunty! Aunty!" I murmured, "your nephew is waiting to take you to his heart!"

And at last I saw my great-aunt's eyes, shining in the dark.

Close the door. That meeting is not for the eyes of the world! Close the door upon that sacred scene where great-aunt and nephew are united at last.

THE END.

THREE NOTABLE BOOKS

The Red Republic. A Romance of the Commune. By ROBERT W. CHAMBERS. *Tenth edition.* 12° $1.25

"With all its rush and excitement there is a solid basis of painstaking and thoughtfulness in 'The Red Republic.' Mr. Chambers is wholly free from self-consciousness; indeed his gifts seem to be little short of genius. Wonderfully vivid and graphic."—*N. Y. Press.*

"Mr. Chambers shows great familiarity with the many dreadful days of 1871, and Mr. Thiers' policy is critically examined. 'The Red Republic' abounds in action."—*N. Y. Times.*

"'The Red Republic' has the healthy ring of a young man's book. Mr. Chambers can do what few men can do, he can tell a story."—*N. Y. Journal.*

"I do not think that one need hesitate to call 'The Red Republic' the best American novel of the year."—VANCE THOMPSON in *N. Y. Morning Advertiser.*

"The book will commend itself not only for its strength and vividness, but for imagination and fancy. . . . Glow with gentle beauty and romance, putting in striking contrast the barbarity of war."—DROCH in *N. Y. Life.*

A King and a Few Dukes. A Romance. By ROBERT W. CHAMBERS. *Sixth edition.* 12° $1.25

"No superior fiction has appeared in months. . . . It is a charming love story, attractively told in a way that is essentially Mr. Chambers' own."—*N. Y. Times.*

"A more charming, wholly delightful story, it would be difficult to name in the whole range of English fiction. That is saying much, but not one bit more than the book deserves. . . . The characters are wonderfully well drawn."—*N. Y. World.*

"This latest of Mr. Chambers' stories is written in a very charming manner, and with all the grace and finish that have made the writings of the author so popular during the past."—*Albany Union.*

The Maker of Moons. By ROBERT W. CHAMBERS. *New edition.* 12°, gilt top. $1.25

"Mr. Chambers writes with the irresistible fluent vigor that characterizes the born story-teller. . . . His stories are in great part as improbable as the famous 'She' by Rider Haggard, but the reader having once begun it is impossible for him not to continue to the end. In the present volume there are also three stories which, on a basis of probability, develop a series of incidents illustrated with humor and pathos which makes them distinctively American."—*Boston Literary World.*

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, New York and London

GOOD FICTION

Sons of the Morning

By EDEN PHILLPOTTS, author of "Children of the Mist," etc. With frontispiece. 8°. $1.50
Special Autograph Edition, limited to 1000 copies, *net* 1.50

"Here we have not only literature, but we have character-drawing, humor, and descriptive powers that Blackmore only equalled once, and that was in 'Lorna Doone.' . . . He knows the heart as well as the trees; he knows men and women as well as he knows nature, and he holds them both in the hollow of his hand."—*Chicago Tribune.*

Hilda Wade

A Woman with Tenacity of Purpose. By GRANT ALLEN, author of "Miss Cayley's Adventures," etc. With 98 illustrations by Gordon Browne. 8° . . . $1.50

"Mr. Allen's text, as in all his writings, is singularly picturesque and captivating. There are no commonplaces, and, although the outcome is perfectly evident early in the story, the reader will find his attention chained. . . . It is one of the best of the summer books, and as an artistic bit of light reading ranks high. It is a pity that such a vivid imagination and high-bred style of discourse are no longer in the land of the living to entertain us with further stories of adventure."—*Boston Times.*

The Secret of the Crater

(A Mountain Moloch.) By DUFFIELD OSBORNE, author of "The Spell of Ashtaroth," etc. Hudson Library, No. 45. 12°, paper, 50 cts.; cloth $1.00

"The author is a novelist with a genuine gift for narrative. He knows how to tell a story, and he is capable of conceiving a plot as wild as was ever imagined by Jules Verne or Rider Haggard. . . . The reader will find himself amused and interested from the first page to the last."
—*N. Y. Herald.*

New York — G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS — London

FICTION.

SMITH BRUNT

United States Navy. By Waldron K. Post, author of "Harvard Stories," etc. 12°, 459 pages, $1.50.

"A rattling good story of the Old Navy. . . . The book recalls Harry Gringo by its breadth and interest of plot; which means it is a first-class sea story. It is not an imitation, however. . . . The prevailing thought of the book is the unity of aims, ideals and race between Englishmen and Americans, and this idea is brought out so well that, even though the reader enjoys the story of the fierce sea-fights, he deplores the shedding of blood by brothers' hands."—*Buffalo Express.*

BEARERS OF THE BURDEN

Being Stories of Land and Sea. By Major W. P. Drury, Royal Marines. 12°, 286 pages, $1.00.

"Major Drury's stories combine pathos and humor with an underlying earnestness that betrays a clear moral vision. The whole volume is of a rare and wholesome quality."—*Chicago Tribune.*

ROSALBA

The Story of Her Development. By Olive Pratt Rayner (Grant Allen), author of "Flowers and Their Pedigrees," etc. Hudson Library, No. 39. 12°, 396 pages, paper, 50 cts.; cloth, $1.00.

"A story which holds the reader with profound interest to the closing lines."—*Chicago Inter-Ocean.*

ABOARD "THE AMERICAN DUCHESS"

By Headon Hill. Hudson Library, No. 41. 12°, paper, 50 cts.; cloth, $1.00.

Note.—This is a reprint of a work previously published under the title of "Queen of the Night"—with certain changes of names.

"He has certainly given to the reading public a capital story full of action. It is a bright novel and contains many admirable chapters. Life on the ocean is well depicted, many exciting episodes are well told, and it will interest readers of all classes."—*Knoxville Sentinel.*

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, New York and London

By Elizabeth Knight Tompkins

THE THINGS THAT COUNT

Hudson Library, No. 43. 12°, paper, 50 cts.; cloth, $1.00.

In her well-known graphic style, Miss Tompkins has made a strong and vivid study of a character hitherto not delineated in American fiction. Her heroine is an indolent young woman of small means, who lives by visiting the houses of wealthy friends. The story of her regeneration through her affection for a man of strong character is cleverly told.

TALKS WITH BARBARA

Being an Informal and Experimental Discussion, from the Point of View of a Young Woman of To-morrow, of Certain of the Complexities of Life, Particularly in Regard to the Relations of Men and Women. 12°, $1.50.

"These speculations about many things of present interest are well worth reading, for they are bright, original, felicitously set forth, and, above all, suggestive."—*N. Y. Mail and Express.*

HER MAJESTY

A Romance of To-Day. Hudson Library, No. 6. 12°, paper, 50 cts.; cloth, $1.00.

"Nothing was ever more realistic than this entirely ideal story, and the romance is as artistic as the realism. . . . . The story is bright and full of life, and there is an alertness in the style as charming as its sympathy."—*The Evangelist.*

THE BROKEN RING

Hudson Library, No. 15. 12°, paper, 50 cts.; cloth, $1.00.

"A romance of war and love in royal life, pleasantly written and cleverly composed for melodramatic effect in the end."—*Independent.*

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, New York and London

RETURN TO ➡ CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT
198 Main Stacks

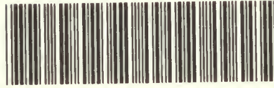
LOAN PERIOD 1 HOME USE	2	3
4	5	6

ALL BOOKS MAY BE RECALLED AFTER 7 DAYS.
Renewls and Recharges may be made 4 days prior to the due date.
Books may be Renewed by calling 642-3405.

DUE AS STAMPED BELOW

DEC 15 1998		

FORM NO. DD6
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
BERKELEY, CA 94720-6000


U. C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES
C041399394