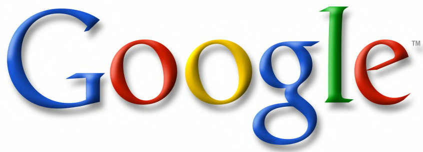

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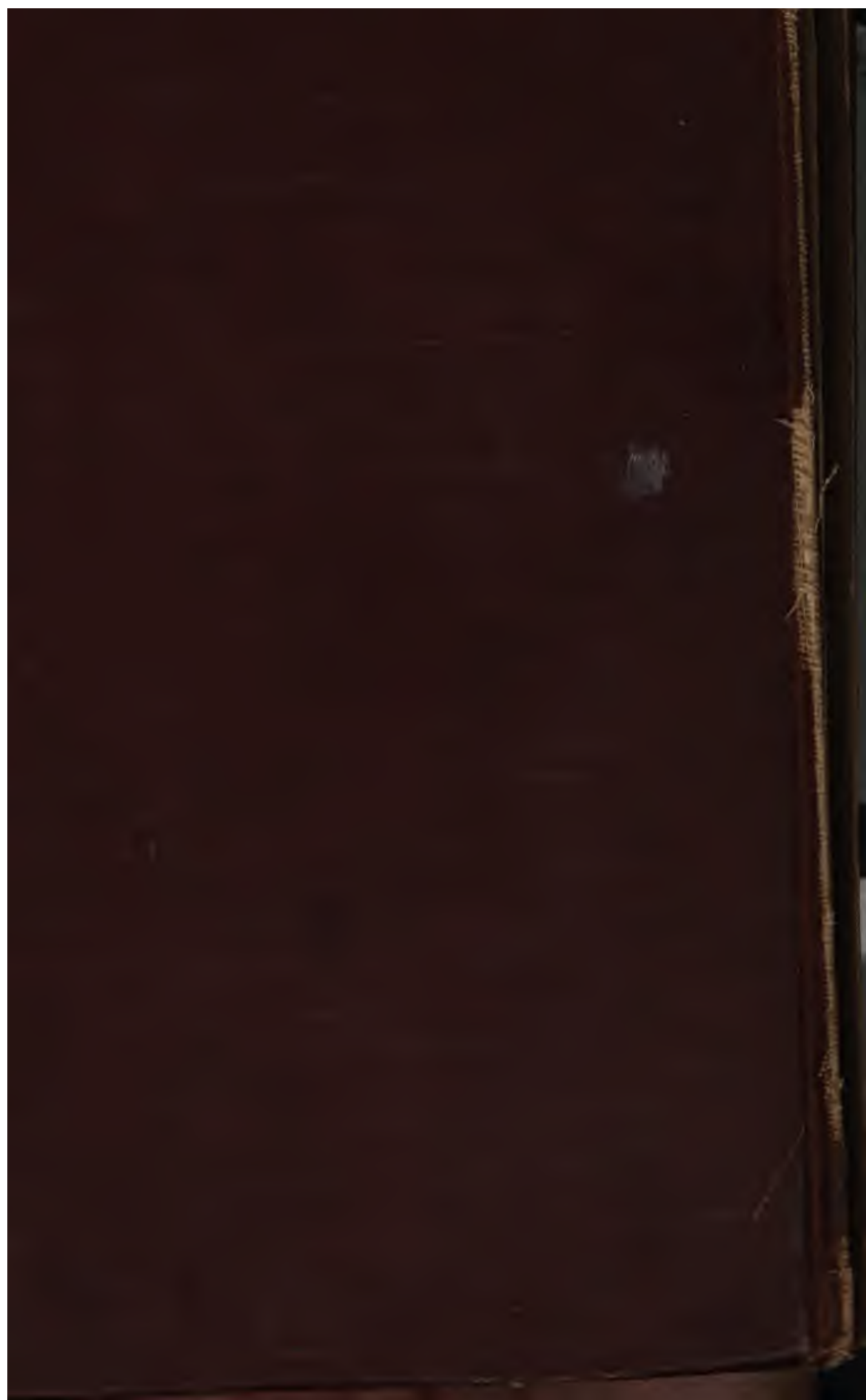

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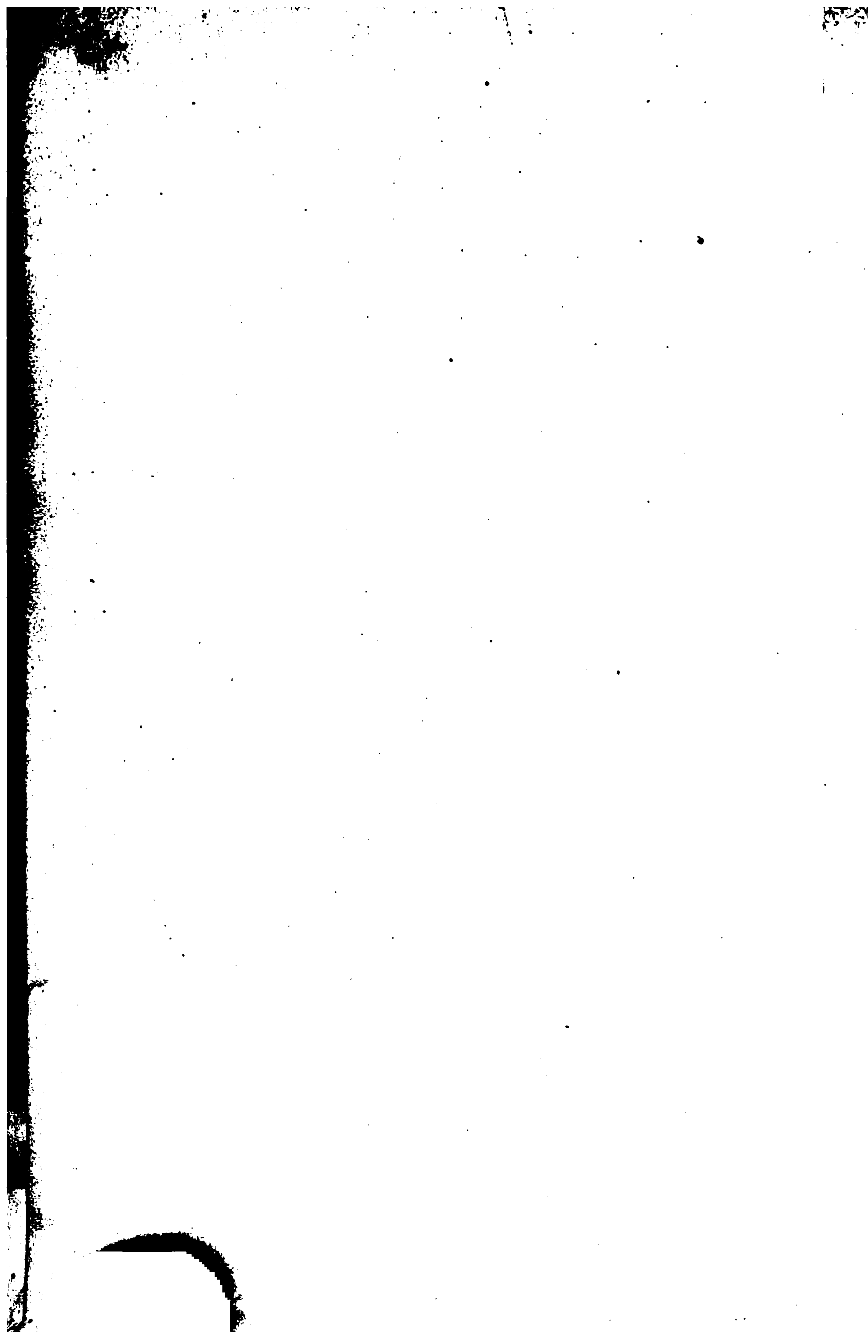
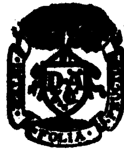


GENEVRA

ENEVRA

BY

CHARLES MARRIOTT



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Published September, 1904

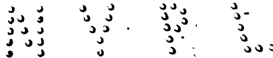
TO

HARRY ROBERTS

GENEVRA

CHAPTER I

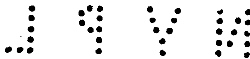
It would have been as difficult for an observer to place Genevra Joslin socially as to tell her age and condition. Her walk, her mature figure, and the gravity of her expression suggested the married woman, until one saw the virginal freshness of her face and comprehended that her seriousness was from within and not the result of a disappointing experience of life. Obviously she dressed with care, choosing her clothes with a keen and [illegible] appreciation of her physical characteristics. This afternoon she wore a simple but well-fitting [illegible] and skirt of a dull green, which called out [illegible] the value of her dark chestnut hair. Direct [illegible] of colour was evaded by a fur necklet in [illegible] shade of brown, repeated in the trimming of her dark-green velvet toque. At her [illegible] she wore a bunch of violets—of all flowers



coloured like their odour—suggesting even at a distance the scented warmth of her presence. Thus the details of her dress were so considered that they expressed a personality without giving any clue to the social position of the wearer.

Genevra's face was redeemed from roundness by the fine modelling of her forehead and lower jaw, every curve strengthened by some softly apparent angle of bone. Her eyes were brown, large, and steadfast, with subtle drawing in their lids; her eyebrows well defined, neither straight nor arched, but with a delicate lift at their outer extremities. Her mouth was rather large, her lips red and full, yet so finely shaped and so perfectly responsive to mental control that they did not convey the impression of sensuality. Above the average height of woman, she was largely made rather than plump, and moved with the quiet freedom of health as indicated by her clear eyes, white teeth, and live, warm skin. Her whole person suggested ripeness, readiness, as of wine slowly matured; in another year or so she would be past her prime.

After the first satisfaction to the eye a complete balance of body and mind is often displeasing, and a hasty observer would perhaps have set down



[illegible] was probably a very selfish woman, if not absolutely heartless. A nearer glance into her eyes, full of sleeping passion, haunted with ideas, must have awakened the interested belief that she was still waiting for a crisis; that, by some fault of circumstances, not from insensibility, a singularly full inner life had as yet failed to find an object upon which to spend its emotional richness.

As she walked along the main road from the Land's End to Porthlew, Genevra was peculiarly in accord with her surroundings. On every side [illegible] the suggestive but unsatisfying curves of the [illegible]-clad carns, at this season—late November—[illegible] subdued harmony of colour. The heather was out of bloom, the gorse ripened to a sombre green, the bracken faded to brown, yet haunted, since the [illegible] was damp, with a hint of purple. In all this [illegible]ering undulation of moor and valley nothing [illegible]ally happened. The eye lifted out of a bot[illegible] to follow the outline of a hill expecting some [illegible] of colour or shape, only to descend unre[illegible], yet always tantalized by the sense of some[illegible] imminent. The moist air was full of the [illegible] of the sea, itself invisible, inaudible, [illegible] with the scent of brine and sea-weed, and a [illegible]our as of fermentation.

Genevra was the landscape become human, as if she were its first expression in conscious life and not the product of successive generations of men and women. She eminently "belonged"; she had the same reticence, the same outer stillness with an undercurrent of active processes without beginning or ending. The shapes and the colours and the odours of the scene were summed up in her as the elements are concentrated within the skin of a grape. Just as it would have seemed not surprising if the tension of the sinister curves broke in flame and thunder with the sudden elevation of a volcanic peak, so for all her quietness she looked capable of devastating outbursts of passion.

Genevra struck off across a marshy croft in the direction of a small plantation running at right angles to the high-road. She took the treacherous ground, stepping from tussock to tussock and avoiding the hollows with the undeviating skill of one used to broken country, though the action with which she picked up her skirt and showed a neatly shod foot was oddly of the town. As she passed along the deeply rutted road beside the plantation, innumerable birds broke away from the bushes: timid wrens taking cover from point to point, blackbirds blundering out with an angry "Tuck,

[illegible] ack!" Once, when a sea-gull passed high overhead with a loud "Ship ahoy, ahoy!" as at [illegible] of the sea, Genevra looked up with a passion[illegible] glance of sympathy, revealing her essential [illegible]nedness.

For some distance the plantation was a mere [illegible] of small trees, mostly coniferous, apparently preserved with some care as a cover for game. At a point where the croft became a lane, leading up to a farm built of grey granite, square set, and resembling in plan and isolation a Moorish forti[illegible] town, Genevra turned off through an iron gate into the wood. She crooked the gate behind her and moved forward deliberately as if to an assigna[illegible]. Though still merely a copse, the plantation [illegible]ened here and lost its precision of character in [illegible]iety of larger trees—oak, ash, chestnut, beech, [illegible] hazel, with an unusual mixture of laurel which [illegible] a curious distinction. It seemed as if those [illegible]ared the pines and firs had grown tired of [illegible] work and left the rest to Nature. The place [illegible] known locally as Merlin's Wood, and indeed [illegible]osphere was that of legend and enchant[illegible] made more magical by the absence of heavy [illegible] There was very little undergrowth to hide [illegible]ordinary contortions of the tree branches,

and the beech trunks, silver satin, lit from every quarter, had no definite shadows and thus became unsubstantial, baffling the eye. It was a place of illusion rather than of mystery. Huge granite boulders, covered with mosses, lichens, and sprouting ferns, were grouped round pools of dark water patterned with fallen beech leaves, like blue steel arabesqued with copper sequins. The light-brown carpet of the wood was diapered with the clover-like leaves of the oxalis upheld on their fine stems, and forming a shimmering green veil a few inches above the ground. The wood ascended brokenly, the upper edge castled against the sky with towering blocks of granite, hung with ivy, and here and there fallen together, leaving caves and crevices between them.

Once within the wood Genevra breathed a deep sigh of contentment, proving that her appointment was with none other than the genius of the place, throwing out her arms in a wide, free gesture that gave a momentary emphasis to the strong lines of her figure. After a few minutes she began to walk up and down, reciting verses aloud with constant repetition and alteration. Movement, voice, and expression suggested active endeavour rather than reverie. Suddenly she halted, looking ahead with

startled frown. At a little distance a small boy, holding a bundle of sticks in his arms, stood still and grinned foolishly at her, as if hesitating between the impulse to touch his cap and some authority which denied him movement. His whole attitude implied a third person, and was explained by the figure of a man who sat before an easel about twenty yards away. For a minute or two Genevra stood hot and confused with her clasped hands half raised. Apparently, however, the man had been too absorbed in his work to notice her presence; he followed the boy's frightened stare with a glance of surprise quickly changing to vexation. He looked about thirty; broad shouldered, with a strong, pale, clean-shaven face. His cap [illegible] drawn down over his eyes, the collar of his [illegible] turned up, and he held an unlighted pipe between his teeth. He did not move, but ceased his [illegible] for a moment as Genevra passed blindly between him and the boy, his expression deepening [illegible] almost a scowl of impatience. It was quite [illegible] that to him Genevra was the intruder.

[illegible] Genevra had gone a few yards she heard [illegible] ask a question and her name spoken by the [illegible] This gave her a feeling of satisfaction she [illegible] have explained; it seemed as if her iden-

tity were a matter of consequence. Climbing the stone hedge at a broken place, she continued her walk up the lane, hurrying along with bent head and clenched hands as if unconscious of her direction. An observer who had lost sight of her when she entered the wood and now saw her again would have supposed that her assignation had ended in a lovers' quarrel. Her walk was now entirely different: quicker, no longer deliberate, but as if unguided from within. On reaching the town-place of Crellas, where three ways met, Genevra stopped and stood absent-mindedly looking at an ancient granite cross in an angle of the hedge. Her lips moved as if she were arguing silently. Then, with an abrupt recovery of herself, she lifted her head, turned about, and retraced her steps. The light was now failing, and in repassing the wood Genevra hurried perceptibly without looking to the right or left. She kept up a brisk pace until she reached the hill on the other side of Trecoth bottom. Here her footsteps slackened, and her face relaxed into a smile strikingly sweet by contrast with the usual gravity of her expression. Her smile was followed by a quick rush of colour into her cheeks, and she put up her hand as though they tingled. Ascending the hill, which curved

[illegible] the letter S, she seemed deliberately to become observant.

At this point the road had the indescribable character of approaching some place of importance. The ridge of the hill was beset with twisted oaks, evidently the survivors of a larger number, holding the sunset between their bare branches like dregs of wine palpably thickened. Under the left flank of the hill was a large overshot water-wheel, fed by a pulsing channel which here passed beneath the road. Further to the left a great valley, shut in between solemn carns, curved away grandly to the invisible sea. On the right, four white cottages, built in a row as if against the fear of solitude, stared hopelessly down the valley over garden ramparts of ice-plant and tamarisk. There [illegible] no sound except the plashing of water which [illegible] over the green stained timbers of the [illegible], now stationary. Below the mill the water [illegible] its way into a bigger stream hastening [illegible] the valley to the sea. Only an accustomed [illegible] Genevra's, would have heard the faint snor[illegible] Atlantic.

[illegible] dawdled up the hill as if nearing her [illegible] with reluctance. Once she turned and [illegible] backward along the road she had come,

but Merlin's Wood was hidden behind the shoulder of the carn. Over the brow of the hill the road plunged and rose on its way to the Land's End. Nobody was in sight and the telegraph poles only increased the effect of utter loneliness. Genevra turned to the right along a straggling avenue of elms coming round to an irregular group of farm buildings, shadowed by rook-haunted trees and standing in immemorial mud. This was Trecoth, once the most important manor of West Cornwall and dating from the Norman conquest. Although approached on either hand by a hill, Trecoth cowered in a cuplike hollow and made no outline against the sky. There was nothing to attract attention from the main road; only when standing in the town-place did one comprehend its former consequence. The plan was still that of the letter E, indicating that the present buildings dated from the sixteenth century. That part corresponding with the lower limb of the letter was still inhabited, the rest was divided into barns and sheds, all more or less decayed, some of them roofless. Facing the short limb and hidden from the road was a newer building, perhaps a hundred years old, and this was the dwelling-house of the Joslins. The whole place wore the peculiar sullen look of

ancient granite houses which take on the grandeur of age without its tenderness, and suggest doom without romance.

Genevra stood for a moment looking at the depressing muddle about her; ruined pig-styes patched with worm-eaten timber torn from the interior of the old buildings, gates unhinged and broken, abandoned ploughs and harrows falling to pieces where they lay, and the road itself degenerated into filthy sloughs and pools. Then with a weary shrug of her shoulders she went round to the dwelling-house and passing through the open door, entered a little room on the right-hand side. Without taking off her outdoor things she sat down in an attitude of reflection. She did not lean back in her chair, but sat upright with her hands clasped together, gazing at the opposite wall. Occasionally she sighed; not with the falling breast of resignation but rather the short, fighting breath of one too ardent or too proud to sink with her circumstances. From the kitchen beyond [illegible] the sound of a woman nagging in a high-[illegible] voice, and the banging of pots and pans. [illegible] at intervals her own name was plainly audi-[illegible] Genevra took no more notice than if the angry [illegible] discussed an utter stranger.

Genevra's room resembled herself in the careful simplicity of its arrangement. There was but little furniture: a black-oak cupboard, a writing-table, and besides that on which she sat one easy chair by the fireside. The walls were panelled and painted a light green, contrasting with the oaken joists and planking of the room above. The window in a cushioned recess faced a little quadrangle between two limbs of the letter E, warmed with dying flowers of Genevra's own planting. There were touches of luxury in the room: a thick rug, too small to be called a carpet, on the stained floor, and short heavy curtains of some rich brown material hanging straight at the window. The door was curtained with the same stuff running on a brass *portière* rod. There were no pictures or ornaments. The room was dark and chilly and had the characteristic smell of damp wood and furze smoke.

Presently Genevra rose, removed her jacket and hat and flung them into the easy chair. Then she knelt on the rug, lit the bundle of furze in the grate, and added coal. The care with which she did this, picking up each lump between her finger and thumb, suggested that she did not wish anybody to know that a fire was being lighted. She

frowned a little as if the sounds from the kitchen afflicted her; and from her watching attitude it was evident that she feared yet further disturbance. When the fire was well burning, Genevra lit a green-shaded reading-lamp and drew her chair up to the writing-table. Unlocking a drawer, she took out a bundle of printers' proofs and in a few minutes the whole woman was concentrated on the work before her.

CHAPTER II

AT the age of twenty-nine Genevra Joslin had found her only emotional escape in writing verse, and she pursued the exercise with the furtive diligence of one practising a secret vice. As yet her work was very little known even among the limited number of persons who read poetry. A few enthusiasts, chiefly masculine, recognised Genevra's peculiar gift and spoke of her among themselves with the superior feeling of those possessing knowledge or discrimination in advance of the general. Most of Genevra's printed work was contributed to the same periodical, a monthly review struggling for existence by reason of its austerity, and edited by a man named Edgar Noy. Edgar Noy, himself a poet, was notorious throughout the literary world for his indifference to accepted opinion and the pungency of his criticisms on contemporary writers. He once said of Genevra's work to Henry Surridge, the only man of letters who remained his friend:

"Brains? It isn't brains, it's woman! Writes verse? She don't write verse, she bleeds it. I hope to God she never marries;" adding almost hopefully, "unless she's deserted in a week." When checked for his ill-wish he laughed boisterously and said: "I don't care if she's crucified, so long as she don't use her blood for making babies and take to writing verse."

Though Genevra and Edgar Noy had never met, they were in regular correspondence, and it was he who had coaxed or bullied a publisher into taking the risk of printing her first volume of poems. Genevra had fortunately passed the age when the mere fact of authorship is alluring, and her attitude towards her offspring was one of the most critical affection. She had now brooded over her proofs, with constant revision, for two months and still could not let them go. She had taken to heart her literary godfather's reiterated warning, "Don't hurry," and again "Don't hurry."

Genevra cultivated her talent so unobtrusively that beyond remarking that her name occasionally appeared "in print" her immediate associates [illegible]ally ignored her as a poet. Socially her position was peculiar, and under the circumstances [illegible]. She was the daughter of a yeoman

farmer and lived with her married brother at the old Manor House of Trecoth. Consequently she was kept out of drawing-rooms and in daily contact with the more essential facts of life. Indeed, there is hardly a more dignified mode of existence for men and women than independent farming. The Joslins were the descendants of a once famous county family, the de Jocelins, whose only known record was in the parish church of St. Adrian, three miles away. Genevra's bitter sense of her ancestry was perhaps the chief defect of her temperament. Her poetry was so definite and apart, so functional, that it was never menaced by the practical duties of life: she was more business-like and less given to day-dreaming than her brother, but she allowed her family pride to govern all her intercourse with other people. This, while it protected her from useless patronage, prevented her from making proper use of material advantages, since she considered everything and everybody in relation to a name restored to its forgotten dignity rather than to her actual circumstances. Her most vivid and lasting memory of her father was that he once took her, a child of eight, to church and, bidding her squat on the floor beside him, made her trace out with her small fingers the in-

scription running round the coffin-shaped tombstone.

"✠ *Isabella: La: Femme: Godfroi: De: Jocelin: Git: Ici: Dev: De: Lalme: Eit: Merce: Ke: Pur: Lealme: Punt: Di: Ior: De: Pardon: Avervnd:*"

"Don't 'ee forgit that, Jenefer, my dear," said old Joslin with ignorant pride. "When you'm woman grown maybe you'll larn what ed do mane. I can't tell 'ee, but I do knaw as it do belong to we."

Genevra never forgot the solemn look on her father's face when he bade her "put forth your hand," or the feeling of the quaint Norman-French letters; and though as she grew up poetry became her incurable habit, her deliberate ambition was the restoration of Trecoth to something like its original dignity whether by marriage or her own unaided efforts in the accumulation of money.

It was perhaps this instinct of race which protected Genevra from the influences of the Porthlew boarding-school, whither she was sent at the age of [illegible]. There she remained impervious to all accomplishments, though she read every book that came her way. When at fourteen she left school, [illegible] was contented to be thought fit for nothing

better than helping her mother in the house and dairy.

Among her father's friends was Uter Penrose, who lived " down Cove," as the seaward end of the Rosewithan valley was called.

Uter Penrose, an old school-master who had fallen between two *régimes,* of the school-board and of the university graduate, was a bachelor solacing his old age with gibes at the methods which left him without occupation. Among the other mysteries of his past profession he practised phrenology, and one evening, as he sat in the farm kitchen over his beer watching the women with a satirical smile, he called Genevra to him that he might " feel her bumps."

" George! " he cried, letting fall his pipe, " your girl has a head like Shakespeare's. Why didden you tell me before? "

Genevra began to cry; she expected to be scolded for inconvenient attributes, and for a day or two she was haunted by a vision of rude people pointing at her head as if it were a prize vegetable marrow. But the only practical result of Uter Penrose's discovery was that she became his pupil. His methods of education, if surprising to modern notions, were the best possible for the girl, being

of a kind which, according to Lamb, "makes incomparable old maids." She received a sound training in English literature from Chaucer to Fielding, with whom, according to her master, the subject ended, some Latin—Horace by heart—and an obscure science called by Penrose "astronomy." This guidance helped her through the shifting sands of adolescence and until she knew her own mental needs. She had sufficient French for reading and, hidden from Penrose, an intimate acquaintance with modern poets. Genevra did not, however, begin to write verse by imitation. Not until she was turned twenty and had outgrown most of her preferences in modern literature did she find herself putting words to the obscure but powerful emotions aroused within her by the savage beauty of her surroundings and the mysterious facts of existence. She went through the history of the race in little. Her earliest poems recalled the cliff-drawings of some forgotten people in their crudity, their shocking truth, and almost brutal feeling for cosmic beauty. With development she seemed to be more graceful, though she was still far enough from realizing Edgar Noy's fear that she would merely write verses.

George Joslin died when Genevra was

eighteen and her brother two years older. Young George actually inherited the farm, but only on condition that he gave Genevra a home and one-third of the income arising from the place until she married. This unusual arrangement was prompted by the old man's distrust of his son's ability to manage the farm by himself. The brother and sister came into possession of an estate unencumbered, but only just paying its way. Nominally Trecoth was a dairy farm, producing beef, butter, and pork, but at the time of the elder Joslin's death the most profitable crops were early potatoes and broccoli. The initial expenses of potato growing are heavy; to insure success fresh seed must be bought yearly, a great quantity of manure is required, and the market value of the crop depends entirely on an early season. It is not a matter of weeks but of days, and, unfortunately, soon after old Joslin's death the Cornish trade began to decline before competition from France and Jersey. With Genevra's quiet encouragement, frugal housekeeping, and actual help in the fields at "tealing-time," George managed to keep his bank balance on the right side.

Perseverance under difficulties, however, was not one of George Joslin's virtues, and, when at

the age of twenty-two he married his cousin, he looked out for a short cut to prosperity. Partly persuaded by his wife and against Genevra's advice, he bought a flower-farm at Trenowan, on the cliffs overlooking Porthlew Bay. Mrs. Joslin convinced her husband that the certainty of making his fortune justified him in borrowing money for the purchase, and so George raised a loan of £3,000 at five per cent interest from an old schoolfellow named Sampson Oliver. Being unable to give any other security he handed him the title-deeds, confident of his power to redeem them before the term of mortgage—ten years—expired.

If George had been a man of industry and enterprise, it is probable that in time he would have made a comfortable income from the early narcissi and daffodils; but a succession of cold springs, by which the flowers were delayed and the market-price lowered, and the establishment of a quick service of steamers from the Scilly Islands, where the bulbs are grown under more favourable conditions, hampered him at the outset. He was easily discouraged, he lacked the knowledge to make the best of his resources, and his wife's jealousy of Genevra robbed him of the intelligent help she might have given him. George's conviction that

his fortune lay in Trenowan caused him to neglect the less obvious advantages of his inheritance, which quickly degenerated, and at the present time he found it hard work to pay Oliver his annual interest of £150. The term of the mortgage on Trenowan expired next year.

Genevra sat over her work till, in a moment of respite, the quiet in the kitchen warned her that the hour was late. She looked at her watch, locked her proofs in the drawer, and hurried out of the room to join her brother and his wife at the tea-table. Before George married, the brother and sister took their meals in the kitchen with the men and girls employed on the farm, but Mrs. Joslin, who had spent her girlhood at an "up-country" village, objected to the custom, and they now used the back parlour.

The relations of the three were evident the moment Genevra entered the room. George was a blunted version of his sister: his face was merely round, his expression genial without being energetic, and his attitude, lounging sideways at the table, helped to explain the condition of Trecoth town-place. His hair and skin were much darker than Genevra's, and with his white teeth and close black moustache his appearance was distinctly Ital-

ian—of the sleepy, good-humoured type. His brown eyes lighted up affectionately at the sight of his sister, and he made a half-effort to square himself up to the table, but relapsed under a glance from his wife. The action illuminated George's moral position between the two women: he was afraid of both, but his wife was the more recent and the more aggressive influence. Mrs. Joslin was a fair, thin, pretty woman, with high cheek-bones and a complaining mouth. She was rather over-tidied for the evening, and handled her tea-pot with a good deal of manner. Anticipating correction, Genevra spoke immediately on entering the room.

"I am sorry to be late, Harriet," she said. "I was working and did not notice how late it was."

Her voice was deep and slow, and it was evident that, while she did not expect her apology to be accepted, she would make no further excuse.

"Working!" repeated Mrs. Joslin, with a short, rude laugh, as she handed Genevra her tea without looking at her. Genevra coloured but said nothing. George's fear of his wife overcame his love for his sister, and he only looked uncomfortable, murmuring, "Harriet, Harriet!"

"If you were so anxious to *work*," continued

Mrs. Joslin, gazing up at the chimneypiece with a thin smile, "why didn't you come in earlier? What's the good of having a room to yourself if you don't use it? Some people would be glad of it, I can tell you," and she sighed affectedly.

"Well, well, Harriet, you know that Jenny has had the room ever since father died," said George in a pacific tone. Genevra understood that he knew the cause of Harriet's veiled reference to her room and that he wished to prevent her speaking more explicitly. His unfortunate allusion to Genevra's inherited privilege did not, however, mend matters.

"Oh, I'm not grumbling," said Mrs. Joslin, airily, and adjusting the cuff of her blouse. "I never expect to be allowed to do as I please in my own house. Still it does seem a bit hard that Genevra won't take her share of the inconvenience seeing that she gets a home for nothing."

Genevra perceived that she had lost the beginning of a discussion. She was too proud to ask questions, and turning to her brother, she began to talk about the dairy, which was under her charge. George answered her questions absentmindedly but in a loud voice, as if he would drown his wife's thoughts. Presently Mrs. Joslin threw

down the teaspoon with which she had been tapping her empty cup and leaned back in her chair.

"Look here, George," she said, "if you're afraid of your sister, I'm not. It's all very fine for her; she can sit down for half the day and go about like a lady, while I have to slave from morning to night and can't get a decent dress to my back."

Genevra felt relieved. This was a constant grievance of her sister-in-law, who spent more money on her clothes than she did and was never properly dressed. Apparently, however, there was a fresher subject for complaint, for Mrs. Joslin continued with heightened colour:

"It's simply her beastly pride and selfishness; so long as she gets her own comfort she doesn't trouble about anybody else. What do we want with a muddling old place like this? There's no convenience anywhere. You'll never do any good with Trecoth as long as you live, and you'd much better make what arrangements you can with Sampson Oliver and be thankful you've got a friend to deal with."

At the mention of Sampson Oliver's name, Gene-[illegible] who never argued with Harriet, frowned [illegible] and looked at her brother. Irritated be-

yond endurance, George Joslin turned. Taking up a knife and hammering on the table to enforce attention, after the manner of weak people, he cried:

"That'll do, Harriet; you leave that to me. When I've talked it over with Jenny, it'll be time enough for you to speak."

Mrs. Joslin, who had more gall than determination, subsided into an expression of her contempt for a man who took orders from his sister. She presently produced her handkerchief and wiped her eyes, but George for once was firm and, keeping his eyes fixed on his plate, went on with his meal in a sulky silence.

Later in the evening, when Genevra, with a racking headache, was vainly endeavouring to work, George tapped at her door. It was his custom every evening to smoke a pipe in Genevra's room, and occasionally listen to a new poem. This was perhaps the happiest hour of his day. The warm, comfortable room, with its shaded lamp and fragrant feminine atmosphere, appealed to some obscure instinct he had hoped to satisfy in marriage. To-night, however, instead of taking the easy chair, he stood just within the door and shifted his feet uneasily.

"Oliver was over to-day, up to Trenowan," he said, presently; then, after a pause, "he wished to be remembered to you."

Genevra smiled. Sampson Oliver was her constant suitor.

"He made an offer," continued George. Genevra laughed outright.

"Oh, not that!" said her brother, hastily. "I suppose that's no use; you've quite made up your mind about that, Jenny?" he asked, as if with a momentary forlorn hope.

Genevra shook her head.

"Quite!" she said, calmly. Then, "What offer did he make, George?"

Her brother did not speak for some minutes, then it all came out in an agitated rush.

"Of course I know you won't agree to it and I told him so, but Harriet thinks it is a splendid plan. Oliver says that if I will let him have the title-deeds of Trecoth, he'll call off the mortgage on Trenowan and I sha'n't have to pay him another penny. He says that I can pay up the interest on Trecoth when I redeem the mortgage."

Genevra sprang to her feet.

"George, George!" she cried, reproachfully.

George winced, but looked stubborn.

"Well, look here, Jenny," said he; "we can't go on as we are. I tell you plainly something's got to be done. There's Christmas coming and the bills to pay and seed to get—let alone Oliver's interest. Of course, father lived here, and grandfather before him, and we were born here," his lips trembled. "Still, Trenowan's our *living;* that's how I look at it," he ended, doggedly.

Genevra did not speak for some time. Though she recoiled from Oliver's proposal, she recognised a certain amount of reason in George's argument, and she knew that Harriet gave him no peace. It had always been a grievance of Mrs. Joslin's that they continued to live at Trecoth while the more modern house at Trenowan was occupied by Harry Tregear, the man they employed to look after the bulbs. Yet at the thought of risking Trecoth, all Genevra's instincts were in revolt.

"Can't you get Mr. Oliver to renew?" she asked in a low voice, and against her better judgment.

George laughed sadly.

"I don't care to ask him, and that's the truth," he said, with a downcast look which proved to Genevra that he had already considered the idea, "particularly since he hasn't pressed me for the

interest." He waited for Genevra to make another suggestion and then continued: "Besides, although he's a friend of ours, Oliver is too good a man of business not to see that Trenowan is worth having. There's two thousand pounds' worth of bulbs there now," he added, lifting his head with illogical pride. "Say what you like, Jenny," he continued, gaining courage from her silence, "'tis a good offer, for Trecoth isn't worth a half of five thousand, as you know."

Genevra refrained from pointing out that under these circumstances so good a man of business as Sampson Oliver probably expected some consideration to balance the obviously unequal bargain, because she believed that she knew and that George knew the nature of that consideration. Checking a smile at this notion of her exact value in hard coin, she went over and put her hand on George's arm.

"George, dear," she said, "you know I would do anything I could to help you, but I can't agree to mortgage our home. It's no use talking about [illegible]"

More than her words her sympathetic manner convinced George that she was unshakable. His [illegible] fell and he seated himself heavily.

" It beats me, Jenny, why you don't trust Oliver," he said in a tone of reproach. " He's not like a stranger; it would be only a matter of form with him. He'd never foreclose on Trecoth, if only for your sake. Besides, ten years is a long time; our luck may turn before that."

Genevra was silent; she knew George's fatal trust in " luck." He mistook her thoughtfulness for indecision.

" Jenny," he said, sheepishly, " don't you think you'll ever come round—to like Oliver, I mean? "

Genevra was very patient with her brother; she knew that his apparent selfishness was the result of worry and the fear of his wife.

" I don't dislike him, George," she said. " I think he is a good man and very kind-hearted, but that is not the point. I don't want to marry anybody, and I'm sure I couldn't marry Mr. Oliver."

It was on George's lips to ask " Why? " but he had asked the question so many times, to receive the only answer a woman ever gives. He worshipped his sister, but he could not help thinking her unreasonable in refusing such a comfortable solution of his difficulties. If Genevra married his friend, she could do as she pleased with Trecoth. So far as he was concerned, the place was

an unprofitable responsibility, and the more George neglected his responsibilities the more he hated them.

"You spoke about bills," said Genevra, presently, divining the head of his distress. "Are you actually short of ready money now?"

George's eyes filled with tears.

"I don't know where to turn, Jenny, and that's a fact," he said, huskily, bringing his hand down on his knee, "and Harriet is about me, night and day, wanting this, that, and the other."

"Would a hundred pounds help you?" asked Genevra, cutting him short. Little as she liked Harriet, she would not have George disloyal to his wife, and she felt a queer sense of shame before any exhibition of weakness in a man.

"It would make up Oliver's interest," said George, eagerly, "or I could let that stand over and pay ready money for the seed and manure—though Paull's belong to give six months' credit." Then, with a sudden change of tone, "No, Jenny, I can't." He put out his hand weakly, as if to repulse a gift. "I've had too much from you as it is."

Genevra went over to her writing-table, unlocked the drawer and took out her bank-book.

George sat staring into the fire, torn between remorse and the fear that she might take him at his word. Presently Genevra turned round and said, quietly:

"Yes, I can let you have a hundred, but you must promise me that you will use it to settle up with Mr. Oliver."

George promised readily enough, though he could not understand Genevra's anxiety about a debt which from previous experience he knew could be put off indefinitely. He was no nearer to a solution of his larger problem, but that was nearly twelve months distant, and in spite of Genevra's firmness he could not but believe that some arrangement would be made before the mortgage on Trenowan fell due. If the worst came to the worst, he could face disaster with almost calmness because there was nothing to be done, but he quailed before those minor troubles of the immediate future which a strong man might have surmounted.

Genevra sat down and wrote out a cheque for a hundred pounds. George stammered his thanks.

"I don't know what I should do without you, Jenny, indeed I don't. I hope you won't bear any ill-will against Harriet; she doesn't mean to be

rude to you, but the poor girl gets worried off her head, and then she don't know what she is saying."

His apology for Harriet was significant, and, guided by the reference to her room at the tea-table, Genevra concluded that George had not made a clean breast of the matter in dispute between himself and his wife. She forbore to question him, however, because she guessed that in spite of George's bold assertion that he intended to talk it over with herself, Harriet had finally brought him to submission.

After George had left her room, Genevra sat resting her head on her hand reviewing her own difficulties. It had cost her a great effort to part with the hundred pounds. She was not miserly, but, apart from her final purpose with regard to Trecoth, she had a keen sense of the value of money, and she hated waste. It was very unlikely that the loan—or gift, rather, for she never expected to see it again—would prove of any real service to her brother.

Just as she was about to turn out the lamp before going upstairs to bed, she remembered her afternoon's experience in Merlin's Wood. That was another misfortune. Genevra was unusually dependent upon solitude for creative work, and

she had come to look upon the wood as a private possession. From previous experience, she knew that where a painter came once he was likely to come again, and to be followed by others. In any case, the idea of the place was spoiled. After she had put out the light and while her eyes still ached from staring at the flame, she saw painted on the darkness the man's face frowning at her. She turned impatiently away, more vexed by the persistence of his image in her mind than by his presence in the wood.

CHAPTER III

THE next evening, while Genevra was brushing her hair Harriet came into her bedroom. It was remarkable that so sharp a woman never lost the delusion that Genevra enjoyed a gossip before going to bed as much as she did herself. She could hardly have chosen a less appropriate moment, for Genevra found the rhythmical motion and slight stimulus of brushing her hair peculiarly conducive to mental activity. Harriet's childish interest in the details of her room and toilet, however, made it difficult for her to show the distaste she felt for these few last words. To-night, possibly in recognition of Genevra's loan, or rather gift, to George, Harriet was distressingly amiable. She sat on the edge of the bed, an odd but unfailing indication of moral slackness, and watched the long, warm tresses coiling round the ivory-backed brush with frank admiration.

"Anybody would think that you were on your honeymoon, Jenny," she said with a giggle.

"Fancy taking all that trouble to make yourself look nice and nobody to see you but yourself."

Genevra's room, though simply ordered, had all the dainty properties of the woman who cares for her body from fine instincts rather than from vanity or a love of material comfort. Once, in a moment of misdirected enthusiasm, she had gently questioned the seemliness of Mrs. Joslin's marital chamber, but was baffled by Harriet's honest inability to understand what anything mattered after a year of marriage. Apparently some vague sense of Genevra's meaning had lingered in her mind, for during the following weeks Genevra's attention to her appearance convinced her that she had a "young man." Since, after investigation, Harriet was forced to admit that no such person existed, she found a satisfactory explanation in Genevra's vanity.

As Genevra did not seem inclined to conversation, Harriet got up and wandered round the room examining the dresses behind the door and the pictures on the walls with exaggerated interest. Genevra continued brushing her hair until her arms ached.

"I can't think how you manage to keep your corsets so nice," said Harriet from behind her.

"I give seven and eleven for mine, and you are a lot stouter than I am, yet your figure looks more genteel. I'm sure I don't pull in, but my busks are always breaking. . . . My!" she added, "wouldn't the men rave about your arms!"

Genevra's desperate smile was reflected in the glass. She concluded that her sister-in-law had something more important to say, but couldn't find a suitable opening. Mrs. Joslin again lounged on the bed, yawning.

"Well, what a lazy cat I am!" she said at last, rising with artificial determination. "The master will be wondering what we've got to talk about."

She stood with her hand on the door-knob, turned it, came back and flopped once more on the side of the bed.

"Oh, by the bye, Jenny, I nearly forgot," she said with a clumsy attempt to be casual. "I suppose I ought to have asked your permission, and I quite meant to, but we're taking a lodger for the winter."

Genevra had learned to suppress her feelings in conversation with Harriet, whose shrillness when crossed tried her nerves. She understood now that George's shyness during the day had not been altogether due to gratitude, but she only said:

"Why is that?"

"I don't see why we shouldn't do what everybody does," answered Harriet, immediately defiant. "There's nothing to be ashamed of; father always used to have a gentleman for the hunting season, and he was twice as well off as George."

"There was no need to ask my permission," said Genevra, with a strong effort to conceal her annoyance; "it is George's house."

"Of course it is—worse luck!" said Harriet; "but that's not the point. You know that George always makes a point of consulting you about everything."

She laughed ill-naturedly, being irritated by Genevra's refusal to discuss the social position of people who took lodgers, a point she herself was not sure about but considered of great importance.

"However," she added, "I'm glad you don't object. I told George I didn't see how you could, but he hummed and hawed a lot."

"No, I don't mind," said Genevra, resignedly. Harriet waited for her to ask who the prospective lodger was, only to be disappointed.

"He's an artist," she said, unable any longer to suppress the answer to the question she supposed

burning on Genevra's lips. "He's been living in Trevenen, but it doesn't suit him because it is so far from his work—he's painting about here, you know. We have let him the rooms until Easter."

"Rooms?" echoed Genevra in perplexity.

This time Harriet looked uncomfortable.

"He'll have our bedroom, of course," she said, confusedly, "and—I say, Jenny, would you mind very much letting him have your study? You don't use it much, you know," she added, hastily, seeing Genevra's face too astonished for resentment, "you're always out. . . . Oh, Jenny!" she cried, as the other didn't speak, "don't go and be nasty when we've got it all settled up so comfortably. The money will be such a help to George—and there's lots of ways of making a little extra for fires and things that'll never be noticed."

"He may have the room," said Genevra, seeing the hopelessness of trying to make Harriet understand the loss to herself; "I can work up here."

"Oh, that's absurd!" cried Harriet, her cheekbones glowing. "Of course, if I'd known you were going to make a fuss about it, I'd have said 'No' at once. As it is, I've told Mr. Morris he can have the two rooms."

"I am not making a fuss, Harriet," answered

Genevra, quietly; "there is no need to say any more."

But Harriet would not be contented until she had shown Genevra how unreasonable was the opposition she had not expressed. It was a convention with Harriet and her friends that Genevra was selfish because she did not often make those thoughtless concessions, the seed of endless trouble, which characterize the good-natured person.

"I must say," said Harriet, "I don't see why on earth you can't bring your work into the front parlour. 'Tisn't as if there were children about; there'll only be me, and it's precious seldom that I get a chance to sit down anywhere. You can use the room all day except when there's company, and your papers are not much trouble to clear away—not like sewing or anything of that sort. As a matter of fact, for the last three weeks you've only worked for an hour in the afternoon—I've timed you by the clock. Besides," with a happy thought, "there's no reason why you shouldn't use Mr. Morris's room when he's out; he need never know."

"I daresay I shall be able to manage," said Genevra, longing for the other to leave her in peace. Harriet jumped up in great delight.

"You're a dear!" she exclaimed. "I told George I was sure you wouldn't be nasty, but he's so funny about asking you anything; he seems to think you never consider anybody except yourself. For my part," she added, archly, "I believe you're much more good-natured than you let people know. . . . Oh, Jenny! he's such a nice man; there'll be a chance for you at last," she cried, with a shrill laugh. "Just your style, I should think: solemn-looking, with very dark eyes." She tried to make her own pale blue eyes look deep and forceful. "You can have him all to yourself; I sha'n't try to cut you out, he's much too stiff to please me—not a bit like Sampson Oliver—and I don't think he's got much money. Besides, I couldn't be spooney on a man without a moustache; I'd as soon kiss a girl."

She dropped her voice and, evidently with the idea of rewarding Genevra's concession with a confidence, continued:

"I used to have lots of fun with Mr.—oh! I can't remember his name—who stopped at father's. It was him who gave me that filigree locket—only don't tell George. Of course there was no harm in it, but George is awful jealous, though you wouldn't think it."

She continued to chatter excitedly about her future guest.

"He'll be here by tea-time to-morrow; Tom Curnow is going to bring his things over from Trevenen in the morning, in the spring cart. . . . What shall I wear to-morrow evening, Jenny—my navy costume or a blouse and skirt?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Genevra, studying her with amusement. "A blouse would be simpler, wouldn't it?"

"Simpler!" cried Harriet in consternation. "Oh, but I'm not going to let Mr. Morris run away with the idea that we don't know how to do things in style, even if we do live in an outlandish place like this. You see, he's not like an ordinary lodger; he's really a paying guest, and of course he'll have all his meals with us. . . . Well, good-night. I shall catch my death if I stop any longer. I can't think what you want with your window open all weathers. And besides, I've got to be up early to-morrow; there'll be the rooms to turn out and a heap of things to get ready. I'm going to drive into Porthlew in the afternoon." She turned to go. "Oh—what shall I give him for tea? Sausages, or a fowl, or what?"

"I shouldn't get anything out of the way," said

Genevra, wearily. "People like tea to be—just tea."

"Oh, that's like your meanness!" laughed Harriet, making a grimace at her from round the door as she left the room.

Genevra blew out her candle lest Harriet should be tempted to come back, went to the window and leaned out. From long practice she had learned exactly how much of herself she could lend to Harriet without becoming desperate. She honestly tried not to despise her, but she had long ago given up all attempts to establish a serious intercourse with her.

Genevra drew a deep, shuddering breath of pleasure as she felt the cool November air on her bare neck and shoulders. From her window a triangle of sea was faintly visible at the end of the Rosewithan valley, and a consoling murmur came up with the wind. The broken shadow in the ruined quadrangle over the way, dark yet full of warm colour, was dappled with evening primroses, gently moving like large pale moths, and their delicate odour was blown to her like a message of peace from the night. After all, nobody could take outdoors away from her.

That carried her mind to the place she called

her open-air workshop—a place become very dear by habit and the memory of past struggles and achievements; thickly sown with seeds of thought which presently would bloom into lyrical ecstasy, and with a hot feeling of shame she recalled her last visit to the wood. She felt as if her most intimate half-thoughts had been laid bare to the casual observer. Was it possible that Mr. Morris and the man she had seen painting in the wood were the same person? Genevra knew most of the regular Trevenen painters by sight, and this apparently was a stranger. It was not very easy to form a picture from Harriet's description, but "solemn," "dark eyes," and "no moustache" suggested a resemblance. Genevra appreciated the irony of the chance that the man to whom she was about to give up her room might be the same who had spoiled for her the solitude of the place she had come to look upon as her own.

Genevra felt the loss of her sitting-room more keenly than was apparent in her conversation with Harriet. She was a good fighter, but her sister-in-law had the advantage of her sick recoiling from argument over personal matters, and scored easier victories than she knew. Genevra now reflected that if she had not given George the hundred

pounds she might have left Trecoth at least for the winter; but in thinking about this, her sincerity would not allow her to be quite sure that she looked forward with dislike to meeting the painter. If his identity were as she suspected, his having taken her unawares had established some mysterious bond between them, as if he had come upon her sleeping; but in proportion as he might be interesting, Genevra detested the idea of the false relation in which they would be associated. Finally, Harriet's egregious allusion to her opportunities came back to her like a jarring noise, and, with a shiver of disgust, Genevra turned hastily from the window and sought refuge in slumber.

CHAPTER IV

ALL next morning the house was made uninhabitable by Mrs. Joslin's energy. Some obscure feeling of jealousy made her resent Genevra's interference in domestic matters beyond the care of her own rooms, though she reminded her daily and bitterly of her exemption from those duties she herself systematically neglected. As is usual with the slatternly, she had a morbid fear of outside opinion, and while ignoring the comfort of her own household she made extravagant preparations for the stranger. In an hysterical way she enjoyed this orgie of cleaning. Clad in a dress decayed beyond decency and with her hair in curling-pins, she rushed frantically about the house, transporting the filth of half a year and bewildering her only assistant, Joan Toddy, a sheep-faced, sheep-brained girl of eighteen, with contradictory orders bawled from distant rooms. In spite of her apparent frenzy, however, Harriet improved her husband's confused discomfort by extorting a fair

portion of Genevra's cheque for household expenses which she declared absolutely necessary.

Having decided that she should dislike the intruder, Genevra went further and tried to convince herself that she looked forward to his coming with indifference—an unnatural state of mind in circumstances where every new acquaintance is necessarily an interesting subject. To encourage herself in the belief that she was incurious, Genevra went for a long walk in the afternoon and delayed entering the parlour until the others were at table. As she came into the room, Morris looked up from under his heavy brows with a slow, apprehensive stare, colouring slightly beneath his dull white skin. Genevra had the rare gift of composure without haughtiness, but she felt a little self-conscious under Morris's interested gaze. He was indeed the man she had seen painting in Merlin's Wood.

Morris rose for introduction and bowed stiffly. Mrs. Joslin, with quick feminine jealousy, saw that he was impressed; his reception of her own effusive friendliness had been quite different. Genevra bowed but did not offer her hand; there was an absurd appearance of hostility between these two persons who had never exchanged a word, and due to nervousness on both sides.

Mrs. Joslin giggled foolishly.

"A friend of yours, you see, Jenny," she said, archly. "You didn't tell us that you had met Mr. Morris before."

Her kittenish manner, which she thought proper to the occasion, implied a great deal more than she intended. Morris looked embarrassed; it was evident to Genevra that he had spoken of his encounter with her in the wood, that the others had discussed her, and that Morris already regretted having introduced her name. Ordinarily Genevra did not trouble her head about other people's opinion of herself; but, though she was quite willing to be disliked by Morris as, she felt, she disliked him, she would have preferred that he formed his views of her character entirely from his own observation.

Genevra glanced round the untidy table with keen annoyance; she was vexed, for once, that Harriet should lay herself open to criticism, and she wished that she had come home half an hour earlier to put things in order. Why, she did not know, but she was ready to resent any sign of amusement or disgust on Morris's face. Also, she recognised that her presence in the house on Morris's arrival would have prevented the preliminary discussion

of herself, so that she was being doubly punished for her futile efforts at self-deception.

Mrs. Joslin had risen to the occasion; as she claimed, she certainly knew how to do things in style, if not with propriety. She had followed Genevra's advice in refraining from sausages, but the table glittered with shop dainties—sardines, tinned pineapple, and three kinds of jam rioting in cheap glass dishes. Genevra reflected that there were many pounds of home-made jam spoiling on the pantry shelves, but Mrs. Joslin considered it vulgar to set their own produce before visitors, and for the same reason she had replaced beautiful old silver with the gay productions of the Porthlew "bazaar." Altogether she had managed to achieve a passable resemblance to the tea-tables of Clapham. She simpered over her teapot in a ready-made pink blouse with a shirt front and stiff collar and cuffs.

Morris ate his meal in alarmed discomfort, nervousness making him appear sullen. George's good-humoured face was almost imbecile with the effort to be worthy of his company. Incoherent with shyness, he talked incessantly, explaining in detail to nobody in particular how Mr. Morris found that living in the country would suit him

better than Trevenen, every now and then appealing to the painter for monosyllabic corroboration.

" 'Tisn't what you've been used to," he truthfully observed of the banquet, " but Harriet can do better if you give her time. She'll be delighted to have somebody to do for; she's always saying that her up-country manners are wasted on us."

Harriet ate nothing, but leaned her clasped hands on the table with studied elegance, occasionally correcting George's pronunciation. Genevra was angry that her brother, who at least out of doors was interesting and dignified, should thus appear a twittering fool. Once, when Harriet apologized for George's reference to farming matters, Morris looked across at Genevra with gloomy appreciation. She noticed that afterward he deliberately made use of dialect words and the local inflection. Genevra hardly knew whether to feel grateful for his loyalty to her brother or annoyed by his rudeness to Harriet. Mrs. Joslin herself was serenely unconscious of criticism, and made sprightly attacks upon Genevra.

" She won't eat a proper meal, Mr. Morris, because she's afraid of spoiling her waist," she said.

Morris received the information impassively and began to talk to George about broccoli. Noth-

ing discouraged, Mrs. Joslin turned the conversation to pictures, mentioning the names of local painters with airy familiarity and minute descriptions of their personal appearances. She also announced her willingness to help Morris in finding subjects for his brush. Presently, fearing that Genevra might feel neglected, Mrs. Joslin alluded to her connection with the fine arts.

"She writes very pretty poetry," she said. "Of course, she doesn't allow *me* the honour of reading it, but Mr. Sampson Oliver, who is a very good judge, says it's beautiful," and she laughed demurely.

Morris's stolid politeness showed that he had never heard of Genevra's work, and the long explanation which followed, including the suggestion that Genevra should read some of her poems after tea, convinced her that he was not even interested. This did not trouble Genevra, though she wished that Harriet had not thought it necessary to explain who Mr. Oliver was and archly to indicate his desire to become one of the family. Though, when Morris looked across at her, she felt, with odd satisfaction, that he was wondering how a friend of Harriet's could also be interested in [illegible]

Genevra remembered the deadly amenities of that evening to the end of her life. Like a dazed bull, Morris allowed himself to be driven into the front parlour, where, among the plush-framed photographs, painted mirrors, and terra-cotta plaques, Mrs. Joslin entertained him with pitiless energy. George summed up the place and the situation by walking into the room on tiptoe and speaking in a whisper. Disregarding an imploring glance from Morris, he presently escaped to some outdoor duties, though he was afterward heard moving stealthily about the kitchen and talking to Joan Toddy.

Alone with the two women, Morris's almost oppressive virility was more apparent; it was as if they had a man in the house for the first time, and he seemed to fill the room. Genevra found herself listening for his heavy voice with perverse curiosity, though she had decided that he was dull and insufferably ill-bred. Mrs. Joslin's monopoly of Morris left Genevra free to study him unobserved. He was a short, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, bull-necked man of about thirty. His coarse, black hair was cropped close to a large head; he had a flat, shelving forehead, bulging at the temples and heavily ridged over his dark,

somewhat sunken eyes. The grim set of his great jaws denied his features any expression but one of chronic ill-temper; when he smiled he was merely sardonic. Yet, looking at him dispassionately, Genevra was forced to admit that in a brutal sort of way he might be called handsome. His whole appearance gave the impression of great physical strength, and, though his movements were somewhat slow, he was manifestly alive to the tips of his white, flexible fingers. Genevra was oddly reminded of the description she had read somewhere of a machine which could crush a stone to powder or crack a hazel-nut without damaging the kernel. There was the same suggestion in Morris of tremendous power brought to an exquisite finish in his extremities. He had a painfully concentrated way of looking at things as if he savagely disregarded whatever was not essential to his purpose —the glance of a man by no means cold or insensible, but who deliberately reserved his sympathies lest they should interfere with his observation. Genevra felt that she could believe the story of the painter who crucified his model that he might record the last expression of human agony.

Mrs. Joslin had evidently determined that, come what would, her guest should be entertained. She

produced some extraordinary decorative needlework Genevra had never seen in her hands before, and Morris was persecuted for his opinion upon the choice of colours. His almost bloodthirsty aversion from Mrs. Joslin would have appeared ludicrous to Genevra but for her quick family pride. She resented George's wife making herself ridiculous before this man. She had intended to go to her bedroom to work, but remained with a stubborn feeling that her presence prevented Morris from becoming desperate, and partly because she found it difficult to withdraw from his overbearing personality. Supper was a silent and perfunctory meal, and at ten o'clock Morris abruptly announced his intention of going to bed.

When he had left the room, both women had the impression of a great silence, though Morris had spoken little enough. Under powerful influences one sense takes over the function of another, so that it is easy to imagine that heard which is either seen or felt. Genevra was a little stunned; she had a humiliating sense of futility, while Harriet was merely cross.

"Well, Jenny!" she snapped out, "I do think you might try to make yourself more agreeable. Simply showing off, I call it."

Genevra answered her, humbly enough, because she had not realized herself again.

"I don't understand you. I didn't mean to be rude."

"Rude!" snorted Harriet, "you were beastly rude. You sat glaring at the man, and every time I opened my mouth to speak you looked fit to eat me. Anybody would think I didn't know how to behave; but, let me tell you, my bringing-up was as good as yours any day."

She banged about the room, shaking up cushions and shoving chairs back into their places.

"If you didn't want the man to come here, why didn't you say so openly at first instead of turning round and being sulky now," she continued, "though you don't seem to object to meeting him on the sly. No wonder you gave up your room so readily. And now you try to put the blame on me. Don't think it's any pleasure to *me* to have another man to do for. We've got to live somehow, and if George can't earn enough to keep us, I suppose I must. If you don't like associating with people who take lodgers"—she dropped a satirical courtesy—"all I can say is, you'd better pack up and put on your fine-lady airs somewhere else."

Genevra listened to her absent-mindedly. She sat with her hands folded in her lap for a long time before going to bed, neither thinking nor dreaming, but unpleasantly exhausted. Before blowing out her candle she read through the proofs of her poems. She was in the habit of considering her work in varying lights and moods. To-night the verses seemed neither bad nor good, but only unimportant.

During the night Genevra was awakened by somebody tapping at her door. She jumped out of bed and opened it, to find George barefooted and shivering in his night-shirt and trousers. The guttering candle he held cast ludicrous shadows round his frightened mouth and eyes.

"Jenny, dear," he whispered, hoarsely, "I wish you'd come and see what you can do by poor Harriet; she's awful bad!"

Genevra was not unsympathetic, but for the moment her mind refused to connect the idea of Harriet with that of serious illness. In any case, her kindness to people in trouble was not of a sort to please her sister-in-law, being usually expressed in practical efforts to remove the cause. The call upon her help made her instantly awake and col-

lected, and, recognising that one acts most quickly who is best prepared, she asked George:

"What is the matter with her?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said George in a tone which, though plaintive, intimated that Harriet had already exhausted his patience, "but for God's sake be quick; she's in great pain, and groaning terribly. . . . How can you stand there and listen to her!" he added, exasperated by Genevra's thoughtful reception of his harrowing news.

"You're spilling candle-grease all down your trousers, George," she said, wishing to distract his attention from his fears.

"What do my trousers matter, and Harriet perhaps dying!" he said, indignantly, but righting the candlestick nevertheless.

Genevra turned away, opened a cupboard, and took out a pair of bedroom slippers. Even her tidiness seemed a fresh grievance to the agitated man.

"George!" came in an irritable voice from the back bedroom, "what's the use of talking to Genevra? She won't be satisfied that I'm really ill until I'm lying dead. Any other man would have fetched the doctor by this time."

"What am I to do?" asked George in desperation. "I don't like to leave her alone."

"I'm coming now," said Genevra, briskly. She looped up her hair and, wrapping herself in a dark-red dressing-gown, followed George into his wife's room.

Harriet was sitting up in bed, holding her face and rocking to and fro while she called upon her Maker. At the sight of Genevra her moaning increased, and then ended suddenly.

"Well, you are a beast, Jenny!" she said, eyeing her critically. "You can fling your money about on dressing-gowns while the roof is being sold over our heads. Who do you think is going to see you at this time of night unless you're going to call Mr. Morris to come and look at you—sulky brute that he is. I'm sure he needn't think it's an honour to have him in the house."

"Where's the pain, Harriet?" asked Genevra, perhaps unnecessarily.

"A lot you care, and George lying here and snoring like a pig. Why don't you do something," she turned savagely to George, "and not stand there like a fool?"

"Well, shall I get you some more whisky?" asked George, weakly, and taking up an empty

tumbler from a chair by the bedside while Harriet resumed her rocking and wailing.

"Whisky? No," she ceased to reply, "I'm past whisky! Go for Doctor Jenkins."

George turned to go, but Harriet stopped him. "You can't go like that, you fool; get some clothes on."

"Don't you think it would be as well to wait a little while?" suggested Genevra, remembering the three-mile walk to St. Adrian, and with a vivid picture of the doctor's expression when he learned the reason for his disturbance.

"That's just like you!" said Harriet, bitterly. "You can think about the expense quick enough when it's a question of spending money on me. I'm sure I don't want the doctor. Go back to your room and let George come back to bed. I sha'n't trouble him much longer, and I daresay he's got somebody else waiting for him as soon as I'm gone."

George looked helplessly at Genevra, who motioned him to stay where he was. By warily questioning her sister-in-law, Genevra learned that Harriet had made up for her polite abstinence at the tea- and supper-table by a hearty and indiscriminate meal in the pantry, principally upon sweet

things. She knew that, even if George fetched the doctor, it was very unlikely that Harriet would submit to have the offending tooth removed. Meanwhile George, uncertain whether to obey his wife or Genevra, was finishing dressing himself. Harriet, moaning whenever she remembered to do so, watched him until he was lacing up his boots, and then announced that if he dared to stir from the room, she should take poison.

"Well," said Genevra, patiently, "if I go downstairs and make you a poultice, will you let me put it on?"

"No; I'm not going to let you vent your spite on me by burning my head off," retorted Harriet. "The best thing you can do is to let me die quietly."

She turned on her side and changed her note to a gasping sigh. Genevra, satisfied that she was not seriously ill, seated herself on the edge of the bed, while George wavered from one side of the room to the other. Presently Harriet's distress became articulate.

"George," she said, faintly, "promise me that you will never marry anybody else. There's that little cat, Minnie Tregoning, only waiting for half a chance, I know."

George fell on his knees by the side of the bed.

"Oh, Harriet, dear; you're not going to die!" he cried, shaking her by the shoulder. "Jenny," he implored, "make her take something!"

"There's one thing," continued Harriet, dismally. "Minnie Tregoning can't get into my new dresses; she's three inches bigger round the waist than I am."

George endeavoured to assure his wife of his undying devotion, while Genevra went to her room and lit the spirit-kettle which, to Harriet's annoyance, she used for her morning cup of tea, and made a journey downstairs to get materials for a poultice. When she returned, Harriet's complaining had changed to a more regular sound. George, still on his knees and holding one of his wife's hands, looked round warningly at his sister. Genevra, carrying the poultice, advanced cautiously to the bedside. Harriet had succumbed to the whisky and was quietly sleeping.

As Genevra regained her door, Morris opened his own and put out his head.

Genevra was not disconcerted by being seen in her dressing-gown, though she flushed warmly as she noticed that Morris's eyes wandered with sur-

prise rather than admiration to her heavy hair, which had again fallen about her shoulders.

"What on earth's the matter?" he asked, irritably.

"Mrs. Joslin is not very well," she replied.

"Oh, Mrs. Joslin!" he said, his ill-tempered expression changing to a satirical smile. Genevra's resentment must have appeared in her face, for he added quickly:

"Not seriously ill, I hope?"

"No, thank you; she is better now. Good-night," said Genevra, coldly.

"Oh, good-night," he retorted with sarcastic emphasis, and closed his door.

"What an insufferably rude creature!" thought Genevra as she slowly turned the handle of her door. Yet, as she set down her candle before the looking-glass, she unconsciously glanced at her reflection and pushed back the masses of her hair. Then, with an impatient shrug of her shoulders, she blew out the light and turned away. Her last waking thought was one of slight annoyance that Morris should have looked surprised at her hair.

CHAPTER V

LEONARD MORRIS was a Welshman of good family, the third son of a Glamorganshire squire, and his genius could not be traced to any of his ancestors, who were generally soldiers notorious for their blundering courage. His only obviously hereditary trait was a capacity for quarrelling, which on examination was due to a strong preference for being "let alone." It was probably the difficulty he experienced in obtaining this small favour from his acquaintances which damaged Leonard Morris's temper.

His first exhibited pictures showed the influence of Rossetti, or rather they resembled that painter's works in their flagrant fulness of colour and unashamed delight in physical beauty. He was becoming quite well known as a figure-painter when he suddenly turned his attention to landscape. His friends were exasperated, but Morris continued to paint extraordinary studies, referring to his previous work, as indeed to figure-painting in general,

with savage contempt. In default of any other explanation it was popularly supposed that the abrupt transition in his methods was due to a discreditable love-affair. For a time his exhibited landscapes aroused a howl of mingled regret and derision, but when people had recovered their breath they began to recognise that though Morris showed them something they had never seen before he was a prophet rather than a perverter. During the interval Morris nearly starved, chiefly supported by a saturnine confidence in his own powers. Curiously, the first person to give practical effect to the uneasy suspicion that Morris was a great painter was Mr. Makin, a wealthy but uneducated Black-country manufacturer. The two rough, silent men struck up a firm friendship based upon their common contempt for triflers. The result was a series of commissions, and when Morris had painted his "Pit-head," "Chemical Works," and "Foundry," persons who wished to be thought cultivated could no longer afford to ignore him.

Morris lived for the best part of a year in Trevenen, where he was respected rather than liked. He did not fit in with the artistic traditions of the place; he idled, but unsociably; and the violent unlikeness of his work to anything there produced

was in itself an unintended criticism. He seemed, while occasionally choosing the same subjects, to leave out exactly what the other men painted, yet there was no appearance of scamping in the finished picture. Since it was evident that Morris's moroseness was not a pose, but that Nature for her own purposes had apparently dulled all his faculties but those which could be turned to account in the handling of paint, he was treated civilly but left pretty much to himself; and when he moved out to Trecoth there was a general feeling of relief in the colony to which he had never properly belonged.

Genevra's instinctive hostility towards Leonard Morris did not obscure her interest in him or lessen her desire to protect him from her sister-in-law's advances. But, indeed, Morris quickly made his own place in the household. He exhausted his nervous energy in his work, and for the rest was a somnolent, placable creature, indifferent to most things that did not project themselves into form and colour, mutely asking to be left alone—a request which somehow exasperates the least interfering of women. Try as she would Genevra could not stifle the wish to humanize Morris's habits. She refined their common table and insinuated flow-

ers into his sitting-room, artfully reminding Harriet of the credit of the house.

Apparently Morris was unaware of these efforts to make him comfortable. He somewhat pointedly avoided Genevra and, after the nocturnal disturbance recorded in the last chapter, his conversations with Mrs. Joslin were mainly limited to ironic inquiries after her health: inquiries which she took in good faith and rewarded with lengthy descriptions of her symptoms.

Though Morris spent most of his time out of doors, he did but little painting. The picture in Merlin's Wood was not a subject of his own choice, but a local commission he could not afford to refuse. When that was finished he lounged about the carns, apparently idle but in reality noting, selecting, and condensing with feverish activity. The fruits of a day were outwardly a few dabs of colour on a scrap of millboard or an incoherent pencil sketch on a page of his note-book. Genevra followed his work with a curiosity she despised, and she had the mortification to observe that she had sacrificed her study merely to give house-room to Morris's painting materials. She supposed, incorrectly, that he knew the inconvenience she suffered on his account, and

decided that he was wanting in good taste not to make some personal use of the room. Morris took an indulgent liking to George from the first, and after three or four solitary evenings—for he did not repeat the experiment of the front parlour—joined him in the kitchen. Here the two men spent contented evenings, generally silent, over their pipes and beer. Harriet was scandalized by this incomprehensible preference, and pestered Morris with apologies for Genevra's rudeness which she supposed to be the cause for his shunning the parlour.

On the first morning of Morris's confinement to the house by the breaking up of the weather, Genevra heard him open the door of his sitting-room and call for Mrs. Joslin. As Harriet did not answer immediately, Genevra waited a moment, hoping that she was not to be found, and then went to Morris's room. She found the painter standing gloomily in front of his easel. He had shifted the furniture and unceremoniously pulled down the curtains from before the window and flung them into a corner. He looked surprised but, she fancied, relieved to see Genevra, though in her unconscious attempt to make her appearance seem reluctant she frowned at him nervously.

"Glad it's you," said Morris, briefly, "I can make you understand without having to listen to brilliant suggestions. You see, Miss Joslin, it's quite impossible."

"What is impossible?" she asked, quietly, though she understood his meaning.

"The light, the room, everything," he answered, with an irritable gesture. "It's a mere cupboard and I must have a lot of room when I paint."

It was on Genevra's lips to ask why he had not considered that before, but she found herself murmuring agreement. She pointedly picked up the curtains, folded them together, and dusted them with the palm of her hand. Morris impatiently shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, can't you suggest something?" he asked. "Isn't there another place? a barn, a shed—anywhere under cover where I can move about and see what I am doing?"

Genevra hesitated for longer than was necessary; she had thought of a more suitable painting-room days before.

"There is the banqueting-hall," she said.

"The what?" asked Morris, abruptly and with a sarcastic smile.

Genevra coloured, but answered composedly.

"It is a part of the old Manor; George uses it as a barn," she said, wishing him to understand the significance of the Joslin name. Her meaning was lost upon Morris, who, intent upon his own requirement, merely said:

"Show me where it is."

Genevra, feeling a little hurt by his self-absorption, put down her curtains and moved to the door.

"Oh, please don't bother to come," he cried. "I'll find it, if you'll tell me whereabouts it is."

"If you'd rather I didn't come—" began Genevra, indignantly.

"How touchy you are!" he exclaimed. "Come by all means, but it's raining hard. You'll get wet."

Genevra laughed, his consideration seemed grotesque. Just then Harriet, hearing their voices, poked out a surprised face from the kitchen doorway. Genevra was about to speak to her, but Morris hurried her on with a scowl over his shoulder.

"Come along," he said, with a significant laugh. "If Mrs. Joslin knows what we are going for, she'll insist on coming to superintend."

Genevra disliked his taking for granted that she shared his contemptuous opinion of Harriet, but said nothing. Picking up her skirts she led the way

across the puddled roadway and round the corner to the older part of the building.

The place referred to by Genevra as the banqueting-hall was interesting because the original doorway was nearly intact, though the rich carving was disfigured, almost obliterated, indeed, by successive layers of whitewash. That portion of the building opposite Genevra's window was roofless and decayed; the blackened fireplace exposed, the fallen stones overgrown with mosses and weeds; but the remainder, about two-thirds of the back of the letter E facing the Rosewithan valley, was in decent repair and used by George Joslin as a storehouse for " shooting " potatoes, baskets, and trays for use in planting, and other odds and ends.

Genevra hesitated for a moment in the doorway, but Morris was too preoccupied with his immediate purpose to notice what she wanted him to see. He pushed open the door impulsively, strode in, and looked about him.

" This'll do all right," he said, in a tone of great satisfaction. " The very thing. There's no reason why I shouldn't work here, is there? " he added, seeing the reserved look on Genevra's face.

" Oh, none whatever," said Genevra, coldly. She felt chagrined by Morris's indifference to the

atmosphere of the place which for her was impressive by association. She did not yet understand that he disregarded everything not essential to his work, and at this early stage of their acquaintance his preoccupation with the affair of the moment seemed brutal. He began at once to move some lumber to the far end of the room, kicking the potato-baskets before him.

"There's plenty of room," he said; "there's a good light—it will suit me admirably. Much better than a nice genteel studio," he continued, as if talking to himself. "I sha'n't feel so much like an artist." He turned to Genevra, as if dismissing her, and said, "I will get my things over at once."

As they went out Genevra called his attention to the doorway.

"Sixteenth century, isn't it?" he asked, carelessly; adding, "those chaps must have had plenty of time: they put a lot of work into a job."

"But isn't it barbarous?" said Genevra, alluding to the whitewash. He was interested and amused by her earnestness.

"Well, I don't know," he said; "do you think it matters? One can't be bothered looking after these mouldy relics: we belong to the nineteenth century."

Genevra was startled into greater frankness than she would have wished to show. She had supposed George's carelessness about Trecoth to be the result of ignorance, and she expected a man of cultivated tastes to share her reverence for the gracious memories of an ancient building.

"But we also belong to our forefathers," she flashed at him, "and it is our duty to take care of and respect the things on which they spent so much time and labour."

"Yes, if they are intrinsically beautiful, in keeping with their surroundings, and convenient for the needs of the present day," he said, apparently enjoying her excitement. "If your ancestors had built this barn for its present purpose they wouldn't have given it an elaborate doorway like that. I don't know much about history or—archæology, I suppose you'd call it; but it strikes me that our forefathers were very practical people."

"But, don't you see," argued Genevra, "if it hadn't been for the stupid carelessness of a previous generation, the building would not have been degraded to its present purpose."

"Well, what can you do?" asked Morris with a grin.

Thus challenged, Genevra told him something

of her hopes and wishes with regard to the restoration of Trecoth. She did not know what made her confide in this man; she was usually shy of talking about her personal ambitions.

"I shouldn't do anything of the sort," said Morris, gravely. "I think it would be a criminal waste of money."

Genevra was pleased and a little surprised that he took her seriously. She had expected him to scoff at her ideas as romantic nonsense.

"It would pay you better to have the farm put to rights, the fields drained and cleaned, and the hedges mended," he said, looking round the town-place. "A lot of these trees ought to come down; it would make the place drier and less gloomy. I wonder you're not all crippled with rheumatism."

Presently his eyes wandered up to the Joslin arms—three fawns' heads—deeply carved on the lintel of the door.

"Of course, I understand what you mean," he said, slowly, and frowning in the effort to explain himself clearly. "You've got the feel of all this in your blood; you are a sort of survival like that doorway. But I can't sympathize with you; there's as much beauty in the world and in life to-day as there ever was, and you know it, or else

how do you write your poetry? It seems to me feeble not to take the present quick and hot, and you can't do that if you clog your mind with the husks of dead-and-gone traditions."

Genevra could not suppress a little thrill of gratification at his unexpected reference to her poetry which expressed exactly the appreciation she desired. She did not answer him in words, but led him round the farm, pointing out the older fragments: mullions and foliated window headings, corbels, and finials built into the walls of pig-styes or half-buried in the ground. As Morris had said, he cared little for the mere fact of age. Like most men of active imagination, he was indifferent to what was picturesque chiefly by association, and he was not at all depressed by superficially unattractive surroundings. He was, however, keenly interested in the vigour and passion of the woman by his side. Genevra had the history of Trecoth at her finger ends, and Morris encouraged her to talk on, unconscious that it was herself and not her information he listened to. He was puzzled by her personality. Though obviously cultivated, she was a farmer's daughter; indeed, the absence of social training was evident in her speech, which, though refined in tone and diction, was rather more

careful than that of the conventional lady, as her movements were more pronounced. Like most persons who lead an isolated life, with opportunity and encouragement she talked too much, as if grateful for a listener. To Morris, as he said, she appeared an Elizabethan survival; belonging to that period when great ladies breakfasted on beef and beer, read Homer in the original, and, on occasion, swore like troopers. He had taken so little notice of her before that her vivid personality came upon him full-blown, perhaps heightened in effect because he had until now deliberately avoided her. His almost cowardly shrinking from ulterior interests into a deep groove of concentration on his work had even blinded him to the fact that she was unusually handsome.

"If this were my place," said Morris, presently, perversely inclined to provoke her into fuller expression, "I should collect all these relics and sell them to some Yankee, and spend the money on bringing the farm up to date."

"There are some people who would sell their mother's grave," she retorted. "I am sorry if I have bored you; of course, these things don't mean anything to you."

Morris laughed grimly.

"Please don't lose your temper," he said. "I may be a barbarian, but I'm not a fool. As a matter of fact, these things mean a lot to me—the other way about. They annoy me for wasting intelligent people's time. You can't do the thing thoroughly and consistently in any case; you can't go about dressed up like a pantomime, so why not let it alone? I've been reading some of your st—your poetry; I found some *British Reviews* in my room. Well, in your writing you seem to have got rid of all superstition, you have learned to look at things as they really are, and it beats me how you can bother your head with an old-man-of-the-sea idea like this about oriels and buttery-hatches and tin armour—you know what I mean?" he ended, helplessly.

"You mustn't expect a woman to be consistent," said Genevra with a laugh.

"That's another silly—" he began, but broke off with, "Well, I can't argue," and walked away to fetch his painting tools.

Genevra's excited mood led her into an indiscretion unpardonable in one who knew the jealousy of the artist for solitude. While Morris had gone for his things, she walked to the top of the hill behind the house, and loitered about, thinking

over her conversation with him. She was not prepared to admit that he was right, but she began to wonder whether there was not some truth in his argument that an undue reverence for the past might become a hindrance to the full appreciation of the present. Indeed, as he put the matter, her duty to her name was to win for herself a worthy place in the future; since, whatever happened, she was the child of her forefathers, and therefore the past could take care of itself.

As Genevra returned to the house, she passed in front of the barn and, seeing that Morris was at work and unaware of her presence, she remained by the doorway watching him. He had pinned a number of apparently unmeaning sketches to a beam, and from them was evoking a picture of Treryn, "The Battle Place," a crest of moorland crowned with two monoliths supposed to have been erected by Athelstan in commemoration of his final victory over the Cornish Britons. The picture was an apt, though accidental, comment on the subject she had been considering, for in the frank representation of the present the past was imaginatively implied, but Genevra was more particularly interested in Morris's manner of working. She was surprised to see that he had already begun to

paint; she had expected a charcoal outline only. For long spaces of time Morris did not touch his canvas at all, but walked backward and forward with half-closed eyes and occasionally muttering to himself. He seemed to practise on the empty air with his brush; then he would step forward and make a succession of rapid touches on the canvas. There was something painful in the intensity of the action; it suggested some brutal conquest, as of a woman. It was the idea of crisis; the whole being of the man was as if wagered on the turn of his brush, and Genevra watched him with that curious passion, persisting through all the ages and only veiled by civilization, aroused in the spectator when the very lives of men are risked on a point of skill. The entire character and habit of the man was illuminated by his method: his dulness and exhaustion in the evening, his reluctance to spend his energy even in recreation, as if all his existence were a preparation for those vivid moments. A week's observation, the abstract of a dozen sketches seemed to be synthesized in three strokes of the brush.

Entirely forgetful of herself Genevra had moved inside the doorway, and, as Morris stepped back from his easel, he collided heavily with her.

He whipped round stammering an oath of astonishment as Genevra staggered against the wall. He apologized immediately in an access of nerves, glaring at her with the eyes of one rudely awakened out of sleep. Genevra had never felt frightened of any man before, but now she hurried out of the barn without a word of explanation.

Surprised to find herself trembling and sweating, as if with the painter's own effort, Genevra was angry and humiliated, and, now that it was too late, she thought of a dozen reasons she might have given for her eavesdropping presence in the barn. With the first rush of self-recovery, however, she was glad that at the cost of her own dignity she had won this momentary glimpse of the real man at the height of his own personality. His apparent indifference and carelessness were justified in a flash of comprehension.

At the dinner-table Morris allowed Genevra to see that he resented her intrusion at his work, and she sensitively interpreted the implication that he had not expected her to stoop to a vulgar curiosity, natural enough in Harriet, for example. Harriet, who that morning had wheedled twenty pounds out of George, was in a mood to dispense friendly suggestions. She winked across the table to Gene-

vra as who should say, " Now, see what I'm going to do for a good child," and, turning to Morris, pleasantly asked how his morning's work had prospered.

" Oh, all right," he said, gruffly, and, as if to evade the personal question, " I'm very glad to have that barn to work in. To tell you the truth, I never expected to light on a place that would suit me so well."

Harriet followed up the admission.

" I hope you won't consider me rude, Mr. Morris," she said with a little cough, " but do you think you could manage to keep all your things there? You could have it all to yourself, you know."

Morris looked puzzled and irritated. Mrs. Joslin's preliminaries tried his nerves.

" I don't quite understand you," he said, stiffly. Genevra tried to catch Harriet's eye, but the good woman was not to be denied.

" Well, you see," she said, with a giggle, " when you came Genevra had to give up the room she calls her study and she has been sulking ever since."

Morris laid down his knife and fork, flushing deeply.

"Genev—Miss Joslin?" he said in a tone of great annoyance and looking across at her. "What a confoundedly stupid arrangement! Why didn't you tell me before?"

"It was all arranged before you came," said Genevra, indifferently.

George pushed back his plate and looked from Genevra to Harriet with slow disgust.

"Well," he said, bitterly, "I don't know which of you has the worst manners. I'm right down ashamed of them, Mr. Morris, that I am."

"Oh, it's all right, you know," said Morris, coolly, "only it puts me in a rather awkward position. Of course, if I'd known——"

"There's no harm done," interrupted Harriet, airily. "Genevra hardly ever used her room—it was just a fad of hers. Only I thought since you can't work there, and the barn suits you, Genevra might as well have her blessed room again and be happy. Of course we sha'n't charge you the same terms for the barn as for the sitting-room," and she leaned back in her chair with the consciousness of a kind action gracefully performed.

There was a little silence and Genevra was aware of a thrill of anxiety lest Morris should announce his intention of leaving the place.

" Please say no more about it," he said, swallowing his anger; " the other place will be more convenient for me in every way."

His tone made even Harriet understand that further discussion was inadvisable.

Morris found himself out of tune that afternoon. After several ineffectual attempts to get to work, he flung down his palette and brushes with " Oh, damn the women! " More than most men he hated a " fuss," and for the moment he saw no reason for not including Genevra in his vindictive feelings towards Mrs. Joslin. He felt like a bull in the arena under the hands of puny but agile persecutors.

Morris loitered about the town-place until he saw Genevra come out of the house dressed for walking.

" Miss Joslin," he called, masterfully.

Genevra turned round and waited until he came up to her. Morris unwillingly conceded that she looked very much the great lady standing on her dignity. There was even the faintest surprise on her face that he should call to her from a distance, and involuntarily he took his hands out of his pockets and flung away his cigarette.

"Is there any reason why we shouldn't be friends, Miss Joslin?" he asked, nonchalantly.

"None whatever," answered Genevra in a tone of polite surprise, though her heart was beating rapidly.

"Well," said Morris, awkwardly, "you'll oblige me by taking possession of your room."

"Of course, if you have no further use for it." Her studied civility jarred on his irritable nerves.

"Look here!" he said, impatiently. "I don't understand women, and I can't fight with the gloves on. Besides, I'm too busy to talk like a polite letter-writer: I came here to work, not to be bothered with a lot of women's quarrels. Of course, I'm not blaming you; Mrs. Joslin has no sense, and I expect you get a pretty thin time of it—oh, hang it all!" he cried, in despair, "don't go off in a huff. Consider me a brute, if you like, but use a little common sense. . . . I'm afraid I was rude to you this morning, too, but—" He dropped his eyes from the ashamed look on her face and added, abruptly, "Come, shake hands on it."

Genevra nervously gave him her hand. He held it for a moment, looking into her eyes with

a grim smile, turned on his heel and walked away.

"She isn't a bad sort," he muttered to himself, "but wants breaking in badly. Pity she isn't a man; she's the type that makes friends after a damned good licking."

He stood for a moment cracking his great hands together with a vague sense that, in spite of her sex, the physical correction of Genevra would give him satisfaction.

When Harriet went to Genevra's bedroom that night to explain the sincerity of her motives in speaking to Morris, she was disgusted to find the door locked. Her sister-in-law's distaste for verbal encounters gave Harriet always the advantage, and she felt that Genevra was not treating her fairly in thus giving practical effect to her displeasure.

Genevra did not feel completely mistress of her own when she again used her study. Just as Morris's presence had robbed Merlin's Wood of solitude forever, so his use of her room, though he left no visible traces of his occupation, had destroyed its privacy. It was as if some nature stronger than Genevra's own had exhausted the atmosphere of the place. For her the room was

haunted with the personality of the man who had occupied it; even her work seemed trivial by comparison, as if it had been subjected to some uncompromising standard of criticism. Her first action was to pack up the proofs of her poems and send them away to her publisher.

Genevra had always prided herself on her power to be two persons—the reserved Miss Joslin her acquaintances knew, and the impulsive woman she allowed to appear in her verses. From the peculiarity of her situation, the utter loneliness of her state, she had never had the good luck or the misfortune to meet in the flesh any one who was capable of suspecting the woman she suppressed. Consequently, the convenient order of her life was never threatened, and with maturity she had settled into a man-like horror of emotion expressed anywhere but on paper. Now she felt that she had lent Morris something of herself she jealously guarded; she had allowed the Genevra of her poems to show through Miss Joslin and momentarily to be involved with him, and she was afraid of herself as a man may stand aghast at the hint of some insane impulse revealed in a dream. Genevra began to see that the instinct she took for hostility was one of self-preservation. Yet,

at the back of it all was an involuntary compassion for the man apart from his work. She remembered evidences of neglect in his clothes, occasional moods of conscious loneliness driving him to foregather with inferiors, and she wondered whether in all the world he had ever found a nature to console him with the sympathy of equal minds. Thus Genevra negotiated with the trinity fatal to a woman's peace of mind: fear, compassion, and that curiosity which opens the door to jealousy.

CHAPTER VI

GENEVRA felt a strong wish to hear what Uter Penrose had to say about Leonard Morris. The day after she had sent off her proofs, with a depressing sense of the futility of literature, she left the avenue and descended the hill leading to the Land's End. At the foot of the hill, where the road made an angle under a clump of trees, she turned to her left through an iron gate into the lane which ran through the Rosewithan valley to Penrose's cottage on the cliff.

On either side retired the rugged flanks of the carns, partly tamed into irregular fields but for the most part moor-clad and islanded with bare granite, their tops veiled in the mist rolling up from the sea and filling the valley with fine rain. The bottom of the valley was thickly wooded with ash-trees, their gleaming grey twigs tipped with the rusty seed-vessels of last season, following the course of the hidden stream. The air was mild and heavy: there was no visible downpour, but a

direct condensation of moisture on the surface of everything, as if the rain were sweated out from within the earth rather than fallen from the clouds. The sloe-bushes, bare of leaves, were wet purple, jewelled, and dripping; the rounded clumps of gorse were beaded on every needle, and great pools of water had begun to form silently in the roadway. Genevra's dark-green jacket was whitened as with hoar-frost on the breast and hips; the moisture ran down her face and, reaching her lips, tasted salt like tears. It seemed as if Nature were silently weeping over destructive changes, and the sense of small, though irresistible, processes at work heightened the melancholy of Genevra's mood. She also was changing, quietly, inevitably; she no longer held empire over her own soul.

About half-way through the valley a great grey heron got up from among the ash-trees, and, after clumsily beating the air for a moment, sailed away grandly across the stream. The apparition of the bird—solitary, exotic—impressed Genevra deeply.

Here the road narrowed between rudely piled granite boulders covered with mosses, ferns, and lichens flourishing greenly in the eternal damp. A few yards further brought Genevra in sight of a handful of grey cottages, where dwelt the Rose-

withan Covers—an isolated community of quarry-men and crabbers whose monotonous lives were redeemed from dulness by traditions of wrecking and smuggling and by that unconquerable expectation of some great prize from the elements which is the birthright of the Cornish race. Beyond the village the carns grew steeper and more sinister, closing in as if for a final dark conference before curving out right and left into the line of the coast. There were no longer any fields grabbed out of the waste; the rich browns and greens paled into the russet and violet grey of the naked rocks; even the bracken had lost its fulness of colour and lay soaked and beaten to the ground by the weather of the last fortnight, so that the very bones of the land were exposed. The road kept to the right, clinging as if for protection to the flanks of the hill, and now Genevra could see the trout-stream, swollen with rain, dashing over its rocky bed below. Where the road dipped suddenly she came in view of a grey triangle of sea, flecked with white where the waves broke against Caraglose, the extreme point of the long carn on the left of the valley. Already the persistent rushing of the stream was overcome by the alternating swell and return of the sea; a menacing murmur like that of

a distant crowd, and a fresh wind, clearing away the mist, blew upon her face. Penrose's ugly grey cottage was now visible, perched on a shoulder of the cliff, and staring backward along the road out of little windows, like his own imperturbable eyes. On the opposite side of the valley was the great scar of the quarry—the slope of the hill spoiled by livid heaps of discarded granite.

Genevra passed through a white wooden gate which gave on the path, littered with fragments of the dissolving cliff, leading to Penrose's cottage; but instead of going to the sheltered doorway she passed round to the seaward front of the house. Here was a little grassy plateau sloping from the edge like the scarp of a fortification, of which the house itself might have been the citadel. Standing here, Genevra looked down on the boulder-strewn beach of the Cove, with its tiny quay, shaped like a gallows and finished off at the shoreward end with a hexagonal lime-kiln resembling a martello tower. On either hand the carns opened out into savage cliffs; on the left, in the far distance, a twinkling double-star, pale with daylight, marked the extremity of the invisible Lizard promontory seventeen miles away. The great wind-swept void

echoed with the roar of the Atlantic chafing against the boulders. Out at sea a three-master schooner laboured round Caraglose, making for the shelter of Porthlew Bay.

At the shore end of the quay two men, looking like black dolls, were using long-handled shovels to load up a cart with rich brown oreweed. These were the first human beings Genevra had seen since leaving Trecoth. Her eye travelling out distinguished the figure of Uter Penrose, coloured like the granite, crouching under the "lew" of the quay wall. Genevra retraced her steps and, passing once more through the white gate, turned sharply to the right and descended the road leading into the Cove. With a pleasant greeting to the two men, she picked her way over the slippery, strong-smelling oreweed as Uter Penrose, waving his hand, came to meet her.

Uter Penrose was a tall, heavily built man of about seventy. He had a massive head, thinly covered with long grey hair. His blue eyes, though rather small, were piercing and deeply set under shaggy eyebrows; his mobile mouth, curiously childlike and innocent, was half-hidden in his straggling grey beard. He wore a long, loose coat

adapted to indoor and outdoor use, indescribably weather-stained, and a cloth cap pushed back, exposing his jutting forehead.

" Come up to the house; you're wet," he said, bending his head sideways to Genevra. He spoke always as if in protest and unnecessarily loudly, though his voice had the hopeless ring peculiar to dwellers by the sea.

Genevra did not tell him that she had been up to the house already, but linked her arm in his and led him back to the quay-head.

" Bin trying to ketch a lil' conger," he said, in answer to her inquiry, adding, " Will 'ee wait, then, my dear, while I pull up my lines? "

Genevra stood under the quay wall, mechanically reading the inscription cut in the granite by the pious builder:

" Except the Lord build the house their labour is but lost that build it."

Penrose followed her glance as he coiled up his line on the canter.

" Bra' fine way to shirk responsibilities," he said, with a chuckle. Penrose frequently tried without effect to involve Genevra in a religious argument, being himself noisily atheistic. He kicked the remains of the spider-crabs which he had been using

for bait into the water and gave a last look round at the weather.

"High wind
Low say
Wrecks due
'Fore day,"

he quoted, as they turned and walked along the quay, Penrose keeping his eyes fixed on the little harbour. He talked as if continuing a conversation already begun.

"Never a bit of wreckwood nowadays, not a bit; and coal fifteenpence a hundred," he grumbled. A criticism of Providence was implied.

"You see, Genevra," he said, stopping to illustrate his meaning, "we lie too far in. When a ship goes to pieces anywhere along this coast, the stuff all swings past here with the tide and gets washed up on the eastern shore. The people over to the Mount get it all, unless there's a southeast wind blowing. Didn't use to be so. I remember when the *Alfred Osborne* went ashore round Carn Cribba, seventeen years ago, we didn't need to buy candles for the winter. I had the Cap'n stopping with me for ten days, and there were several things he wished me to have—a fine mirror and some

furniture out of his cabin. Well, one night we looked out of the window and saw the Cove all alive with lights moving. I let off my gun to frighten the people away, but, there! 'twas no use. They stripped the copper off her bottom, and what they didn't understand they smashed, so I never got my mirror. There was one big chap living down here then, in Sam Treneere's cottage—Jack Laity he was called. One of the owners came down in a day or two, and he and the Cap'n went up to Jack and said, 'Jack Laity, you're a wrecker.' Jack drew himself up and folded his arms and looked down at 'em—he was a g'eat lump of a man. 'You call me a wrecker?' he said. 'Yes, you are,' said they. Jack answered them very gently: 'D'ye know what they call me down here? They call me the King o' the Wreckers!' and turned on his heel and left 'em speechless. All I got was a lot of timber. I had to pay a man to haul it up to the house, I had to pay a man to saw it up, and when 'twas sawn up it wouldn't burn."

They slowly ascended the hill, Penrose occasionally stopping to lean on his stout furze stick while he denounced some fresh example of human folly or injustice of fortune.

As he opened the door of his cottage, an elderly woman appeared in the passage drying her hands on her apron. She nodded and smiled to Genevra and retreated into the kitchen. Inside the sitting-room Penrose passed his hands over Genevra's shoulders and down her skirt.

"You're wet through," he said, shortly. "Go up to my room and take off your jacket and dress; Ann'll dry them. You'll find my auld blue coat behind the door."

Well aware of the uselessness of argument, Genevra obeyed him without a word. When she reappeared in the sitting-room she was in her petticoat, with the old man's jacket round her shoulders. Penrose stirred the fire and flung on some cork floats which he took out of his pocket, and pulled a chair forward, but Genevra stood looking out of the window at the Lizard Light. She did not usually require to give a reason for her visits to Penrose, but this afternoon she felt compelled to explain herself lest her presence should be misunderstood. Somehow the words would not come, and for once in her life she was afflicted with self-consciousness.

Penrose stared at the back of her head and muttered fretfully.

"Can't 'ee make yourself comfortable, then?" he asked. "Sit down!"

Genevra obeyed. Penrose stooped suddenly.

"Your feet are wet," he said, and immediately began to unlace her boots.

"There, now," he said; "sit and dry your stockings."

There was less tenderness than authority in his tone and manner. He carried her boots out into the kitchen, and while he was gone Genevra looked round the queerly furnished room with an absent-minded smile. The worn leather-covered chairs left but little space to move about in, and one wall was entirely taken up by a rickety bookcase with glass doors. The bagging wall-paper had taken on an amazing variety of tints with damp, and the recesses of the windows, one looking seaward, the other facing the quarry, were not papered at all. In spite of the fire, the room smelt of mildew. A fine steel engraving, badly stained, a portrait of Jonathan Swift, filled the space over the mantel-shelf, which was littered with pipes, fish-hooks, an inkstand, and a tobacco-jar, both made of serpentine. The few other pictures were framed pencil drawings or elaborate examples of penmanship signed with the names of Penrose's former pupils.

On top of the bookcase was the plaster model of a human head with phrenological markings. An old harmonium was jammed into the corner between the windows, and two globes, celestial and terrestrial, stood one on either side of the fire-place.

Presently Penrose returned, carrying a bottle of sloe gin. Without asking Genevra whether she would take some, he poured out two glasses of the ruby liquid and handed one to her, smacking his lips.

"Good stuff!" he said. "That'll warm 'ee; 'tes five years old."

"Well," he continued, seating himself by Genevra's side and looking at her intently, "what's that fool of a brother of yours bin doing now?"

The question showed that Penrose thought he knew the reason of Genevra's preoccupation. She knew that no offence was intended: had George been present, Penrose would have used exactly the same term. And George would probably have laughed—which was the most hopeless thing about him.

"He is managing—somehow," said Genevra, flushing a little, as she remembered her recent loan. "He's pretty straight for this year, I think," she

added, to disarm the old man's suspicions. But Penrose was too sharp for her.

"Bin lending him money again?" he asked, cocking his eye at her in a side glance.

Genevra nodded.

"Aw! 'tes shameful!" cried the old man, poking the fire savagely. He turned to her, still holding the poker.

"That's not the way to restore your name, I reckon," he said, bitterly. It was evident who encouraged Genevra in her fantastic notion which, in that moment, she recognised that she was beginning to doubt. "Besides," he added, "it's flinging good money away. George'll nivver be a man so long as he's got you behind him. Always excuses—now 'tes the dryth, now the slag—instead of facing his troubles like a man. Why don't 'ee let 'en go scat and end all?"

"And be turned out of Trecoth?" said Genevra, conscious that the prospect did not seem so terrible as formerly.

"Why for Trecoth?" retorted Penrose with a momentarily puzzled look. "He's put his money into Trenowan against your advice; leave 'en stand or fall by that. He nivver should 'a' bo't the place," he continued, beating time to his words

with the poker. "Your father did well enough by Trecoth."

"George wouldn't have bought Trenowan but for Harriet," said Genevra, more in stubborn defence of her brother than in criticism of her sister-in-law.

"What did he want for to be marrying at all, and him not able to get a son?" said Penrose, betraying at once his principal grievance against George and his disregard of Harriet. "Might as well have stayed single."

"George would get on well enough if it wasn't for what he owes Mr. Oliver," said Genevra, stoutly keeping to the point. "He's had no luck since he borrowed the money; the debt takes all the spirit out of him. If he could only pay that off he would be able to make a fresh start."

"Niver, niver, so long as he lived," said Penrose, contemptuously. "He's bone wake, is George. Not but what Oliver is a damned scamp. He knew what he was doing, I think, when he led George on to buy Trenowan: simply putting his money out to interest, dead sure that the place would fall into his hand. Oh, he's a clever devil!" admitted the old man, with a reflective smile.

Genevra was unworthily pleased to hear Oliver

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denounced. Though, as George had said, Oliver was a keen man of business, he was always friendly and considerate to the Joslins, and but for his wish to marry her, Genevra would have thought of him not unkindly. But during the last few days his persistence from a passive weariness had come to be an active injury, and his last attempt at bargaining for her hand had roused her feelings to something like hatred. Genevra flinched from abusing Oliver herself, but she was quite willing to give the opportunity to Penrose, and it was with a distinct feeling of malice that she told him Oliver's latest proposal of an exchange of title-deeds.

"If you allow that, Genevra, I'll never speak to you again," said Penrose, his voice quivering with anger. "George can't do it without your written consent, mind that, my girl. And George is willing, you say?" He spat in the fire. "There's a son to his father! 'Tes enough to make the auld man rise out of his grave. Mortgage Trecoth! I'll step over to-morrow and tell 'en what I think of 'en."

"Don't do that!" pleaded Genevra. "I told George that I couldn't think of the exchange, and there's an end of it. George has paid up his interest, and I daresay he'll be able to make some

arrangement before Michaelmas if it is a good season with the flowers."

Penrose had his doubts about the arrangement, but the possibility of George losing Trenowan did not trouble him, and, satisfied that Genevra was firm about Trecoth, he let the subject drop. Since Genevra seemed disinclined for conversation, Penrose got up and went and stood over by the window.

"What's this I hear about Harriet's fine lodger?" he said, slyly.

"Who told you?" asked Genevra, glad that he could not see her face.

"Aw, my dear, what with my Ann and your Joan Toddy!"

Genevra did not speak. She wanted to talk about Morris without appearing interested. Penrose, like many arrant gossips, was clever at pretending ignorance.

"Painter chap?" he asked over his shoulder.

"Yes," said Genevra.

"What's his name then?" asked Penrose, turning round. When Genevra told him, the crafty old man assumed a sudden interest, as if Morris's identity were new to him. He came over and stood by her chair.

" A devil," he said with conviction, and intending a compliment. " He's the only one of the lot that belongs to see inside the skin of the land. They come down here and they paint and they write about the dear, simple Cornish people. I've seen this Leonard Morris about; I know 'en. *What* shoulders! *What* a man! My God!" he cried with a sudden inspiration, " what a breed you'd make, you two!"

He looked Genevra up and down with keen satisfaction, bent forward and touched her on the shoulder.

" Marry 'en, Jenny!" he said, as if setting on a terrier to worry a rat.

Genevra laughed.

" But I mane it," said Penrose, seriously. " What's to prevent it? There's you"—he pointed with his forefinger—" there's he—under the same roof. Aw! 'tes as simple as chad."

Genevra, knowing his obstinacy when possessed by a new idea, and perhaps not altogether displeased by the suggestion, humoured him.

" We've begun by disliking each other as cordially as possible," she said.

" What matter? Use your eyes and he'll flare like tinder. See here, Jenny," he struck the palm

of his left hand with his closed fist; " this is fundamental truth from Homer to Fielding: any woman can make any man want her."

" But I don't want him in the least," said Genevra, closing her eyes and shielding the side of her face with her hand.

" Nonsense! " he cried. " One man's as good as another, and he's better with them legs."

" However, I don't intend to marry," said Genevra, decisively, as if to chase away her own dreams. " What's put this in your head all at once? You've always said that you wanted me to call no man my master, but to live my own life."

Penrose sat down beside her.

" To keep Trecoth," he said, slowly; " to keep Trecoth. Once you've a man to look after your affairs and stop your flinging away your money—though the man isn't born that can master you—you can soon buy out George and snap your fingers at Harriet and Oliver and the lot of them."

" For the matter of that," said Genevra, impelled by she knew not what to tell the old man something which a sort of shame had hitherto caused her to keep from his ear, " there's Mr. Sampson Oliver himself."

" What d'you mane, Jenny? " inquired Penrose, anxiously.

" Didn't you know that Mr. Oliver had asked me to marry him? " said Genevra, carelessly.

" The filthy hound! " shouted Penrose, getting on his feet; " the rat-faced swine! I'll break every bone in his miserable carcass. Sampson Oliver marry Genevra Joslin of Trecoth! Why's he let live? Where's your overruling Providence? "

" Please sit down and don't get excited," said Genevra, composedly. " I've not the least intention of marrying Mr. Oliver—or anybody else."

Penrose lowered himself into his chair, holding by the arms.

" Aw, but the craft of the man! " he whispered, with tragic appreciation of Oliver's strategy. " I wondered why he parted with his money so readily. Of course, he thought to buy you like a harlot—forgive me, Jenny."

" So, you see," said Genevra, mercilessly following up her argument, " if I were willing to sell myself to keep Trecoth, there's a customer waiting."

" I see you've not forgotten your Plato," said Penrose, with a grim chuckle.

" There's one thing you seem to have forgot-

ten," pursued Genevra, half, as she knew, to clear up her own ideas. "Supposing, as you suggest, I married—anybody—and bought out George; what becomes of the name?"

"What becomes of the name, in any case?" retorted Penrose with scorn. "What did George want to marry his cousin for? That's the curse of our race, and no wonder it's dying out. But if you marry the right man, you'll not let the breed die, never fear. The name can be managed by letters patent quick enough, but all the king's horses and all the king's men can't make Joslin blood without you. Tell you what, Jenny," he cried, enthusiastically, slapping his thigh, "there's more in my plan than I thought there was at first; 'tes the soundest mating—Silurian with Bolerian—king-cousins. Send this chap Morris down to me; I'll manage him. Say the word, Jenny, and, by God! we'll have a young Joslin before next New Year's day."

The old man's passionate earnestness prevented any shadow of offence, and Genevra was too natural to feel or affect to feel shocked by his sincerity.

"Don't talk nonsense," she answered, gravely. "You know me well enough to be sure that even

if what you say were not fantastically impossible, I could not marry a man unless I loved him."

"Love!" snorted Penrose, disgustedly. "Love! That's your modern degeneracy. Did Helen love Paris except that he was a fine figure of a man, or Danaë Jove? All this mewing and whimpering about 'love' is a rank insult to Nature and the ruin of our posterity. Gad! some of the maids to-day want whipping—no offence to you, Jenny; your proper man never happened along before—addling their brains with plum trash about love and all. It needs a wiser head than a young maid's to know the needs of the race. They did better in the old days: The King of Britain presents his compliments to the King of Gaul and begs for the loan of his daughter to make princes; and if she squalls, we'll step over and fetch her. R.S.V.P. . . . And 'tes more shame to the Tressilians and the St. Ruths that they can't find a man among them to ask for you. Off they go, every man Jack of them, after their chicken-breasted ball-room wenches, their titled drabs, and Chicago pork-packers' daughters, filling the land with scrofulous children — if they bear at all — when there's race and blood and marrow and beauty spoiling at their very doors like peaches on a tree."

Ann's announcement that tea was ready checked the old man's eloquence. He played the host as humbly as he had been overbearing in the character of matrimonial adviser.

" 'Tes only the marinated tail of a conger, my dear, but I cot 'en myself yesterday," he apologized, looking round the table, " and Ann's made one of her heavy cakes, and there's tart and crame. But the tay," he added, proudly, " is the best that can be got in London Churchtown. I've never bo't any tay at Porthlew since I was in Rodda's shop one day and a poor woman from down to Trevenen come in. ' Will 'ee let me have a pound of your tay at eighteen pence, Mr. Rodda, my dear? ' says she. Down he reaches a g'eat tin or canister if you will, all green and gold leaf and weighs out the tay like God A'mighty spooning thunder. When she's gone a carriage stops at the door, and in steps a lady and asks for a pound of the best China tay at four shillings.

" ' Will I send it for 'ee, ma'am? ' says Rodda. ' No, I'll take it with me.'

" Friend Rodda reaches down tin and weighs out the tay—same tin, mind you—same tay. . . . Lord, Lord! And him up to Bowjey Street Chapel

every Sunday morning, putting half-crowns in the plate. Scamps and rogues!"

They took tea in the kitchen—a long, concrete-floored room, with a wooden ceiling and yellow-ochred walls. The place was badly lit by a tin paraffin lamp, but sufficiently golden to intensify the small, vividly dark-blue square of the deeply embrasured window looking out to sea. Behind the table another window showed black against the narrow passage between the side of the kitchen and the cliff. At intervals a cloud of smoke poured out of the slab before a sudden puff of wind, and the tin roof rattled like stage-thunder.

Ann, Penrose's housekeeper, had arrayed herself in black silk to honour Genevra, and used the opportunity of her visit to air accumulated grievances.

"Will you talk to master about getting him some new clothes, Miss Jennifer?" she said, slyly. "His things do be so full of skeats that I'm 'most ashamed to watch he going 'bout 'long."

"There you are, Jenny!" said Penrose, triumphantly. "If Ann had got a man of her own, she wouldn't be worrying her head about my appearance. She's a Trevenen woman, and belongs to rule."

"Never mind, Ann," said Genevra, as the old woman giggled complacently. "You are quite right; he's not fit to be seen. If you'll make me up a parcel of his clothes, I'll take them into Pellews myself and order some new ones."

"I'll tell 'ee what 'tes, Jenny," retorted Penrose. "'Tes all along of Ann going up to Chûn Chapel. They've got a new parson there, a black-faced sweep of a St. Rud man. He's worrying after my poor soul, and told Ann here he hoped to see me clothed and in my right mind. She's remembered half and forgot t'other—unless she thinks my mind's past curing. He stopped Ann t'other day in Clodgy lane, and the pair of 'em dropped on their knees in the mud to pray for poor friend Penrose, an Atheist. Young Cara saw them over the hedge and 'most killed himself laughing when he told me. What did I do? Why, I stepped round to parson's lodging, down to Porthidné, with my good furze stick.

"'Look 'ee here, Mister Apostle,' I says, 'I'm a staid man, for all I'm not married, and though Ann is nigh sixty, I stand *in loco parentis* towards her: and if she *has* got a long stocking somewhere, let alone owning a boat and nets down to Treve-

nen, I'm not going to have a scandal in my household.' "

" Aw, master, how 'ee do talk on! " said Ann, reproachfully.

" No; but some of these canting chaps are a disgrace," said Penrose, with a change to gravity. " The way they do run after the maids: working 'em up with hell-fire and all till they out and screech, ' I'm saved, I'm saved! ' Then they kneel down beside 'em on chapel floor and cuddle 'em. ' Do 'ee love Jesus, my dear? ' Aw, 'tes disgusting! You knaw, Jenny, I'm what they call a Freethinker, but I'll take off my hat to Passon Keverne of St. Adrian and treat him like the gentleman he is; and if he comes down along and wants a blue petticoat for Peter or a red one for Paul, or a fancy table-cloth for his church, I'll out with half a sovereign any day. He's a gentleman and college bred, and fit to teach ignorant people to live clean and do their duty in this world, so that I can wink at his hanky-panky about the next. But as for these half-taught ranters, I'd like to put 'en all in a sack and drop 'en over quay. . . . But you're not eating, my dear; maybe the fish isn't to your liking? Ann, where's your manners? Pour out Miss Genevra another cup of tay; and will 'ee have a dash of rum in it? "

"You're looking slight," said Penrose to Genevra when they were again in the sitting-room; "you've bin working too hard. How about this poetry book?" The tone of the question was indulgent, for Penrose's general contempt for modern literature never allowed him to show his pupil the pride he took in her work. He had entered into an elaborate conspiracy with Beard, the Porthlew bookseller, to send him whatever periodicals contained Genevra's poems. These he read in secret until he had got them by heart, and bragged about them to everybody but Genevra. She herself played the game with spirit and never allowed Penrose to know that Beard had betrayed him. Occasionally, with apologies, she would bring the old man a poem to read, when his attempts to conceal his elation and his familiarity with the verses caused her intense amusement. They had agreed to ignore the forthcoming volume as a regrettable weakness, and Genevra worked him up into a fever of curiosity by denying him all information he did not ask for. In answer to his question, she admitted that the book was to be published in the following March.

"Well, Jenny," he said, loftily, "from the few bits of things I've read, I believe your poetry is

real singing," immediately qualifying the admission by adding, "though I'd a deal rather see you about something more solid: a history of Cornish families, or a glossary of the language which is wanted badly enough. However, you know your own talents best, but if you'll take an old schoolmaster's advice, you'll keep a weather eye on your parts of speech. I was down to Beard's shop the other day—John Beard always shows me anything new he's got—except poetry, which he knows I cannot abide," corrected Penrose, hastily. "He was to school with me. I taught him all he knows about books, and he's got the sense to be grateful. Well, well! these modern writers: ten sloppy adjectives to one little starving noun, like a pothouse bill of Jack Falstaff. Sack? Oceans
Remember this, Jenny; literature, prose or p
stands or falls by the verb and the nou
are the ribs and the bones of it; adject
clothing—the plum flesh, if you
enough, but not proof against tim
bones you know the shape of a
bones that last. So much
tion; for your subject, go
head will take care of
cleverness nowadays

Any amount, but brains alone don't make litera- ture any more than a schooner's headlight makes a stout ship. It's heart: heart of oak and the sails of imagination. Speak out from your heart; let all you see and hear sink into your heart, and leave it simmer there till it turns to song like the buck of milk. . . . And now read me what Sir Thomas Browne says about the Vanity of Ambition."

When Genevra took her leave she would not have the lantern Penrose pressed upon her. The [illegible] had ceased, the wind abated, and the night was like black velvet to sight and touch. As she passed up the valley, Genevra could hear the in- numerable nocturnal sounds of a wild country; the ...ing of foxes that made their earths in the ...rown stone tips from the quarry, and once ...ildlike scream of a rabbit strangling in a ...ther side of the valley she could ...indows of cottages, occasionally ...ws, the outlines of the houses ...ndistinguishable against the hill- ...ked as if the carn were lit up with ...inhabited by Trolls. This effect, ...e stream and the unceasing mur- ...kept up the idea of subdued but ...y.

Genevra felt that Penrose had not given her quite the view of Morris she went to seek from him; he had blessed where she intended him to curse, though, if he had cursed, she would have been disappointed. Yet he had helped her, because his extravagant notion had rounded off the painter into a subject she could consider from outside and with amusement instead of perplexity. She returned in better spirits than she had known for some days, and as she picked her way between the puddles in the dark road she hummed a tune, occasionally breaking off to smile at Penrose's absurd enthusiasm. A listener would have concluded that she was pleasantly preoccupied.

After Genevra was gone, Uter Penrose walked round to the front of his cottage and stared out across the sea. The luggers from Trevenen were well out of the bay, herring drifting, and their riding lights, matching the stars, gave the illusion that he stood at the edge of the world and looked down into the abyss of the sky. Penrose, born dreamer of a race of incurable dreamers, was possessed by the visions called up by his conversation with the woman who had just left him. To his fancy, the lights became the procession of Genevra's heirs across the firmament of time, leading

his imagination into the future, when the land should be repeopled and Trecoth the centre of an organized and flourishing race.

"Siluriân and Bolerian—king-cousins," he murmured again and again. Then he went indoors to read, for a hundredth time, the past glories of Trecoth and to pore over the plans and drawings he himself had made. Presently he took down from his bookcase The County Families of England, and with pen and paper traced out a quartering of the arms of the houses of Morris and de Jocelin.

CHAPTER VII

Mr. Sampson Oliver was a little more than a gentleman. He was a tall, not ill-looking, young solicitor, with cordial manners, a red moustache, and excellent teeth. The last, indeed, were a topic of local conversation, and persons who had recently made his acquaintance were invariably asked, "Did you notice his beautiful teeth?" It was not Mr. Oliver's fault if they hadn't, for frequent congratulation made him take his teeth very seriously. He was not arrogant, but rather as one deprecating some special gift of Providence for which he was not responsible—like the gentleman in the play who, when taxed with heroism, answered, "Oh, it's nothing." After an introduction to a lady, his face wore an expression of mild anxiety, and one felt that he was inwardly debating, "I wonder if she noticed my teeth?" and hoping that the agent of the acquaintance had not forgotten his duty. His naturally shrill voice was

by art impressively full and sonorous. He was reputed to be "a ter'ble chap at cross-examination," and his habit of tilting back his head and half-closing his eyes while he asked inconvenient questions in a suave murmur was really effective upon simple witnesses. If you were not quite sure of his sincerity, you knew that he never could be vulgar; indeed, the greater part of his leisure was improved by embroidering that simple title which persons of his profession are understood legally to claim. He derived new pleasure from every letter which assured him that he was "Sampson Oliver, Esquire." His aspirates were not so pronounced as to be obtrusive, yet the listener was never permitted to ignore them. There was just the possibility that, with so many pains to be a gentleman, Sampson Oliver had ceased to be a human being of any profound consideration. Though prudent in business and of average intelligence, he never quite recognised that he was not intimate with the local gentry, and in the complacency resulting from this misapprehension he patronized persons of his own and inferior classes with unfailing good humour. He was able to do this gracefully, since he inherited a comfortable fortune from his father, a Tolcarne man, who had

dealt in mines with success and by methods which he did not care always to explain.

George Joslin had been proud of the acquaintance ever since Oliver helped him with his sums at school. Oliver's more accurate perception of the fundamental truths of arithmetic as well as George's continued dependence may be gathered from their later financial dealings. Not that Oliver was dishonest or even rapacious; it was simply business. George Joslin was obviously a fool, but Providence had placed him in such a situation that he was useful in the development of capital; and, when it became apparent that Trenowan would fall into his hand, Oliver was not surprised. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the possibility was a clause in his private reading of the agreement when he lent George the money. That was Oliver's way: things fell into his hand. Hence he showed no ill-feeling when Genevra persistently declined to marry him: she, too, would possibly fall into his hand. Family pride and fraternal affection are powerful motives in a time of trouble, and eminent counsel had complimented Oliver upon his appreciation of motives.

Oliver's own motives in wishing to make Genevra his wife were eminently characteristic, and

only obscure to persons who held primitive ideas upon love and marriage. He wanted his wife to be a lady in the technical meaning of the word, but his relations with the aristocracy of the neighbourhood did not give him courage to woo their daughters. Perhaps he surmised that the memory of his father's handling of mining concerns in which the aristocracy had held shares was too recent. Financially he might have made a better match, but Sampson Oliver was the last person not to recognise that there were other things besides money, and in spite of her circumstances Genevra Joslin was of undoubted lineage. To sum up all personal reasons, she was, in his own words, "a damned fine woman."

A week before Christmas, Mr. Sampson Oliver, a little too carefully dressed, rode on horseback up the avenue to Trecoth. His mind being full of the future as he intended it, he rode slowly and with an observant eye. A stranger would have supposed him already the owner of the place and immersed in pleasant schemes for the improvement of his property. His face, like the day, was mild and pensively radiant. The great field on his left, sloping down in corduroy lines to the Rosewithan valley, had once been the lawn of the manor-

house, and Oliver saw no reason why it should not be the lawn again, though the existing buildings, which a turn of the road revealed and at which he momentarily frowned, would all have to be pulled down. Oliver's frown was merely like the passing of a light cloud, for the site was magnificent and the only one available in the neighbourhood, since neither the Tresillians nor the St. Ruths were willing to part with land. George was a sensible fellow to recognise that Trecoth was a nuisance to a man without capital, and it was a pity that Genevra maintained such a dog-in-the-manger attitude, though, indeed, unreasonableness was a charming characteristic of women as Oliver understood them, and, as a man of the world, he appreciated the wisdom of indulging Miss Joslin's sentiments while he arranged that ultimately she should be brought to see "which side her bread was buttered." As Mrs. Oliver, she would not only remain mistress of Trecoth, but she would be in a position—and here Oliver's teeth flashed in a smile—to carry out her fantastic ideas of restoration. That was a matter they had never discussed in detail. Oliver himself would have preferred a building in the Italian style, with colonnades, and lighted by electricity—indeed, he had paused that

morning, on his way up the hill, to consider the convenience of water-power so near at hand—but he was willing to make concessions. It would be a good policy to conciliate Penrose, and nothing would please the old man more than to have his plans and descriptions of the old manor-house turned to practical account.

Where the avenue opened out into the town-place, Oliver encountered Tom Curnow carrying meal to the pigs. Tom set down his pails and slowly and respectfully touched his cap. Oliver returned the salute with punctilious gravity and a visible stiffening of his back. When he had passed, Tom turned round and gazed after him with a broad grin, as if he were enjoying the serious make-believe of a precocious child; then he spat on his hands, thoughtfully rubbed them together, and picked up his pails again.

Instead of riding to the door of the dwelling-house, Oliver turned to the left in the direction of the banqueting-hall. He wished to revive his impressions of the ancient doorway and, out of compliment to Genevra, to consider what might be done towards incorporating it with the building he contemplated in imagination. As he reined in his horse he was surprised to hear somebody mov-

ing inside the barn. Dismounting, he tied his horse to a gate-post, pushed open the door, and walked in, to pull up short before a dark-faced man, who scowled at him from in front of an easel.

"Beg pardon," said Oliver, hastily. "I—er—I was looking for Miss Joslin."

He was rather scared by Morris's abstracted gaze, for, in spite of his notorious good looks, Oliver disliked being studied by men, and the sudden encounter gave him no time to adjust his features and his manners to the occasion.

"I'm sure I don't know," said Morris, slowly and absent-mindedly. "Oh, Miss Joslin—up at the house."

He pointed with his brush and turned his back upon Oliver. Sampson, who by this time had resumed his make-up, was mildly vexed by Morris's nonchalance. He thought perhaps the painter had mistaken him for somebody else, and hastened to reassure him. He grasped his riding-whip behind his back with both hands and, planting his feet wide apart—an attitude he remembered out of the pages of Punch—observed in his best manner:

"Hope I'm not intrudin'; doin' some paintin'?"

"Oh, get away, man; can't you see I'm busy?" snapped Morris in a flurry of nerves. Oliver's attitude went to pieces and, muttering an incoherent apology, he backed out of the barn. He was deeply hurt, but as he untethered his horse he was inclined to take a charitable view of the situation, since it was quite evident that the painter did not know whom he was addressing. Besides, thought Oliver, pausing with his foot in the stirrup, the man's look of being at home in the place suggested a possibility which might be turned to account.

Genevra was at work in her room when Oliver passed the window. She knew that he had come to see her, for it was his notion of etiquette to ignore George and his wife in their own house, a convention which they cheerfully accepted in their hopeful view of future relations. Genevra's first action was to gather up her papers and thrust them into the drawer, but on second thoughts she replaced them on the table; they were at least circumstantial evidence that she was busy. She met Oliver's impassioned bow with gravity but gave him her hand, which he held a moment longer than was necessary, as if he were on the point of pressing it but dared not. Like many men whose

thoughts about women are sultanesque, Oliver was timid in their presence. With all his intelligence, he believed that the surest way to please Genevra was to talk about her work. He lolled in the armchair while Genevra sat upright by the table, and, beating time on his gaiter with his riding-whip, he began softly to declaim her last poem in the *British Review.*

"What a beautiful mind you must have to write like that, Miss Genevra!" he said, in an enthusiastic whisper, while his eyes implied all that he thought about her beautiful body. Genevra was well practised in evading the unfit, so that her face did not betray even annoyance, though she recognised that the bunch of violets in his coat was less a complement to his complexion than a pointed assumption of her own preferences. When Oliver had ended she asked after the health of his mother, a simple old woman for whom she had great affection. The mention of his mother reminded Oliver of the only relation in which she appealed to him, that of a social convenience. He approached the subject obliquely.

"Oh, by the way," he said; "I saw a gentleman painting in the banqueting-hall as I passed." Oliver showed his refinement by carefully avoid-

ing the words man and woman. "A friend of yours?"

"He is lodging here," said Genevra, bluntly, thinking that Oliver merely intended to warn her of a trespasser. Oliver thought that she coloured, though as her back was to the window it was difficult to see clearly. He raised his eyebrows to express commiseration.

"Beastly unpleasant for you," he said, sympathetically, with emphasis on "you."

"He gives us no trouble," said Genevra; "he is entirely considerate."

She was glad, now, that Morris had given up her room so that she could speak truthfully.

"He was rude to me," said Oliver in a tone of reproach.

"Perhaps you interrupted him at his work," said Genevra, with an unconscious, though significant, glance aside at her papers, which Oliver disregarded.

"A professional artist, I presume?" he asked, in his legal murmur.

"Yes," said Genevra.

"What's his name?" asked Oliver, with a stern hint of some future correction of the painter's behaviour.

"His name is Leonard Morris," answered Genevra, suppressing a smile as she pictured the encounter.

"Not the great Leonard Morris?" cried Oliver in his unguarded and high-pitched voice. Though not exactly a lover of the fine arts, he was well informed in that surface gossip about their practitioners which is necessary to polite conversation. To have been insulted by Leonard Morris was something to talk about, and for the moment Oliver forgot to arrange his features and looked almost human.

"By Jove, how interesting!" he said. "You must have a great deal in common, practising sister arts as you do. He is an admirer of your work?"

"I don't know that Mr. Morris has read any of my verses," said Genevra, untruthfully; then, lest the remark should sound too personal, added, "painters are not great readers, as a rule, you know."

"Shocking, shocking!" breathed Oliver, who himself avoided generalities; "but I expect," he added, with intense meaning, "your great modesty has prevented him from becoming aware of the fact that you are a poetess."

"Oh, no," answered Genevra, carelessly, "he knows I write."

"Then," said Oliver, with determination, "I shall take an early opportunity to tell Mr. Morris that he has deprived himself of a great privilege by neglecting to become acquainted with the works of Genevra Joslin."

To a stranger his words would have sounded ironical, though they were intended to be impressive. That was where Mr. Oliver did himself an injustice: his expression and manner were so elaborated that, like patchouli, they conveyed the idea that they were intended to conceal something less inoffensive than the reality.

"I shall be extremely annoyed if you do anything of the sort, Mr. Oliver," said Genevra, and he saw that she was in earnest.

Naturally he suspected a quarrel.

"He has been rude to you?" he asked, fiercely, pulling at his moustache.

"Oh, dear, no," said Genevra, with a smile, and in a tone which implied that in any case she did not wish for Oliver's protection; "but I dislike being discussed."

Having sufficiently paved the way, Oliver divulged the chief reason for his visit.

"Oh, by the way, Miss Genevra"—he habitually used the inaccurate form of address particularly displeasing to her—"my mother is giving a party on the 26th, and before sending you a formal invitation she asked me to try to persuade you to come. I feel sure you will enjoy yourself: we have asked nobody whom it will be uncomfortable for you to meet, there will be dancing, and of course you will use our carriage as if it were your own."

The unintended insolence of his words turned Genevra hot all over, though her quick recognition of the speaker prevented her showing resentment in her voice as she said:

"Mrs. Oliver is extremely kind, but I fear it will be impossible for me to accept her invitation."

"I was afraid you wouldn't come," said Oliver, momentarily forgetting his manners; "you always make a point of going against my wishes."

Genevra was irritated by his making it a personal matter.

"It is not usual for unmarried women to go to dances unattended," she said, in the desperately controlled voice of one teaching a stupid child.

"Oh!" said Oliver, softly, in the tone he used when a witness made a damaging admission. "That can be arranged—I *think.*" Genevra

raised her eyebrows. "If that is all," he continued, "we believe your objections may be overcome. Mr. Morris"—he threw back his head and looked at her with an insinuating smile—"introduce me to Mr. Morris. Now."

Genevra laughed outright. Mr. Oliver's tact was so pronounced as to be almost sticky; one felt that he had taken up tact as another person takes up fretwork or amateur photography.

"Why not?" he asked, a little indignantly. "I wish to make his acquaintance," he made an effective pause to enable Genevra to grasp the breadth and height and depth of his condescension. "I am interested in him."

"I shall be pleased, of course, at some other time," said Genevra, soberly, and failing to grasp the reason for his precipitancy. "I do not think that Mr. Morris would like to be disturbed just now; he is rather nervous and fidgety when he is working."

"Quite so, quite so!" admitted Oliver; "but would you mind giving him my card, and telling him that I shall be delighted to see him at Merthen whenever he can make it convenient to call?"

Still wondering and a little irritated by all this air of mystery, Genevra took the card and Oliver

produced an envelope from the breast pocket of his coat. He did not give it to her at once, but held it by a corner while he explained.

"I have brought your invitation with me. I could not use the cold formality of the post-office with you, Miss Genevra. If you will permit me one moment's use of your poet's pen and a sheet of note-paper——"

Without waiting for her answer, he seated himself in the chair from which, supposing his visit at an end, she had just risen.

"When Mr. Morris understands the situation —which he cannot fail to do after reading my note," he said, pausing in the act of sticking down the envelope, "I do not see how he can avoid making use of his privilege without discourtesy to you." He rubbed the missive with his closed hand. "Particularly since he is an *artist,*" he added, with a killing glance at Genevra.

He rose from his chair and stood beside Genevra, who had given up all hope of understanding him but concluded with a little thrill of malicious pleasure that the contents of his note, whatever they were, would place him in a ridiculous light.

"And now, Miss Genevra," he said, in a tone of great solicitude, "I want you to banish from

your mind all uneasiness regarding the friendly arrangement between myself and your brother."

His manner afflicted her with a fresh anxiety.

"Hasn't George settled with you about the arrears?" she asked, nervously.

"Oh, certainly, certainly," he said, putting out his hand as if to soothe her; "but I referred to the remote possibility that, owing to the uncertainties of agriculture, your brother might not find it convenient to observe the date mentioned in our agreement." He rocked himself gently on his heels and toes while he spoke. Continuing: "Though I regret that you could not see your way to accede to my proposal about Trecoth, I wish to assure you that I am prepared to give your brother every consideration—for your sake, Miss Genevra."

The last words spoiled Genevra's feeling of gratitude—for she believed that he spoke sincerely and would act up to his promise. His dragging her name into the matter, however, made her answer him more coldly than she felt.

"I am not personally concerned with Trenowan," she said, abruptly, and moving a little further away from him, "but I am glad that you quite understand that I cannot sanction any ar-

rangement which gives you, or anybody else, a claim on Trecoth."

"Why do you persist in misinterpreting my motives?" asked Oliver, shaking his head and with a pained smile. "Surely you must know that I would never claim Trecoth except through and for the hand of its mistress."

Oliver's exemplary manners in love-making hardened Genevra to the point of absolute rudeness.

"It is a waste of time to talk about impossibilities," she said, coldly. "I thought we had agreed not to refer to that subject again? If you do not keep your promise, I shall decline to see you. I think you had better go now; I do not wish to be angry with you."

She held out her hand. Oliver was the perfect gentleman under correction.

"Oh, Miss Genevra!" he murmured. "Oh, Miss Genevra!"

She disengaged her fingers; he looked all the things he dared not say and, with bowed head, left the room. As he opened the door, he caught a glimpse of Harriet hastily retreating into the kitchen from her station in the passage.

When the sound of Oliver's horse's hoofs, sym-

bolically kept to a walking pace until clear of the town-place, broke into a business-like trot, Genevra seated herself, gazing at the envelope, addressed "Leonard Morris, Esq.," on the table before her. Remembering her promise, she checked her first impulse to fling the note on the fire and slipped it into her pocket. She covered her burning face with both hands as the meaning of Oliver's manœuvres came suddenly into her mind. He did not care to invite Harriet or George to the party which was to further his wooing, and so, ignoring discretion, he had seized on the first eligible person to accompany herself. Most men, she thought, would hesitate before asking another to take charge of the woman they professed to admire, and Oliver's assurance implied either that he was confident of her ultimate surrender to him or that the possibility of Morris being attracted by her was so remote as to be not worth considering. It was difficult to say which hypothesis was the more insulting, though perhaps nothing angers a woman more than the failure to recognize her powers of attraction.

Genevra had a momentary wild hope for the improbable: that Morris would accept Oliver's invitation and— She leaned back in her chair, shiv-

ering, and laughed low in her throat. Genevra had never deliberately attempted to stir any man's pulses, but she knew the truth of Penrose's "any woman can make any man want her."

Until now Genevra had not recognised exactly why she could not marry Oliver. He was physically attractive, he was good-natured, attentive, and polite, he had plenty of money, and there had been times when she wondered whether her shrinking from him was not due to a foolish prejudice. Now she knew that she hated him for his imperturbable taking things for granted; his policy of contriving what he could not achieve by force of character, bargaining for what he was not man enough to take. He was so maddeningly well-meaning. If for a single instant he had forgotten his manners and exposed his desires, had put his arm round her waist and snatched a kiss, she could have pardoned him; but this patient manipulation of circumstances without risking a direct rebuff aroused all her most cruel instincts. She felt that she could stoop to almost anything to prove that she was not to be won as a matter of convenience.

Genevra took the letter out of her pocket and read the name, "Leonard Morris, Esq." Unwit-

tingly, Oliver had pushed her a little nearer to the painter. The instincts of women, of whatever degree of intelligence or social training, do not vary much, and it is a first point in the unconscious strategy of their affections that the object shall think of them in association with another man.

In response to a rather petty desire for Oliver's public humiliation, Genevra gave Morris his note at the tea-table in the presence of George and his wife. Morris frowned in perplexity over Oliver's card.

"Mr. Sampson Oliver?" he repeated, looking up at Genevra.

"Oh, an *awfully* nice man!" exclaimed Harriet. "I thought he would be sure to call upon you."

"Mr. Oliver asked me to tell you that he will be delighted to see you whenever you can make it convenient to pay him a visit," said Genevra, demurely.

"But I never go anywhere," protested Morris, looking from one to the other; "besides, I've never seen the man."

"He says he met you to-day," said Genevra; "you were painting in the barn."

Morris's grim jaw relaxed in a smile.

"Oh, the man in riding-breeches," he said, and tore open the envelope. Harriet was all eyes as Morris read the note, his expression changing from amusement to perplexity.

"I didn't think I made such an impression," he said, looking up at Genevra, "and I don't understand what he means by saying that I shall do you a great favour by accepting his invitation."

"I'm afraid it's my fault," said Genevra, with a laugh. "My excuse for declining his invitation was that I had nobody to take me."

Morris looked still more puzzled and said:

"But I should have thought Mrs. Joslin or your brother——"

"Oh, we're not *half* grand enough for Mr. Oliver's friends," interrupted Harriet, bridling. "Has he really invited you, Jenny? How lovely! Of course, you'll go?"

Morris looked at Genevra in embarrassment; she observed with a thrill that he waited for her answer, and she was strangely tempted to put him to an extreme test by at least allowing him to think that she wanted to go to the party.

"It isn't for me to speak," muttered George, misinterpreting Genevra's hesitation, and looking

anxiously at Morris, "but Genevra dearly loves dancing. The reason why Oliver didn't ask us is because he knows we shouldn't feel at home among the people that go to his house."

"Do you really wish to go, Miss Joslin?" asked Morris with a dull-red flush. Harriet made a grimace at George, who scowled and shifted in his chair ill-temperedly. This air of mystery afflicted his simple mind; he knew that Harriet had as good reasons for not feeling slighted by Oliver's apparent discourtesy as he had himself.

"No," said Genevra. "I don't wish to go, and Mr. Oliver knows I do not or he would not have —troubled you."

Morris dropped his eyes before the ironical expression in hers and hastily drank tea. Harriet laughed bitterly.

"Don't you think she's very ungrateful, Mr. Morris?" she asked in an injured tone. "Mr. Oliver is most attentive to her, but she won't take any notice of him. He's a perfect gentleman and worth thousands. Well," she added, spitefully, "there's no pleasing some people, I believe."

For once Genevra was quite grateful to Harriet for putting her indifference to Oliver and his thousands in a stronger way than she herself could have

expressed. Morris looked at her with a quick glance of sympathy.

"I think I can understand how Miss Joslin feels," he said, stiffly. "I'm not a society man myself; it's no kindness to ask me out, but I find it isn't always easy to make people understand that I am in earnest without hurting their feelings."

Harriet said no more at the time, but attacked Genevra in her bedroom.

"Well, you are a fool," she said, shortly; "just as if you couldn't have made yourself agreeable for once. I could see that Mr. Morris was quite ready to say 'yes' if you had shown a wish to go. Oh, Lor'! I wish I had some of your chances," she added, stretching out her arms with a giggle.

Genevra ceased brushing her hair and turned round.

"What do you mean, Harriet?" she asked, gravely, though she was foolishly pleased to be reminded that Morris had waited upon her answer. She was quickly punished. Harriet assumed a demure expression, turned up her eyes, and dropped a courtesy.

"Lor', ain't we proper!" she sneered. Coming

a little nearer, she peered mockingly into Genevra's reddening face. "Do you mean to say, Jenny, that you don't like the men after you the same as the rest of us? Oh, don't tell me! I wouldn't trust you quiet ones further than I would throw you. It's my belief you're gone on Mr. Morris."

"How dare you, how dare you, Harriet!" cried Genevra, the wave of colour creeping down her neck. For a moment Harriet shrank away as if she expected Genevra actually to strike her, but her sharp eyes convincing her that her sister-in-law was more wounded than angry, she plucked up courage to pursue her advantage.

"Keep your hair on," she said, tittering with malicious enjoyment. "I don't see any harm in a little quiet spooning myself. Just fancy, Jenny, the carriage all to yourselves and you in your shally-go-naked gown. My!" she screamed with laughter, "Oliver would be 'most mad with jealousy! Oh, you are a fool! Why, you'd be able to get what you liked out of him; he'd be willing to let George off everything."

Genevra, now very pale, turned her back on her sister-in-law and, controlling her temper, said nothing. Harriet, recognising that there was no fur-

ther chance of "taking a rise out of Genevra," bade her good-night, merely adding:

"Well, all I can say is, Jenny, seeing the way George is beholden to Oliver, you might try to keep him up to the scratch, even if you are not in a hurry to get married. I'm not one for spoiling anybody's fun, but it's just as well to keep an eye on the main chance and take care how far you go —particularly with a man like Morris."

Genevra lay awake for a long time trying not to think. She had possessed her soul in peace for so many years that Harriet's impudence hurt her beyond knowledge. In the sordid give and take of their daily life she herself was not involved, and she was a little spoiled by her immunity from really personal annoyance. Now she had betrayed the weak spot in her armour of self-possession. In spite of the offensive terms of Harriet's accusation, there was enough truth in it to afflict her with a keen sense of degradation, and she foresaw that Harriet's shrewdness laid her open to all the ingenious torturing a vulgar-minded woman delights to inflict on another whose delicacy she instinctively resents.

For the first time she recognised in all its nakedness the reason why George and Harriet encour-

aged Oliver's addresses. As Penrose had put it, they wanted her to sell herself to save them from the consequences of their carelessness and mismanagement. She wondered with dull anger whether George had actually bargained with Oliver. She could hardly believe her brother capable of this infamy, but she knew that he had ceased to be the keeper of his own conscience, and Harriet was capable of anything.

There was a little comfort in the thought that this barefaced scheming justified her treatment of Oliver, but she grew hot all over when she remembered how nearly she had stooped to the conduct Harriet suggested, though with an opposite intention. She was ashamed, not of her wish to confound Oliver but because for a moment she had been ready to lend herself to baseness. Though chaste, Genevra was not cold; she knew now that she wanted to attract Morris, and she did not try to deceive herself by pretending that her interest in the painter was intellectual. It was as a man that he was beginning to dominate her imagination, and she was so unused to passion that, as crudely presented by Harriet, an entirely healthy instinct seemed vile and unwomanly. The revelation of her own weakness gave her a great shock,

but perhaps it was wholesome, and, as Genevra turned her face to the wall, she made many resolutions to keep a close guard over her words and ways and imagination.

CHAPTER VIII

GENEVRA was awakened at four o'clock on Christmas morning by the carol singers from St. Adrian. She was actually roused by the dogs barking in the town-place, their clamour dropping to an affectionate whimpering as they recognised Tom Curnow, who was one of the party. Shivering with excitement like a child, Genevra slipped out of bed and put on her dressing-gown and slippers, but was careful not to strike a light or make a noise, for it was part of the tradition that one should be awakened by the music. Crouching low by the window-sill Genevra watched the dark figures with swinging lanterns stealthily file into the snow-clad town-place, stamping their feet as they rounded the corner. They formed up in line with their faces solemnly turned up to her window. It was always her window they saluted first, not that of the master of the house. Genevra chuckled mischievously as she listened to

the earnest muttering of the singers. They were chaffing one of their number, a long-nosed, hungry-looking lad with enormous ears, named Peter Blewitt. Peter, Genevra learned for the first time, was accused of casting sheep's-eyes at herself. Tom Curnow, whose long black moustache against his ruddily lighted face gave him an unwonted look of ferocity, seemed to be the principal aggressor.

"Now, Peter," he said, "don't stand gaping like a duck against thunder; think upon curls, not kisses. Cap'n John, my dear, show lantern on Peter's face; they do say as first man maid's eyes do look 'pon Christmas marnin' she be bound to wed, sure 'nuff."

In obedience, Tom's face went out suddenly like a vision and Peter's flared against the dark, twitching with anger.

"I'll lev' 'ee knaw this minit, Tom Curnow, you g'eat lubbercock, you," spluttered the youth.

"You'll be busy all your time, then, Labbats," answered Tom, with a good-humouredness which belied Genevra's last memory of his face.

"Aw! go thee west 'ome," growled Peter, with contempt.

"Come, soase, keep cooram," Cap'n John mut-

tered imploringly in his beard as he opened his lantern to light another candle-end.

"I won't be made a Mȧy game by 'en," persisted Peter, his voice dropping to a whine as his face died into the night.

"Ssh! Get in coose avore she do rise up," said somebody, and they burst forth with

"Joseph was an old man
And an old man was he,
When he married Mary
In the land of Galilee."

The music and the arrangement of the parts were peculiar. The air was taken by the tenors, the altos or counter tenors, as they are still called in this district, singing a third higher and producing a plaintive effect not unpleasing. After Genevra had showed herself at the window, paid tribute and been rewarded with

"As it fell out one May morning
And upon one bright holiday
Sweet Jesus asked of his mother
If he might go out to play"

she heard Morris's window thrown up and the sleepy murmur of his voice. She half expected him to grumble at the singers for disturbing his

rest, but the sudden fervour of "The Holly and the Ivy" and the unusually long stay they made proved that she had done him an injustice, and that he was not without that sentiment of the season which meant so much to her romantic nature. Her own intense appreciation of the atmosphere of Noël was of a piece with her passionate clinging to the idea of her home. It was a small matter, but she was in a mood to overvalue the touch of poetry where she had not looked for it.

This new conception of Morris undoubtedly brought the impulse which, when a few hours later she was dressing to go to church, sent the blood to Genevra's face and momentarily suffused her eyes with tenderness. She paused in the act of fastening her dress, hesitated, and then stole out on the landing and tapped at Morris's door.

"Yes, what is it?" came in a drowsy voice.

"Get up and come to church with me," she murmured, her mouth close to the wood.

There was a moment's pause in which Genevra could hear her heart thumping, and then a short laugh and "All right" in brisk reply. Immediately afterward Genevra regretted her impulsive action. She thought of Harriet's mocking face

and spiteful innuendoes, though in her anxiety to preserve the spirit of good-will she readily attributed these to her sister-in-law's ignorance of the ways of reasonable people. Anyhow, it was too late to withdraw her invitation. She fidgeted about the cold parlour with increasing nervousness while Morris dressed himself, and met him at the foot of the stairs in an access of shyness.

Once out of the house, Genevra's courage returned; she was glad now that she had asked Morris to come with her. He for his part was unwontedly cheerful. As they hurried along the hard road in the grey light, he showed the most attractive side of his nature, and was boyishly simple, talking about his memories of Christmas in Glamorganshire. He seemed to find nothing odd in their being together, though, as he said:

"I have not been to church since I went with my mother and sisters—except once or twice abroad."

This was the first time he had ever alluded to his home life, and the mere word "mother" on his lips seemed to vibrate poignantly, as if it stirred forgotten deeps. There was a hint of something held sacred through years of indifference.

"Is your mother alive?" asked Genevra, fol-

lowing the train of her thoughts and almost unconscious that she uttered the words aloud.

"No," he said; "she died fifteen years ago."

Genevra's "I'm sorry" was like the clasp of a hand in a moment too full for speech, and for a little while neither of them spoke. At that time Genevra's mood with regard to him was perhaps chiefly maternal, and she wished for nothing more than that her womanhood should remind him of his mother and in a sort console him for an irretrievable loss. For the present that was enough because it implied that in spite of his hardness and at his best he was dependent at least on her sex. The early celebration was Genevra's most precious experience, and her asking him to share the hour with her was the highest offer of intimacy she could make to a fellow creature. There was a faint exultation, too, in the thought that spiritually her nature dominated over his, that in these paths at least he must follow whither she led. Morris's ignorance of the intense meaning of her request that he should go to church with her saved them from embarrassment. He, indeed, was blessed unawares; he did not know her fine intention, though his keen eyes dwelt interestedly on her exalted face so perfectly in accord with the white-clad moor-

land and the austerity of the grey sea without horizon, and only explained by the pearly shifting of its nearer surface. He was impressed, but entirely by the outward aspect of things, including that of the woman by his side.

As they passed the ancient wayside cross where the church lane turned off from the main road, Morris, in obedience to some vague instinct he could not have explained, lifted his cap. Genevra's quick intuition told her that the act was unconscious, learned abroad and prompted by her presence by his side. At the same moment she knew in her heart that she could not remain contented with her relation to him of abstract womanhood; she was instantly and unreasonably jealous and inquisitive. At some other time in some foreign country Morris had walked beside another woman to another church. "Except once or twice abroad." That once or twice raised a barrier, and instinctively she walked a little further away from him. Morris attributed her sudden reserve merely to the fact that they were approaching the church.

The hour, the cold church, the scanty congregation gave the service a poignant sincerity. It was a meeting of individuals selected by some supreme standard, not ashamed to confess their personal

needs and aspirations as in the early morning of the faith. As the time for communion drew near Genevra was seized with a fit of trembling. She hoped for more than she dared expect, and she tried to shut out all thoughts but that of the imminent consecration. She was haunted with the memory of Karen and the Red Shoes. She knelt at the altar rails, knowing thankfully that Morris was at her elbow.

Unwilling to destroy her mood by contact with other people, Genevra remained on her knees until the church was empty. Thus she was kept from seeing how perfunctory was Morris's reverence. He had obeyed his early training with boyish decorum during the service, but now looked interestedly about him. The church of St. Adrian was large and unbeautiful, though redeemed from the commonplace by surviving fragments of an earlier structure. There still remained the wonderfully carved rood-screen, a masterpiece of birds, beasts, and foliage intertwined in cunning symbolism. When they had passed down the aisle, Genevra, still further to gain time, but now because she dreaded the curiosity of acquaintances, led Morris aside under the western tower and showed him the tomb of Isabella de Jocelin. Morris looked at the in-

scription somewhat shamefacedly: he remembered his flippant reception of Genevra's confidences in Trecoth town-place.

"You must have thought me a dull, unimaginative creature," he murmured, "but don't you see that this is in its right atmosphere here as part of an unbroken tradition?"

He would have said more but something warned him that he was out of his element, and would be sure to offend her devotional sense. Genevra wished to show him the bells with their quaint inscriptions, "*Virginis egregiæ vocor campana Mariæ*" and "*Vocem ego do vobis: vos date verba Deo,*" but the door of the tower was locked.

During their walk home Genevra was silent and a little frightened. She fancied that the people they met looked at them meaningly, and that their neighbourly greetings were intended to apply to more than the season. She had forgotten until now that there was a special significance, locally, in young—that is to say, unmarried—persons of opposite sex attending a place of worship together: a delicate advertisement of courtship. She wished the inner personal meaning to remain all the more strongly that she chafed against the ridiculous construction which popular fancy would put upon

their being together at this hour. How humiliated she would feel if the gossip came to Morris's ears, and she wished that in some jesting way she could forewarn him of the misapprehension which might arise in the minds of their neighbours, but wanted courage to do so. It was only her circumstances, she somewhat bitterly reflected, which exposed her to a misconception which would not have existed if she had been, in the conventional sense, a lady.

Morris for his part seemed to accept their new comradeship without embarrassment. He was in high spirits and enthusiastic over the beauty of the morning. The sun, like a red wafer, hung low in the mist, sending level shafts of rosy light along the surface of the snow and leaving blue lakes of shadow; every hillock was defined as with a finger-print of ultramarine. Genevra was half vexed, half amused, by the change in Morris from polite indifference to rapt earnestness. Despairing of expression in words, he tried to point out with queer illustrative gestures the subtleties of tone and colour which appealed to him so strongly. It was evident to Genevra that she was become a mere accident of the road: if Morris had been alone, he still would have talked to himself. Only as they

turned in at the avenue did he remember her presence in a fit of awkwardness.

"I don't believe we've wished each other a merry Christmas," he said, holding out his hand with a laugh. "I'm glad you made me come out."

She faced him a little tremulously and he glanced with interest into her troubled eyes.

"We're neither of us very happy people," he continued, "so we ought to be friends."

She knew that she wanted infinitely more than that; still, to be isolated with him by the misunderstanding of other people was at least something.

"Yes, I hope we shall be friends," she said, lamely, and turned to move on up the drive.

Harriet was too preoccupied with other matters to comment on their absence or else she reserved her remarks until she should catch Genevra alone. From time immemorial the owners of Trecoth entertained their neighbours on Christmas day. In the abstract, the custom appealed to Genevra, in whom survived some instinct of the great lady holding hospitable court of her tenantry, but every year left her disappointed by the reality of overeating and stupid, because insincere, social reunions. Harriet's "up-country" training, more-

over, caused her to introduce an element of pretence into her hospitality, and jealousies and ill-feeling were born of what should have been a means of grace. Having as usual driven off her preparations till the last moment, Harriet was glad to press Genevra into her service, and so that day which is supposed to be peculiarly sacred to the home was, at Trecoth, spent in desperate attempts to astonish acquaintances. As Harriet said:

" What's the use of being in a position to have a merry Christmas unless there's somebody to see you do it," her own idea of a merry Christmas being new clothes and noisy, if innocent, flirtations with the young farmers of her acquaintance. She was annoyed to-day because Morris had not responded to her broad hints that some of his Trevenen friends would surely be glad to see him. " You see, Jenny," she explained, " 'tisn't as if we could pick our company to suit him, and he's sure to sneer at the Eddys because they haven't been brought up like ourselves."

Genevra tried to reassure her, having already observed that Morris was well liked by their neighbours, particularly by the men, a fact which to her mind strongly told in his favour. She herself had been touched by his friendlessness which Harriet

so resented; she noticed with a pang of sympathy that there were no letters for him even to-day.

This year, contrary to the usual, the season fell piercingly cold. The sides of the valley were patterned with snow-drifts lying between the clumps of gorse, and the rounded shapes of Carn Vowlas and Carn Guela keeping watch over the Atlantic were white against a clear blue sky. The wide land was brisk and vivid with broken colour, the snow more precious for its rarity like a strayed spirit from another world. The dark background of the moors robbed the drifts of all shadows except tones of pale pure colour; the difference between light and shade was but that between warm and cold, faint rose lights picked out from untroubled spaces of lilac and lavender, violet and piercing blue. The air was dry and pungent, odorous with sunned gorse, exciting the spirits like champagne.

George Joslin was in the highest spirits and laughed at his wife's complaints of his idleness on a day when she was so busy. George was generally happy at the end of the year; the definite division of time rid him of the sense of neglected responsibilities, and no man was readier to form good resolutions or to face the future with a more

cheerful confidence. He had a fatal facility for making a fresh start, a curious trait in a dweller in this place where nothing seemed ever to begin or to end. The snow was a great boon to the farmer, since it gave the land a rest usually denied by the mild winters of the district. There was very little work that could be done. In a few weeks the preparations for potato-planting would begin, and in the face of a solid period of hard work and in spite of his wife's protestations, George Joslin made holiday with a conscience flatteringly clear. Immediately after breakfast he dragged Morris off to join a hunting party on the moor, the outdoor companionship cementing the friendship between the two men as nothing else could have done.

Hunting in West Cornwall means less the pursuit of the fox than rabbit-shooting. The prevalence of these enemies of the farmer has developed a local breed of dog—a cross between a setter and a spaniel—admirably adapted to the character of the country. During the late autumn the furze-cutters, protected with gauntlets and greaves and armedwith stout hooks, are at work on the moors cutting and bundling furze to be stacked for fuel. Their labours leave wide lanes and aisles

of bare ground between the rectangular furzy thickets. The dogs work in couples with exquisite interdependence like two "forwards" dribbling at foot-ball. They are put in at one end of a thicket while the guns command the clearing at the other. When once the dogs have disappeared there is nothing to betray their presence except a sinuous vibration of the furze tops and a stifled yelp of excitement, until with padding feet the rabbit bounds from cover under the muzzles of the guns. Where the old hedges of rough stone and beaten earth are honeycombed with burrows, a ferret is used. The little pink-eyed beast is taken from somebody's pocket and insinuated into an opening, while the sportsmen stand on top of the hedge with bent heads listening to the muffled music of the bell, now fainter, now louder, as "Bun" explores the labyrinth, occasionally ceasing altogether and causing a moment of anxiety lest the ferret shall have succumbed to the temptation to lie-up. Presently there is a hollow throbbing, felt rather than heard, within the hedge. Heads go up, backs straighten, the guns come to the ready: it is quick shooting, for no man can say on which side of the hedge the rabbit will break away. Sometimes a handy croft gives ref-

uge to the bolter; then "De Wet" and "Steyn" are given the chance for which, with heaving sides and lolling tongues, they have so patiently waited.

Genevra, buoyantly crossing the moor with a basket of dainties for Joan Toddy's mother, who was a "bed-lier," came upon Morris and her brother standing motionless upon a hedge. She felt her cheeks flame at the sight of Morris's figure, broad-shouldered and alert, silhouetted against the sky; he appealed to her in a new light, his occupation and attitude adding a last touch of masculinity to her conception of him. As he waved his cap to her from a distance, she noted with a strange thrill that his hand was blood-stained.

The Joslins' guests, chiefly from the neighbouring farms, began to arrive about six o'clock. In old Joslin's day no distinction of class was made, and the company included the farm servants and even the quarrymen from Rosewithan Cove, but Harriet picked her friends with just enough care to destroy the feeling of heartiness and sharpen incompatibilities. Though she was ashamed of the thought, Genevra wished it had been possible not to invite Penrose this year. Her great affection for the old man did not blind her to his ag-

gressive tactlessness. He had an uncomfortable habit of ignoring Harriet, who feared and hated him, and treating Genevra as if she were the mistress of the house. Usually, on occasions like this, his potentialities as a social powder-magazine were discounted by the absence of a confidant, since Genevra's character of part hostess enabled her to keep out of his way, while the guests were sufficiently occupied to disregard the old man's sharp eyes and sharper tongue. To-night, however, there would be Leonard Morris, whose quiet habits would make him an excellent listener to Penrose's audible comments upon his neighbours.

Directly Genevra heard Penrose's voice at the outer door she slipped into the passage and, taking hold of the lapels of his long grey coat, kissed him on the cheek. The old man glanced down at her between narrowed lids, affectionately, but with a quizzical smile, and patted her on the shoulder.

"I want you to be very good to-night," she whispered up at him.

"I understand," he said, with a nod and a chuckle; "he's here, then?"

Genevra coloured, but did not affect to misunderstand him.

"I don't mean that," she said, confusedly; "but I want everything to go off pleasantly, and you can help me such a lot, if you like."

"That's what I'm telling you," he retorted, slyly, and pinching her arm.

She shook her head.

"No, that's impossible!" she said, firmly.

Harriet, hearing their voices, came out of the kitchen with a tart observation on her lips, but Penrose's unusual urbanity disarmed her.

"My sense, Harriet!" he said, eyeing her approvingly; "I've nivver seen you looking so well. Here, Jenny, you'll find a bottle or two of old rum in my pockets; I'd like George's opinion on it presently." He held up his arms while Genevra relieved him of the bottles. "Harriet, my dear, aren't you going to help me off with my coat? And where's the mistletoe, then?"

Harriet laughed and dodged coquettishly as she took the coat and pushed the old man forward into the parlour.

During the earlier part of the evening the good manners, of the younger guests in particular, were somewhat overpowering, but later on they began to degenerate. There was no definite ill-behaviour, but tongues were looser, laughs louder, and

love-making a shade more obtrusive. The effect of wine and spirit, more insidious for being disguised in "cups" and "cordials," upon people unused to alcohol is always unedifying, and, though none of the party so far forgot themselves as to get drunk, there was a general weakening of self-control which allowed their least attractive qualities to become evident. George Joslin was frankly not sober, while Harriet's voice grew shriller and shriller, and her attentions to good-looking young men unnecessarily cordial. It may be said emphatically that the good woman never gave her husband cause for a moment's anxiety, but unfortunately she believed herself adept in that verbal flirtation so charming when gracefully suggested, so offensive when clumsily done. Usually a most abstemious woman, this evening she appeared to put discretion aside, as if in obedience to some rule which made it a point in good manners to let oneself go. She, however, preserved an elaborate ritual of genteel unwillingness. When her swain of the moment approached with a jug, Harriet shook her head wildly, murmuring: "No, I really couldn't; not another drop, thank you." After an earnest consultation with several people, involving the animated statement of her general and particu-

lar health, and arriving at the unanimous decision that it wouldn't hurt her, Harriet sighed resignedly and said, " Well, just three parts of a glass." She would then hold out her glass and turn away her head in sprightly converse, only glancing round quickly when the glass was brimming, to cry, " Oh, you bad man! That's much more than I wanted."

As the evening advanced there was dancing, when young men wearing expressions of confused solemnity circled heavily with partners they failed to recognise, whispered pronounced compliments into ears for which they were never intended, and squeezed hands whose owners they treated with somewhat fearful respect on ordinary occasions.

Morris found the spectacle interesting, if unpleasing, though his finer sensibilities were blunted in obedience to George's pressing invitations to the cup. Uter Penrose, sitting in a corner, with his wide satiric smile, suggested a diabolical master of the revels. The old man had a head of iron, and the only effect of his potations was a feeling of physical well-being in which his mind was fully alert, and he looked the comments he was too comfortable to utter aloud. With consummate craftiness, he had avoided arousing Genevra's self-consciousness by any allusion to Morris beyond his

few words at the door. He played on the painter's good-nature by inveigling him into a game of cards "with a lonely auld man," and between the rounds lost no opportunity of calling his attention to Genevra's appearance.

"There's a picture for you!" he muttered, as Genevra came into the room. "Look how she moves, like a queen among all this rabble!" though no man would have resented more bitterly an outsider's criticism of the people he loved and chastened with all the fierce loyalty of one belonging to a little race.

"Fancy a woman like that—best blood in Cornwall, mind you—withering because there isn't a man with eyes in him to ask her to share his bed." He laughed savagely and continued with a sly glance at the painter: "They do say as that son of a Tolcarne mine-pepperer, Oliver, has asked her, and a little more and she'll take him out of sheer weariness. Well—diamonds are trumps, I b'lieve."

Though, indeed, Morris needed no incitement to watch Genevra as she moved about the room. He had in a marked degree the faculty of interesting or not interesting himself in people, as he chose—which is a very different thing from being

uninterested—and to-night he was in his most appreciative mood, so far as Genevra was an attractive woman. Nor was he altogether insensible to the charm of her temperament: his early morning walk with her had been a great step towards intimacy, and he was sincerely interested in her, but as yet felt sure of his power to dismiss her from his mind whenever she became a hindrance to his work. It was this power, rather than indifference to women, which had kept his life singularly free from entanglements in the past, for he was by nature passionate. As an artist, women were no concern of his, and fear of unfitting himself for his art kept him from using them as a diversion. This form of asceticism, as he knew by instinct, is only successful when it is absolute, and to-night his imagination was heated while his jealous foresight of consequences was a little obscured. His higher sense of beauty was not so dulled but that he felt a shame-faced sympathy with Genevra's obvious struggle between hospitality and repugnance to the scene; her efforts to keep a smiling face while her eyes yearned to some inner vision worlds away from the noisy room. He noticed her tactful treatment of Harriet, who was beginning to be quarrelsome; her affectionate, though unobtrusive,

appeals to her brother to be steady. Morris's eyes dwelt admiringly on the fine modelling of her temples, the exquisite poise of her head on her round neck, the vitality of her movements—the moment of perfection in fulness of drawing. Genevra wore a white dress of a material running into innumerable soft folds. Her bodice, though high at the throat, was of a full-fronted pattern which, falling loose to the waist and ostensibly hiding the figure, yet with a triumph of art betrayed the forward lift of her breasts, the firm set-back of her shoulders, more surely than absolute bareness.

During the singing of a song by one of the young farmers, the exaggerated sentimentality on the faces of the women became suddenly nauseous to Genevra, and she escaped from the room. She stood at the open front door, leaning against the jamb, and gazed up at the stars, which were irregular splashes of amethyst fire against a sky of black velvet. The peace of the night after the revelry within held her strongly, and she was reluctant to return. Meanwhile, Morris, irritated by the proximity of Harriet, who pressed his hand in almost tearful friendship, was afflicted with a vivid sense of the wrong woman. He went into the passage with the intention of smoking a cigarette, but, as

he came out of the hot room, the vaguely lit background of the town-place was darkened by the figure of Genevra standing by the open door. He went forward and stood beside her. His appearance chimed well with the mood she believed she shared. Genevra turned her head slowly and smiled without speaking. They two seemed singularly apart from the rest of the world, and his proximity affected her with a more tender recurrence of her morning's exaltation.

Morris looked at her with a deep breath that was almost a sigh; his appreciation of beauty was little short of a bodily anguish. In his unbalanced condition, with the fine edge of his character blunted, Genevra was merely a beautiful woman: he was perhaps, never further from love as she understood it. The subtle fragrance of her hair, the deep-breathed rise and fall of her bosom, the apparent readiness of the woman, intoxicated his senses. Before he thought of his intention, his arm was round her waist. Genevra shuddered and lay still in his clasp; her heart seemed to stop beating, the stars to fall from heaven before her eyes; she closed them, her head sinking back as she met his lips in a long, passionate kiss. Immediately her instincts were up and armed, and she pushed him

from her with a low, vibrating "I hate you; oh, I hate you!" The full meaning of his cruel clumsiness came upon the man. The mere libertine would have lied and protested. "I did not know —believe me, I did not know!" he stammered, yet he still held her. One-half of him was in vivid understanding, but passion died hard. "Oh, for pity's sake, go away!" sobbed Genevra, and, unable to free herself, she raised her arm, bare from the elbow, against his face. Out of the tumult of their senses they heard the shrill mockery of Harriet's laughter, cold and thin as the falling of broken glass.

CHAPTER IX

GENEVRA had reached the age of twenty-nine without a love-affair of any sort, and this not from coldness but because of her circumstances. She was neither incapable of passion, nor simple, nor innocent. She had written of love with the full knowledge of imagination; fuller, perhaps, than that of experience because more detached in observation. Most women, even women of exemplary virtue, come to the great passion of their lives prepared by passages, innocent enough yet foreshadowing surrender; but, except in imagination, Genevra was absolutely untouched. In her conviction that the man had arrived, she had betrayed herself with the entire abandonment of a nature enriched by the reserved emotion of years; and, though it was only for a moment and only in a kiss, she could never be her own again: she had given that which might not be recovered. Body and soul had lain in Morris's arms crying, "Take me." She had offered unutterably more

than was asked to a man who, his pulses quickened by liquor, had lost his head and kissed a pretty woman as he might have kissed Joan Toddy while slipping a shilling into her hand for cleaning his boots; a man obviously embarrassed by the response to his cruel blunder.

By instinct and training, Genevra was incapable of understanding the progressive stages of modern courtship. She belonged to a race and time of franker dealings, being descended from high-spirited, full-blooded women who, when they gave, were helped and applauded by customs which, in the kiss of betrothal, already saw and spoke of lusty sons and daughters. To her the *epithalamia* of the poets were neither extravagant nor indecorous, and she did not, could not, understand the infinite and cautious subdivisions of the approaches between modern men and women.

Once during the night, Genevra had begun to pack up her clothing with the intention of leaving Trecoth on the morrow, but, as is so often the case, an heroic purpose was checked by trivial considerations: she had very little money and no idea where to go. Her clear common sense gave her a right value of the decencies of life, and she had outgrown that sublime confidence in the world's

hospitality, the risk, though occasionally the salvation, of young and ardent ignorance. If, she thought, she had not given George the hundred pounds, she might have gone to London, for she did not distrust her ultimate power of gaining a livelihood by her pen. She wished never to see Morris again; the shameful suspicion that he had been incited by Uter Penrose, so far from absolving him only put his insincerity in a stronger light.

With the memory of Harriet's laughter, Genevra's pride came back to her. People might talk as they pleased, but she would not be frightened away from Trecoth; though, indeed, as she might have expected, Harriet was too artful to waste her advantage by sharing it with other people. Her treatment of Genevra, when they met at the breakfast-table, was one of respectful sympathy, touched with sly, surprised admiration, summed up in an aside:

"Well, you are a caution!"

Apparently she had not taken even George into her confidence. He was in a contrite mood and applied his wife's vague and condemnatory allusions to the ways of "the men" to his own hazily remembered misdeeds of the night before.

Morris's intelligence saved him from the fla-

grant error of seeming apologetic, but he was evidently ill at ease. He glanced once or twice at Genevra's pale and impassive countenance, as if he would read her opinion of him, and he gave only monosyllabic answers to Harriet's pointed inquiries as to how he had enjoyed himself. Altogether, Mrs. Joslin had the situation in her own hands, and she was gratified by observing that Morris hung about the front parlour after breakfast, with the object, she supposed, of catching her alone. She took a malicious pleasure in evading him for some time, but finally gave him his opportunity by coming into the room with a chair which had been borrowed for winding up the evening's festivities in the kitchen. She found Morris examining a plush-framed photograph of the promenade at Porthlew.

"I'm afraid I made rather a fool of myself last night, Mrs. Joslin," he said, standing stiffly before her with his hands behind his back. Harriet said nothing, but looked at him with demure disapproval.

"Miss Joslin is very angry with me," he continued, reddening at her arch expression, "and I hope you won't give people the chance of annoying her by talking about what you saw."

He had better kept silence, but in his rough way he wished to make amends to Genevra and to stop Mrs. Joslin's tongue by putting the episode in the light of a foolish and uninvited liberty. As a matter of fact, Harriet was puzzled. She could not understand a woman resenting the attentions, drunk or sober, of a man for whom she had a preference, and she had begun to think that she must be mistaken in suspecting Genevra of a leaning to the painter. In this case, the matter was a very good joke. She came nearer to Morris and dropped her voice to a confidential murmur.

"Don't you worry about that, Mr. Morris," she said; "of course, I sha'n't say anything. It will do Jenny a lot of good, and I'm glad you had the pluck to take down her pride a bit. She's got an idea that nobody dare touch her." And she went away pleased that she had Morris under an obligation.

Morris himself was irritated by the persistence of Genevra's image in his mind. He assured himself that he was indifferent, and that she was a sentimental fool, whom time and neglect would bring to her senses, but he could not shake off the memory of her surrender to his arm and the pressure of her lips on his. He had been a fool, and

a clumsy fool, and he tried to explain his impulsive action by the coarse hypothesis that he was not himself at the time, but at the back of his mind he knew that it was only true that George's hospitality had weakened the artificial checks to a natural inclination. Morris made a hard fight to recover his peace of mind, and possibly would have succeeded but for a circumstance which presumably placed Genevra out of his reach altogether.

When George Joslin came in sight of the last five-pound note of Genevra's loan, he fell into a mood of acute depression, which Harriet's constant grumbling did not tend to relieve. It was true that he had no pressing debts, but his obligation to Oliver at Michaelmas remained, and, contrary to Genevra's hopeful remarks to Penrose, no "arrangement" seemed forthcoming. A dogged sense of honour prevented George from asking Oliver for a renewal, but, illogically, he saw no reason why Genevra should not do so on his behalf.

"Oliver would be glad to do anything for you, Jenny," he concluded, plaintively. The voice was the voice of George, but the sentiment was Harriet's. Genevra made no promise, but George's request chimed only too well with her bitter mood.

Whether Harriet had told Oliver of George's difficulties or whether it was a coincidence, she never knew, but within the next three days Oliver sent her yet another formal proposal of marriage by post. At any other time Genevra would have laughed at his persistence, but now she seized upon the opportunity of proving to herself how little she cared for Morris. The terms of her letter to Oliver consenting to an engagement between them were not such as would have delighted an ardent lover, but since Oliver was before everything practical, it may be supposed that he was satisfied.

"I have decided to accept your offer of marriage," she wrote. "I must ask you not to announce our engagement until I give you permission to do so, and also that you will undertake to renew the mortgage on Trenowan for another ten years, during which time I trust my brother will be able to pay back in full the original sum he borrowed from you. If you agree to this arrangement, will you please write to my brother as if the proposal were your own, and without giving any reason for it beyond your knowledge that he is not in a position to redeem the mortgage?"

Genevra's demand for secrecy was due to the fear that George, or at least Harriet, would guess

the real reason for her consent to marry Oliver. She tried to persuade herself that she was moved by the idea of self-sacrifice, and for a few hours after despatching her letter she felt a fine glow of mingled generosity, security from herself, and defiance of Leonard Morris. Oliver's answer to her letter of consent, however, robbed her of the nobler feeling and reduced her to a vivid comprehension of her actual motives.

"I am grieved," he wrote, "that you should think it necessary to ask me for conditions. I am too conscious of my good fortune to cavil at your wish that our engagement shall be kept secret, but surely you might have known that, whatever your answer, the mere fact that George is your brother makes it a *sine quâ non* that I shall treat him with every consideration. It was already my intention to propose the renewal, but I did not want to hurt your feelings by suggesting it until I knew that George would find it necessary, and that you yourself desired the arrangement. I shall write to George to the effect that when the present term of mortgage expires I am prepared to draw up a formal agreement of renewal for another period of ten years."

It is to be feared that Genevra's regard for her

future husband was not made warmer by the news that, so far as George was concerned, she had bestowed her hand unnecessarily, even though she read between the lines that her consent was the cue for Oliver's magnanimous treatment of her brother. To her mind, the letter, with its dignified reproach, was typical of Oliver's cautious waiting upon events, and she felt, illogically, that she had been trapped. Oliver was prepared to be generous, but it was against his principles to do anything without a commission: she was that commission, and the guarded concluding sentence implied that Oliver expected his commission in advance. There was no reason, she thought, why Oliver should not make out the renewal at once.

Genevra was not in the habit of breaking her word, but the recognition that she could not now avail herself of her sex's privilege to change her mind without a breach of honour, was humiliating; and the sly reminder that it was she who had definitely told him of George's inability to redeem the mortgage, made her doubt Oliver's honesty.

George did not indulge in any sort of speculation as to the reason for Oliver's proposal, which reached him on the second day after Genevra had given her promise.

"That's what I call a friend!" he cried, looking up from the letter which he and Harriet had read affectionately together. "'Tisn't every man would give up a clear profit of fifteen hundred pounds to oblige another, for Trenowan's worth five thousand to anybody to-day. I should think you'd alter your opinion of Oliver now, Jenny."

Genevra congratulated her brother and refrained from reminding him that during the next ten years he would pay Oliver exactly fifteen hundred pounds in interest.

"Yes," said Harriet, meaningly, "I should think this would teach you to be a little more careful in the way you treat people. Anybody but Oliver would have lost patience; it's no thanks to you that he has behaved so generously. It's all very well to have your fling, but there is such a thing as going too far, and you never know what you're throwing away. If I were you, I'd let Oliver see that you can be grateful."

Genevra said nothing. She knew that Harriet would never be convinced that her keeping Oliver and his wealth at a distance was due to anything but coquetry, and it was poor consolation to reflect that when the time came to announce her engagement, both George and his wife would consider it

the proper thing, and only natural. Her pride would not allow her to admit that she was profoundly miserable, but her first personal interview with Oliver was a worse ordeal than she had anticipated.

To prove her emancipation from the idea of Morris, she allowed Oliver to meet her by appointment in Merlin's Wood. Until she heard him deliberately fastening the iron gate, she felt confident of her power cynically to carry off the interview with an appearance of grace. She controlled a wild impulse to run away, but could not force her limbs to advance to meet him. With the apparition of Oliver, carefully dressed and walking delicately among the trees, she felt her whole body stiffening. Oliver did not hurry; he tried on a selection of smiles and wiped his mouth with a blue silk pocket-handkerchief. Genevra's mind was horribly clear; she noticed all these details and knew that, in spite of them, Oliver was sincere; that he cared for her after his fashion, and would make a good husband to any woman. At the same time, she understood why women killed themselves rather than submit to the caresses of the wrong men.

In response to Oliver's impassioned, though ob-

viously prepared, greeting, she gave him a cold hand, keeping her elbow tightly fixed to her side. As she had expected, he ardently claimed the privilege of their new relation. She tried to suppress a shiver as she shrank away from the arm he was about to put round her waist.

"I would rather you did not kiss me until I have told people that we are engaged," she said, in a low voice.

"Oh, but that is unreasonable!" protested Oliver, standing with his hat in his hand.

"I'm sorry," gasped Genevra, backing as he advanced a step, and keeping her eyes warily fixed on his face. "Please stay where you are."

"But what is your reason?" asked Oliver, replacing his hat on his head.

"Unless we are the same when we are alone as before other people, we are sure to forget—somebody is sure to find out," she panted, hurriedly.

Oliver looked crestfallen and pulled at his moustache.

"I can't understand why you won't let me tell people," he said, impatiently. "Everybody knows that I have asked you to marry me more than once before now."

"I'm sorry that I can't give you any reason for

wishing to keep our engagement private," murmured Genevra, thankful for his change of subject. " Please be patient; it will only be for a little while."

Her white face and almost tearful earnestness touched the man. He was disappointed, but his habit of mind enabled him to set a right value on a little progress at a time, and he readily attributed her holding aloof from his embrace to a delicate sense of something clandestine in their meeting. Lawyer-like, he inclined to take more seriously the relatively unimportant fact of her wish for secrecy, but he was too intelligent to press the matter.

Oliver's exemplary obedience to her wishes made Genevra recognise how badly she was treating him, and during the rest of their interview she was humble, and almost affectionate, addressing him by his Christian name and allowing him to sit on the same rock with herself.

If there needed anything to complete Genevra's humiliation, the spectacle of Morris's apparently contented industry was more than enough, and, woman-like, she taxed him with being the heartless agent of the degradation she had brought upon herself. She tried to hate him, and succeeded to

a manner of such pointed hostility that Morris became exasperated. He set down her behaviour to sulkiness, an explanation in which he was supported by Harriet.

"Don't take any notice of her, Mr. Morris," she said, observing him scowl and cease whistling as Genevra, pale and with set features, passed them at the door, to enter her own room. Morris most heartily wished that he could disregard her. "She's been made too much of," continued Harriet, noting his gloomy stare at the closed door, "she and her blessed poems. She doesn't know what she wants; nobody's good enough for her. As if she need go and put on all these airs over a little bit of fun at Christmas time. If it had been me, now!" she added, archly, as Morris shrugged his shoulders and moved away.

Morris himself was half-inclined to believe Mrs. Joslin's simple explanation of Genevra's conduct. If she were merely suffering from wounded vanity, he thought, there was not much harm done. His dislike of any situation that kept his mind from his work drove him to bring matters to a crisis, and the next time he encountered Genevra alone in the parlour, he burst out impulsively:

"For God's sake, Miss Joslin, tell me if you

want me to go away. It will be inconvenient just now, but I daresay I can get rooms elsewhere."

"I don't want you to go away," said Genevra, coldly, but without looking at him.

Morris took up a photograph, looked at it, and flung it down again. "You treat me like a dog," he said; "you make me feel that I am in the way; you avoid me pointedly, and it gets on my nerves. I only want peace and quietness."

Genevra looked at him with a faint smile; his consideration for himself was a little grotesque. She did not know that it was from himself he wanted peace and quietness. Morris, gazing into her eyes with reluctant admiration, was half-conscious of a wish to take her into his arms. Something of the impulse must have appeared in his eyes, for Genevra flushed and turned away her head.

"Well, what do you wish me to do?" she asked, unsteadily.

"Do?" he cried, savagely. "I don't wish you to do anything. I only want to be treated like a human being."

"I had thought of going away," said Genevra, slowly, as if thinking aloud. "Now that I know

from your own lips that my presence annoys you, I will certainly do so."

Morris clenched his hands in a frenzy of perplexity.

"Upon my soul, I can't understand you women!" he said. "I don't know what you want; you don't know what you want yourselves—you're like children!"

"Surely you are overpraising us," said Genevra, gathering composure from his agitation. "I should have supposed that you put us on the level of cattle."

Morris flushed darkly.

"Look here, Miss Joslin," he said, "I don't pretend to be clever, so it's no use wasting your wit on me. Don't you understand that I only want to be left alone? You have a hundred ways of making a man feel like dirt; I don't know why I care or why I take the trouble to speak to you; I shouldn't if it were anybody else. If you'll shake hands and agree not to be always reminding me that I am a beast, I'll—we'll say no more about it; if not, I shall have to clear out."

"We seem to be always shaking hands," said Genevra, lightly, though her hand trembled as she held it out.

Morris grasped it frankly.

"That's all right, then," he stammered. "I thought you had more sense than to keep up with a quarrel about nothing," and he left the room with a great air of satisfaction.

Genevra stood looking at the door with an absent-minded smile. Then she looked down at her hand, and after a moment carried it to her mouth.

"Nothing!" she murmured, and immediately burst into tears.

CHAPTER X

UTER PENROSE stood on the little plateau outside his cottage and watched Genevra breasting the long climb up the opposite side of the valley. He watched her critically as a trainer might watch a favourite colt, and his impressions were summed up in the single emphatic ejaculation:

"Thorough-bred!"

The path made three turns at sharp angles, but Genevra paused at neither. From the moment her dark, green-clad figure came in sight above the purple sloe-bushes fringing the stream until she reached the furze-bearded mouth of the quarry, Genevra did not slacken her pace or turn her head. Then she stopped, faced about, and waved her hand to Penrose. In another moment she had passed out of sight.

For all her evident soundness of wind and limbs and apparent freedom from care, Penrose was not satisfied, and for some time after she had disappeared he stared across the valley as if his eyes

still followed her vigorous movement, and occasionally he sighed.

"I can't understand it," he muttered, moving away and round to the front of his cottage.

When Penrose advised Genevra to capture Morris he did not reckon on any motive stronger than practical policy, nor could he have understood that her power of deliberate attraction—even if she had been willing to use it—ceased the moment her heart became involved in the pursuit. Genevra's suspicion that he had worked upon the painter to follow her out of the room on the night of the party was entirely unfounded, and he was quite at a loss to account for the striking change in her manner and appearance. Until this afternoon, towards the end of January, when she had called for half an hour on her way to the flower-fields, he had seen her only twice since Christmas, and each time he was freshly disturbed by the evidence of some trouble deeper and more personal than worry about her brother's affairs. She was visibly thinner, and the ardour of her expression was quenched in apathy, an inexplicable condition in a woman of her character.

Penrose lit his pipe and patrolled the grass-plot for ten minutes or so without coming to any satis-

factory explanation of his perplexities, and then turned to go indoors. As he passed round the corner of the cottage, he glanced down the bank and saw Leonard Morris descending the road into the Cove, with a sketch-book under his arm.

"Where are you going, then?" he hailed him in the peculiar sing-song of the district. Morris came and leaned his arms on the low wall at the bottom of the bank, while Penrose slowly climbed down, stopping now and then to pull up a mallow, which he flung into the road with a curse.

Morris said that he was going nowhere in particular. Penrose eyed him thoughtfully as he wiped his hands on his red pocket-handkerchief.

"Ivver bin up to Trenowan?" he asked.

"Where they grow the flowers?" said Morris, with a show of interest.

Penrose nodded.

"'Tes worth your while," he said. "Of coorse, I don't knaw much about modern painting, but I should say that if you want to see colour, now's your time, sure enough. I never saw such blues and greens in all my born days except in a peacock's tail. The flowers are just beginning to come out now; a week or two later they're not so

beautiful, to my mind; there's too much white and yellow, and the foliage gets coarser."

Having dropped the seed, Penrose left it to Providence, and, knowing the value of the last word, reclimbed the bank and went indoors. In five minutes he reappeared and, stepping to the edge of the plateau, looked anxiously across the valley. His face expanded in a grin as he caught sight of Morris's broad-shouldered figure climbing the hillside.

"A pair of 'em!" he said, with a chuckle. "They're like two thunder-clouds: given a favourable wind—" He did not finish the sentence, but brought his hands smartly together.

When Morris reached the turn by the quarry he halted, as Genevra had done before him, and looked up and down the valley. His preoccupation until this moment with the sterner moods of the country left him unprepared for its immediate aspect, and his attention was caught and held as if by the sudden revelation of tenderness in a face familiar in its austerity. The changes of the last month were so gradual that he had hardly noticed them from day to day, but on returning to the same spot, after an interval, he found an entirely different expression due to the ascendancy of some

quiet growth, infinitesimal in detail, marvellous in total effect as seen from a distance. Here the ivy had pushed forward with a livelier green, there the bracken had been dissipated by wind and rain to allow the sloe-bushes, with their full tints of purple and madder, to predominate, while in sheltered corners already the sallow had put on its exquisite livery of silver satin touched with faintest green and rose. Over the sea the sky was opalescent, like a dove's neck, while up the valley and round an early moon the limpid blue changed to violet in effect, yet with the blue and rose not mingled but superimposed, and all made more delicate by the harsh framing of the carns.

Morris, keenly responsive to natural beauty, felt as if he had been given new eyes, and took the crest of the hill touched and sobered, with something of the valley's enchantment remaining on his mind. At the bleak farm buildings, set square on the high down land, he asked his way to the flower-fields. Mrs. Tregear directed him, adding that he would probably meet her husband. Morris turned down the long lane descending to the sea between hedges covered with stone-crop and polypody ferns. He was already in a special atmosphere—mild, enervating. The wind came up from the sea, thyme-

scented, in languid gusts and bearing a faint murmur. On his right, the fat, purplish loam of a newly ploughed field was full of the small white bulbs of the vernal squill, giving a poignant impression of fecundity. A little further on he came to the first of the flower-fields, opening off the lane like a room inclosed, with a hedge of grey-stemmed elder already showing pink-madder leaf-buds. Here the yellowish-green spears of the narcissi were only just piercing the soil, but the next field was filled with the upward-rushing foliage of Scilly-whites.

Morris heard voices and, looking through the elder-stems, he saw Genevra talking to Harry Tregear. For a moment he thought of turning back, but before he had made up his mind Tregear had seen and hailed him pleasantly. He went forward, feeling an odd sense of being taken unarmed in this place of soft colour, odours, and hushed murmuring.

Tregear himself looked as if long tending the flowers had informed him with their spirit. His thin face had the ivory pallor of one fed upon strange drugs, his eyes were dark and melancholy, his voice low and musical. When he spoke, he used his delicate hands to point his meaning.

"Next week," he said, half to Genevra, half to Morris, "we shall begin to cut Henry Irvings. If the weather keeps and there are no cold winds, you ought to get a good market."

His gentle voice, faintly regretful, and the odd change of pronoun, gave the impression that his interest ended with the blossoming of the flowers he loved. Genevra, on the contrary, was almost painfully eager.

"Do you think it will be a good season?" she asked.

Tregear smiled compassionately.

"Who can say, Miss Joslin?" he said, with a deprecatory gesture. "To-day the air is like milk; to-morrow, you know—" He touched his hat and trailed away without finishing the sentence.

From where they stood Morris could see the general plan of the place—a shallow basin in the cliff, sloping seaward and echoing with its everlasting murmur. At their feet was a shimmering lake of peacock blue, answering the play of the wind like young wheat. Here and there a hint of yellow showed how nearly the blossoms were ready for cutting. Lower down were larger fields, hedged longitudinally with elder, crossed at right

angles by twelve-foot walls of glossy dark-foliaged Escallonia, and bastioned from the sea with ivy-clad hedges hanging immediately over the chafed granite rocks.

Morris began to regret that he had come; he felt unstrung by the influence of the place, witched from his right mental balance to an overconsciousness of the woman by his side. His unsociable habits gave him at any time a morbid sense of the qualities of women—the mystery of hair, the softness of hands, and the troubled cadences, the curious overtones of their voices—and Genevra had never seemed more feminine than at this moment, gazing at the field as if the very warmth of her eyes would evoke the lagging blooms.

"I am sick with anxiety," she said, mournfully. "You can't think what it means to us, and this year, in particular, so much depends upon a good season."

Her irrational hope that even now some almost miraculous good fortune would release her brother from his fresh obligation to Oliver, and a new recognition of the frailty of the flowers, precarious as dreams, on which she relied, overweighted her naturally deep voice with an emotion apparently beyond the subject. Her words linked Morris

with her in a dangerous intimacy, as if he, too, shared her hopes and fears, and he made an effort to shake himself free into the world of practical affairs.

"I heard that your brother had made some fresh arrangement with Oliver," he said, tritely. Genevra did not speak. "I think it's a pity," he continued, in a sort of defiance.

Genevra looked at him curiously.

"Why?" she asked.

Morris laughed awkwardly.

"You'll think me impertinent," he said, "but has it never struck you that your brother is a born server? He has no sense of ownership, and not a spark of initiative. Some men are like that, you know. Treat them kindly, give them orders from day to day, and they will be happy and industrious; leave them to manage their own lives and they go from failure to failure. From what I understand, your brother, though nominally owning this place, has paid rent for it in the form of interest for ten years, and now he's agreed to go on paying rent for another ten years. For the life of me, I can't see why he didn't let Oliver close. It would have wiped off the debt at once; and, since Oliver would have had to employ somebody to manage the place,

it strikes me that it would have paid him to give your brother a salary to do so."

With her knowledge of the circumstances under which George had renewed his burden, Genevra could only smile at the unconscious irony of Morris's words.

"Ah, you don't understand!" she said, and turned away. Half against his will, Morris followed her down the winding path between the elder hedges towards the sea.

The place, like a cup, held a warm atmosphere of dreamy peace: it was an Armida's garden by the grey sea. In these alleys of enchantment thought was impossible; one slid from dream to dream. The smooth shifting sea was patched with irregular violet shadows from the soft grey clouds; westward the sun took the water in broad, waxy burnishing of palest gold. Far away on their left they could see the long sleeping Lizard promontory, delicately, though clearly, defined in veining of light and shade from the purple hills to the pale sandy beaches, with here and there a white line of surf. All about them was the faint whispering of the elder branches as they rubbed together in the light wind. Where they caught the sun the bushes shone with an intolerable glare like a sheaf of

golden spears awakening blue in the grey of the sea in fine contrast.

Morris had forgotten why he came, and she accepted his presence as a gift of the day and the place. They wandered, their wills in abeyance, their bodies swayed together by deeper instincts, thrilled by the almost audible upward striving of the spear-shaped leaves out of the rich brown earth. They spoke in unfinished sentences; words came to their lips and died away inarticulate. They were at the mercy of Nature, mere channels of her large desire and only wanting a touch, a glance, to be conscious of their own emotion.

A bright spark of colour, a scarlet anemone in the shimmering blue-green at their feet, attracted their eyes at the same moment. Genevra stopped and plucked the passionate emblem, and as Morris received it from her, their hands touched and trembled.

"Have you forgiven me?" he murmured, hoarsely.

"Forgiven?" The word quivered on her lips like an echo.

"I was a fool, I was mad—you will believe that I have reproached myself?" He made a step forward, but she put out her hand.

"Don't let us speak about that," she said, unsteadily.

"But I must speak——"

"Come, let us be going," she answered. Her sudden pallor and the change in her voice broke the spell, and Morris involuntarily turned his head to follow the glance of her eyes. Far away he saw the figure of a man coming towards them by the cliff path from Trevenen. He was further away than was apparent, because of a deep curve in the coast-line, and it would take him at least twenty minutes to reach the spot where they stood, but even at that distance Genevra had recognised her future husband. His apparition froze and hardened her to the reality of her promise. When she spoke again, it was in her usual tone of self-possession.

"That is Mr. Oliver," she said. "I don't wish to meet him here this afternoon."

"Pretty average cad, I should think," said Morris, carelessly, as they began to ascend the path.

They walked a few steps in silence.

"That is unfortunate," said Genevra, with a nervous laugh.

"Why?"

"Because it is not improbable that I shall marry Mr. Oliver," she answered.

Morris stopped and checked an oath.

"I'm sorry!" he muttered, with a deep flush.

"For me?" asked Genevra.

Morris took his cue from her affectation of cynicism.

"Incidentally," he said, "but that is not what I meant; I meant that with my usual clumsiness I criticised the man before I knew he was a friend of yours."

"I did not say that he was a friend of mine."

"But you said——"

"Yes, but that is nothing."

Morris frowned impatiently. A moment ago he could have sworn that he was glad to be saved from confessing to what he still believed to be a passing infatuation.

"That is what you call a paradox, isn't it?" he said, sarcastically. "Surely, you won't marry the man unless you want to; you are——"

"Old enough to know my own mind?"

"Yes, of course you are," said Morris, bluntly.

"It is merely a matter of business," said Genevra, in a tone of indifference. Now that she had recovered from her dangerous mood of tenderness,

she wished to pacify her conscience by painting herself and her actions in unattractive colours. " I can't afford to consider sentiment in my marriage," she added.

As was natural in one who wished to flatter conscience, she hoped to punish Morris at the same time, but so far overdid her part that he was only irritated.

" I should not have said sentiment, but dignity, in this case," he retorted.

" I shall be well housed and fed, ' the kennel will be well padded and there will be plenty of cream in the saucer ': he has plenty of money, he is good-looking, and will treat me with every respect," said Genevra, taking a defiant pleasure in enumerating the things which for her did not matter.

In proportion to the apparent soundness of her reasons, Morris grew angry because he felt a cowardly shrinking from admitting to his own mind the one good reason why Genevra should not marry Sampson Oliver.

" I don't understand you, Miss Joslin," he said, after a pause.

" I don't understand myself," she admitted, rather tremulously.

"Surely, this marriage can't be necessary?" he asked, presently.

"It is decidedly advantageous," she replied; and then, because at the bottom of her heart she found a perverse delight in hearing his protests, she continued: "You may not like the man, but you cannot give me one practical reason why I should not marry him."

Morris swung round and faced her.

"You've given the strongest reason why you shouldn't," he said, harshly. "As for liking him, I don't know; I haven't taken advantage of his invitation to improve his acquaintance. Anyhow, that's beside the question; the man's character has got nothing to do with it; he might be an out-and-out blackguard, and yet—oh, good Lord! do you realize what marriage implies?" He laughed savagely. "You'll drive a knife between his ribs the day after."

"You needn't be violent and offensive," said Genevra, coldly; "besides, you are entirely mistaken. I shall have the good sense to respect the contract I have made."

"Well, I don't pretend to be a refined sort of person," said Morris, sullenly, "but that's a degradation I could not stand."

"Why should I be degraded?" said Genevra, defiantly. "I thank God I can keep myself apart in any relation."

"I've heard that said before," retorted Morris. "I've known men who've tried—well, perhaps they've succeeded after a fashion. But no woman ever survives."

"I've survived a good deal," said Genevra, "but we won't argue about the matter. I'm sorry I told you; I only"—and here she frankly lied—"I only told you so that you might use more discretion when you are tempted to abuse Mr. Oliver in my hearing."

Morris relapsed into sulky silence. When they parted by Trenowan, where Genevra intended to wait for her prospective husband, Morris looked down at the flower he still held in his hand. He laughed awkwardly, but did not throw it away.

Half an hour later Sampson Oliver received a pleasant surprise.

"I have changed my mind," said Genevra. "I think I would like people to know that we are engaged to be married."

CHAPTER XI

As Genevra had anticipated, the news of her engagement to Sampson Oliver was the signal for almost universal congratulations from her friends and neighbours. She had the sense of humour to perceive that people commended less herself than their own foresight in predicting an alliance which on every side was declared to be most satisfactory. Genevra had always been a trouble to the peace of mind of her social superiors, who had the uneasy feeling that they were not doing the right thing in neglecting a woman who, whatever her circumstances, was of a good stock and who might become famous. Nobody, however, had the courage to make the first move towards receiving old George Joslin's daughter as an equal, and Genevra evaded attempts at intimacy on any other terms. It is probable that she gained in character from her isolation, but she undoubtedly suffered from the loss of refined feminine companionship, and the Tressilians and the St. Ruths were right when

they felt that they had not quite done their duty by the lonely girl, whose nature cried out for the sympathy and guidance she could not obtain from her immediate associates. But, as the good people pointed out to each other, Genevra was dangerously good-looking, and it was really an act of kindness to prevent her being exposed to the risk of entanglements with susceptible sons, for everybody knows the peculiar dangers which lie in wait for young women superior to their class. Hence, there was a genuine sigh of relief and a sincere expression of satisfaction when it became known that the clever Miss Joslin had done so well for herself. Of course, Mr. Sampson Oliver—" the solicitor, with the beautiful teeth, you know "—was " not quite like one of ourselves; still, for a girl in her position, and getting on, too, he is a very good catch."

And it really looked as if that eccentric Miss Joslin would be able to carry out her odd fancy for restoring Trecoth, after all. Everybody was interested in Trecoth: visitors from town were invariably driven over to look at the wonderful old doorway, and perhaps to catch a glimpse of the farmer's daughter who wrote poetry. There was a unanimous, though hazy, opinion, instigated by

a hint from Lady St. Ruth—whose father made soap in Liverpool—that something handsome ought to be organized to celebrate Miss Joslin's wedding when it took place—"something that will suggest her connection with the archæological interest of the neighbourhood," in Lady St. Ruth's own words.

Some of the attention which Genevra now received was reflected upon Sampson Oliver. When one came to know him, he was a most unassuming young man, who could not be held responsible for his father's sharp practices, and he really did manage that right-of-way case of the Pawlyns very cleverly. It was understood that when the young people married they would live at Trecoth; indeed, Mr. Oliver had already engaged an architect from London to come and look at the place to see how far Miss Joslin's ideas could be reconciled with a modern and convenient building. Well, it would not be a bad thing to have a little money in the district, and when one considered the sort of people who set up country houses nowadays, one was inclined to be thankful that Mr. Oliver was at least a professional man.

Oliver began to recognise that his marriage would not only satisfy his inner craving for social

distinction, but improve his business, and he was rather vexed by Genevra's indifference to the opportunities held out to her.

"Well, you are a rum one!" said Harriet, on one of her nightly visits to Genevra's room. "First you won't, then you will—and you don't seem to be getting much fun out of your sparking, either. I'm surprised at Sampson being so mean, with all his money. Isn't he going to give you an engagement ring?"

"No doubt he would if I allowed him," answered Genevra.

"Allowed him?" cried Harriet, in astonishment. "Wouldn't I! Why, Jenny, what's the use of being engaged if you don't get something out of your chap? Now's your time; they're not so ready to spend money on us after we're married, I can tell you." She laughed knowingly and continued: "Don't you remember how George had to borrow money to pay the bill he'd run up at Tonkins, the jeweller, for brooches and things for me? I will say that for George: he did know how to make the money fly when we were engaged. Look at him now! He grumbles if I ask him for a few shillings to buy a dress for my back. You take my advice and make hay while the sun shines."

"I don't wish Mr. Oliver to give me presents," said Genevra, wearily.

"Mr. Oliver!" cried Harriet, with a grimace. "Is that what you call him when you're alone?" She lay back on the bed and laughed hysterically. "Oh, you're too killing; it's as good as a play! 'Mr. Oliver!'" she mimicked. "Look here, Jenny," she continued, sitting up, "what'll you give me for lessons in love-making? I've had lots of practice: I was engaged—let me see, there was Willie Rowe, and Bob Clemens, and—three times before I said I would marry George. But you're an artful puss, Jenny; I don't believe you need so much teaching, after all. When are you going to get married?"

"We have made no arrangement yet."

"Soon?"

"I don't know, Harriet."

"Well, this year, do you think?"

"Perhaps this year," admitted Genevra, to stop her endless questions.

"The reason I ask is because I want to know when we can clear out of this ramshackle old place," said Harriet, coolly. "I must say, Jenny," she continued, in an injured tone, "if you meant to marry Sampson all along, I can't understand

why you wouldn't let George exchange the title-deeds; it would have saved a lot of bother. However, George won't move out of here until you are married; so the sooner you make up your mind, the better for me. Perhaps Mr. Morris will stop on along with you and Sampson," she interpolated, in spiteful parentheses. "I've been over to Trenowan and measured the rooms: Master George'll have to stump up, I can tell you. We shall have to have new carpets in both parlours. I'm not going to stand any of his nonsense about things being good enough; I mean to have the place nice —it's the first chance I've had since we've been married. Well, Jenny, you've brought us good luck, after all. Did George tell you of the green-houses he thinks of putting up over to Trenowan? Of course, it means expense, but they'll soon pay for themselves because, as George says, it'll make three weeks' difference in the flowers, and he'll get the best of the market. I say, Jenny, don't you think you could ask Sampson to lend George another hundred or two?—he can pay it all back together when he redeems the mortgage."

"I don't think I should care to do that, Harriet," said Genevra, quietly. "You see, it was

very generous of Mr. Ol— of Sampson to offer George a renewal without being asked for it."

"I don't see that," said Harriet, with a toss of her head. "He knew he was sure of his money once George got a fair start. Besides, that was only a sprat to catch a whale, and he's got what he wanted; he's got Trecoth and he's got you, too —and he's welcome to both, as far as I am concerned."

Seeing that Genevra, though silent, was inflexible in her determination not to "get anything out of Sampson Oliver" on the strength of her engagement to him, Harriet rose and, yawning, prepared to leave the room.

"Well," she said, "all I can say is, Jenny, you're a lucky woman. All the girls are in love with Sampson. I remember how we used to wait for him coming out of church and quarrel over him—me and Ada Kelynack and Minnie Tregoning—nasty little cat." She rubbed her lips with the back of her hand, reminiscently. "He always said he liked me best—I can feel his moustache now; he was quite a boy then, and we used to tease him about it awful. Just think, Jenny; this time next year you won't be allowed to spend all this time doing your hair, I'll bet."

During these days George Joslin rather shamefacedly avoided his sister. Apart from the material advantage to himself, he was disinterestedly glad that Genevra had at last consented to marry the man he admired, but his affectionate knowledge of all her ways and moods convinced him that she was not happy. At last he plucked up courage to speak to her. After, with unconscious selfishness, closing her mouth by the enthusiastic recital of all the benefits to himself which were to result from her marriage, George, with his beautiful brown eyes fixed appealingly on her face, observed:

"What is it that's troubling you, Jenny?"

"Nothing is troubling me, George," said Genevra, with a faint smile. "Oughtn't I to be happy?"

"Yes, but you're not," said George. "Look here, Jenny," he blurted out; "Oliver's always been my best friend, and I was brave'n glad when he told me you were going to marry him; but now I can't bear to think that perhaps you've been persuaded against your will. I've got a jealous thought that you've done it to oblige me, and that makes me miserable. Jenny, dear," he continued, huskily, his eyes deprecating his words, "if you've

changed your mind again and don't like to say so, tell me; I'll make it right with Oliver, indeed I will, and take the consequences."

Genevra rested her hand affectionately on his shoulder.

" Don't distress yourself, George, dear," she said. " I'm doing this entirely by my own wish, and I think you do Mr. Oliver an injustice in supposing that he looks upon our engagement in the light of a bargain."

George was perplexed, but his fear of worry and responsibility made him only too ready to accept his sister's word in spite of appearances.

He was now in the full swing of work; he had begun to cut the earlier flowers, which were fetching good prices, and he was also busily engaged in potato-planting. George did not know that his comparative contentment at this season was chiefly due to the associations of happier days when he and Genevra worked in the hillside fields together, he with a long-handled shovel opening up the drills while she, short-skirted and wearing a pair of his own boots, followed close at his heels with her basket of " shooted " potatoes. Laborious but cheerful days, when they faced their poverty and fought it inch by inch without hankering after

short cuts to prosperity. Their co-operation survived only in the case of the flowers. During the early weeks of cutting, when the consignments were small, the Joslins did not employ outside helpers, and George and Genevra spent many afternoons and evenings together in the packing-house, bunching and tying the flowers ready for sending to Porthlew station in the morning. Harriet did not consider that it became her position to take any part in handling the flowers, nor, indeed, did she possess the patience and delicacy of hand necessary for the work. The condition of the flowers on reaching their destination depends greatly on the care and skill with which they have been put together, and it was a tradition with London buyers that boxes from Trenowan need not be opened before passing them for sale.

Without any conscious disloyalty to his wife, George Joslin enjoyed this yearly revival of the old companionship before the complications of marriage had spoiled the intimacy between himself and Genevra. He was a man of simple tastes and, as Morris observed, industrious so long as he was not harassed by responsibility; and the monotonous work in its pleasant surroundings exactly suited his temperament.

Out of all the Joslins' acquaintances, Uter Penrose alone reserved his opinion about Genevra's engagement to Oliver. The old man saw a little further than his neighbours, but only far enough to be mystified. He did not, however, show the anger Genevra had expected, but humiliated her with compassionate and wondering looks, as if she were out of her mind. Morris's apparent insensibility exasperated him, but he was too crafty to allow the painter to see that he suspected him of knowing the reason for Genevra's perplexing behaviour. He observed with grim satisfaction that Morris was growing worse-tempered and working fitfully.

"The girl's mad," he said one afternoon, *à propos* to nothing, as Morris sat on the quay making a sketch of Caraglose and the sea beneath, where orange reflections from the sunlit granite fought with the clear azure of the ripples; "'tes worse than suicide. Can you tell me the manin' of ut?"

Morris turned on him savagely.

"Oh, I mind my own business," he said; "I'm not a blasted psychologist."

Penrose made a mental note that Morris took him without Genevra's name being mentioned.

" 'Tes your business to observe Natur' and l'arn of her ways," he said, mildly. " I'm a fulish auld man, but ed do seem to me as there's something wrong with the scheme of things when Miranda pairs off with Caliban. 'Tes my b'lief she's doing ov ut out of perversity, or to spite somebody, ef you will. I've heerd that wimmen belong to do sech things."

" Miss Joslin gave me to understand that it was a sort of commercial arrangement," said Morris, stiffly, as he resumed his painting.

" Aw, now! she did, did she?" exclaimed Penrose, with affected surprise. " She's took you into her confidence, then? I wonder what was the reason of that, now; I wonder I can't get her to speak one way or t'other. Well," he continued, turning away, " I'd give five hundred sovereigns to see the right man come along and take her off by main force—marry her or not marry her."

Out of earshot he broke out bitterly:

" What's the man made of, then? Is he a man at all? Has he blood in his veins? Here's the girl panting for 'en, and the fool goes on paint, paint, while Oliver stands ready holding out his paws waiting for her to fall into 'em like an apple from a tree. I've nivver seen the like ov ut. 'Tes

a case for love-charms." He stopped suddenly and, wheeling round, stared thoughtfully out to sea. After ten minutes of trance-like stillness, he went indoors and, taking down a volume of Culpeper, became absorbed in his pages.

As Harriet remarked, Genevra did not seem to get much fun out of her courtship. She went about her daily duties in a mechanical sort of way and was unwontedly sympathetic to the business of her associates, as if she would wipe out the wrong she did herself by helping other people. An interminable love-affair was ripening between Joan Toddy and Tom Curnow, and Genevra took a gloomy pleasure in listening to the girl's frank description of her emotions. Apparently the lovers spent most of their time in quarrelling over the future, though the only grievance Joan admitted to Genevra was that Tom was not sufficiently demonstrative of his affection. When Genevra asked her what first attracted her to Tom, Joan rapturously exclaimed:

" Aw, miss! his face is so red, and he's got sech a lovely, thick neck; I can't abide a man near me as looks poor and whisht."

Genevra looked forward to the publication of her poems without enthusiasm, and she was quite unable to write. Once, when from force of habit

she took up her note-book to jot down an idea, she flung it passionately from her. That part of herself, at least, which she had given to her work must be saved from profanation; she must never, she thought, write poetry again.

Oliver suffered her unkindness with exemplary good-humour. His reverent appreciation of the poetic temperament and his sublime confidence in arrangement made him look forward to the future without serious misgiving, but such is the perversity of women that Genevra was irritated rather than pleased by his unprotesting loyalty. He did not resent even her continued refusal to allow him to kiss her; he demurred, but without spirit.

"Oh, but I say, Genevra, that isn't fair! A promise is a promise, you know."

"I promised to marry you," said Genevra, with a dangerous light in her eyes.

"But aren't you going to let me kiss you until we are married?" he asked, ruefully.

"I should prefer that you did not—it is a matter upon which I hold very strong opinions," answered Genevra, at a loss for a reasonable explanation. Away from Oliver, she felt that it would be possible to submit to the exercise of his conventional rights, but the moment she was in his

company some physical repulsion beyond her control made her shrink from even the touch of his hand.

At this time Genevra saw very little of Morris. In the desperate hope of effacing her image from his mind, he had chosen a painting-ground far afield in the Pedn Dinas district, bicycling out every morning and only returning to Trecoth in time for supper. At Pedn Dinas the ground literally reeks of prehistoric associations, the subject of conflicting theories. The huge castellated mass of rock rising sheer out of the sea, and upon which is poised the famous rocking-stone, is joined to the mainland by a narrow neck, encircled at the shoreward end with a triple ring of intrenchments. The place remains as in the origin implied by its name, a battle-field. Borlase says that the works are Danish, Polwhele Irish, and others again Roman. It is probable, however, that the headland was fortified by the Cornish Britons, either against an enemy by sea or as a last stronghold in their westward retreat before Athelstan. One can conceive a desperate band of irreconcilables lurking here while the conqueror, having reduced the main body to submission, passed by to find a fit place of embarkation for his descent on the

islands of Scilly. The inaccessibility of the place from the sea makes it appear highly improbable that it ever gave hold to an invader of any outside nation.

The grandeur, the solitude, and the stern relics of a forgotten race profoundly affected Morris's gloomy imagination, and the impulse which drove him to Pedn Dinas undoubtedly put him in the mood to feel the essential character of the place. He was too averse from trickery to people the scene on canvas with its proper inhabitants, but by sympathy he contrived to suggest their lurking presence: the inexpressibly haunted character of these rude mounds and storm-bitten cliffs. He achieved the waiting look of the land—that significance by which human life, though invisible, is implied. In looking at his now famous "Pedn Dinas; Twilight," that simple, ominous curve of moorland under a troubled sky, one feels that the painter had been initiated into the awful secret of the place; that he knew more than he dared say, even in paint. Yet nothing is added, nothing evaded; and, though at first one thinks that the introduction of the telegraph wires and posts crossing the down to the cable hut was a mistake, one has only to blot them out with the hand to recognise not

only how aptly they hold the picture together, but that they throw the landscape back into the twilight of time as of space. They marvellously suggest sound: a thin, sighing human voice giving point to the cosmic wail of the wind.

In his first meeting with Genevra Joslin, Morris had been warned by instinct that she might prove distracting, and he had protected himself with indifference until her own action in allying herself with Sampson Oliver had presumably safeguarded her from his imagination. The actual result, however, was that Morris thought about her more than ever. He did not immediately recognise that he was jealous, and tried to persuade himself that his irritation was due to abstract regret that Genevra should throw herself away upon a man obviously her inferior. The persistence of her image between him and his work made him desperate, and he vowed that so soon as he had finished his pictures of Pedn Dinas, he would leave Trecoth, never to return. If this had happened, whatever the effect upon Genevra, it is probable that Morris would have recovered his sanity, but the spectacle, one afternoon, of Genevra and Sampson Oliver walking lover-like along the grassy road above him aroused the reluctant fires of his nature.

The encounter was accidental, though Genevra had some difficulty in persuading Oliver that the painter would not be pleased if they went across and spoke to him. When they had passed out of sight, Morris laid aside his work with a groan. Although apparently so stolid, when roused the man suffered horribly. He fought against love with all the stubborn selfishness of the artist, never apparent until his work is threatened.

CHAPTER XII

LATE one evening at the end of February, Genevra was busy in the packing-house, a small wooden, half-glass, half-tin roofed structure standing in the town-place of Trenowan. The walls of the room were hidden by masses of narcissi, gathered half-open and placed on the shelves in gallipots of water to harden, and the long table was heaped on Genevra's left with the flowers she was putting together in bunches ready for the packers in the morning. The place was lighted by a hanging lamp, the yellow glow concentrated by the flowers contrasting with the violet oblong of the skylight and illuminating Genevra's face with a golden pallor. The tones of the flowers were white and cream and saffron, with hints of orange and amber summed up in the full warm brown of Genevra's hair, surrounded with a nimbus of red gold where it caught the lamp-light. From chin to foot she was covered by a pale lilac pinafore, hanging in straight though soft folds, increasing her apparent

height, and recalling the nameless robes of saints in early Tuscan pictures. The quiet, the warmth, the heavy scent of the flowers, and her monotonous occupation had lulled Genevra into a state of dreamy contentment. She swayed backward and forward, crooning a song while her long, white fingers deftly arranged the flowers, placing the bunches on a wooden tray to her right. At the sound of footsteps outside the door the song died on her lips, the flowers dropped from her hands, and Genevra came to herself as out of sleep with a sharp fit of trembling. Her first impulse was to go and lock the door, but as she turned, the latch lifted and Morris entered. They faced each other in the languid air of the room. Genevra's breast rose and fell, and she put out her hands with a feeble gesture, pitifully expressive. Morris did not approach, but his eyes blazed at her out of the heavy shadows flung by the lamp.

"Oh, this has got to end!" he said, wearily.

Genevra gave a great sigh and the blood came back to her face.

"How did you know I was here?" she asked, in a low voice.

Morris took off his cap and leaned against the shelves bearing the heavy masses of flowers. The

intoxicating sweetness of them was against his face. He closed his eyes. To an observer it would have seemed as if the man and the woman moved and spoke in a dream; to themselves it was as if they had but now resumed their waking thoughts and words after a sleep of ages.

"How did I know?" he repeated, slowly, as if asking himself the question. "How did I know? *I* can't tell you; what is the use of asking me; don't you know?"

Genevra turned away her head, took up a handful of flowers, tied them together, broke the strip of bast, and allowed the flowers one by one to slip through her helpless fingers, speaking the while.

"You should not have come here—it is not right—there are the Tregears about—they will talk—Mr. Oliver would not like it."

"Mr. Oliver!" he echoed, with a quiet laugh.

"Will you please wait for me outside?" she asked, humbly, and with a shake in her voice. "Walk on towards Trecoth; I shall follow you in a few minutes."

"No!" said Morris, wearily, but with determination. "I will neither wait for you outside nor will I walk on towards Trecoth."

She covered her burning face with her hands, but did not speak. Morris did not move.

"What is the use of going on like this?" he asked. "It is killing me; it is killing you—all there is of us that matters. For God's sake, tell me what I am to do!"

He spoke in the querulous tone of a strong man who knows himself beaten and puts his will into the hands of another.

"I don't understand," she said, weakly.

"That is a lie!" he answered. "You understand me very well, and that's what makes you so devilishly cruel. It is the curse of my life that I cannot say what I mean," he continued, dragging out every word as if with a painful effort to make himself clear. "I'm a dumb brute, except in paint. Can't you see how that hampers a man? No, of course you can't, because it is your trade to say things. You have been in my way ever since I saw you in the wood, and I have tried to hate you for it. I was a fool to come to Trecoth, but I did not know that you lived there until after I had taken the rooms. You'll believe that, won't you? I might have known how it would end, but I could not go away. I have not done an honest day's work since I have been here."

"Oh, don't!" said Genevra, with a little stamp of her foot. "What is the use of telling me all this now?"

"Because I want you to understand exactly the sort of beast I am," said Morris, slowly. "I want to be quite honest with you so that you can't make any mistakes about me. I can't say pretty things to you; it's no use expecting the sort of thing from me that you write about. I've been reading your poetry; I thought it would help me to speak to you, but it only makes me see the distance between us. . . . I've never had anything to do with a decent woman before; I had to buy the first kiss I had from a woman since I left home as a little boy. I don't want to make myself out exceptionally unfortunate; hundreds of men have the same experience, but can you realize what that means? I didn't know how to approach you—how should I?—and that was why I behaved like a brute that night. Haven't you forgiven me yet? But I know you haven't, or you would not have sold yourself to that man. It's no use telling me that you love him; if you do, that is a lie! All along I have tried to hate you because you are so beautiful and a hindrance to my work, but I can't—because you are so beautiful."

" If you are a gentleman, you will leave me at once," said Genevra, coldly.

He laughed.

" I am not a gentleman, as you know," he said. " But, of course, if you tell me to go, I'll go. I'll cut my throat, if you tell me to."

" Do you think it is right, do you think it is manly, to talk like this to a woman you know is engaged to another man? " cried Genevra, passionately.

" I don't know anything about right or wrong, and I don't care. I only know—Genevra ! " he murmured, his voice breaking harshly.

Genevra looked at him as he stood by the door, his face white and drawn, his limbs trembling. She knew that he was absolutely in her power and would do her bidding to the letter, but the knowledge brought her no feeling of triumph, only sadness.

" Well," he muttered, his eyes fixed on the floor, " now you know all about me. Must I go? Send me away and I swear I'll never trouble you again; you shall never see my face any more."

There was a silence while one could have counted ten. Morris put his hand on the latch. Genevra lifted her head and looked at him haggardly.

"No, don't go!" she whispered.

Morris made one stride forward and crushed her in his arms.

"Why have you tortured me?" she sobbed. "Why have you been so blind? Couldn't you see that I was yours, and yours only? If I had married any other man, I should have come at the lifting of your finger. It was that that frightened me, and I tried not to let you see. It was my pride, I suppose, but what is my pride to me now?"

She disengaged her head, to laugh brokenly.

"Come away with me at once!" said Morris, hoarsely, holding her by the arms. "There's no *sense* in waiting. I will get a license so that we can be married immediately."

"But we can't do that, dear," she said, looking at him in despair. "You know that I am ready to go with you now, this night, out of this place as I am, without a single regret. I can't say more than that, can I? But there are the others—there is Oliver."

"Damn Oliver!"

"But I have promised to marry him."

"I will tell him that it is impossible."

"Oh, you don't understand, you don't under-

stand!" she said, distractedly. "I must get my own release, and I don't know how to do it. It was not like an ordinary promise, you see; I was a fool, I made conditions. He will carry out his side of the bargain, while I— Oh, what a miserable creature I am! No, no, not miserable—I can't feel unhappy now, and that makes it all the worse."

"Does that beast kiss you?" asked Morris, harshly. For answer, she drew his head to hers.

"I am ashamed to seem so cowardly," she murmured against his lips, "but what am I to do? I promised."

"Why did you, why did you?" cried Morris, almost shaking her in his anger. "But of course it was my fault. What a fool I was not to speak before! But how was I to know? I thought you disliked me."

They stood a little apart and gazed at each other hopelessly.

"In a way, it would be better if I were already married," said Genevra, in a dreary tone; "then I should have fulfilled my promise; and if you had said, 'Come'——"

"I believe it would," he said, moodily. "But no, no; that is unthinkable!"

"Do you believe that of me?" she asked, with great scorn. "If I married him, I sold myself, but there would be conditions on the other side."

"Let me go to Oliver," he pleaded.

"No," she said, "I am not afraid, only you must give me time—because of all the other things that were to depend on my marriage. Don't you see how completely I am bound? Until I can see a way out——"

Morris turned impatiently away.

"But it is the cursed delay," he said. "I can't work."

She was too torn between despair and her new-found happiness to take the obvious warning.

"I'm afraid we must be patient, dear," she said, humbly.

"Oh, I can be patient if I can see the end," he answered; "but it seems to me that, as you can't get out of it without breaking your word, you might as well let me tell him now and get it over. Has Oliver done what you asked him to do for your brother?"

"Not yet, but he has promised to get the papers drawn up in September."

"Then there is time yet," he said, coming a step

nearer. " If you let me go to Oliver and tell him that you can't marry him, he will probably withdraw his promise and you will be free to do as you please."

" But—" she began.

" I know what you are going to say," he interrupted, " but why should we be sacrificed for your brother? I believe that the loss of Trenowan would be the best thing that could happen to him."

Genevra turned aside irresolutely and played with the flowers.

" No, I can't, I can't," she said, flushing deeply. " It is much more complicated than you think. George has already spent money on the strength of the renewal, and he and Harriet have quite made up their minds that they are to live at Trenowan. How can I make you understand? If there were any ordinary obstacle between us, I would put it aside—like that." She threw down the flowers. " But since I have involved other people in my promise, I can't let them bear the consequences of my breaking it. You see that, dear, don't you? "

" I don't see how you are going to release yourself," he said, stubbornly.

"You must give me time; George may be able to pay off the debt sooner than we think."

She looked round at the flowers, frail as dreams, which clothed the walls and hid the table and, recognising the pitiful uncertainty of her hopes, went forward and put her hands on Morris's shoulders with a movement of inexpressible tenderness.

"Ah, don't be angry with me, now you have made me so happy!" she pleaded. "Think how I am being punished for my folly."

Her generosity in taking all the blame when she might fairly have uttered reproaches, her submission and unquestioning confidence in himself, touched the painter, and he did not argue any further.

"What excuse can I make to your people for giving up my rooms?" asked Morris, presently.

"Why need you go?" she said, anxiously, her face whitening.

"Oh, I can't go on living in the same house with you," he answered, with a short laugh. "I can wait, but I am only human."

"No, I suppose not," reluctantly admitted Genevra, after a moment. "We must think of a reason to tell Harriet. . . . Leave me now; we must not be seen together—not yet!"

As he was opening the door, she involuntarily held out her arms, and he came back for a passionate embrace. Then he tore himself away and went out into the night.

CHAPTER XIII

THE publication of Genevra's volume of poems in early March was for her an anticlimax. She had become famous for something which did not intimately concern her newer self, and her impassive reception of the compliments rained upon her work was not due to modesty or indifference to other people's opinion, but to her feeling that the past and all that belonged to it was relatively unimportant. She had begun to write again with a delighted but astonished feeling of irresponsible facility; like Alice in Wonderland, when the words would come out differently. Her work seemed to be produced by a co-ordination of functions never exercised before; all of her—heart, brain, and body—chimed together, and, whereas in the past there had always been a part of herself which held aloof unmoved and critical, she was now one throbbing pulse of an ecstasy above and beyond her comprehension. For the first time in her life, her verses frightened her; they were out of her hands

a gift she was unable to judge; she believed them to be good, she knew they were strong, but the standard of workmanship which had limited and sobered her singing in the past now seemed inadequate, and she was not yet sure of her power to control the fuller inspiration. It was as if she had exchanged the spinet for the organ and was a little dazed by the range and volume of the music evoked by her fingers.

On the evening after the appearance of Genevra's first new poem in the *British Review,* two grey-beards wagged profanely in a tobacco-haunted, book-lumbered room in Portland Place, and two elderly voices cracked one against the other.

" What did I tell you? " cried Edgar Noy, taking the grey-covered magazine from his friend's hands and flinging it aside with a triumphant cackle. " Where's your Rainham and your Englefield now? " These were two of Surridge's literary god-children. " There's more guts in this one little six inches of verse," continued Noy, tapping the cover of the review, " than in all their stuff put together. While they're explaining how it ought to be done, she does it. Oh, they're going to learn by actual experience, ain't they? They're never going to write a line about anything they

haven't done; 'Soak themselves in Life'—young Rainham said that in the Thripenny Twaddler, didn't he? This woman, country-bred, never crossed the Tamar, never seen any more of Life than she gets in her own barn-yard—she *knows*. I think you said that she could do landscape very gracefully, but that all her humanity was hearsay, didn't you?"

Surridge had offended by insufficient enthusiasm in his notice of Genevra's book of poems in a journal which rather noisily preached the poet's living what he sang. He shrugged up his little fat body and glared at Noy out of his large, round glasses which deceived people by giving him the expression of a frightened owl.

"Yes, yes, I did," he whispered, nodding energetically, "but this is altogether different."

"Oh, I grant you she's matured," grandly admitted Noy.

"I wonder who helped her."

"What?" screamed Noy, who was rather deaf.

"I say, I wonder who helped her—to mature," repeated Surridge, scared but stubborn.

Noy laughed and pulled his Vandyke beard.

"Well, it struck me too, but what the devil does it matter?" he said, defiantly. "That's your

Twaddler instinct "—he shot out an accusing forefinger—" like to know where she buys her hairpins? Gar! Whoever he is, he's given her the one touch wanting that's all we need know, and the gods be thanked for bringing them together!"

As was only natural, Genevra's immediate neighbours, who did not read her poems but only saw the new light in her eyes, were even less exercised to account for her insuppressible buoyancy which, since they did read the newspapers, they easily attributed to her sudden local fame: a happy accident, which permitted her to rejoice without being exposed to prying and questioning. It is, by the way, significant of the relative amount of pain and pleasure in human life that joy is the condition of which our friends demand the explanation: one's laughter rather than one's tears provokes a "What's the matter?" Perhaps gratitude was the element strongest in Genevra's love for Morris; her nature, so long denied human sympathy, blossomed like a garden after April rain, and, being so thankful for a little kindness, she overpaid, not only the giver but all the world besides. Even Harriet found her less reserved, more amenable to friendly gossip, and, with a surer instinct than her neighbours, improved her

private certainty of an early wedding by exacting yet more lavish promises from her husband for the embellishment of Trenowan.

"You see, George," she ingeniously argued, "when Genevra's Mrs. Oliver, she'll be able to get whatever she wants in the way of furniture, and I'm not going to have her crowing over us. Besides, it would be a slight on Oliver if people said that his brother-in-law's house looked poverty-struck."

Though, indeed, Oliver was not so sensitive to public opinion as he was to Mrs. Joslin's arch reminders of innocent passages with herself during the incipiency of his moustache. Here Harriet did Genevra a service by keeping Oliver, who was naturally unaware of bedroom confidences, in a constant anxiety lest his future wife should hear of these indiscretions of his callow youth and be retrospectively jealous. Harriet's veiled allusions to the guiltless secret made Oliver civil to herself and submissive to Genevra, which, as her sister-in-law privately indicated, was a desirable state of mind in a prospective husband. Not that Genevra was in a mood to give pain to anybody, and compassion as much as anything else delayed her telling Oliver that, after all, she could not marry him.

He, misled by her remorseful kindness, was fairly satisfied with their somewhat chilly courtship, and spared her overmuch of his company, thus making her unpleasant task none the easier when it should become inevitable.

Morris found Mrs. Joslin more than willing to accept his resignation of her hospitality, and he returned to his lodgings at Trevenen. In view of the practical advantages of Genevra's marriage to Sampson Oliver, Harriet's lurking suspicions that " something was up " between her sister-in-law and the painter made her all the more anxious to get rid of him; for, though Genevra's humiliation would have been not unpleasing as a recreative interlude, she rigidly put business first, pleasure afterward—a habit of mind which perhaps accounts for nine-tenths of average morality. Besides, on purely personal grounds, after the first novelty had worn off, Harriet grumbled at the extra trouble of a lodger, and, in the light of her sanguine expectations from the future, the loss of a weekly addition to her housekeeping money seemed a matter of little moment.

Morris persisted in his plea for honesty and immediate marriage. How far, judged by ultimate results, Genevra was mistaken in putting him

off depends on the reader's estimate of the conditions necessary to a happy marriage and his relative appreciation of poets or contented wives and mothers in the cosmic scheme. Genevra insisted on delay from two motives, both unselfish: she wished to disengage herself from Oliver with the least injury to his feelings—of self-esteem rather than affection—without prejudicing his relations with George, and to spare Morris to his art. Being a woman and loving him, she was not able to carry this last sacrifice to its logical conclusion, but she desired fiercely that their union should be marred neither by involuntary regrets on his part nor by any sordid struggle for a livelihood. For herself, the condition of loving and being loved was enough, and to Morris's ardour she only answered, "Wait, wait."

They met as lovers learn how to meet: by the sea, on the moors, in the Cyprian solitude of the flower-fields. The harvest of the daffodils was nearly over, but there were left whole fields of Scilly-whites no longer worth cutting—a scented foam of blossom between the cliff-like elder hedges, hollowed into caves and bays, and already the aristocrat of the race, the slim Poeticus, was coming into flower. It was a time and a place made for

lovers. The days passed, spring came with a rush, and all that grey land was a garden. The sallow changed its livery from silver satin to primrose-yellow plush, the coralline buds of the blackthorn became hoary and broke into milk-white blossom on the bare purple wood. Every bank and hedge was covered with violets and primroses, and the cliffs were carpeted with grey-glue squill, pink thrift, and frail sea-campion with its reticent odour. The carns were growing in beauty from day to day, the gorse flamed and worshipped the sun with incense, the blackberry canes broke into green buds among the metallic violet of last year's leaves, and every thicket was laced with woodbine in full foliage. All the long valley echoed with the mænad laugh of mating woodpeckers busy in the elm-trees, whose reddening twigs made a misty veil against the tender blue of the sky. On every side was a shimmer of changing colour, and the air was heady with the cinnamic odour of bursting leaf-buds.

For a time Uter Penrose kept his own counsel, but after innumerable sly hints he said to Genevra, one evening as they sat at the open window in the dusk:

"What's come of Mr. Morris, Genevra?"

She gave him an unnecessarily minute explanation of Morris's reasons for leaving Trecoth.

"Wasn't doing a bra' lot of work, they say," commented Penrose, abstractedly. "Might as well have stopped to Trevenen all along, I reckon. Didden find you got to like him any better, I s'pose?"

"We managed to get along without quarrelling," said Genevra, composedly. "I didn't see much of him, fortunately."

Penrose grunted and knocked out his pipe against the window-sill.

"Seen him lately?" he asked.

"Not very lately."

By the chronology of lovers that was true, since they had not met for two days.

"Still of the same 'pinion about Sampson Oliver, Genevra?"

"He is very good to me," answered Genevra, not without a pang of compunction.

Penrose shut his eyes and laughed internally.

"So it do seem," he said, dryly. "Why, Genevra, you're all aglow! Has he give back George his title-deeds, then?"

"No, not yet," said Genevra, wondering; "but surely that is more than we can expect. It was a

great concession to promise George the renewal."

Penrose bent forward and, fixing his hard blue eyes on her face, tapped her knee.

"He'd like to make sure of 'ee first, I b'lieve," he said.

"I have promised," said Genevra, with the haughtiness of absolute untruth.

Penrose looked at her steadily for half a minute, then leaned back in his chair and burst into a harsh laugh.

"Well, well!" he said, recovering. "To think that my Genevra should beat the lawyer chap at his own game!"

"What do you mean?" asked Genevra, with sudden pallor.

Penrose made a grimace.

"'Tes the kingly way, after all—by proxy," he said. "'Will 'ee marry me, my dear?' says he. 'No,' says she. 'But I tell 'ee 'tes policy,' says he, 'for, look you here, I've got your brother tied up.' 'Oh!' says she. 'Will 'ee marry me now?' says he. 'Yes,' says she, 'but you must let some-one else do the coortin', ugly face.'" And he roared again.

Genevra burst into tears.

"Now, now, my girl!" said Penrose, getting

up and patting her on the shoulder, "what's the m'anin' of this? Come, come!"

"I know I'm vile," sobbed Genevra, "but what am I to do? I didn't know when I promised to marry Mr. Oliver that—that——"

"That King Carry-all would come along? No, av coorse you didden," said Penrose, soothingly. "Where's the trouble? I'm not blaming you."

"Oh, but I hate myself!" cried Genevra; "it is so dishonourable. I would tell Mr. Oliver now, but he would think that I got the renewal out of him on false pretences. I really did mean to marry him until——"

"Ssh!" said Penrose, gravely, "don't make me ashamed for you. You really did ax 'en for it, then?" he asked, with a glance of admiring curiosity. "I wondered how it came about. Not but what I believe he'd have given George the renewal in any case, as a matter of business."

"Yes, I believe he would," said Genevra, ruefully; "in fact, he says so."

"Well, he can't go back on his word now," said Penrose, with composure, and seating himself. "At least—I s'pose he's drawn up an agreement?"

"He's given George his promise in writing,"

said Genevra, " but don't you see how much worse that makes it? If Mr. Oliver were able to break his promise—I don't think for a moment he would —but if he only had the power, I should not mind so much."

" Don't 'ee be too sure about Oliver," said Penrose, grimly. " I knaw 'en. Mind you, I don't see that it 'ud matter to you if he did foreclose. Why should you trouble your head about George? Well, Jenny," he continued, with ungenerous complacency, " see what a caüdle you've made of it by not taking my advice in the first place. And it seems to me you've got precious little for George by the bargain. If you'd lev George's affairs alone and allowed Morris to see the mind you had to 'en, 'twould all have straightened out proper. If I were you, I'd say nothing whatever to Oliver; 'tes no more than he desarves."

" But I must tell him sooner or later," said Genevra, despairingly.

Penrose reflected for a little while with wrinkled brows and pursed-up mouth.

" What does Morris say? " he asked.

Genevra coloured and looked down at the toe of her boot.

"He wants us to be married at once—by license," she said, in a faint voice.

Penrose slapped his thigh.

"The very thing!" he cried. "Marry 'en, marry 'en, Jenny!"

"No," said Genevra, shaking her head as if to dismiss temptation, "that is impossible. I can't marry him until Mr. Oliver has released me from my promise."

"Why not?" asked Penrose, impatiently. "That's the crame of it!" He pushed back his chair, got up, and walked about the room, immersed in thought and occasionally chuckling to himself. Presently he wheeled round.

"Look here, Jenny," he said, "I'll tell 'ee what I'll do—for you, mind, not for George. On the day you marry Leonard Morris, I'll buy up that mortgage. You know, Jenny, 'tes all yours when I'm passed—all but a trifle for Ann here."

For a second Genevra was attracted by the brilliant simplicity of the proposal. Oliver was far from being the melodramatic villain Penrose persisted in thinking him; there was no reason to suppose that he would refuse the bargain, and the immediate profit of the transaction would go far towards healing his wounded self-esteem at the

loss of his bride. Yet, on second thoughts, it was a solution from which her pride revolted. Seeing her look of hesitation, Penrose continued disappointedly:

"The plan don't seem to your liking, my dear. Is it because you think I'm robbing myself to help you? If that is all, you may be easy in your mind. It will be simply changing an investment, and if I have to give Oliver a trifle more than the papers are worth, why, then, I shall soon make that up, because, you see, the rate of interest that poor fool George is paying is higher than what I'm getting on my capital now. Ladner & Polsue's business isn't what it was, and I've a jealous thought that things will get worse, and I believe I shall be doing wisely to realize on my shares while I can get a fair price for them. The only difference will be to yourself. When I'm passed, you'll come into Trenowan instead of shares in Ladner & Polsue's bank."

Genevra did not care to ask the obvious question why, if Penrose were willing to buy out Oliver, he could not do so at once and thus make her task easier by removing part of her obligation to him beforehand. Penrose was too diplomatic to press his proposal; he saw that Genevra wavered, and

had little fear but that she would accept an arrangement which made her way smoother.

"Well, well," he said, as Genevra took leave of him in the little porch looking up the valley, "talk it over with Morris. Don't worry about the future, my dear; leave all to me. The only thing you have to concern yourself with is your own happiness and an heir to Trecoth."

When he was alone the old man busied himself in elaborating the plan he had sketched out to Genevra. However strong his wish to help her, his radically cruel nature took more pleasure in contemplating Oliver's prospective humiliation. There was no reason for this beyond Penrose's hatred of lawyers as a body—a common trait in a naturally litigious people—and his instinctive antipathy to Oliver as an individual made more acute, perhaps, by the young man's pretensions to the hand of the woman who incarnated Penrose's racial pride. The touches he added to his programme were picturesque and ingenious. So soon as he had private word of Genevra's marriage to Leonard Morris, he would buy out Oliver—who, having caught his fish, so to speak, could have no further use for the net—and immediately call him in to draw up a will by which the mortgage on

Trenowan would pass to Genevra and her heirs. Over his rum and water, Penrose laughed until the tears ran down his face as he pictured Oliver's bewildered satisfaction in the stroke of fortune by which he gained not only the price of the mortgage but, through his future wife, the property itself. When Oliver had been allowed full time to congratulate himself on this notable vindication of his policy of waiting, he would all the more appreciate the news that he had waited a little too long. In his sanguine expectation of "cheating the lawyer chap," Penrose perhaps underrated the importance of Genevra's acquiescence.

Genevra's determination to work out her own escape was indeed sorely tried on her next meeting with Morris in the flower-fields. That morning he had received a letter—half invitation, half commission—from Mr. Makin, his early friend and patron, asking him to spend three months with him in Norway "to paint pines." After the first pang, Genevra honestly regretted that she had told Morris of Penrose's proposal, and she begged him not to sacrifice the opportunity she knew he so keenly appreciated.

"But I can't work with half myself left behind," said Morris, moodily.

"All my thoughts will be with you," answered Genevra.

"I'm afraid I'm not a poet," he said, grimly. "I want more than your thoughts."

"You must go, dear," she urged. "If I can bear the separation when you are all my life to me, surely you can."

"I can't leave you!" he protested.

"But it is I that send you away, and for love's sake," she murmured, holding his head between her hands. "I know I'm exacting—who should know what I lose by it better than I?—but it is for the sake of my own future. I suppose all we poor woman rob ourselves of to-day's happiness in taking care of to-morrow; that's our penalty, you know—to look ahead. I want always to think the very highest I can of you, both as man and artist, because I may have to be content with being proud of you. I won't have you less than yourself; you must lose nothing in coming to me, even though it is to my present sorrow. I am horribly jealous of your work; it will be always between us; but I know you well enough to recognise that if I kept you from it, you would in time grow to hate me."

He argued, but she shook her head sadly.

"No; love makes women very wise," she said, "and that is my penalty for loving you. I shall be always like the woman whose husband loves another; but if you are yourself, and happy, and think kindly of me, I can bear the situation."

"Why can't we be married before I go?" he persisted, doggedly. "It seems to me that Penrose's offer clears up all your difficulties."

"All my outside difficulties—yes," she admitted, "but—how can I explain? It's the inner feeling of the thing; you would not like me to come to you feeling dishonoured?"

"It's you I want, not your attributes," he replied, impatiently.

"And then it's not necessary for us to be married before you go; we are so sure of each other."

"But so many things might happen."

"Nothing can happen to come between us now but death."

She spoke bravely, and Morris, who did not know how desperately she was tempted, thought her cold.

"I am very human; I want you, Genevra. . . . I don't believe you care whether we are ever married or not," he said, irritably.

"Oh, don't; you hurt me, dear!" she said,

catching at his arm. "What can I say or do to make you believe me? I shall never be contented until I am yours altogether. Do you think I should hesitate for one moment if I only considered my own inclination?"

It was curious that, while Genevra did not shrink from a general deception of Oliver, some scruple, which she could not and did not try to understand, held her back from the particular step of a secret marriage.

CHAPTER XIV

THE shadow of their approaching separation made sweeter the days that remained to them. Morris chose his painting-ground less with a view to work than for the convenience of their meeting, which his own ostensible occupation and Genevra's habit of solitary walking in secluded places, made easy without exciting comment. As with all true lovers, Genevra's happiness was perhaps heightened by the need for stratagems, and Oliver's absence on a holiday in London, so far from seeming an advantage, gave her the sense of an unfair opportunity. Now that she had her heart's desire, she wished that the pretender was a little less complacently sure of her. His confidence robbed her of justification, though it certainly gave her the excuse that a man so self-sufficient deserved to be humiliated. Alternating phases of doubt and recklessness kept her mind alert and active; all the odd fancies and fears of her childhood came back to her, to be shared with her lover. Morris found

something sealike in her moods of unexpected playfulness—her deeps and glooms, transparent simplicity, and baffling reserve. Her touch of austerity, quite other than discretion, left him with always something to learn, so that their intimacy never staled to a casual fondness. Every time she kissed him she gave herself anew.

With the far-sightedness of her sex, Genevra could not fail to recognise, though as yet it was only like a cloud on the horizon, that love which was an inspiration to her was a hindrance to him as an artist. Morris could not divide himself, nor on this side of absolute possession could he be alternately painter and lover. Genevra quieted her vague uneasiness by attributing his unrest to the uncertainty of their prospects. Once they were married, she thought, he would regain his power of concentration; this was probably true, though she did not or would not recognise the fatal conclusion—that she must be the sacrifice. At present Morris could not work, and Genevra's daily denial of herself until the light waned was in this respect unnecessary, since he spent the best part of his time merely waiting for her. On the day before his departure, Morris begged her to spend the afternoon with him, and they arranged to meet near

Pedn Dinas, where there was little fear of their being seen together, since it was early for tourists, and the few stray persons who came to see the famous rocking-stone were likely to be strangers.

Morris had spent the whole day among the great grey stones on the landward side of the isthmus. He had settled down in a non-committal mood to sketch a corner here and there, but within an hour he was caught by the April witchery of the morning. It was a day of satiny gleams and lost outlines; there had been rain in the night, and exhalations of vapour still followed the shortening shadows as they and the moisture were sucked up by the sun. The upper slope of the cliff was enamelled with patches of colour dominated by the gilding of the gorse, and where the granite broke sheer away, clear violet shadows ran down to meet a sea like shot silk, pale green and hyacinth purple, thrilled but not shaken as by some inner ecstasy communicated from the warm, laughing air. Out at sea were sudden planishings of the surface, like soft kissing made visible. Morris put away his bits of millboard and, without knowing how far he would be implicated, began an upright canvas of sky, cliff, and sea—a simple subject, but subtle as a half-waking dream, and exacting the same

breathless attention lest it should be shattered by some outside interruption. The hours flew, and into Morris's dazed vision, as he looked up for a moment, came the fluttering white figure of Genevra, descending towards him. It would be unjust to say that he was sorry to see her, but he switched off his mind to receive the idea of her with a perceptible effort, and he could not suppress a quick feeling that she had come at the wrong moment. The rupture of the man from his work was complete when she reached him, and as he took and kissed her hands, his eyes were full of her only. Giving herself so generously, Genevra was confident of the same surrender in him; but, though Morris could not be accused of regarding her as a distraction, a keen observer would have felt uneasy for the time when he should be no longer mastered by her proximity.

Genevra spoke with simple honesty when she said:

" I had waited for you all my life, and when you came I did not make your acquaintance, I recognised you." Morris knew that he could not say the same to her: his words, " You have been in my way since the day I saw you in the wood," remained fatally true.

After an hour, Genevra begged him to go on with his work. She could not understand the impossibility for him, and they came nearly to a lovers' quarrel.

"But you don't mind other people watching you," she said. "I've seen you working quite contentedly with half-a-dozen people standing round."

"Ah, yes—other people!" he answered, irritably, because he found it so difficult to put into words the difference that was so real to him. Genevra was too forlornly jealous of her present happiness to follow up the words to their logical conclusion, and to ask, "Well, then, how will it be when we are always together?" and Morris, for his part, was too reckless or cowardly, or both. It is possible, indeed, that their devotion was deepened by the foreknowledge of insecurity, and whatever doubts she may have had of its continuance and consequences, no woman can whole-heartedly regret an immediate illustration of her power over a man. Once when Genevra spoke to Morris he did not hear her, and she saw his rapt face, all the man battened on the beauty of sky and sea and cliff. She touched his hand, and with a little laugh of triumph saw the blood rush into his face as he turned stammering towards her.

The hours passed all too quickly, and when the time for parting came and, with haggard faces, they looked into each other's eyes, their wise resolve to separate there was broken.

"Let us have this last hour together," he begged; "let me walk home with you."

"But we might meet somebody on the road," she demurred.

"What does it matter if we do?" he said. "Besides, we needn't go by the road; we can walk back to Rosewithan under the cliff. I have never been that way, and we may never have the opportunity again."

Genevra needed but little persuasion. Morris collected his painting materials and went on ahead to the little village of Penscathe, in the cove where the beach is paved with flattened boulders. While working at Pedn Dinas, Morris had obtained his midday meal and kept his tools in one of the cottages here, and between packing up his things ready to be forwarded to Porthlew station in the morning and saying good-bye to the old woman, nearly half an hour had passed before he rejoined Genevra round the point, and the light was already fading. During his absence, Genevra had been seized with an involuntary impulse to hurry on;

she felt, she knew not why, that the momentary cruelty would prove kindness in the end. She was checked, however, by the fear that Morris's impetuosity would drive him to disregard consequences and call at Trecoth for an explanation. While she hesitated the opportunity passed and it was too late, and the moment she saw Morris coming round the corner, she was glad that she had not moved.

They walked in silence over the boulder-strewn beach, every now and again turning to look back at the purple mass of Pedn Dinas as if they had left peace and hope behind them. Neither cared to put the foreboding into words, but both felt that they had passed the full tide of their lives and that their feet were entering the shallows of perplexity and disunion. Morris began to surmise what Genevra in an undefined way already knew, that it had been better to part in despair than in depression. The sense of having made a mistake made them compassionate rather than kind towards each other, and where it was possible they went hand in hand, like two beings driven from Paradise for a common error. Their very way was troubled: in places they had to cross tracts of marshy land, where the cliff line was broken by

little streams finding their way to the sea. Occasionally it was impossible to keep to the shore, and they were compelled to climb to the narrow path above and follow it for several hundred yards before the lie of the ground permitted them to descend. The idea of physical danger—for in places a false step would have been fatal—the solitude, and the inhospitality of their surroundings all had the effect of deepening the melancholy tenderness of this last hour together. All that could be said had been said, and they could only touch hands and trace out each other's shadowy outlines in a sorrowful silence. Hardly a word was spoken but an occasional warning or some trite reference to their future plans until they reached Tregwidden and could already see Carn Cribba, "the crested headland," which hid the entrance to Rosewithan Cove. The stern outline of the granite carn was a cruel reminder of the definite last moment.

Morris looked at his watch.

"It is half-past eight," he said; "stay with me for half an hour longer. It will only take you about forty minutes to walk from the point to Trecoth, and you will be home before ten. It would not be a bad plan to call in at Penrose's

as you pass," he continued, " and then you could have an explanation ready in case Mrs. Joslin asks you where you have been."

The suggestion jarred strangely on Genevra. Whatever stratagems she herself took for secrecy, some delicate scruple always prevented her from using Penrose's aid in the deception he was so willing to further. Still she could not deny her lover's request that she should stay with him yet a little while.

They seated themselves in a nook of the rocks facing the sea. The raised beach curved in a long crescent between the two points of Tregwidden and Carn Cribba, thrust out like horns. The cliff behind them was precipitous, and in places overhanging, not formed of granite altogether but of a crumbling, gravelly soil, with rocks embedded and here and there worn into caves and tunnels. Apparently the beach had been formed by a breaking-away of the cliff's edge and not by the gradual erosion of the waves. At intervals was heard the rattle of falling stones, as if detached by some invisible person walking on the narrow path above, and one listened for the thud of a heavy body which never came. The air in this sheltered place was warm and still; the sea murmured gently with

a lulling noise, as if it were craftily intent upon some sinister purpose and would disarm suspicion.

"I wish we were not dependent on somebody else," at length said Morris, gloomily. "I can't stand inaction and I don't like the thought of all this managing and contriving going on while I am away. Supposing anything happened to Penrose?"

"That is not likely," said Genevra; adding, with shame-faced hesitation, "but, don't you see, even in that case I should be able to buy up the mortgage from Mr. Oliver myself."

"I can't understand," persisted Morris, "why, since Penrose is anxious for us to be married and knows your reason for delay, he doesn't come to terms with Oliver at once and get it over."

Genevra did not care to explain that she surmised Penrose's reason to be his childish desire to subject Oliver to a dramatic defeat of his supposed machinations.

"If that were only settled," continued Morris, "you could come to London with me and we could be married before I started."

"No, I should not care to do that—for another reason," said Genevra. "I want you to work seriously while you are away, and you must not be

hampered by any practical anxiety about me. Very soon after you come back I shall be free to marry you, and then you can take a long holiday so that I shall have you all to myself."

"When does Oliver come back?" asked Morris.

"At the beginning of June."

"And I don't return until the end of July," he said, grimly. He waited a moment and then continued, "Have you considered what you shall do if Oliver wants the wedding arranged before September?"

"I don't suppose he will," said Genevra, in a tone which showed that she had thought of the possibility, "but in that case I should have to put him off somehow."

"But if he presses you?" said Morris. "I don't know much about him, but I should hardly think he would be such a worm as to accept delay without some good reason—particularly since you led him to believe that you were only marrying him for the sake of your brother."

"Well, then, I shall have to tell him the truth."

"How about George, then?"

Genevra was silent.

"Genevra," said Morris, taking her hand,

" don't you think that if Penrose saw that you were determined not to marry me privately he could be persuaded to settle with Oliver before September? "

Genevra did not answer for a moment, but gently slipped her fingers away from him, as if she would remove herself from every influence which might weigh in her decision. Morris, leaning his chin on his hand, watched her eagerly. He could see by her closed eyes and hands tightly clasped round her knee, that she was going through a severe mental struggle, though he did not know the agony it cost her. Presently her body relaxed, and she sighed deeply.

" I will promise you this," she said, " if Mr. Oliver presses me so that I can't get out of it without confessing everything, I will go to Uter Penrose and ask him to lend me the money to buy back the title-deeds myself."

" And supposing he won't? "

" Then," said Genevra, sadly, " I shall have to leave George in the lurch and trust to Mr. Oliver's generosity."

They sat talking until Genevra declared that she could stay no longer. Tearing themselves apart from a last embrace they went their several ways—

he west, she east. Neither dared to look back at the other; indeed, after a few steps, Genevra broke into a stumbling run, as if she would put distance between them before her purpose weakened.

When Morris reached the shoulder of Tregwidden he found that the rising tide had covered the broken rocks by which they had come round the point. He climbed with difficulty to a ledge above, but when he had worked his way to the angle of the point he found that the ledge ended there. It was impossible to climb higher, and round the point the sea ran up into a deep zawn or fissure. Morris descended and stood for a moment on the boulders to consider his position. There was nothing for it but to retrace his steps and follow Genevra round Carn Cribba. He had little fear for Genevra's safety: she was careful and sure-footed, and perfectly familiar with this corner of the coast. Morris turned and walked slowly back in the direction she had gone; he was anxious not to overtake her; he could not bear another parting. It was now nearly dark; the moon in her first quarter was up, but only served to silver the water and make blacker the shadows in the caves. Suddenly Morris's heart gave a great thump: Genevra was coming towards him.

"Go back, go back!" she cried, as soon as they were within ear-shot; "we can't get round the point."

There was absolutely no danger; even at high tide a stretch of shore several yards wide and half a mile long was left uncovered, but, except to a strong swimmer, there was no way of escape at either end. With a desperate effort and in daylight Morris might have scaled the cliff, but it was impossible now or at any time for Genevra.

"When was full tide?" she asked, agitatedly.

"About twelve o'clock, I think—yes, I noticed that the Coral Rock was covered at noon," said Morris. "It is now twenty past nine."

"Then it will be past three o'clock before we are able to get round the point," said Genevra, in despair. "Oh, if we had not stayed! But no, I don't blame you; it was my fault. I ought to have remembered."

"Surely, it is fate," said Morris, taking her into his arms.

CHAPTER XV

As is usual with persons naturally honest, Genevra found it harder to tell a half-truth than to invent an entirely false explanation of her night's absence from home. The statement that she had been tide-bound while walking on the shore would have been plausible enough to satisfy even Harriet, since the experience had befallen other people within living memory—which is after all the final proof of veracity to suspicious and unimaginative minds. But when Genevra reached Trecoth in the morning her poignant sense of reality drove her to tell what seemed a more probable story. George Joslin had been made more anxious by his sister's absence than he allowed Harriet to see, and, ironically, his uneasiness had hovered about something approximating to the half-truth, because he had frequently expostulated with Genevra for her venturesome habits. Harriet's thoughts had been characteristically busy with variations of the other half.

When Genevra saw her brother in the avenue she was keenly touched by the change in his expression from frantic misery to almost tearful delight.

"Oh, Jenny, but I'm brave'n glad to see you!" he cried, running to meet her. "Where have you been? I was 'most scared to death."

"Didn't you get my message?" Genevra asked, carelessly. "I stopped at Uter Penrose's for the night."

"Oh," said George, blankly. He seemed staggered, at first, as if his mind would not readily admit an idea so different from that he had imagined; then he continued, with an odd look of sympathetic curiosity, "that was kind and thoughtful of you, Jenny. Poor old chap; I should think it had 'most broken him up—if 'tes true?"

"Yes, it's true," answered Genevra, not understanding, but with a great sinking of the heart. Harriet, hearing their voices, came to the door and smiled unpleasantly.

"Jenny was at Penrose's after all!" cried George, gladly. Harriet received the news in stony silence. They went indoors.

"Well," said Harriet, coldly, "I suppose what we heard is correct?"

George looked uncomfortable; Genevra's whiteness and evident perplexity, which she tried to conceal, troubled him.

"About Ladner & Polsue's," he put in, hastily.

"Ladner & Polsue's?" echoed Genevra, trying to remember the association of the words.

"Gone in," said George, staring anxiously at his sister.

"Yes, of course," said Genevra, shaking her head, as if annoyed by her own stupidity, "I thought you meant—that was why——"

Harriet laughed her thin, tinkling laugh.

"Why are you so unfeeling, Harriet?" said George, indignantly. "What is there to laugh at in friend Penrose's trouble?"

"Oh, nothing," answered Harriet, biting her lip and darting a glance of malicious amusement at Genevra.

Genevra sat down and controlled her shaking limbs. The double shock of learning how nearly she had blundered and the news of Penrose's misfortune prevented her from fully comprehending how his loss affected her own affairs. George relieved the situation somewhat and gave her time to recover her self-possession by expressing his relief at her safety in anger against his wife.

"You may thank your stars it isn't us," he said; "we're badly off, but we do know the worst of our troubles, and, thanks to Jenny, here, we begin to see the end of them. From what I heard tell up to Trenowan there'll be worse coming for poor old Penrose—calls on the shareholders and what not."

"Oh, I don't suppose the old man will be left so badly off as you try to make out," retorted Harriet. "He's not such a fool as to put all his eggs in one basket. Well, Jenny, you were quite right to stop and comfort him—you'll be mentioned in his will, sure enough; only the next time you want a night out, please let us know what tale we've got to tell people—else it might be awkward," and, with a satirical giggle, she left the room, slamming the door behind her.

"Harriet never did like Penrose," said George, unnecessarily, in apology for his wife, "but she isn't really so bitter as she makes out. She was awful worried about you not coming home, and this is her way of showing she's upset. Let me get you some breakfast, Jenny, my dear."

Genevra shook her head absent-mindedly.

"No, George, thank you; I promised Uter I would go back immediately," she said, faintly. "I

only came up because I felt uneasy lest Amy Roseweare had forgotten to deliver my message last night. I'm very glad, now, that I came."

Genevra hurried down to the Cove in an agony of apprehension. Already she bitterly regretted having withstood Morris's last desperate attempt to persuade her to go to London with him. It was little comfort to remember that she had sacrificed her own inclination out of loyalty to Morris's work and consideration for her brother. She wished, also, that she had carried out her intention, suggested by Morris the night before, of calling at Penrose's cottage on her way up to Trecoth. In this, too, a sense of honour had prevented her from asking a third person to help her in deception.

Genevra found Uter Penrose seated at the harmonium with his head thrown back and his eyes closed, chanting a funeral hymn in his thin, sweet tenor voice. The room was in disorder, the evil-smelling paraffin lamp still burning, though it was nearly nine o'clock, and the acrid air made her cough and choke as she opened the befogged windows. Evidently Penrose had not been to bed at all that night. She stooped and kissed him, murmuring words of sympathy, though, indeed, the

stout old man seemed less broken in spirit than she had expected, but rather exalted with anger against them whose carelessness or treachery had caused the bank's failure.

"Aw, my dear!" he said, "four thousand and twenty golden sovereigns just as much stolen as if they had come here and forced them out of my hand. And you tell me there's a God in Heaven," and he resumed his comminatory wailing.

Genevra busied herself by setting the room in order, while she tactfully drew from the old man' the story of his disaster. From what Penrose had heard, there was little prospect of his recovering more than a contemptible fraction of his money and, being a shareholder in the bank, he was liable to be called upon to help in winding up affairs in the interests of ordinary depositors. Genevra understood that the management of the bank had exceeded their discretion in advancing money to a company which had criminally failed.

"I've had my suspicions for some time," said Penrose, getting up from the harmonium and going to the window, "but until a fortnight ago I could have parted with my shares at a trifling loss to Combellack's, who, I understand, are going to take over the wreck. And they directors will

get off scot free!" he cried, turning his bloodshot eyes upon Genevra; "can't touch 'em. Aw, 'tes cruel!"

"'Tes not so much for myself, my girl," he continued, presently, coming and putting his hand on her shoulder. "I can scrape together enough from other sources for an auld man to live 'pon, but your brother will have to let Trenowan go."

"Oh, never mind about us!" cried Genevra, passionately, touched to tears by his unselfishness. "Besides, I think you distrust Mr. Oliver without reason. It is necessary, I suppose, to wait until September before he can draw up a formal agreement with George about the renewal, but he has definitely promised to do so."

"'Tes the likes of Oliver have caused all this havoc," said Penrose, gloomily. "Never trust a lawyer till you've got en tied hard and fast by agreement."

It came upon Genevra with crushing effect that if she had followed his advice and listened to her lover's pleading Penrose might have bought up the mortgage on Trenowan by this time, and, as he said, placed his money out of jeopardy. All the trouble in the world seemed to be involved with

her refusal to follow the leading of her heart. The ordeal most trying to her pride she had yet to endure.

"I want you to do something for me," she murmured, averting her head; "I was not able to get back to Trecoth last night—I—I told them I stopped the night here."

Penrose looked at her keenly; she felt his eyes on her burning face, but could not meet them.

"You've come to your senses, then, and married him?" he asked, eagerly.

His confidence tortured her. Only then did she realize what would have been obvious to a less scrupulous person weeks ago; that it had been easy to pretend the marriage for which Penrose had waited.

She shook her head.

"No; don't ask me any questions," she pleaded; "but it will be very awkward for me if Harriet finds out that I was not here."

"Of course you were here, my dear," said Penrose, decisively. He rose and went to the door.

"Ann," he called.

The old woman appeared, drying her eyes on her apron. In spite of their constant wrangling,

she was as devoted to her master as race could make her. At sight of Genevra her tears started afresh.

"What time was it Miss Genevra come here last evening?" asked Penrose, carelessly.

"Please?" said Ann, with a bewildered stare.

"Do you mean to say that you don't remember?" said Penrose, sternly.

"Aw, master," replied Ann, twisting her apron, "I'm that mazed——"

"'Tes all along of my rum you've bin bibbling, you auld coozer," he said, reproachfully.

"Aw, master, how'ee do ballyrag," whimpered the old woman. "Miss Jennifer," she appealed, "I was took all on an upshot with the news that master here had gone in, and I was that bedoled——"

"Who says I've gone in?" cried Penrose, cutting her short. "The older you are the simpler you are, like the Fabies. 'Tes only your fangings you're thinking upon, I reckon," he added, ungenerously, and continued in an insinuating tone: "But do you mean to tell me, Ann, that you were so drunk that you can't call to mind fitting a bed in the spare room for Miss Genevra who'd come to comfort an auld man in his trouble?"

"To be sure I did, master," said Ann, fiercely; "who says I didden?"

"Ann'll nivver knaw different," said Penrose, with a grim chuckle when the old woman had disappeared and was heard painfully ascending the stairs to obtain the confirmation of her eyesight. "'Twill scare her off rum for months seeing how she put the bed straight this morning after you'd slept in it unbeknown to herself."

"Has Morris gone?" he asked presently.

"Yes," she answered with a deep sigh, and unconsciously glancing up at the clock on the mantelpiece. And then a sudden thought drove the blood from her cheeks and caused her to half spring from her chair. What a fool she was to stay here wasting precious moments! Unless Morris had gone to town by the twenty minutes past ten train, which was very unlikely, he could not leave Porthlew till noon. It was now nearly a quarter past ten.

No sooner had she conceived the idea than the instinct of self-preservation drove all other considerations out of her head. With eyes imploring Penrose not to ask questions she hurriedly excused herself for leaving him. Perhaps he guessed her purpose, for, as she went into the passage, he laid

his hand for a moment on her shoulder and said:

"Don't worry about me, my girl; do what you think best."

Genevra nearly broke down as she recognised that possibly this was a parting for years from the man who, father and mother in one, had so lovingly tended her growth into womanhood.

Penrose watched her as she climbed the steep zigzag on the other side of the valley.

"If only she had trusted her heart and not her head," he murmured, sadly.

By the time Genevra had reached the top of the carn her spirits rose and she pushed forward with the single hope that she would not be too late. The necessity for prompt action had brought her to a simpler view of things. Doubts and scruples fell away: she was going to the man she loved and the rest of the world must look after itself. Already she pictured herself sitting hand in hand with Morris journeying towards a new life where all the mistakes and perplexities of the past would be forgotten. Everything but love seemed to become unimportant by her decision. After all, she was not responsible for George's mismanagement of his affairs; she had tried to help him, but had

only succeeded in bringing about fresh complications; making discord between husband and wife and binding George to efforts which his easy-going nature found a burden. She recalled Morris's description of her brother as "a born server." Yes, that was perfectly true, and it was a mistake to spur him on against his temperament; if he wanted to drift it was kinder to let him drift.

As Genevra hurried through Trenowan, scattering the fowls, she felt inclined, literally, to shake the dust from her feet. The place and its fortunes had been a nightmare to her long enough; she was done with all that now, and she turned her head to laugh defiantly at the trim, square-set granits buildings, grey as duty, ugly as care. Only for the packing-house, with its one eye discreetly turned up to heaven, as if its wooden walls cherished a secret, her secret, she had a thrill of tenderness, and she kissed her hand to the little squat rogue in farewell. Mrs. Tregear, coming out of her door with an apronful of maize for her fowls, caught the action and laughed and nodded in return.

"Wherever be Miss Genevra off to in such spirits, then?" she called to her husband within the house. Harry Tregear, picturesquely clad in grey

flannel shirt and trousers, with a slouch hat on his head and a red carnation between his lips, sidled out of the house, and shading his eyes with one delicate hand, gazed after Genevra's now distant figure. He did not advance any speculation in response to his wife's question, but closed his eyes and drew a deep breath, as if he caught the fragrance of his beloved flower-fields even at that distance.

"Well," said Mrs. Tregear, turning to go indoors with a look of pleasant anticipation on her round face, "this time next year she'll be Mrs. Oliver, I reckon."

Harry did not reply. He looked up at the sky, held out his hand, and smiling inscrutably with his eyes only, examined a rain-drop on the back of it. Then he glanced round behind the packing-house, where George Joslin's green-houses were already a-building in a glare of glass and pink woodwork, and from thence across the town-place to the cottage which was to be his own home when the Joslins moved to Trenowan.

"I wonder what weather we shall be having this day next year," said Harry Tregear to himself, aloud.

Beyond reaching her lover, Geneva had no

plans whatever. She did not even consider whether Morris would delay his journey to Norway so that they could be married by special license in London; whether, if they were married, she could accompany him on his journey, or, indeed, whether they should be married at all. Nor did she care: it was enough for her to surrender her life into his keeping.

As Genevra descended the long hill which commands a fairy-like panorama of Porthlew and the bay, she resolved to alter her original plan. In picturing her meeting with Morris she was vividly aware of spectators on the station platform. She knew that it would take Morris no more than a moment to grasp the situation; but she would prefer that they shared that moment alone. Also—though she did not dwell upon this—there was just the possibility that Morris had gone by the earlier train. Her watch, not having been wound up the night before, had run down, but she felt sure that she had time for her purpose. So instead of going straight on to the station she turned to the right and took the headlong alleys which led to Morris's lodgings in Trevenen.

Yes, the woman said, Mr. Morris was travelling by the twelve-o'clock train, but, wishing to

make some purchases in Porthlew, he had started early; though, indeed—and she leaned back to look at the clock—it was not so early now, and if the lady wished to see Mr. Morris off at the station she would have to look sharp.

Genevra relied on the little Jersey cars, which ply between Trevenen and Porthlew, but when she reached the starting-place there was not one to be seen. Not for the first time she was harassed by the interminable stretch of road between Trevenen bridge and Porthlew promenade—one of those dead reaches always underestimated in prospect. Circumstances have also arranged that a person rounding the corner upon Porthlew harbour already sees the railway station, but at a heart-breaking distance. Genevra took the last three hundred yards at a run and reached the head of the platform stairs just in time to see the train steaming out of the station.

Only in that moment did Genevra fully understand the opportunity she had thrown away. She had held happiness in both hands and let it go. It was no use following Morris to London: he had given her no address, as he was to be met at Paddington by Mr. Makin, who would take him to his hotel.

Sick and faint with fatigue and want of food, Genevra slowly retraced her footsteps to Trecoth. When she had crawled up the interminable hill she sank down on a heap of stones and her overstrung nature gave way in a passion of weeping. Nothing could seem more contemptible now than the objections she had raised in answer to Morris's urgent pleading that she should marry him before he went away. Her love for him was the only real thing in the world and she had put it aside for a pack of sick-brained scruples which had failed utterly to achieve their object. Sitting by the roadside Genevra reviewed her folly from her refusal to allow George to part with Trecoth. The place hung round her neck; her cherished plan for its restoration was the whim of a silly girl ignorant of life and intoxicated with the glamour of lying chronicles. She hated the place. A few months ago it had seemed a fine thing to be Genevra Joslin and mistress of Trecoth; now she would have given all the world to share a hovel with her lover, from whom she was parted indefinitely by circumstances which her own pride and obstinacy had created.

CHAPTER XVI

MORRIS left for Norway the day after he reached London. He wrote in high spirits and with great confidence in the future.

" Let me know directly you are free, and I will come to England so that we can be married. If there should be any reason which makes it uncomfortable for you to remain at home, do not hesitate for one moment, but leave everything to right itself and go to London. I shall be with you in three days after hearing from you. I am not sure about my plans, at present, but I think it is probable that I shall stay here longer than I intended."

In spite of her anxiety, which was vaguely deepened by the last sentence of Morris's letter, Genevra rather resented his underrating her strength of character. He seemed to miss the point of her difficulties, her promise to Oliver. She was no nearer to a solution than on the evening when Morris made his avowal in the packing-house, nor, indeed, in the respite from Oliver's polished attentions

during his holiday, could she rouse her mind to face the problem which remained to be settled.

With the loss of Penrose's practical assistance Genevra felt quite sure that she never could have accepted it, and she got a sort of heroical pleasure from not telling Morris of the old man's disaster. She also spared her lover the knowledge of her desperate attempt to reach him on the morning he left Porthlew. After the first cruel disappointment Genevra was conscious that in some as yet unexplored corner of her nature she was glad that the attempt had failed. She could not explain this feeling, and tried to dismiss it as unworthy and a slur upon her love for Morris. It seemed to imply a doubt of him. Yet, in spite of her assurances, and though she was not sensible of any diminution of warmth towards the painter, she could not escape from the growing conviction that it was as well that she had not committed her life irrevocably into his keeping. Though all her heart cried down the thought, her mind told her that her most pressing desire was rather to release herself from the one man than hasten to the other. Love between Morris and herself, she argued, was so sure that she could afford to wait patiently for its fulfilment. Moreover, when she was quite honest with

herself, Genevra recognised that, all along and Morris apart, the menace to her brother's welfare was a small thing beside the injury to her pride caused by her bondage to Oliver. Her first care must be to recover her self-respect: love was beyond any such small necessity.

The little stir caused by the news of Genevra's engagement to Oliver had subsided, and her approaching marriage was only alluded to in discussing the domestic alterations which were to result from her changed condition. In anticipation of these events Harriet continued to be amiable, but Genevra was aware of her interested scrutiny and felt convinced that her sister-in-law reserved her opinion of certain matters. Whatever Mrs. Joslin thought, she said nothing; indeed she was the last person in the world to breathe a word which might prejudice her future brother-in-law, but she took a malicious pleasure in imagining Genevra no better than but for shrewdness she was herself. The tone of her speculations may be gathered from her remarks to Genevra that it was a pity she had not arranged her wedding to take place earlier in the year.

" The sooner the better, I should say," she said, with a comprehensive glance at Genevra, as she

stood with arms uplifted before the looking-glass. "Suppose Sampson meets another young lady in London and changes his mind, where would you be then?"

With Oliver's return and request for the arrangement of their marriage in August, Genevra roused herself to a consideration of means of escape. Deception, so easy in Oliver's absence, was now hateful, and their formal meetings revolted her. Every time he called she made up her mind that she would tell him the truth; but in the face of his calm assurance and the calculations based upon their union she found herself speechless. Oliver began to afflict her with discussions of their future life together. It was arranged that after their marriage they should live with his mother, and that Trecoth should be put into the hands of an architect immediately. There were tedious consultations between this gentleman, Oliver, and Genevra, who had to pretend an interest in a subject which now seemed absurdly unimportant. Oliver was gratified, though surprised, by Genevra's unhesitating agreement with his architectural preferences; she seemed to have outgrown her early fancy for a sixteenth-century restoration, and even declined his offer to see what could be done

with Penrose's plans and drawings. To tell the truth, she was a little afraid that this egregious proposal would exhaust Penrose's patience with herself and that he would take Oliver's disillusion upon his own shoulders.

Finally, unable to face the ordeal of a personal explanation, Genevra wrote to Oliver begging him to release her from her engagement. His answer surprised and at the same time humiliated her.

"I am bitterly disappointed, but I cannot blame you for your decision against a contract in which your heart was never engaged. In this respect you have not deceived me, though I had hoped that if we were married you would in time have learnt to care for me. You say that you have come to the conclusion that our marriage would have interfered with your literary work; I can assure you that I should have been only too happy to encourage you in every way, and I cannot help thinking that your wish for freedom is prompted by something stronger than the reason you give, or disinclination to myself. However, even if I had the right, there is no use in discussing that now.

"There is one thing I must say in justice to myself. My first proposal to George, that he

should exchange the title-deeds of Trecoth for those of Trenowan, was in the hope that if I could not win you by any other means you would consent to marry me for the sake of the place. I make this explanation because I am under the impression that you misunderstood my motives at the time. As I have already said, I do not wish to ask you any questions, but, for certain reasons, I have come to the conclusion that your affection for the place is not what it was.

"Since I have gone so far in considering the proposed alterations and already have incurred the expense of professional advice, I repeat my offer to accept the title-deeds of Trecoth in full redemption of the mortgage on Trenowan. If you are unwilling to agree to this, I will, of course, give George a ten-years' renewal of the period of mortgage, as you asked me to do. I may point out, however, that the former arrangement would be more advantageous to your brother."

In spite of her humiliation, Genevra could not help feeling amused by the persistence of Oliver's passion for arrangement in his dignified expression of blighted affection. She did not distress herself by imagining any lasting damage to his peace of mind, but she had a trying hour with George when

she took him Oliver's letter. George's best qualities came out in his relations with other people, and his loyalty to Oliver was a very beautiful thing.

"'Tes shameful, Jenny," he said, slowly. "I should not have believed you capable of such conduct. Sampson isn't popular, I know, and he may be sharp in matters of business, but he's always been a good friend to us. Why did you promise to marry him if you didn't mean to?"

"I did mean to, George," said Genevra, humbly; "I didn't wish to at first, as you know, but I would have kept my promise—only I found I couldn't."

"If you'd let me part with Trecoth when Oliver asked for the place I should not have minded so much; now I shall never be able to look the man in the face again; it will seem as if we had been trying to trick him." He laughed sadly. "And now you seem to care no more for the place than I do myself. Upon my word, Jenny, I can't understand you. Well," he continued, "Oliver shall have Trecoth—I suppose you've no objection?" Genevra shook her head. "Harriet never liked the house; she'll be only too glad to move over to Trenowan, and you must get reconciled to the change."

Genevra was grieved that she could not confide with George her affection for Morris, and her intention of marrying him; had it not been for Harriet she probably would have done so. Now, that silence was no longer a matter of policy, Genevra quite expected Harriet to gratify her taste for scandal. For some reason, however, Mrs. Joslin preferred the solitary enjoyment of her private knowledge, though she took a last opportunity to show Genevra that she was not so blind as some people.

"Well, Jenny," she said, "I don't see any reason why you can't marry Sampson. Of course, you know your own business best, but I'm sure you'll live to regret it."

As Genevra did not seem disposed to argue the matter, Harriet continued in a tone she intended to seem sympathetic.

"You were a bit gone on Morris, weren't you, Jenny? I was afraid he'd treat you badly, but you're so beastly quick-tempered that I daren't give you a hint. I never liked him—sulky brute."

"I don't wish to discuss Mr. Morris with you, Harriet," said Genevra, quietly.

"No, I suppose not," agreed Harriet. "Best thing you can do is to forget all about him as quickly as possible, I should say." She turned

to leave the room, but came back and said, confidentially: " You needn't be afraid that I shall tell George anything; he'd bite my head off if I hinted that you were not perfect. What fools the men are, ain't they, Jenny? But I don't see why you can't be reasonable and marry Sampson," she added, visibly making a calculation, " seeing there's no harm done."

Public criticism of Genevra's conduct in throwing over Sampson Oliver was tempered by the information that she intended to devote herself altogether to literature. The success of her volume of poems made the act less glaring in the eyes of her more cultivated acquaintances, who could condone behaviour in a person whose name was respectfully mentioned by sixpenny weekly journals, which they had deemed unpardonable in old George Joslin's daughter. The discriminating even mildly commended Genevra for, as it were, holding stock in a rising market. Lady St. Ruth put the general feeling into words.

" Of course, if she were a man it would be different, because there's no money in poetry; but if Miss Joslin leaves home—as I suppose she will when her brother moves—she can get into circles where she will have much better chances than

Sampson Oliver; so you really can't blame her for breaking off the engagement."

Genevra shook off the memory of her troubles with a shudder of relief and wrote to Morris in a burst of gladness, telling him of her freedom. He delayed in answering her letter, and the tone of his reply aroused an undefined fear in her mind. There was no lack of warmth, but a pointed reference to his work, so that Genevra pictured him writing with one eye on his canvas, grudging the interruption.

She felt proudly that he had misunderstood her, and that he supposed she was urging the time of their marriage. Her next letter to him was one of those pitiful outpourings of generous abandonment, giving all, asking nothing, the eternal wonder of men. She reproached him for imagining that she doubted him.

"Only let me come to you: we can be married when you choose, any time or never. Nothing shall come between us any more; I am simply waiting for you to call me to your feet."

There is no reason to suppose that Morris's answer was written with any but honourable intentions.

"What you propose would be fatal to my work

at this time. You have got rid of your difficulties, you are beginning to make a reputation, and it is surely better for both of us that we should put off an event which is bound to unsettle us, to a more convenient time. I look upon you as already my wife, and I have implicit confidence in you; cannot you put the same trust in me? You know my temperament; when I am in the mood of a place I can do my best work, but any interruption just now, such as the irregular arrangement you suggest, would be disastrous. It will be to my interest to stay here through the autumn, and I shall probably make not only a lot of money, but a solid position with my series of Norwegian pictures. Then I shall come back with something real to offer you, and we can be married quietly and go away for a long holiday. If at any time you are in want of money, let me know at once——"

Genevra did not read any further, nor did she write to him again.

CHAPTER XVII

EDGAR NOY's first words to Genevra, when she told him her name, were:

"Ah, I was afraid you'd come to this filthy place sooner or later."

He cleared the books out of an easy chair and placed it for her, studying her with interest. He saw a tall, heavily built young woman with knitted brows over smouldering eyes and full red lips contracted by mental suffering, obviously, he thought, of recent origin. She sat leaning a little forward with her hands clasped on her knee and looked at him speculatively, as if she were not quite sure of her wisdom in calling upon him.

" I want work," she said, almost roughly.

Noy smiled; he saw that she was too proud to wish him to think her disinterested. He treated her with equal frankness.

" How much money have you? " he asked.

" About seventy pounds," she answered, in a tone which implied either that she expected the

question or would have volunteered the information.

" That's all right," he said, lightly, " then you needn't "—he abandoned a stronger expression—" sell your soul—unless you please. Have you any friends? "

" I have a brother," she said, " and there is one old man who has been so good to me that I had to leave him without saying good-bye; and I thought——"

Noy, who had never taken his eyes from her face, stepped forward and closed his hand on hers as it rested on the arm of the chair.

" You have me, of course," he said, gravely.

Genevra's eyes moistened and Noy, delicately aware that she had not yet made up her mind about him, seated himself and turned over the papers on his desk.

Genevra's preoccupied frown grew a little deeper as she looked at him. He was a tall, thin but vigorous man, with unusually light grey eyes, wide open and kindly, though satirical. There was an odd touch of old-fashioned gallantry in his movements and in his twisted white moustache and Vandyke beard. He looked, she thought, like her

idea of a French cavalry general. In the middle of her scrutiny Noy looked up with a smile.

"Well," he said, "are you going to cap the compliment of your visit by making a friend of me?"

"Yes, if I may," she answered, with a deep breath, as if she had committed herself irrevocably.

"I'm so glad," said Noy, boyishly, and continued: "Now we can begin to talk. What sort of work do you think you can do?"

"I don't know," she said.

"For example," said Noy, "do you think you could at once set down your first impressions of London, or of me? Or could you write a story about the cabman who drove you from Paddington or the woman in whose house you are lodging?"

Genevra did not answer him at once.

"No," she said, reluctantly, "I don't think I could."

"Why not?" he asked.

Genevra closed her eyes for a moment, as if in intense self-examination.

"I think," she said, slowly, "I think it is because I can only write about what is inside myself. I believe that when I have forgotten the things

that you speak about, so that they are part of me, like yesterday's dinner, I believe that then I could write about them."

"Thank God!" said Noy, leaning back in his chair. "You're a very lucky woman, Miss Joslin, though I don't suppose you know it, yet."

"What I want to know is this: Do you think," she anxiously inquired, "that by the time I have spent my seventy pounds I shall be able to earn my living by writing?"

"I'm quite sure of it," he answered.

"How much do you suppose I shall be able to earn?"

"Since you intend to save your soul alive," said Noy, playing with a paper-knife, "for the first two or three years, and taking the fat with the lean, I should say that you will be able to earn—about a pound a week."

He looked up suddenly with the last words, but Genevra did not flinch or look surprised.

"Can I live on a pound a week—in London?" she asked.

"Most women could not, but you can," he said.

Genevra sat bolt upright, seeing nothing but thinking hard.

"Of course," continued Noy, digging a pencil into his desk and, with a slight smile, "we are not taking your verses into account."

"I doubt if I shall write any more verses," she said.

Their eyes met for a moment and Noy's were sympathetic.

"I think I understand," he said, gravely, "but you will write verses again—better verses—in time." He waited for a moment and then continued: "I'm not going to ask you any questions, but I conclude—that things have happened and the world has gone to pieces?"

She answered him obliquely.

"Some day, perhaps, I shall be able to tell you why I can never go back to Cornwall any more, but I can't tell you now."

"Of course you can't," he said, "though I hope you will remember that if ever you feel the need to speak, I am here to listen. And now to details."

For twenty minutes or so he discussed her prospects, showing an acute appreciation of her peculiar powers, holding out no false hopes, putting aside useless endeavour and dwelling on the precise kind of literary work she was qualified to pursue

and the proper quarters in which she might reasonably expect to dispose of it.

"Of course, as you see," he said, in conclusion, "personally I can be of little use to you, but I can see to it that whatever you choose to write is carefully considered—in another sense than that advertised on the contents page of magazines. There are perhaps three journals possible to you for occasional papers besides the *British*. Don't be afraid; seventy pounds will last you a long time, and if you are only strong enough not to write about anything until it is part of you—but will you promise me something?"

"That depends," said Genevra, with a laugh.

"Well, it is this." He hesitated, and, in spite of his years, looked as awkward as a schoolboy. "Of course, you will come to see me often—that's allowed—but I want you to promise that you will come not only for—afternoon tea and the pleasure of my conversation—but that you will come to me whenever you are hungry and want a meal?"

Genevra flushed, whitened and bit her lips. Then she looked him steadily in the eyes and said:

"Yes, I will come."

Noy rose and came to her side.

"My dear lady," he said, reverently, "you have made me a very pround man."

When Genevra was leaving, Noy said, as he held open the door, "Oh, by the way, there is one thing I should like to know: do you intend to become a literary woman?"

"I don't quite understand——"

"Dear me, no; of course you don't; how stupid of me," he said, with the mocking light in his eyes. "Well, will you let me take you to a literary woman on Sunday week?"

"I don't get on well with women," Genevra demurred, laughing nervously.

"I think this is a valuable experience," urged Noy.

"Very well," said Genevra, laughing again, "I'll do as you wish."

"I suppose, Henry," said Noy that evening to his friend Surridge, when he told him of Genevra's visit and his own guesses at her history, "whatever gods may be used him for their own purposes, and undoubtedly he's made her; but Lord! you've got to see her to understand the waste of womanhood in the making. She sat in that chair, now desecrated by your fat carcass, and looked as if she'd found salvation when I told her

that she could earn twenty bob a week by putting words on paper. . . . Well, whoever he is he's a heartless swine."

Surridge, who in company with Noy, always looked about to dodge a missile, removed his pipe from his mouth and said:

"Three months ago you thanked whatever gods may be for bringing them together, and not so long before that you swore you'd rather see her crucified than happily married."

"So I did, Henry, so I did—and God forgive me for a cold-blooded old devil," said Noy, sorrowfully. "But I ask you, is it worth it? Lost faith, dead love, a lonely hearth and children crying to be born—and a few little words on flimsy scraps of paper?"

"Give it up," said Surridge, placidly, and helping himself to whisky.

Genevra had spent her first night in London at a Paddington hotel. In the morning she looked through the advertisements of embarrassingly desirable rooms to let in the *Telegraph*. She had the common delusion of country people that the suburbs are haunts of undistracted leisure, and pathetically influenced by a position on the Great Western Railway, her first choice was Ealing. At the

end of a week she had learned that suburbs are only to sleep in, and recognised that the way to possess your soul in peace near London is to be a Londoner. Misled by appearances of cheapness, she then explored that neighbourhood where Oxford Street degenerates through New Oxford Street into Holborn, but found that her intuitions of its desirability were confirmed by the price of even inferior lodgings. Finally she engaged two small rooms in the Kings Road, Chelsea, her choice being partly determined by the associations of Cheyne Walk. Here she felt that she could live and work. She found that the noises of the street neutralized each other as bright colours become fused into greyness with rapid movement, and that unceasing traffic is a stimulating background to thought.

When Edgar Noy called for her on Sunday afternoon, instead of the obvious countrywoman, he found her quietly but correctly dressed for calling. Not immediately recognising that the woman who can wear print and a sun-bonnet becomingly has nothing to fear from the newest fashion, he allowed something of his surprise to show in his face. Genevra laughed, frankly.

"It was quite easy," she said. "I spent three

afternoons in Bond Street, and last Sunday I sat on a penny chair in the Park watching the women until I knew exactly what was the right thing to wear. When I felt quite sure, I went to a shop in Regent Street and ordered my things."

Noy made a despairing gesture. He looked at her simple biscuit-coloured frock and the very last expression of the milliner on her head and calculated.

"You're thinking about my seventy pounds?" said Genevra. "But don't you understand that this," she indicated her gown and her hat, "is essential economy? After this—with an occasional shilling gallery—I shall be able to make my own frocks and trim my own hats."

While they were in the hansom Genevra frankly asked him about minor points of behaviour.

"I don't think I'm snobbish," she said, "but I want to go out occasionally, and it is so much more comfortable to be taken for granted."

Noy had no fears about Genevra's behaviour, but he reserved his opinion about people's unquestioning acceptance of her, for a very different reason from any she imagined.

Mrs. Franklyn, with whose graceful writing Genevra was already familiar, lived in the Glouces-

ter Road. The drawing-room was full when they arrived, and the first thing that struck Genevra was the meticulous etiquette of that class which may be called Upper Bohemian. When he had presented her to her hostess, Noy, who was evidently a rare and not overwelcome visitor, retired to a corner.

Mrs. Franklyn was a quite beautiful woman, spoiled by the effort to look like a disembodied spirit. She spoke in rather awe-struck tones, as if every word that came from her lips were part of a divine message. Her pronunciation was a little affected: she separated her vowels and said " can not " as some Americans write it. She sat in a chair slightly raised above the general level, and the rest of the room led up to it as a cathedral leads up to its central altar. Her husband and two sons hovered behind her, as if they symbolized some etherealization of the family affections: one felt that Mrs. Franklyn had stooped to motherhood in some strange exquisite way only that weaker women might not be ashamed. Her husband wore the tender deprecating look of the instrument of fate, honoured above all men for no merit, yet still condemned for no fault of his own in that he had slain her virginity; her sons said

"mother" often, and with a perceptible quiver of the lip. Several young persons of either sex sat literally at Mrs. Franklyn's feet, so that the group was composed in a pyramid. The other occupants of the room were removed a little distance, as from a shrine, and the whole spectacle reminded Genevra of a Morality: she would not have been surprised if the central group had dissolved and all resumed their natural looks and manners at the tingling of a bell.

The conversation was chiefly about books—frequently about books which had not yet suffered the profanation of print, and it was remarkable that people seemed familiar with each other's intentions rather than their achievements. Genevra noticed that from her hostess downward everybody spoke in hushed voices and nobody finished a sentence; it was evidently an indecency to do so. When Mrs. Franklyn was delivered of a message everybody bent forward, and afterward one looked at the other with swimming eyes. When people moved it was as if to the music of the spheres. Occasionally somebody sighed.

The worshippers were sustained with tea—the abstract idea of tea, rather—and cakes that were merely pretexts for illuminating gestures—wave-

offerings. Once, at a command from his hostess, a beautiful young man said some poetry while a girl swept faint chords from a dulcimer. Mrs. Franklyn listened with closed eyes and a beatific smile, and afterward thanked the young man with a caressing movement of her hand.

Edgar Noy observed that during the recitation one or two men looked at Genevra as she sat at the other side of the room. Their glances were furtive and afterward they redoubled their admiration of the proper deity. But for all that there was a perceptible difference in the moral atmosphere of the room. Mrs. Franklyn looked pained, and two or three women who left shortly afterward pressed her hand sympathetically. Presently Genevra was motioned to the presence and catechised. She came out of the ordeal pretty well, though once she laughed, when everybody caught their breath, and once she asked her hostess a question, when everybody answered her all at once, as people vie in checking a child on the edge of an indiscretion. When they took their leave Mrs. Franklyn slid her fingers through Genevra's and did not press her to come again.

"Well?" asked Noy, when they were again seated in the hansom.

" I don't think I shall ever be a literary woman," answered Genevra.

"No, please God," said Noy, adding, " I thought the warning necessary, but you must not confuse the literary woman with the woman writer."

At the door of her lodgings in the Kings Road, Genevra hesitated.

" Come and have tea with me," she said. " I will give you some very thick bread and butter."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE first fortnight of Genevra's life in London set the key to the enduring comradeship between her and Edgar Noy; an association marked on his side by bantering kindness, which left more serious regard to be taken for granted, and on hers by trust and gratitude too deep to put into words. She was grateful to Noy not so much for anything he did, but because, of the three men who had influenced her life, he alone understood her.

It was because Leonard Morris did not understand her at all that after the first shock of wounded pride Genevra came to think of him without bitterness. For a time the act of burning his letters unopened, as they were sent to her from Porthlew, was like burning her own flesh, but with the gradual recognition that, though he had not understood her, he had helped her to understand herself, she was able to look upon the destruction of each letter as the loosing of a bond between herself and a life she had deliberately not chosen,

yet, still, in weaker moments, yearned after. But for Morris she would never have known what she wanted of life, and daily her assurance grew that the way if not to happiness, at least to contentment, was clearly to know what she wanted. It was only when his letters grew less frequent and finally ceased altogether that she doubted the perfect sincerity of her choice. This mood of harrowing uncertainty soon passed, however, though perhaps the fierce determination with which she set her face to the future was helped by the lingering half-thought that in deciding to pursue contentment she had forever lost the chance of happiness. It was as if at the last moment she had locked the door of her bridal chamber and flung away the key, yet still found solace in the thought that all was ready within: as the cold peace of the cloister is enhanced not by disparaging, but by renouncing in full glow the warm family hearth.

Whether she had done wisely or foolishly, her mind absolved Morris of infidelity: she believed that after his fashion he loved her well and truly, and could not be blamed if she refused to accept love save on terms which were impossible between them so long as he remained himself. They two could have become one only by remission of them-

selves, and it seemed to her a finer thing that they should remain apart and in their several ways work out the best that was in them.

Something of these thoughts she tried to put into her first letter to Penrose. She would have preferred to say nothing at all, but the old man knew so much that an explanation could not be avoided, and she wished him to credit her with the entire responsibility for breaking off the match he had so much at heart. Penrose had accepted her disappearance from Trecoth philosophically enough, supposing that she had gone to Morris; indeed, he took a keen anticipatory pleasure in the announcement he believed he would shortly be able to make. Genevra's letter bitterly disappointed him, and for a time he refused to hold any communication with her. At length, however, anxiety about her material welfare drove him to pay her a surprise visit at her lodgings. He was so shocked by the "squalid hole" in which he found her that he hardly mentioned Morris's name. On his return to Rosewithan he bragged about Genevra's "suite of rooms," her dresses, her literary reputation, and her titled acquaintances.

Though Genevra did not pass through the straits predicted for her by Edgar Noy, for sev-

eral years she earned no more than a bare living. She had no facility, and many profitable branches of journalism were closed to her. Her volume of poems assured her a respectful hearing; she did a great deal of reviewing, and gradually won her way to recognition as a writer of imaginative prose studies. Stories she did not attempt. Not for some time did she recognise that in keeping her vow not to write any more verses she was suppressing a natural impulse. At first she wrote poetry with a shame-faced feeling of disloyalty, as a person puts off mourning, but there came a time when she was able to open a locked drawer and look through the poems written under the influence of her passion for Leonard Morris. They were frankly love songs, but, incurably an artist, she was unwilling to reject a sincere expression of herself in any mood. After the publication of this, her second volume of poems, Genevra's way was easy. She never again wrote with the same abandonment; she never stood at the height she might have reached had love been fulfilled, but she had gained a deeper philosophy of life, pity and tolerance so wide that many people mistook it for cynicism.

Genevra did not revisit Trecoth, though at this

distance, and with no risk of irritation, she continued on the friendliest terms with her brother and his wife. Sampson Oliver pursued his plans, and as soon as Trecoth was rebuilt, illustrated his incorrigible opportunism by marrying an heiress and acquiring the final properties of a country gentleman. The facility with which he transferred his affections may throw some light on his generous release of Genevra from her promise. George Joslin blundered into comparative prosperity, and seemed in a fair way to pay off his mortgage on the day of reckoning. Uter Penrose continued to make inquisitorial descents upon Genevra at uncertain intervals until, during her fifth year in London, and when she was already mistress of a respectable income, he died, leaving her a legacy of fifteen hundred pounds.

The first use Genevra made of her little fortune was to take a flat in Leinster Square. With comparative affluence her sense of race came back to her with an expression in considered hospitality. As a woman she had reached her full growth when she wrote her last letter to Leonard Morris: further development was only in the confirming and organization of habits, which now for the first time she was able properly to indulge. Loving comfort

more than luxury she settled down to that sad business of making the best of it which may be described as epicureanism. Her little dinners became quite famous. Very young men adored her, and brought her their confidences. They said it was difficult to believe she had never been married.

London is at once the best and the worst place to hide in. During her years of obscurity Genevra had little fear of Morris finding out where she lived—for she did him the honour of believing that whether he still loved her or not he would seek an opportunity to demand the explanation of her silence. Now that she was become in a sort a famous person, she felt sure that sooner or later he would come.

One afternoon during the September of her seventh year in London, from a window in her flat she saw him crossing the road, and at once knew that so far as she was concerned they could meet with equanimity, and that in any forlorn attempt to pick up and unite the threads of the past she and not he had everything to lose of liberty and comfort. But because she was not sure of him, and wished to spare him any possible pain, she ruthlessly sent down word that she was not at home. From her station at the window she saw

him walk dejectedly away. She jealously watched for any sign of relief as at a duty performed in his attitude: if there had been she would have felt humiliated, but because there was none she cried a little and wished she had received him. Then she called herself a fool, dried her eyes, sat down and wrote to Edgar Noy, asking him to dine with her that evening. Over their coffee she made her belated confidence. For once Noy's discrimination forsook him, and his comment on her story was to ask her to marry himself.

"Don't spoil everything," she said, lightly. "If we married I could not with propriety ask you to dine with me."

Misinterpreting her flippancy, he pressed her, but she gravely said:

"No, dear friend, I have no love left to give any man—and you have everything else as it is."

Genevra did not again see Morris until they met face to face at the house of her publisher on a "literary evening." She had been sitting in a corner of the drawing-room, away from the crush of people who swayed and shouldered together. Something in the murmur of voices and the rustle of dresses reminded her of the sea. She closed her eyes and leaned back her head, her mind re-

turning to the picture she knew so well: the crumbling cliffs of Tregwidden, the pale green patches of submerged boulders with wine-purple interspaces where the colours of the water and of the ore-weed mingle. The whisper and beat of the water died away and some one was speaking. She heard her name.

"Genevra!"

She opened her eyes upon Leonard Morris. Neither spoke, and without a pang she felt his eyes wander from her figure to her hair, still glorious but streaked with grey. He, too, was aged and sobered: the savage intentness of his face relaxed to comparative geniality. He was stouter, and looked prosperous. Genevra was the first to recover and smiled, holding out her hand. He seated himself beside her, and his first words were a reproach:

"Why in God's name didn't you write?"

"I had written," she answered.

"You must have misunderstood me."

"There are some misunderstandings that are born with us."

"But you denied me my right," he said, with a touch of his old fierceness; "there has always been that between me and contentment."

Genevra smiled.

"Then it is only I that have not changed," she said. "You have a new object—and I am still in the way?"

"For God's sake don't remind me," he said, hastily. "I have lived to find that my work is—well—not everything."

"May I be frank?" she asked. "You have been successful—and you are older."

"Yes, but not too old to love you," he said, impatiently. "Genevra—is it too late?"

"It is too early," she answered, "since we are both alive."

THE END