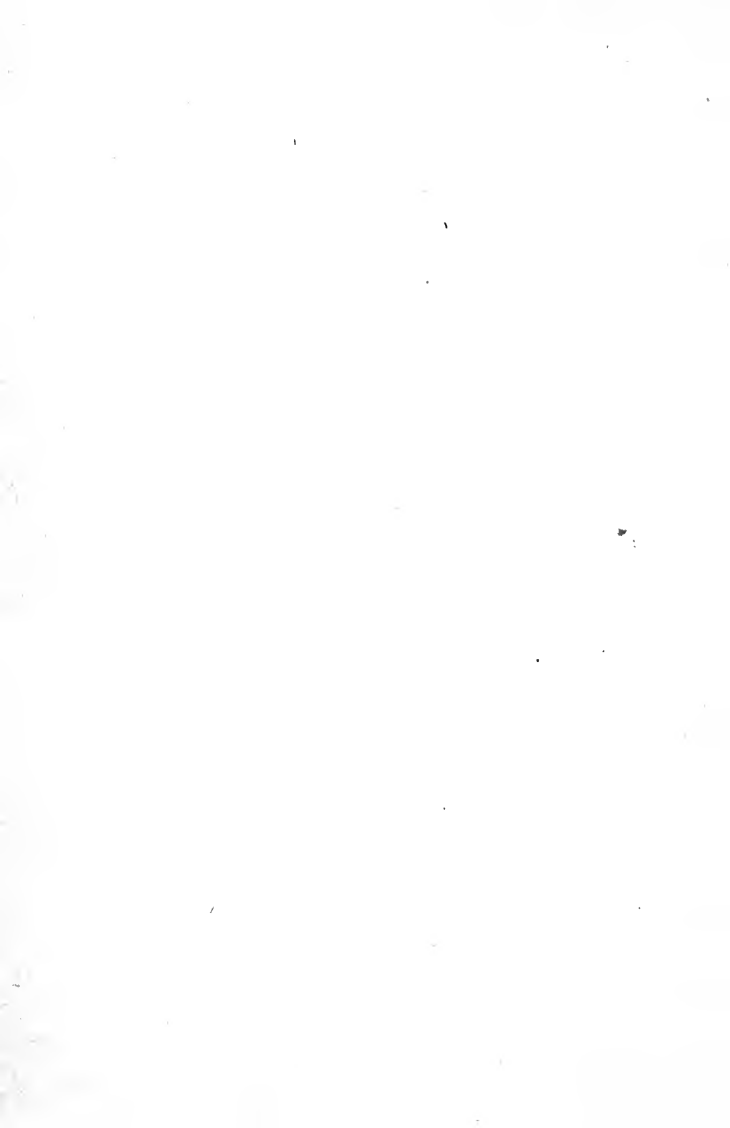




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# HILL OF PAINS

## ALBERT PARKER







# The Hill of Pains



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Sir GILBERT PARKER

Author of *The Seats of the Mighty, The Battle of the Strong, etc.*



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# The Hill of Pains



## I.

SEE, madame, see,—there, on the Hill of Pains! . . . One more . . . one more.”

“One more, Marie, . . . it is the life: that on the Hill, this here below; and yet the sun is bright, the cockatoos are laughing in the palms, and you hear my linnet singing.”

“It turns slowly, . . . slowly. Now It points across the Winter Valley. . . . Ah!”

“Yes, across the Winter Valley, where the deep woods are, and beyond”—

“And beyond?”

*never ending*

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"To the Pascal River."

"And my home is at the Pascal River. . . . How dim the sunshine has become! I can only see It now — like a long dark finger." . . .

"No, child, there is bright sunshine still: there is no cloud at all; but It *is* like a finger. It is quivering now, as if it were not sure."

"Thanksgiving, if it be not sure! . . . but the hill is cloudy still."

"No, Marie, how droll you are! The hill is not cloudy: even from here one can see something glisten beside the grove of pines."

"I know. It is the White Rock where King Ovi died, but whose burial-place none knows."

"A black king merely."

"His heart was not black: there are stains upon White Rock, and

THE HILL OF PAINS 3

they are red. . . . Is it still upon the Hill of Pains, madame?"

"Yes, still, and pointing as you say, like a human finger, towards Winter Valley."

"I did not say a *human* finger, madame. There is nothing human there."

"Yet was not that the gleam of bayonets near the palisade?"

"But bayonets are not human, neither here in Noumea, nor yet on Isle Nou over there."

"You are sad to-day, my Marie. Have you had lonely dreams?"

"*You* are human, madame. It is like summer always where you are. Is it very bright out there just now? Sometimes, . . . sometimes, madame, things are so dark to me."

"Marie, turn your face to me so!

His black  
paints like  
a finger  
the ink  
towards  
Valley

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*is sad,  
the sea's  
clouds*

Your eyes do not see, my child, because they are full of tears. The cloud is in them, not on the world. See, I kiss this rain away."

"Yes, it is my eyes, madame."

"It is the tears, Marie."

"I weep for the cloud out there upon the world, and yet the cloud is in my eyes."

"You weep because of It, Marie. Your heart is tender. Your tears are for the prisoner,—the hunted in the chase."

*M*

"No, madame, I am selfish. I weep for myself. Tell me truly, as—as if I were your own child, was there no cloud, no darkness, out there?"

"None, dear."

*M*

"Then,—then,—madame, I suppose it was my tears."

“Yes, Marie, it was your tears.”

But each said in her heart it was not tears: each said, “Let not this thing come, O God.” And then with a caress they parted; but the girl remained to watch, as it might be granted to her, that gloomy thing upon the Hill of Pains.

As she stood there, with her fingers clasped upon a letter which she drew from her pocket and looked at once or twice, a voice from among the palms outside floated towards her. It was speaking thus: “He escaped last night. The Semaphore, there upon the Hill of Pains, shows that they have got upon his track. I suppose they’ll try to converge upon him, and hem him in, before he gets to Pascal River. Once there, he might have a chance of escape; but

m

5/10 exam  
Prison

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he'll need a lot of luck, poor wretch!"

Marie's fingers tightened on the letter.

Then another voice replied; and it brought a flush to the cheek of the girl, and a hint of trouble in her eyes. It said in no apparent connection with what had just been uttered, "Is Miss Gorham here still?"

"Ah, yes! Miss Marie Gorham is still here, to our pleasure. My wife will be distressed when she leaves us, yet she speaks of going very soon."

"I doubt not she will be distressed to go. The Hôtel du Gouverneur spoils us for all other places in New Caledonia."

"You are too kind, Monsieur Farling."

"I do not say at all what I should like to say, Monsieur le Gouverneur."

“But I fear that those who think as you are not many. After all, I am little more here than a gaoler,—merely a gaoler, Monsieur Farling.”

“Ah! pardon me if I correct you,—the Commandant of a military station and the Governor of a Colony.”

“The station is a penitentiary; the colony,—eh?—for *libérés*, ticket-of-leave men and outcast Paris, with a sprinkling of gentlemen and officers dying of ennui. No, my friend, we French are not colonists. We emigrate: we do not colonize. This is no colony. We do no good here.”

“You forget the nickel mines.”

“Quarries for the convicts and for political prisoners of the lowest class.”

“And the plantations.”

“Ah! there I crave your pardon.”

explanat-

8 THE HILL OF PAINS

You are a planter, but you are English. Monsieur Gorham is a planter and an owner of mines, but he is English. The man who has made the most money in New Caledonia — Monsieur Hilton — is an Englishman. You, and a few others like you, French and English, are the only colony I have. I do not rule you: you help me to rule.”

“To rule?”

“By being on the side of justice and public morality; by dining with me (though all too seldom); by giving me a quiet hour now and then beneath your vines and fig-trees, and so making this uniform less burdensome for me to carry. No, no, Monsieur Murray Farling, I know you are about to say something very gracious, but you shall not: you



shall pay your compliments to the ladies."

As they journeyed to the morning-room, Murray Farling said, "Does Monsieur Rive Laflamme still come to paint the portrait of Miss Gorham?"

"Yes; but it ends in a day or two, and then no more of that. Prisoners are prisoners; and pleasant as is Monsieur Laflamme,—that makes it the more difficult."

"Why should he be treated so well,—as a first-class prisoner,—and others of the Commune be so degraded here, as Mayer, for instance?"

"It is but a question of degree. He was an artist and something of a dramatist; he was not at the Place Vendôme at a certain critical moment; he was not at Montmartre at

*Laflamme  
VIP Pr*

a particular terrible time ; he was not a major, like Mayer ; he was young, with the face of a patriot. Well, they sent Mayer to the galleys at Toulon. Then, among the worst of the prisoners here, he was too bold, too full of speech. He had not Laflamme's gift of silence, of pathos. Mayer works coarsely, severely, here : Laflamme grows his vegetables, idles about Ducos, swings in his hammock, and appears at inspections. One day he sent to me the picture of my wife. Here it is. Is it not charming? The size of a franc-piece and so perfect ! and framed in gold. . . . You know the soft hearts of women."

" You mean that Madame Solde "

---

" That my wife persuaded me to let him come here to paint my

portrait. He has done so, and now he paints Mademoiselle Gorham. But—”

“But? — Yes?”

“But these things have their dangers.” *Gov*

“Have their dangers,” Murray Farling musingly repeated, and then added under his breath almost, “Escape or”—

“Or something else,” the governor rather sharply interrupted, and then, as they were entering the room, *G* gayly continued, “Ah! here we come, mademoiselle, to”—

“To pay your surplus of compliments, Monsieur le Gouverneur. I could not help but hear something of what you said. Mr. Farling, I am glad to see you. Let me think: how long is it since you were patriotic?” *Patriotism*

"I am afraid I do not quite understand, Miss Gorham."

"You are English. So am I. I am here at the charming house of a French governor. Madame Solde spoils me. There are denationalizing influences about me. You leave me to my fate," she said with pretty mockery.

"Believe me, Miss Gorham," replied Murray Farling, with the blood quickening at his heart,— "believe me, to be patriotic, one does not kneel continuously at the foot of the throne. Besides, the court is not always open to subjects."

"And subjects have plantations, and"—

"And I leave you to Mademoiselle Gorham's tender mercies, Farling," said the governor. "*Au revoir!*"

When he had gone, Murray Farling said, "Ah! you are gay to-day."

"No, indeed, no! I am sad."

"Sad? and wherefore sad? Is nickel proving a drug? or sugar? Don't tell me that your father says sugar is falling." He glanced at the letter, which she unconsciously held in her hand. Far

She saw his look, smoothed the letter a little nervously between her palms, and put it in her pocket, replying: "No, father has not said that sugar is falling. But come here, will you?" and she motioned towards the open window. When there, she said slowly, "That is what makes me sad and sorry." And she pointed to the Semaphore upon the Hill of Pains. ↙

"You are too tender-hearted," he

remarked. "A convict has escaped. He will be caught perhaps, perhaps not; and things will go on as before."

"Will go on as before. That is, the *martinet* worse than the *knout de Russe*; the *poucettes*, the *crapaudine* on neck and ankles and wrists; all, all as bad as the *Pater Noster* of the Inquisition, as Mayer said the other day in the face of Charpentier, the Commandant of the penitentiary. How pleasant also to think of the Boulevard de Guillotine! I tell you it is brutal, horrible. Think of what prisoners have to suffer here, whose only crime is that they were of the Commune,—that they were just a little madder than other Frenchmen."

"Pardon me, if I say that as brutal things were done by the English in Tasmania."

“Think of two hundred and sixty strokes of the ‘cat’!”

“You concern yourself too much about these things, I fear.”

“I only think that death would be easier than the life of half the convicts here.”

“They themselves would prefer it, perhaps.”

“Tell me, who is the convict that has escaped?” she rather feverishly asked. “Is it a political prisoner?”

“You would not know him. He was one of the Commune who escaped shooting in the Place de la Concorde. Carbourd, I think, was his name.”

“Carbourd, Carbourd,” she repeated, and turned her head away towards the Semaphore.

The girl’s earnestness roused in

Murray Farling a glow of intense sympathy,—a sympathy which had its origin, as he well knew, in three years of growing love. This love leaped up now determinedly, and perhaps unwisely; but what should a blunt soul like Murray Farling know regarding the best or worst time to seek a woman's heart? He came close to her now, and said, "If you are so kind in thought for a convict, I dare hope that you would be more kind to me."

"Be kind to you," she replied, as if not understanding what he said, nor the look in his eyes.

"For I am a prisoner, too."

"You a prisoner?" she a little tremulously, a little coldly, rejoined.

"In your hands, Marie Gorham."  
His eyes laid bare his heart.



“Oh,” she replied, in a half-troubled, half-indignant fashion; for she was out of touch with the occasion of his suit, and every woman has in her mind the time when she should and when she should not be wooed. Besides — “Oh, why aren’t you plain with me?” she protestingly cried. “You say things strangely, vaguely.”

“Why do I not speak plainly? Because, Marie Gorham, it is possible for a man to be fearful, to be a coward in his speech,” — he touched her fingers, — “when he loves.”

She drew her hand from his quickly. “Oh, can’t we be friends without *that*?” she said somewhat bitterly.

At that instant there was a sound of footsteps at the window. Both turned, and saw the political pris-

she re-joins  
him

oner, Rive Laflamme, followed by a guard.

“He comes to finish my portrait,” she said. “This is the last sitting.”

“Marie, must I go like this? When may I see you again? When will you answer me? You will not make all the hopes of my love to end here?”

It was evident that some deep trouble was on the girl. She flushed hotly, as if she were about to reply hotly also; but she changed quickly, and said, not unkindly, “When Monsieur Laflamme is gone.” And now, as if repenting of her unreasonable words of a moment before, she added: “Oh, please don’t think me hard. I am sorry that I grieve you. I’m afraid I am not altogether well, not altogether happy.”

"I will wait till he has gone," the planter replied. At the door he turned as if to say something; but he only looked steadily, sadly at her, and then was gone.

She stood where he had left her, gazing with melancholy abstraction at the door through which he had passed. There were footsteps without in the hall-way. The door was opened, and a servant announced Monsieur Laflamme. The painter-prisoner entered, followed by the soldier. Immediately afterwards Mrs. Angers, the elderly companion of Miss Gorham, sidled in gently.

Rive Laflamme bowed low to Marie Gorham, and then turned, and said coolly to the soldier: "You may wait outside to-day, Roupet. This is my last morning's work. It is

important, and you splutter and cough. You annoy me. You are too exhausting for a studio."

But Roupet answered, "Monsieur, I have my orders."

"Nonsense. This is the Governor's house. I am perfectly safe here. Give your orders a change of scene. You would better enjoy the refreshing coolness of the corridors this morning. . . . You won't? Oh, yes, you will. Here's a cigarette,—there, take the whole bunch. I paid too much for them, but no matter! . . . Ah! pardon me, Mademoiselle Gorham. I forgot that you cannot smoke here, Roupet; but you shall have them all the same, . . . there! *Parbleu!* you are a handsome rascal —if you weren't so wheezy! Come, come, Roupet, make yourself invisible."

The eyes of the girl were on the soldier. They did the work better. A warrior has a soft place in his heart for a beautiful woman, and this fellow had memories. He wheeled suddenly, and disappeared from the room, motioning that he would remain at the door.

The painting began, and for half an hour or more was continued without a word. In the silence the placid Angers had fallen asleep.

Nodding slightly towards her, Rive Laflamme said in a low voice to Marie Gorham, "Her hearing at its best is not remarkable?"

"Not remarkable."

He spoke more softly. "That is good. Well, the portrait is done. It has been the triumph of my life to paint it. Not that first joy I had

when I won the great prize in Paris equals it. I am glad ; and yet — and yet there was much chance that it would never be finished.”

“ Why ? ”

“ Carbourd is gone.”

“ Yes, I know. Well ? ”

“ Well, I should be gone also, were it not for this portrait. The chance came. I was tempted. I determined to finish this. I stayed.”

“ Do you think that he will be caught ? ”

“ Not alive. Carbourd, the patriot, has suffered too much,— the galleys, the *corde*, the triangle, everything but the guillotine. Carbourd has a wife and children. Ah, yes ! you know all about it. You remember that letter she sent : I can recall every word. Can you ? ”

The girl paused, and then with a rapt sympathy in her face repeated slowly: "*I am ill, and our children cry for food. The wife calls to her husband, my darlings say, 'Will father never come home?'*"

Marie Gorham's eyes were moist.

"Mademoiselle, he was no common criminal. He was like a martyr. He would grandly have died for the cause. He loved France too wildly. That was his sin."

"Carbourd is free," she said as if to herself.

"He has escaped." His voice now was the smallest whisper. "And now my time has come."

"When? And where do you go?"

"To-night, and to join Carbourd, if I can, at the Pascal River. At King Ovi's Cave, if possible."

The girl was very pale. She turned and looked at Angers, who still slept. "And then?"

"And then, as I have said to you before, to the coast, to board the 'Parroquet,' which will lie off the island St. Jerome three days from now to carry us away into freedom. It is all arranged by our 'Underground Railway.'"

"And you tell me all this to-day — why?" the girl said falteringly.

"Because you said that you would not let a hunted fugitive starve; that you would give us horses, with which we could travel the Brocken Path across the hills. Here is the plan of the river that you drew; at this point the King's Cave which you discovered, and is known only to yourself."



“I ought not to have given you that paper; but”—

“Ah! you will not repent of a noble action, of a great good to *me*—Marie?”

“Hush, hush, Monsieur Laflamme. Indeed, you may not speak to me so. You forget. I am sorry for you: I think you do not deserve this—banishment. You are unhappy here; and I told you of the King’s Cave,—that was all.”

“Ah, no! that is not all. To be free, that is grand, but only that I may be a man again, that I may love my art—and you, that I may once again be proud of France.”

“Monsieur, I repeat, you must not speak so. Do not take advantage of my willingness to serve you.”

“*Pardon!* a thousand *pardons!* but

that was in my heart; and I hoped, I hoped"—

"You must not hope. I can only know you as Monsieur Rive La-flamme, the"—

"The political convict. Ah, yes! I know," he said bitterly: "a convict over whom the knout is held; who may at any moment be shot down like a hare; who has but two prayers in all the world,—to be free in France once more, and to be loved by one"—

She interrupted him: "Your first prayer is natural."

"Natural? Do you know what song we sang in the cages of the ship that carried us into this evil exile here? Do you know what brought tears to the eyes of the guards? what made the captain and the sailors

the  
prison

turn their heads away from us, lest we should see that their faces were wet? what rendered the soldiers who had fought us in the Commune more human for the moment? It was this:—

“ ‘ Adieu, patrie !  
 L’onde est en furie,  
 Adieu, patrie  
 Azur !  
 Adieu, maison, treille au fruit mûr !  
 Adieu, les fruits d’or du vieux mûr !  
 Adieu, patrie,  
 Ciel, forêt, prairie !  
 Adieu, patrie  
 Azur.’ ”

Well, Carbourd sang that song last night so softly to himself; and I sang it also, with another,—

“ ‘ Beyond the valley lives my love,—  
 Ah, ah, the Winter Valley !  
 I meet her where ’ ”—

“Hush! Oh, hush, monsieur!” the girl said.

He looked, and saw that Angers was waking. “If I live,” he hurriedly whispered, “I shall be at the King’s Cave to-morrow night. . . . And you? — the horses?”

“And you shall have my help and the horses.” Then more loudly, “Adieu, monsieur.”

At that moment Madame Solde entered the room. She acknowledged Laflamme’s presence gravely.

“It is all done, madame,” he said.

“All done, monsieur?”

“The portrait, as you may honor it with a glance.”

Madame Solde bowed coldly, but said, “It is well done.”

“It is my masterpiece,” remarked the painter, musingly, “if my poor

work can be given such a name. Will you permit me to say adieu, mesdames? I go to join my amiable and attentive companion, Roupet, the guard." He bowed himself out.

Madame Solde then turned, and drew Marie aside. Angers discreetly left.

The governor's wife drew the girl's head back on her shoulder, and kissed her on the eyes. "Marie," she said, "Monsieur Farling does not seem happy. Cannot you make him happier?"

With quivering lips the girl laid her head on the Frenchwoman's breast, and said: "Ah! do not ask me. Madame, I am going home to-day."

"To-day? But, my child, so soon! I wished"—

“ I must go to-day.”

“ But we had hoped you would stay while Monsieur Farling ”—

“ Murray Farling — will — go with me — perhaps.”

“ Ah, my dear Marie ! ” The woman kissed the girl, and wondered.

That afternoon Marie Gorham was riding across the Winter Valley to her father's plantation at the Pascal River. Angers was driving ahead. Beside Marie rode Murray Farling, silent and attentive. Arrived at the homestead, she said to him in the shadow of the *naoulis*, “ Murray Farling, what would you do to prove the love you say you have for me ? ”

“ All that a man could do I would do.”

“ Can you see the Semaphore from here ? ”

“Yes, there it is clear against the sky. Look!”

But the girl did not look. She touched her eyelids with her fingertips, as though they were fevered, and then said: “Many have escaped. They are searching for Carbourd and”—

“Yes, and — Marie?”

“And Monsieur Laflamme”—

“Laflamme!” he said sharply. Then, noticing how at his brusqueness the paleness of her face changed to a startled flush for an instant, his generosity conquered, and he added gently, “Well, I fancied he would try; but what do you know about that, Marie Gorham?”

“He and Carbourd were friends. They were chained together in the galleys. They lived — at first — to-

gether here. They both desire to return to France."

"Tell me," he said, "what do you know of this? What is it to you?"

"You wish to know all before you will swear to do what I desire."

"I will do anything you ask, because you will not require of me what is unmanly."

"Rive Laflamme will escape to-night, if possible, and join Carbourd on the Pascal River, at a safe spot that I know." She told him of the Cave.

"Yes, yes, I understand. You would help him. And I?"

"You will help me. . . . You will?"

There was a slight pause, and then he said: "Yes, I will. But think what this is to an Englishman, to

*agrees  
to help*



yourself,—to be accomplice to the escape of a French prisoner.”

“I gave a promise to a man who I believe deserves it, who himself believed he was a patriot. If you were in that position, and I were a Frenchwoman, I would do the same for you.”

He smiled rather grimly, and said : “If it please you that this man escape, I shall hope he may, and will help you. . . . Here comes your father.”

“I could not let him know,” she said. “He has no sympathy for any one like that, for any one at all, I think, but me. Ah me!”

“There, don’t be down-hearted. If you have set your heart on this, I at least will try to bring it about, God knows! Now let us be less

French  
E

gloomy. Conspirators should smile. That is the cue. Besides, see, the world is bright. Look at the glow upon the hills."

"I suppose the Semaphore is glistening at the Hill of Pains, but I cannot see it."

And he did not understand her.

## II.

**A** FEW hours after this conversation between Marie Gorham and Murray Farling, Rive Laflamme sought to accomplish his escape. He had lately borne a letter from the commandant, which permitted him to go from point to point outside the peninsula of Ducos, where the least punished of the political prisoners were kept. He depended somewhat on this for his escape. Carbourd had been more heroic, but, then, Carbourd was desperate. Rive Laflamme believed more in ability than force. It was ability and money that had won over the captain of the "Parroquet," coupled with the connivance of an old member of the Commune, who was now a guard. This night there was in-

creased alertness, owing to the escape of Carbourd; and himself, if not more closely watched, was at least open to quick suspicion, owing to his known friendship for Carbourd. He strolled about the fortified enclosure, chatting to fellow-prisoners, and waiting for the call which should summon them to the huts. Through years of studied good-nature he had come to be regarded as a contented prisoner. He had no enemies save one among the guards. This man Maillot he had offended by thwarting his continued ill-treatment of a young lad who had been one of the condemned of the Commune, and whose hammock, at last, by order of the commandant, was slung in Laflamme's hut. For this kindness and interposition the lad was grateful and de-

voted. He had been set to labor in the nickel mines ; but that came near to killing him, and again through Laflamme's pleadings he was made a prisoner of the first class, and so relieved of all heavy tasks. Not even he suspected the immediate relations of Laflamme and Carbourd ; nor that Laflamme was preparing for escape.

As Laflamme waited for the summons to huts, a squad of prisoners went clanking by him, manacled. They had come from road-making. These never heard from wife nor child, nor held any communication with the outside world, nor had any speech with each other, save by a silent gesture-language that eluded the vigilance of the guards. As the men passed, Rive Laflamme looked at them steadily. They knew him

well. Some of them remembered his speeches at the Place Vendôme. They bore him no ill-will that he did not suffer as they. Laflamme made a swift sign to a prisoner near the rear of the column. The man smiled, but gave no answering token. This was part of the unspoken vocabulary of imprisonment, and, in this instance, conveyed the two words: *I escape*.

A couple of hours later Laflamme rose from his hammock in his hut, and leant over the young lad who was sleeping. He touched him gently.

The lad waked: "Yes, yes, monsieur."

"I am going away, my friend."

"Away? To escape like Car-bourd?"

“Yes, I hope, like Carbourd.”

“May I not go also, monsieur?  
I am not afraid.”

“No, lad. If there must be death,  
one is enough. You must stay.  
Good-by.”

“You will see my mother? She  
is old, and she grieves.”

“Yes, I will see your mother.  
And more. You shall be free. I  
will see to that. Be patient, little  
comrade. Nay, nay, hush. . . . No  
thanks. Adieu!” And he put his  
hands on the lad’s shoulder, and  
kissed his forehead.

“I wish I had died at the Barri-  
cades. But, yes, I will be brave, be  
sure of that.”

“You shall live in France, which  
is better. Once more, adieu!” and  
Rive Laflamme passed out.

It was raining. He knew that, if he could satisfy the first sentinel, he should stand a better chance of escape, since he had had so much freedom of late; and to be passed by one would help with others. He went softly, but he was soon challenged.

“Halt. Who goes there?”

“Condemned of the Commune — by order.”

“Whose order?”

“That of the commandant.”

“Advance order.”

The sentinel knew him. “Ah! Laflamme,” he said, and raised the point of his bayonet. The paper was produced. It did not entitle him to go about at night, and certainly not beyond the enclosure without a guard: it was insufficient. In



unfolding the paper, Laflamme purposely dropped it in the mud. He hastily picked it up, and, in doing so, smeared it. He wiped it, leaving the signature comparatively plain,—nothing else.

“Well,” said the sentinel, “the signature is right, but it is not like an order. Where do you go?”

“To Government House.”

“I do not know that I should let you pass. But—well, look out that the next sentinel doesn’t bayonet you. You came suddenly upon me.”

The next sentinel was a Kanaka. The previous formula was repeated. The Kanaka examined the paper long, and then said, “You cannot pass.”

“But the other sentinel passed me. Would you get him into trouble?”

The Kanaka frowned, hesitated,

then said: "That is another matter. Well, pass!"

Twice more the same formula and arguments were used. At last he heard a voice in challenge that he knew. It was that of Maillot. This was a more difficult game. His order was taken with a malicious sneer by the sentinel. At that instant Laflamme threw his arms swiftly round the other, clapped a hand on his mouth, and with a dexterous twist of leg threw him backward, till it seemed as if the spine of the soldier must break. It was impossible to struggle against this trick of wrestling which Laflamme had learned from a famous Cornish wrestler, in a summer spent on the English coast.

"If you shout or speak, I will kill you," he said to Maillot, and then

dropped him heavily on the ground, where he lay senseless. The other stooped down, and felt his heart. "Alive!" he said, then seized the rifle and plunged into the woods. The moon at that moment broke through the clouds, and he saw the Semaphore like a ghost pointing towards Pascal River. He waved his hand towards his old prison, and with tightly pressed lips sped away.

But others were thinking of the Semaphore at this moment: others saw it indistinct yet melancholy in the moonlight. The governor and his wife saw it, and Madame Solde said: "Alfred, I shall be glad when I shall see that no more, and all no more."

"My wife, you have too much feeling."

*Semaphore  
bring them  
all*

“ I suppose Marie makes me think more of it to-day. She wept this morning at the thought of all this misery and punishment.”

“ You think that. Well, perhaps something more ”—

“ What more ? ”

“ A condemned of the Commune, Rive Laflamme.”

“ No, no! it is impossible.”

“ Indeed, it is as I say. My wife, you are blind. I chanced to see him with her yesterday. I should have prevented him coming to-day ; but I knew it was his last day with the portrait, and that all should end here.”

“ We have done wrong in this,— the poor child ! Besides, she has, I fear, another sorrow coming. It showed itself to me to-day for the

first time." Then she whispered to him; and he started and sighed, and said at last:—

"But it must be saved—by——! it shall be saved. And you love her so, my wife."

And at that moment Marie Gorham was standing in the open window of the library of Pascal House. She had been thinking of her recent visit to the King's Cave, where she had left food, and of the fact that Carbourd was not there. She raised her face towards the moon, and sighed. She was thinking of something else. She was not merely sentimental; for she said, as if she had heard the words of the governor and Madame Solde, "Oh, if it could be saved!"

There was a rustle in the shrubbery

near her. She turned towards the sound. A man came quickly towards her. "I am Carbourd," he said. "I could not find the way to the Cave. They were after me. They have tracked me. Tell me quick how to go."

She swiftly gave him directions, and he darted away. Again there was a rustle in the leaves, and a man stepped forth. Something glistened in his hand,—a rifle, though she could not see it plainly. It was levelled at the flying figure of Carbourd. There was a report. Marie Gorham started forward with her hands on her temples and a sharp cry. She started forward into—absolute darkness. But there was a man's footsteps going swiftly by her. Why was it so dark? She stretched out her hands with a moan.

bird  
she  
being  
chased

he is  
chased too

“O mother! O mother!” she cried. “I am blind!”

But her mother was sleeping unresponsive beyond the dark,—beyond all dark. It was perhaps natural that she should cry to the dead, and not to the living.

Marie Gorham was blind. She had known it was coming; and it had tried her, as it would have tried any of the race of women. She had, when she needed it most, put love from her, and would not let her own heart speak, even to herself. She had sought to help one who loved her, and to fully prove the other—though the proving she knew was not necessary—before the darkness came; but here it was suddenly achieved by the sharp disturbance of a rifle-shot. It would have sent a

*cries  
for her  
wrote*

shudder to a stronger heart than hers that, in reply to her call on her dead mother, there came from the trees the shrill laugh of the mopoke,—the sardonic bird of the South.

As she stood there, with this tragedy enveloping her, the dull boom of a cannon came across the valley. "From Ducos," she said. "He has escaped. God help us all!" And she turned and groped her way into the room she had left.

She felt for a chair, and sat down. She must think of what she now was. She wondered if Carbourd was killed. She listened, and thought not, since there was no sound without. But she knew that the house would be roused. She bowed her head in her hands. Surely, she might weep a little for herself,—she who



had been so troubled for others. It is strange, but she thought of her flowers and birds, and wondered how she should tend them; of her own room which faced the north,—the English north that she loved so well; of her horse, and marvelled if he would know that she could not see him; and, lastly, of a widening horizon of pain, spread before the eyes of her soul, in which her father and another moved.

It seemed to her that she sat there for hours: it was in reality minutes only. A firm step, and the opening of a door roused her. She did not turn her head. What need? She knew the step. There was almost a touch of ironical smiling at her lips, as she thought how she must hear and feel things only, in the future.

A voice said: "Miss Gorham — Marie, are you here?"

"Yes, I am here."

"I'll strike a match, so that you can see I'm not a bush-ranger. There has been shooting in the grounds. Did you hear it?"

"Yes. A soldier firing at Carbourd."

"You saw him?"

"Yes. He could not find the Cave. I directed him. Immediately after he was fired upon."

"He can't have been hit. There are no signs of him. . . . There, that's lighter and better, isn't it?"

"Perhaps. . . . I do not know."

She had risen, but she did not turn towards him. He came nearer to her. The enigmatical tone struck him strangely; but he could find

nothing less commonplace to say than, "You don't prefer the exaggerated gloaming, do you?"

"No, I do not prefer the gloaming; but why should not one be patient?"

"Be patient!" he repeated, and came nearer still. "Are you hurt or angry?"

"I am hurt, but not angry."

"What have I done? or is it I?"

"It is not you. You are very good and noble. It is nobody but God. . . . I am hurt, because he is angry, perhaps."

"Tell me what is the matter. Look at me." He faced her now,—faced her eyes looking blindly straight before her.

"Murray Farling," she said, and she put her hand out slightly, not

exactly to him, but as if to protect him from the blow which she herself must deal, "I am looking at you now."

"Yes, yes, but so strangely, and not in my eyes."

"I cannot look into your eyes, because, Murray, I am blind." And her hand went further out towards him.

He took it silently, and pressed it to his bosom as he saw that she spoke true; and the shadow of this thing fell on him. The hand held to his breast felt how he was trembling from the shock.

"Sit down, dear friend," she said, "and I will tell you all; but do not hold my hand so, or I cannot."

And sitting there face to face, with deep furrows growing in his counte-

nance, and a quiet sorrow spreading upon her cheek and forehead, she told the story how, since her childhood, her sight had played her false now and then, and within the past month had grown steadily uncertain. "And now," she said at last, "I am blind. . . . I think I should like to tell my father—if you please. Then, when I have seen him and poor Angers, if you would come again! There is work to be done. I hoped it would be finished before this came; but—there, good friend, do go. I will sit here quietly."

She could not see his face, but she heard him say, "My love, my love," very softly, as he rose to go; and she smiled sadly to herself. She folded her hands in her lap, and thought, not bitterly, not listlessly,

but deeply. She wanted to consider all cheerfully now: she tried to do so. She was musing among those flying perceptions, those nebulous facts of a new life, experienced for the first time. She was now not herself as she had been: another woman was born; and she was feeling carefully along the unfamiliar path which she must tread. She was not glad that these words ran through her mind continuously at first:—

*“A land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death without any order, and where the light is darkness.”*

Her brave nature rose against the moody spirit which sought to take possession of her, and she cried out in her heart valiantly: “But there is order, there *is* order. I shall *feel*

things as they ought to be. I think I could tell now what was true and what was false in man or woman: it would be in their presence, not in their faces."

She stopped speaking. She heard footsteps. Her father entered. Murray Farling had done his task gently, but the old planter, selfish and hard as he was, loved his daughter; and the meeting was bitter for him. The prop of his pride seemed shaken beyond recovery. But the girl's calm comforted them all, and poignancy became dull pain. Before parting for the night, Marie said to Farling: "This is what I wish you to do for me: to bring over two of your horses to Point Assumption on the river. There is a glen beyond that, as you know, and from it runs the steep and

dangerous Brocken Path across the hills. I wish you to wait there until Monsieur Laflamme and Carbourd come by the river: that is their only chance. If they get across the hills, they can easily reach the sea. I know that two of your horses have been over the path: they are sure-footed; they would know it in the night. Is it not so?"

"It is so. There are not a dozen horses in the colony that could be trusted on it at night, but mine are safe. I shall do all you wish."

She put out both her hands and felt for his shoulders, and let them rest there for a moment, saying: "I ask much, and I can give no reward except the gratitude of a girl who would rather die than break a promise. It isn't much, but it is all that



is worth your having. Good-night. Good-by!"

"Good-night. Good-by," he gently replied; but he said something beneath his breath that sounded determined, devoted, noble.

The next morning, while her father was gone to consult the chief army surgeon at Noumea, Marie strolled with Angers in the grounds. At length she said, "Angers, take me to the river, and then on down, until we come to the high banks." With her hand on Angers's arm, and in her face that passive gentleness which grows so sweetly from sightless eyes, till it covers all the face, they passed slowly towards the river. When they came to the higher banks, covered with dense scrub, Angers paused, and told Marie where they were.

“Find me the she-oak tree,” the girl said: “there is only one, you know.”

“Here it is, my dear. There, your hand is on it now.”

“Thank you. Wait here, Angers, I shall be back presently.”

“But, oh, my dear”—

“Please do as I say, Angers, and do not worry.” And the girl pushed aside some bushes, and was lost to view. She pressed along vigilantly by a descending path, until her feet touched rocky ground. She nodded to herself, then, pressing between two bits of jutting rock at her right, immediately stood at the entrance to a cave, hidden completely from the river and from the banks above. At the entrance, for which she felt, she paused, and said aloud, “Is there any

one here?" Something clicked far within the cave. It sounded like a rifle. Then stealthy steps were heard, and a voice said:—

"Ah, mademoiselle!"

"You are Carbourd?"

"Yes, mademoiselle, as you see."

"You escaped safely, then, from the rifle-shot? Where is the soldier?"

"He fell into the river. He was drowned."

"You are telling me the truth?"

"Yes, he stumbled in, and sank—on my soul!"

"You mean you did not try to save him."

"He lied and got me six months in irons once; he called down on my back one hundred and fifty lashes a year ago; he had me kept on bread

and water, and degraded to the fourth class, where I could never hear from my wife and children, never write to them. I lost one eye in the quarries because he made me stand too near a lighted fuse"—

"Poor man! poor man!" she said. "You found the food I left here for you?"

"Yes, God bless you! And my wife and children will bless you, too, if I see France again."

"You know where the boat is?"

"Yes, I know."

"When you reach Point Assumption you will find horses there to take you across the Brocken Path. Monsieur Laflamme knows. I hope that you will both escape; that you will be happy in France with your wife and children, and Monsieur Laflamme with his art."

“You will not come here again?”

“No. If Monsieur Laflamme should not arrive, . . . and you should go alone, leave one pair of oars : then I shall know. Good-by.”

“Good-by, mademoiselle. A thousand times I will pray for you. Ah, *mon Dieu!* take care! you are on the edge of the great tomb.”

She stood perfectly still. At her feet was a dark excavation where was the skeleton of Ovi, the king. This was the hidden burial-place of the modern Hiawatha of these savage islands, unknown even to the natives themselves, and kept secret with a half-superstitious reverence by Marie Gorham, who had discovered it a few months before.

“I had forgotten,” she said. “Please take my hand and set me right at the entrance.”

“Your hand, mademoiselle? Mine is so —! It is not dark.”

“It is dark to me, for I am blind.”

“Blind! blind! Oh, the pitiful thing! Since when, since when, mademoiselle?”

“Since the soldier fired on you,— the shock. . . .”

The convict knelt at her feet. “Ah, mademoiselle, you are a good angel. I shall die of grief. To think — for such as me!”

“You will live to love your wife and children. This is the will of God with me. . . . Am I in the path now? Ah, thank you.”

“But Monsieur Laflamme,— this will be a great sorrow to him.”

Twice she seemed about to speak, but nothing came save good-by. Then she crept cautiously away

among the bushes and along the narrow path, the eyes of the convict following her. She had done a deed which, she understood, the world would blame her for if it knew, would call culpable or foolishly heroic; but she smiled, because she understood also that the spotless heart and perfect mind cast out fear, and are safe among the lions.

At this time Rive Laflamme was stealing watchfully through the tropical scrub, where hanging vines tore his hands, and the sickening perfume of jungle flowers overcame him more than the hard journey which he had undergone during the past twelve hours.

Several times he had been within voice of his pursuers, and once a Kanaka scout passed close to him.

He had had nothing to eat, he had had no sleep, he suffered from a wound in his neck caused by the broken protruding branch of a tree; but he had courage, and he was struggling for liberty,—a tolerably sweet thing when one hasn't it. He found the Cave at last, and with far greater ease than Carbourd had done, because he knew the ground better, and his instinct was keener. His greeting to Carbourd was nonchalantly cordial.

“Well, you see, comrade, King Ovi's Cave is a reality.”

“Yes, so.”

“I saw the boat. It is safe. The horses? What do you know?”

“The horses also will be at Point Assumption to-night.”

“Then we go to-night. We shall



have to run the chances of rifles along the shore at a range something short; but we have done that before at the Barricades, eh, Carbourd?"

"At the Barricades. . . . It is a pity that we cannot take Citizen Louise Michel with us."

"Yes, a pity; but her time will come."

"She has no children crying and starving at home like"—

"Like yours, Carbourd,—like yours. Well, I am starving here. Give me something to eat. . . . Ah! that is good—excellent! What more can we want but freedom? Till the darkness of tyranny be overpast,—overpast, eh?"

This speech brought another weighty matter to Carbourd's mind. He said,—

“I do not wish to distress you, but” —

“Now, Carbourd, what is the matter? Faugh! This place smells musty. What’s that? A tomb? . . . Speak out, Citizen Carbourd.”

“It is this: Mademoiselle Gorham is blind.” And then Carbourd told the story, with a great anxiety in his words.

“The poor mademoiselle! Is it so? A thousand pities! So kind, so young, so beautiful! Ah! I am distressed; and I finished her portrait yesterday. Yes, I remember her eyes looked too bright, and then again too dull; but I thought that it was excitement, and so — that!”

Rive Laflamme’s regret was real enough up to a certain point; but, in sincerity and value, it was chasms

below that of Murray Farling, who even now was getting two horses ready to give the Frenchmen their chance.

After a pause Laflamme said: "She will not come here again, Carbourd? No? Ah, well! perhaps it is better so; but I should have liked to speak my thanks to her. She is so kind!"

That night Marie Gorham sat by the window of the sitting-room, with the light burning, and Angers asleep in a chair beside her,—sat till long after midnight, in the thought that Laflamme, if he had reached the Cave, would perhaps dare something to see her and bid her good-by. She would of course have told him not to come; but he was chivalrous, and then her blindness would touch

him. . . . Yet, as the hours went by, the thought came: Was he, was he so chivalrous? Was he altogether true? . . . He did not come. The next morning Angers took her to where the boat had been; but it was gone, and no oars were left behind. So both had sought escape in it.

She went to the Cave. She took Angers with her now. Upon a wall a paper was found. It was a note from Rive Laflamme. She asked Angers to give it to her without reading it. She put it in her pocket, and kept it there until she should see Murray Farling. He should read it to her. And she said sometimes, as she felt the letter in her pocket: "He loved me. It was the least that I could do. I am so glad." Yet she was not altogether

glad, either ; and disturbing thoughts crossed the parallels of her pleasure.

It was the governor and Madame Solde who first brought news of the complete escape of the prisoners. They had fled across the hills by the Brocken Path, and, though pursued after getting across, reached the coast and were taken aboard the "Parroquet," which sailed away with them. It is probable that Marie's visitors had their suspicions regarding the escape ; but they were gentle, and did not make her uncomfortable. The fact is, the pity of the governor and his wife was very acute ; and the cause of its special acuteness the governor made known, shortly after, to Murray Farling. But just now they were most concerned for the girl's physical misfortune. Madame

Solde said to her, "My poor Marie, does it feel so dreadful, so dark?"

"No, madame, it is not so bad. There are many things which one does not wish to see, and one is spared that."

"But you will see again,—when you go to England, to great physicians there."

"Then I should have three lives, madame,—when I could see, when sight died, and when sight was born again. How wise I should be!"

They left her sadly, and after a time she heard footsteps that she knew. She came forward, and greeted Murray Farling.

"Ah!" she said: "all has been successful, I know; and you were so good."

"Yes, they are safe upon the

seas," he gently replied; and he  
kissed her hand.

"Now you will read this letter for me. Monsieur Laflamme left it behind in the Cave."

With a pang he took it, and read thus:—

*Dear Friend,*—My grief for your misfortune is inexpressible. If it were possible, I should say so in person; but there is danger, and we must fly at once. You shall hear from me in full gratitude when I am in safety. . . . I owe you so many thanks, as I give you so much of devotion . . . But there is the future for all. . . . Mademoiselle, I kiss your hand.

Always yours,

RIVE LAFLAMME.

"Murray!" she said sadly, when he had finished.

He started at the word: "Yes, yes, Marie."

“I seem to have new knowledge of things, now that I am blind. I think that letter is not altogether real, though it has gratitude. But *you* would have done it differently. You see, that was his way of saying — good-by.”

What Murray Farling thought, what he knew from the governor, whom he had met on his way to Pascal House, he dared not say. He was silent.

She continued: “I could not bear that one who was innocent of any real crime, and who was a great artist, and who believed himself to be a patriot, should suffer so here. When he asked me, I helped him. Yet I suppose I was selfish, wasn't I? — it was because he loved me.”

Murray Farling spoke breath-



lessly, "And because—you loved him, Marie?"

Her head was lifted quickly, as though she saw, and was looking him in the eyes. "Oh, no! oh, no!" she cried. "I never loved him. I was deeply sorry for him,—that was all."

"Marie, Marie," he said very gently, while she shook her head a little pitifully, "did you love any one else?"

She was silent for a space, and then she said: "Yes. O Murray, I am so sorry for your sake that I am blind, and cannot marry you."

"But, my darling, you shall not always be blind: you shall see again, I hope. And you shall marry me also. As if—O Marie, as if one's love could live but by the sight of the eyes!"

“Poor brave Murray! . . . Blind, I could not marry you. It would not be just to you.”

He smiled with a happy hopeful determination: “But if you should see again?”

“Oh, then, dear . . .”

And she married him; and in time her sight returned, though not completely. And Murray Farling never told her, as the governor had told him, that Rive Laflamme, when he was in New Caledonia, had a wife in Paris; and he is man enough to hope that she may never know.

# The Cave of Crys



# The Cave of Crys



## I.

**G**USTAVE FLAVELLE had a strong sense of humor.

That was why his imprisonment in New Caledonia for political crimes, in company with his friend and compatriot Henri Rochefort, had been relieved of some of its deadly *ennui* and despair. It was how he managed to make friends among the *libérés* and *récidivistes*, as among the officers and *gendarmes*. It was why the corner of the island set apart for political prisoners, behind an ominous escarpment of sea and bayonets, was less dreary for all than it otherwise would have been; why Junie

Cavour or La Grive, the Cricket, as she was called, the sometime keeper of the secret of Monsieur le Commandant, laughed in his face at an inspection one day, patted him on the shoulder, and called him *un beau garçon*; why, perhaps, as a sequence, she came again under the very noses of the guards,—for did she not always bear the commandant's permission to go where she listed?—and said to him gayly and meaningly that the cage of the starling was not built for the eagle. It was why on the motionless, tropic sea, with but a cupful of water left for her, and no food at all for either, bereft of sail and helpless of arm, he had heart enough to say in a cheery, if thirstily arid voice: “Ah, Junie, *ma cbérie*, you shall see! There will be land

or a ship to-morrow, or the next day, truly!"

Junie Cavour, sitting still and nerveless in the stern, only raised her head with a smiling languor, and moved her hand to her companion with an assent which was half protest, and said nothing. He continued: "*Ma foi*, what a mother France is! To-day she is the lover of those whom princes cherish: to-morrow she cherishes those who hate princes. It is a strange nation. Yesterday Paris said: '*Voilà!* The pen of Gustave Flavelle—it is good!' Now with droll distress she cries, 'Gustave Flavelle!—ah, most execrable!' Well, it is no matter. . . . I am free. That is much. Why am I free? Because Junie Cavour made one, two, three, many guards so

blind! and put out to sea with me on the night of the great banquet at the Hôtel du Gouverneur. Why was La Grive so minded to suffer the perils of the ocean, this thirst, this hunger, the sweating sun of the hurricane season, the malarial moon that pinches the face and leaves it glassy and cold, and the trembling chance of reaching land across three thousand leagues of misery with Gustave Flavelle, the outlaw of France? *Eb bien!* that is a question which Gustave Flavelle cannot answer. He is only so grateful! He kisses his hand—there!—to Junie Cavour, and says, *Mon sauveur!*”

La Grive, pale of lip and weary of eye, but striking and pathetically handsome still, moved her fingers



slowly over the waves of her tawny hair, and with a wistfully playful motion of the head replied: "You wish to know, *mon ami*? Well, for one thing, because that was misery there for me, too. Monsieur le Commandant,—you *think*? Faugh! I had him, so, around my finger. I was a power, the greatest in New Caledonia. I thought power would bring happiness. Ah! ah! that was amusing! Monsieur le Commandant was devoted—and jealous. He thought me wise in counsel. He applauded me when his foolish officers were stricken in their vanity—by me. But everything palled. I loved nothing of it. I hated them all, except the *gendarmes* and the prisoners. For one political prisoner I had much regret—much. He was gay

and yet wise. He had been wise and yet gay. Years before I had laughed when he was *folâtre*, and cried when he was *triste*—in his books. That was when” . . . . She paused, her lustrous eyes fixed abstractedly on the sickly horizon before her. There was silence for many moments. Gustave Flavelle, with his elbows on his knees and his chin in his hands, watched her. At last he said, “Yes, La Grive, that was — when — when?”

She slowly looked towards him, and replied: “When I was not La Grive, when I was young, when I was an exile in England,—it seemed like that to me,—when I earned my living by teaching good English girls what *not* to read in French. . . . Ah, how like a farce it is! . . . But they

were sweet and noble ; and I was good then, too. . . . I taught them to read Gustave Flavelle. I wished some day that I might come to know him face to face, the young novelist ; and I have. . . . So you see !”

She leaned back with a fluttering suspiration of breath, and relapsed into silence. He shaded his eyes with his hand, and scanned the circle of the horizon mechanically. Then he turned, and said, “ What changed all that, Junie ? ”

Her hands suddenly clinched, her large eyes glowed until the dark rims of suffering around them were one with their dusky radiance. “ Ah,” she said, “ you have discernment—well ! . . . You have seen the fountain at Versailles in the sun,—I was like that ; the roses in the Bois de

Boulogne on a *fête* day,— that ; the song of the birds in the Jardin des Plantes,— that ; the golden stars that dance in June — all that. . . . Well, what? But that is my story. You see the sky there like a yellow shower of mist in plague time, and the red billows of the evil sun that roll through it? Well, that is the background and the foreground of my life. But in New Caledonia they thought I was always gay, because I laughed in their faces. . . . Bah! . . . Do you know, *mon ami*, what it is to have a hot iron band pressing in and in upon the heart, until there is no heart left at all, only a nameless ache, a cold emptiness? No, you do not, except as the poet. Ah, Gustave Flavelle, to think that I speak so to you, and here! . . . Is

it perhaps because we are near to death? Ah! Yes. So. See, to the north, nothing but hateful sea and the murrain sky, the drip of equatorial poison, the sieve of fever. To the south, the east, the west, the same. *Bien, mon* Gustave, would you not drink to death if we each had one glass of wine?"

He had drawn near to her. At her feet he looked up, a suffusing kindness overcoming the pale endurance of his face, and said: "Junie, I did not know you. I was gay, but *not* wise. I only saw the flash of light, not the sun itself."

"So, Gustave, so. Because at first I sang to them, because I danced for them all — convicts, soldiers, prisoners, governor — they called me La Grive. But do you know

what my father called me when I was a little child? It was L'Alouette, because, he said, I would soar, and sing, and . . . *Mais* that was long ago; and — and, *mon ami*, I am, as you see, foolish,—quite.”

Strength had suddenly gone out of her, the rapt passion from her face, the tension from her fingers.

“Poor Junie, poor La Grive!” the other said; and he took her listless hand tenderly. “When we get to the land, *ma chérie*, you shall have the one reward that the outlaw can give; on my soul!”

Her eyes swarmed with flying thoughts for an instant, and then the joy of them faded again, and she said very softly:

“What would you do, Gustave, what would you do for La Grive?”

A swift struggle appeared in his eyes, and then he was about to reply with faintly smiling lips; but she touched his sunken cheek with her forefinger, and whispered:

“Gustave, *mon enfant*, I know the thought that fought with another in you for a moment. What sacrifice for you it told! I used to sing a song—ah, so lightly!—at the *Café Papillon*! What you would do is in it:—

‘God bless all maidens fair, but most  
 The jailer’s daughter gay;  
 She who in youth’s sweet pity  
 Struck all my bonds away;  
 And should I e’er return to Nantes,  
 I’ll wed her yea or nay:  
*Gai faluron, falurette!*  
 I’ll wed her yea or nay—  
*Gai faluron, dondé!’*

“Gustave, *mon brave!* you would do that. Just for the moment that thought came to you. It was noble. But I know. There is one in France, young, beautiful, and good. You see I was Monsieur le Com-mandant’s censor there. You will marry her some day. But that this thing was in your mind for me, for La Grive—it is great; it is like Christ. . . . Ah, but so for me to crown the headlands of your life with the wrecker’s fire— No, that is not Junie Cavour. . . . But, I am so thirsty! My throat, my tongue, afire altogether!”

Gustave Flavelle took the water-bag, nearly empty now, and with compassionate words poured out a few teaspoonfuls of water in a cup and handed it to her. She seized it



greedily, and put it to her lips, but at the moment paused and looked at her companion, whose eyes were on the cup with an involuntary covetousness of thirst. Yet, even then, he was smiling that she should have the water. "No, no," she said, "I will not, unless you also drink, *mon enfant*. I will die first. We must be the same in this, you and I; not man and woman, but soldier and soldier. You know I fought at Voulari. I was wounded. You can see, if you roll up this sleeve, the spear thrust of a native. Well, if you do not drink, neither shall I. . . . Ah! but you must," she continued with playful pathos. "La Grive always is obeyed."

The words were said very slowly, for her throat was painfully dry.

Without a word Gustave poured out a mere drop of water in a cup, and raised it with such a courtesy as one might use at an emperor's banquet. "To the hour when we kiss the shore of Australia," he said. "To that hour with you, Junie!"

They smiled; but that smile was so charged with destiny that a great artist would have immortalized himself to have painted it and them as they drank. They smiled. Others so stricken, so compassed about with peril, might become mere animals of thirst and hunger, mere unkempt, haggard beings broken on the wheel of disaster. Not so they. Their tragedy had comedy, too; their pallor, a smile; their desolation, a relieving light of inner and airy stoicism, both throwing back with

sportive fingers the cowl from the head of death. . . . La Grive, in her great exhaustion, sleeps.

There is no wind to fill a sail, if they had one. In the dank stillness Gustave Flavelle attempts once more to row, first covering La Grive's face with her cloak to protect her from the maddening tropic moon. But his oars only feebly catch the phosphorescent sea. The water, like molten silver, drops heavily from them. At last, with laborious breath, he lays the oars aside, and says: "No, Gustave Flavelle: it is no use. It is all the luck of God now—a wind with a ship or death."

That night, another day, another night and another morning comes: and still they are derelict and alone. No, not alone. The sea is peopled

with phantoms that beckon them downward to the noisome depths. The last drop of water is long gone. Their dim eyes stare out of piteous caverns. La Grive is only just alive. Her companion kneels beside her, his eyes still scanning the horizon for a sail or steamship. She talks of flowing brooks and flowers and birds, of dancing at the *Café Papillon*, of the fight of Vouleri. Once she said with slow, scornful smile: "No, Monsieur le Commandant, no, *mon ami*. It cannot be. I will laugh with you, sing with you, drink with you, rule your country, but never *that!* . . . *Cbut!* you do not know La Grive. We are good comrades. You need me in the government. Tiss! that is enough,—quite." Then, after a long pause, in which hot tears hung

on her lashes, she whispered to Gustave Flavelle, with no knowledge of who he was in her eyes: "Hush, Monsieur le Commandant, I will tell you something. You know Gustave Flavelle, the patriot prisoner? There, that is different,—where one loves." Her companion looked at her with consummate pity and tenderness, and he murmured brokenly: "The poor Junie. Is it so, *ma chérie*? Well, it is good to know as one dies that some one cares." His head sank down beside hers in a partial swoon. How long he lay there he couldn't tell. He was brought to consciousness by feeling a cool breath of air blow over him. He staggered to his feet. There was a wind; and, O God be thanked! there was a vessel on the horizon,

with wide-stretched sails. He seized La Grive's arm, and cried, "Junie, Junie, a sail, a sail!" It came nearer, nearer. Yes, they must have been seen. But the long minutes passed; and the black, pirate-looking craft does not pause, does not turn from its course. . . . It passes them. In vain Gustave Flavelle waves his signal feebly. In vain! "Compassionate God," he said, "they pass us by!" Even so. The forms that crowd the bows of the swart ship grew fainter, fainter. Junie Cavour falls on her knees. "Merciful Jesu," she said, "wilt thou not save Gustave Flavelle, the patriot, and the pitiful La Grive? One cannot die so. Ah, mother of God!"

But the swift vessel sailed sardonically on. Was such a thing ever

heard of before? That awful hospitality of the sea, which levels to one common and heart-grappling degree the mighty merchantman or steel-clad cruiser with the humblest fishing-smack, to be so belied and renounced here! Could anything be more inhuman?

That was what Tom Stormont, gentleman-digger from one of the islands of the New Hebrides, who had by merest accident secured a passage on this doubtful boat, asked of the swarthy-faced captain and the detestable mate of the *Swallow*, and asked it with such determination in his look that any one could have seen him to be a man of mickle might of will. "Great heavens!" he said: "you're not going to leave that derelict to its fate?"

“I stop for nothing or nobody!” was the ruffianly reply. “I had my orders to do one thing, and one thing I’m going to do. I’ve enough on hand to look after these niggers, without turning the *Swallow* into life-boat and hospital.”

Tom Stormont set his teeth grimly. He looked to where the kidnapped natives were jabbering and making excited protest towards the derelict. He scanned the possibilities for compassion in the sulky mate’s face. He glanced towards three seamen who had drawn near, and were sullenly regarding their chief. He made up his mind instantly what to do. “Captain Gaskell,” he said in a voice ringing with power, “you must stop and pick up those castaways! You’re a



‘black-birder,’ a buccaneer of human flesh and blood,”—he pointed towards the natives—“but, so help me God, I don’t believe any other pirate that ever lived would do so scurvy a trick as this! Stop the craft, I say!”

Two armed men, who acted as guards over the natives, at a respectful distance stood still in expectation. The natives crowded upon the barriers which kept them from the after part of the ship. The sailors’ eyes were on Tom Stormont. He recognized the fellow feeling in them. Captain Gaskell’s mouth opened and shut with a mumbling sound, like that of a hound when it snatches at the unbroken flesh of the fox which it has quarried; and his yellow teeth showed savagely behind his red beard. With a roll of curses

he said to the sailors, "Carry him below, and put him in irons."

For this Tom Stormont was prepared. The sailors stood still. He knew they would. He suddenly presented a revolver at the captain's head. "If they stir, you are a dead man," he said. "Give the order to bring the *Swallow* around, and send a boat to pick up those castaways!"

A murmur of approbation came from the sailors. The captain looked at the mate, who stood surlily neutral, and then, pale to his foaming lips, gave the order. The sailors obeyed with alacrity. But, while one movement of a tragedy was drawing to a close, by the rescue of Gustave Flavelle and Junie Cavour, another was beginning. Through the strange pantomime that

had just been enacted, the natives were growing to a knowledge of what kind of demon had brought them away from their island homes. The spirit of rebellion and revenge was born in their black bosoms, even before the castaways were brought on board, and their hands clasped by those of Tom Stormont, who, not to speak it profanely, was henceforth to be to the patriot and La Grive, like him who came out of Edom, mighty to save.

## II.

**F**OR Tom Stormont the situation was fraught with danger of a kind. But his safety lay in the fact that the sailors were friendly to him. Captain Gaskell had only the vagabond mate with him in his ugly venom ; and even this compatriotship of evil was in peril, through his having been too free in his curses regarding the lack of support at the time of the rescue. The loyalty of a drinking villain is ever an uncertain quantity. So the captain considered it wiser not to let loose a fury that might turn and rend him. Besides, he was fully aware that the half-starved natives, poisoned now by the belief that they were being taken to an evil doom, were seething to revolt. He had been too long on

the way from the New Hebrides, the *Swallow* had been becalmed for days, and provisions were now nearly exhausted. A half-dozen well-armed men might keep a hundred unarmed natives at bay ; but Captain Gaskell had awakened to the unpleasant knowledge that half at least of these hundred had knives or native weapons, in the shape of spear-points. He watched them closely, as closely as he watched Tom Stormont, who in his turn was vigilant. With this wind for two days more, these half-fed natives and their suggestive demonstrations would be inside the Great Barrier Reef and on the coast of Australia. But those two days !

Already Tom Stormont and Gustave Flavelle were friends. The Englishman in past days had known

well of the literary and political work of the other, and the armor of companionship was soon welded. Tom Stormont asked no questions concerning Junie Cavour. He knew simply that it was through her the Frenchman had escaped. On the evening of the third day after the rescue he said, however, in the course of a long talk: "I was in Noumea for a day a couple of years ago. They talked much then of a woman called La Grive, who appeared to carry the colony in the palm of her hand, governor and all."

His astonishment was pronounced when the other, emphasizing his remark with puffs of cigarette smoke, coolly nodded towards the spot where Junie Cavour was making a picture of dramatic suggestiveness as she

movelessly watched the sinking sun, and replied, "*She* is La Grive."

"She, Monsieur Flavelle! She, La Grive! You astound me. Why" — He paused; for at that instant he heard the loud snarl of voices behind them, and, turning, he saw the mate staggering across the deck with drunken gesture. Behind him was the captain. A name was bandied between the two with menace on the one hand, with growls of profane defiance on the other. Yet why should that name bring Tom Stormont swiftly to his feet? Why should it cause Junie Cavour to turn sharply and amazedly round? Why should it send the mate with frenzied gesticulation down the hatchway?

In an instant Tom Stormont, with grim, inquiring face, was by the cap-

tain's side. "To whom are these natives consigned? In other words, whose boat is this, and who pays you for stealing these islanders?" he asked.

Captain Gaskell looked Tom Stormont up and down with an ineffective attempt to be overwhelming, and gruffly said: "So you'd like to know the name of the J. P. that's going to put you behind the bars for mutiny, eh? You're hankering to know who owns these niggers and this *Swallow* and the biggest sugar plantation and a third of one of the fattest gold mines in Queensland? Well, then, take Rothsay Hecklar in your throat, and see how you like it." And the ruffian walked aft.

Tom Stormont said that name



over and over to himself, with his hands thrust deep down in his pockets. His lips were curled in contempt: there was a fret of battle in his eyes. The sound of some one breathing hard caused him at last to look up; and he saw La Grive standing before him, her face radiating suppressed excitement, and a wan smile of discovery on her lips. Their eyes were set to one long, penetrative look, and then a triumphant glance of knowledge impelled the woman close to the Englishman. She scanned his face closely; and, with a shuddering sigh, she said: "Ah, monsieur! it is so strange! I had not remembered you until now, and yet your face has haunted me ever since you rescued us. Since *you* rescued us,

monsieur,—that is so strange, too. You, Rothsay Hecklar's enemy! You do not remember me? No! You never knew me! But that night you arrived from America I saw you near his house in London, when they came out together—he and she, Rothsay Hecklar and Madeline Boyer, his wife." . . . She threw her head back as does a deer when it faces its pursuers, and her teeth closed with suggestion of animal malison. Tom Stormont dazedly regarded her as she continued: "You watched them drive away. You were stunned, bewildered. In crossing the street, a hansom knocked you down. From your pocket a letter fell,—a letter to *him*. I picked it up, and—kept it. And then they came and carried

you away. I tried to follow; but I was weak and ill, and couldn't. . . . And, then, do you know what they did with me? They arrested me in the street. They said that I had too much wine. Oh, how they lied — the English beasts! They could not tell when a woman's brain is turned and her heart is broken. . . . I was in the hospital for a long time. The years have passed; and so I am here and you are here, Monsieur Tom Stormont!"

Gustave Flavelle had withdrawn from them at La Grive's first words. These were confidences which he felt he had no right to share. Tom Stormont said with depreciating gesture: "I believed in him. We were friends."

"Yes, yes, I know. You went

away to California together, after gold. You found it at last — much. But then you were taken ill of fever at a lonely spot in the Sierras. He abandoned you, and carried the money with him. Some Indians found you, and you recovered after a long time. You came back to England to find him rich, of course, and — though it was not *of course* — married to the girl who had promised to be your wife — the good Madeline Boyer. . . . He had made her to believe that he had nursed you till you died — he was sure you *had* died; and she, without love, married her lover's friend. Ah! So, the poor lady! . . . Tell me, monsieur, does he or she know that you live?"

"No, I would not wreck her life;

and I spared him, too, and came to the South Seas."

"But now—but now, monsieur, what will you do? You are poor, eh! is it not so?"

"Yes, I am poor."

"Well, he has money: it is yours. His wife is yours: he stole both from you, and he killed you. Yes, he killed your life. I know!" . . . She touched his breast with her forefinger, gently.

Tom Stormont looked at her half-wonderingly, half-pityingly; for he felt that she had some tale of ill on her own behalf to unfold. "And you," he said. "What do you expect from this? Wherein lies your wrong, La Grive?"

"Ah! you know they call me that. . . . Wherein lies my wrong, mon-

sieur?" She shook her head back with a laugh, but her eyes were afire. She leaned for a moment against a mast wearily. Then she continued: "He lied to me at the first so grossly! but that is no matter now. I was alone: I loved him then. That was something, was it not, to be loved with a first love, altogether? . . . I was foolish and young. I liked power and money — many things. I was ambitious. . . . He did not keep his word. . . . I did not care so much of the wrong — the world was bright, and he was kind — until my child was born. . . . Ah! monsieur, it was so sweet. I could have died of that happiness. But then rose the thought of the days to come. All at once I waked to the great aching misery. I saw its life — a girl — nameless!

I hardened my heart. I told him that he must be true for the baby's sake, the little Faustine. . . . *Mais* I learned then how cruel a man can be. I saw that he hated the pretty flower of my life. One night I was taken suddenly ill, and nearly died. . . . I think sometimes that was poison. He would know. . . . When I became conscious and the danger was past, he told me that the child was dead, that I had accidentally smothered it. Oh, what a devil was in him! . . . I knew that, if I were mad as a thousand devils like his, I could not hurt Faustine. . . . Well, at last I suspected another wrong to me; and on that night, when you discovered him, I discovered also the wrong. . . . I had not known that he had married until then. . . . When

I recovered, they had left England. One day a message came to me from a dying woman. I went to see her: it was a maid who was in the house when Faustine was *killed*—yes, killed by Rothsay Hecklar, her father. Ah! *mon Dieu!* the woman came back one swift instant from death to tell me that much, but only that much! . . . And so you see!”

Tom Stormont did not immediately reply. Something very like a sob was choking him: her story had been told with such searching pathos. She saw this, and with a tremulous motion of the hand towards him said: “I have told you all, because I believe this meeting is of heaven—for one of us. Which one? Ah! Monsieur Stormont, you are a good man: you are brave, too. You are like Gustave,



great — in a different way. *Bien!* You know now all of La Grive. . . . *Regardez*: you will be silent over there?" she pointed in the direction of that sky line beyond which Australia lay — "silent until the time has come; and then you and I will speak of this once again."

Tom Stormont slowly replied: "You have told me your history. Well, I am sorry. It only makes me hate *him* the more. But we will not speak of this again, mademoiselle — if you please."

But Junie Cavour saw before her a vista of fateful events. There should appear a new heaven and a new earth for at least two of the children of men. But in that new heaven and new earth she knew she would have no part or lot. She only

smiled at that prescient thought, and said to her companion: "Yes, monsieur, we will speak of it just once again . . . and then not at all. I have told you so much. I will tell you more. It is best so. You will understand Gustave Flavelle, the patriot, there. Well, he is noble. He would sacrifice himself for me: that is the poet in him. He shall not, monsieur; but it is beautiful to think of for a moment. It is heaven, — quite. . . . *Pardon! pardon!* that I speak so much, but . . . Ah! what is that?" she added sharply.

From the native quarter there came muttering sounds, like the growls of wild beasts. Tom Stormont had been so long among the Polynesians that he caught instantly at a sense of danger. He ran for-

ward. Among the natives was the mate, blinded with drink. He was pouring out liquor from a bucket, and handing it to the islanders. The stalwart digger sprang over among them, seized the bucket, and hurled it into the sea. Then he endeavored to push the mate aft. But the wretch was mad with drink, and blood-thirsty. He turned to the savages, and in a few words of their own language raised them to murderous frenzy like his own. Tom Stormont retreated swiftly aft, calling for the guard to stand steady—which they did not do—and to the captain and sailors to arm. La Grive he drew swiftly back. To the captain Tom Stormont said: "Don't fire yet. Let me do what I can first."

Six rifles were levelled. The natives in their onward movement paused. Even six death-dealing weapons are awkward for a hundred men to face at the start. The savages suddenly changed their plan of action. They pushed the mate before them, and held their knives over him menacingly. This instantly sobered him. Sane now, he grew lividly still with fear. "More drink, more food!" the blacks shouted. It was at this moment that Tom Stormont, notwithstanding the captain's cursing determination to fire, stepped between the natives and the rifles, coolly drew his tobacco pouch from his pocket, and quickly yet not hurriedly filled his pipe, walking steadily towards the foremost Polynesian, and looking him

in the eye unconcernedly as he did so. He knew the calibre of this race: harmless enough, when not roused; fiendish, when the lust of fighting was on them. His easy intrepidity dazed them for a moment. He spoke to them words of good-fellowship, and the sentiments were given interesting emphasis. He held the now lighted pipe to the mouth of this foremost native. There was an instant sullen gravity, then the mouth slowly opened and the pipe-stem went in. This done, he took some cigarette-papers from his pocket, rapidly rolled one and handed it to another native, motioning him to light it at the fiery pipe. Others quickly followed; and, as the natives received the gifts, they put their weapons in

their *lava-lavos* or laid them aside. A spell was on them. In this brief, strangely-won truce the mate began to creep away. Tom Stormont saw the danger, and in a low tone commanded him to be still for a little longer. But the fellow was in terror of his life, and only quickened his movements. There were ominous sounds from some of the yet unbribed natives, and an upraised knife showed that a critical moment had arrived. But just at the supreme apex of doubt, and when Tom Stormont felt that lives were hanging by a gossamer thread, one of the natives called to the others with a wild-eyed chuckle. "See! see!" he said.

There on the deck between the natives and the rifles was La Grive! She had instantly seen the danger

and the intrepidity of Tom Stormont's scheme to save the mate. It flashed through her mind at the same time how once in the forest of New Caledonia, before the fight at Voulari, she had saved her own life as well as that of the commandant and his aide-de-camp by her dancing—dancing that had turned the heads of London one year; how the natives had been so overcome that they made her a chieftess by rubbing her arm, lanced with a spear-point, against the bleeding shoulder of a great chief.

And now she was dancing on the deck of the *Swallow*.

“Put up your rifles, gentlemen-executioners,” said Tom Stormont to himself, as he pushed the mate aft with his boot: “there will be no bloodshed to-day.”

To dance well is as great an achievement in the eyes of a Polynesian as to be dexterous in the accumulation of gory heads in battle.

From the first instant La Grive caught and held the gaping attention of the natives. There was something diabolically beautiful in the dramatic intensity of this dancing. It was not only sensuous grace, not mere bending and swaying, but splendid poetic strength, magnificent nervous meaning, superb aplomb — the daring rhapsody of a glorious Mænad. There in the tropic sunset, on a suddenly becalmed sea, with the sails idly flapping for an accompaniment, she danced hatred and evil and blood-thirstiness away. Now it was the tense pose of one who would defy the stars in their



courses, now the faint roll of musketry from her vivid feet. The movement of armies was in the lissome breadth of her fine gestures, the gayest, weirdest fantasies of a master musician were in the enchanting rhythm of her swaying body, the rapt exultation of one who was drunken with pure oxygen was in her impassioned face. A black, wandering sea-bird circled overhead, and brown humanity crouched conquered before her. The captain's yellow teeth were clenched to one unmoving grin of fascination. An ecstasy possessed her. She swung, she whirled, she panted with beaming life, she laughed. Swifter, swifter! more and more intoxicating! But let us leave her there triumphant.

### III.

**T**HE *Swallow* sailed into a natural and unfrequented harbor of the Queensland coast in the friendly gloom of a cloudy evening, and her passengers and dusky freight were safely landed. Tom Stormont and La Grive were prepared, if not willing, to see Rothsay Hecklar, the planter and slaver, there; but only his agent was present. To-night the natives were to be housed in some rude huts, and to-morrow started on their march across the hill to "Lebanon," the plantation where Madeline Hecklar, once Madeline Boyer, ruled her household in a stately, neutral way, uninterpreted of those about her, unreadable even to her husband — strangely changed from the warm-

faced, frank-thoughted girl who had bade Tom Stormont God-speed in his quest for gold years ago. A shadow was in her life. Her gift of wise yet not oppressive reticency was the chief outlying evidence of it. The only other apparent testimony was the sleepless eyes that watched the misty moon wheel away behind the hills and the Southern Cross fade into the morning, and the slow lips that murmured hidden thoughts to the waves of a coral sea; but these things were not seen by any eye save God's. She distrusted her husband. She knew some evil had been done her; but she could not surely define it, and she had naught by which to accuse. She also had come to know that his character was unworthy, and that there

was some dark thing in his life. But what?

Once he had dared to tax her with cherishing a memory that was not in keeping with her wifely duty, but he was met by such a vehemence of suggestion and icy scorn that he never repeated his offence. He had bought a hoped-for happiness at a tremendous cost. Fate held a lien on his existence. Foreclosure must occur. It was peculiar that he felt no shiver of warning pass through him at the moment when Gustave Flavelle appeared in his doorway, delivering a note of introduction that the agent—at the harbor—of the *Swallow* had given him. On the advice of La Grive the Frenchman had told the agent just who he was—no criminal, no convict, no enemy

of the morality of the Anglo-Saxon dispensation, but a gentleman of France, companion of Henri Rochefort and Félix Rastoul, sent hugging out of his native country to rot in a savage island of the South. At Lebanon he could wait, she said, until money came — until, through the aid of sympathizers in Sydney, he could sail again for Europe. She was sure that Rothsay Hecklar would be flattered by the association. Besides, she insisted, it suited her that Gustave Flavelle should find his home for a time at Lebanon. And, since Gustave Flavelle had views in his chivalric heart regarding La Grive which as yet he did not make definitely clear to her, he consented to seek a position of Rothsay Hecklar. It was as she said. The

planter, slave-dealer, murderer, as he was, had sensibilities of a pleasing kind, like many another of his class. He was far from adverse to having in his employ, as under-manager, the famous French novelist and politician.

Gustave Flavelle did not hide from the planter the fact that he owed his escape to a woman whom he had left in a hut in the hills near the Hebron Falls, and to whom he was attracted by all the ties of gratitude and — affection. This again was on the advice of La Grive. The Frenchman told the story airily. To the planter it seemed like a page out of Balzac; and he inwardly determined to see to some purpose the rescuer of this newly made under-manager.

“You see, monsieur,” said Gustave Flavelle, finishing his tale, “it is quite amusing; but ah! monsieur,” and he shook his finger in mock reproof, “I am afraid you’ll have to change the command of the *Swallow* if you desire to preserve its stainless reputation. I have much fear that the invitations to travel which its captain issues to the natives of the island are not of the kind encouraged by government. So, truly! . . . Oh, pardon me, monsieur, champagne? . . . Is it not unwise—ah! you laugh so at what I say of the *Swallow!*—is it not unwise that you give your employee champagne? . . . *Bien*, if you insist, then. So I drink—eh, what is that, monsieur?—to my charming and intrepid companion and rescuer!

. . . Ah! Monsieur Hecklar, you honor me much. . . . *De grâce*, a moment. I desire to add to your toast, To the auspicious moment when monsieur has the honor of meeting mademoiselle! She is a great woman, monsieur. You'll see that — quite. Love, wisdom, comedy, tragedy — it is all in her: the full ellipse of life, the perihelion of all the planets of joy and suffering. Monsieur, once again: To the hour when you have the honor to meet La Grive!"

The Frenchman laughed, eyes and mouth, as he stood in the shade of the veranda, and Rothsay Hecklar did not see the boding something behind the laugh; but Madeline, the wife, at that moment glancing from the window, did. She caught



the ring of sharp scorn. The fine rapier point of hate touched the nerves of her heart, and she withdrew to wonder what part this man was to play or had played in her husband's life. The time came when the impression faded, but it had its resurrection duly. And so it was that Gustave Flavelle began a brief career at Lebanon. He superintended the pacific breaking-in of the natives who had made life momentarily exciting on the *Swallow*. He also made Rothsay Hecklar delicately and covertly to understand that a compact of silence was safest for both, since, if one was a refugee from the government of France, the other was open to the practices of the law in Australia through kidnapping natives. And Captain Gaskell did not,

for obvious reasons, have Tom Stormont arrested, as he had threatened. Tom Stormont, on the contrary, secured employment as assistant district engineer on a railway that was being built across the hills and along the precipitous sides of the Hebron Gorge. Junie Cavour, as Gustave Flavelle said, had found a humble home in a mountain hut. She lives a life of mingled joy and tragic apathy. There is a smother at her heart, despite the gay words that rise to her lips, whenever Gustave Flavelle comes to see her, bringing, as he often does, Tom Stormont.

Altogether, there was something about her beautifully sardonic, something so splendidly irregular, so vivid, so mentally certain, so lightning-like in the sweep of the ele-

ments of her nature. Life in her was concentrated along the narrow clefts of impossible mountains, on the copings of dizzy cliffs. Hers was the sure foot of the chamois, the daring heart of the wapiti, the reckless glory of the cassowary as it sweeps down the ratline side of a cañon. She stood on precipitous peaks of life as calmly secure for the moment, as indomitably nerved, as when she rode the horse of Assistant Engineer Tom Stormont along a pathway of Red Bluff, where never horse had trod before — betwixt a river-chasm on one side and a great excavation, for a bridge, on the other. A partridge whirring in the trees, a snake starting from the wild pumpkin vines, a rolling and obtrusive stone, a nervous horse, and

both woman and animal would be no more. What feared she? She was forcing the elements of life into one swift pulsation, one brief scene of activity. How else had she sat before a nest of death-adders at the Cave of Crys in Hebron Gorge, and painted them as they writhed? how else seized one by the neck and held it, as with her brush she sought the colors of its breast?

There was something almost grotesquely fateful in the train of coincidences which had converged here from wide points in the compass of the world, and many a time Tom Stormont thought upon them. There was to him a gloomy fascination in being near his Lost Paradise, his hand almost upon the traitor who had left him shipwrecked, with

the wild sea booming down the hatchways of his life, and who might now, after all these years, at any moment stand before him. He never could rid himself of the thought of that retribution which La Grive had faintly prophesied, however it was to come! for might not harm come to her—to the only woman he had ever loved? He longed for one look at Madeline, one sight of her in her home. He permitted Gustave Flavelle to tell him but little, though the Frenchman lacked not a willing and sympathetic listener in Junie Cavour. At last on a day in which he knew through Gustave Flavelle that Rothsay Hecklar would not be at home he went to Lebanon. He came upon Madeline, the wife, seated by

the riverside. She did not see or hear him. He was hidden in the pines a few paces from her. With tears in her voice she was reading aloud that rare and beautiful tale in verse, *Convict Once*. She stopped many times, and looked around as though something in her presence troubled her. At last she took a piece of paper, and wrote on it swiftly, freely. She then copied what she had written, and laid the first slip on the rough seat beside her. After a moment's thought she rose, and began to walk slowly away. Tom Stormont stole quietly out, picked up the paper she had left, and returned to his hiding-place just in time; for she came back to get the paper. When she saw that it was gone, she looked around timidly,

and her hand pressed her heart. With fear in her sad eyes, she disappeared among the trees. She did not see a strong man lean his head against a tree, with a sob rattling in his throat. This is what he had read:—

“ If thou art dead, I pray thee come not near me;  
 For, living, I the parting word have said.  
 If thou canst hear, O noblest spirit, hear me!  
 Touch not my presence now, if thou art  
 dead.

“ I would be strong, be faithful and enduring;  
 Fret at no chain, accuse not, nor despair;  
 Strain at no hope, bend to no light alluring;  
 Nor memory cherish, for that thou art  
 there.

“ If thou art dead, have pity; see, I tremble!  
 I dare not love thee, love, so sore bestead;  
 I would be true, though he, though all, dis-  
 semble—  
 Why wakens so my heart, if thou art  
 dead? ”

These words were in Tom Stormont's mind the next day when he stood in the office doorway of the "Sunburst" gold mine at the entrance to Hebron Gorge, waiting for the manager, whom he had sought on business. Two men were emerging from a shaft before him. Suddenly there was a sharp cry from one of them. They had forgotten that Rothsay Hecklar, one of the directors, was below, inspecting a new lead—and the fuse of the blasting had been lighted! The name of Rothsay Hecklar rankled through the summer air to Tom Stormont, as he ran towards the shaft. He understood on the instant. The men dared not venture to save the imperilled man. Tom Stormont swiftly stepped into the cage, and gave orders



to lower away. In spite of protestations on the part of the miners the cage was lowered, and he disappeared. White faces above waited in dreadful suspense for an explosion — which never came! At length there was the signal to haul up; and soon Tom Stormont and Rothsay Hecklar appeared above the surface, the one calm and austere, and holding in his hand an inch of fuse — the one inch that had been between the planter and his doom — the other downcast, and with a look of sullen shame in his eyes. Without a word they parted. What was said, what was done, at that meeting in the grim solitude of the tunnelled earth, with death quivering from its impotent attack at the feet of these two men, one the wronged, the rescuer, the

other the wronger, the rescued, lies hidden in their own hearts and in the silences which are not of earth.

The evening of that day La Grive had a notable interview with Gustave Flavelle, who had ridden up from the plantation. She told him that several times Rothsay Hecklar had tried to see her — of course without knowledge of her identity — that she had avoided him, but that she had determined to see him now. Gustave Flavelle, with a sudden premonition of evil, tried to dissuade her from her purpose, and proposed that they should leave for the south, now that money from his sympathizers had come, to seek some quiet spot where they could live their lives free from turmoil, and spend their days in security, un-

touched by the arrows of persecution, unvexed by the passion of revenge. "Junie, *ma chérie*," he said, "is it worth while now—your hatred? You have me. Would you kill him? Is that it?"

She was silent for a moment; and then she said: "Gustave, it is my whim; . . . but you need not fear. I will not kill him as you think—*not as you think*. That would not be pleasant for you in memory, *mon ami*. To kill him would part us: it would be good for you, but the thought of a stab or a bullet wound would be vulgar—quite. . . . *Mais*, my Gustave, I wish to say something to you. I know that you should go to Europe—into the great world. I know that there is some one who waits for you, and mourns that you

come not. *Bien*, you will not go. Why? Because you are so good. You think of La Grive. You cannot go and take her with you. You will not desert her. . . . Ah! ah! Gustave do not kiss me so. Your arm is so strong. . . . Hush! You must *not* say that. You must be true to yourself, to France. *Chut!* You must forget Junie. I followed you because I was tired of that life there. Well, I am here. We are good friends. Is not that enough? We will part so — soon.”

He interrupted her: “No, no, Junie Cavour! I know your heart. It shall be as I wish. You risked your life for me — all for me” — a smile was set in a fine firmness on his face — “and I swear to you that I will not leave you. But you shall

go with me, not as Junie Cavour, but as June F" — She put her fingers with tremulous solemnity on his lips, interrupting the word: "*Mon Dieu!* hush!" she said; "but you shall not, my Gustave."

Her eyes were moist. She suddenly shook back her hair from her brow, drew away from him quickly, slightly lifted her skirts, with a smile as pathetic as fascinating, and, as if she were on the stage, executed a few boldly graceful steps before him. "You see, *mon enfant*, what I am," she said — "only La Grive, the dancer, known to the world as the friend of Monsieur le Commandant of New Caledonia. . . . With you, to be blessed by priest before the world? No! No!" Once again she swept away in the dramatic im-

pulse of the dance, then suddenly paused, ran over to him, dropped on her knees at his side, and said softly: "Gustave, *mon ami*, yes, you must leave me forever; . . . but to-night, just to-night, I will think that there is no past and no future, only the present, in which is the thing that is good."

He stroked her hair gently, and thought of how God-like a power in this woman had been turned awry — of what she might have been if, years before, when she was wholly unsoiled of the world, she had come into his life.

After a long silence, she said: "Gustave, to live life all round is given only to the few. It is they who understand for the race, by whose experiences the world is made

wise. That is what you wrote in a tale years ago. . . . *Voilà!* I have had it all—all, Gustave! Of this and that—the song of the bird and the venom of the serpent, the dew on the rose and the hot lead sputtering on the heart, the iron heel of wrong, the hand upon the mainspring of power, the fingers touching the lever of revenge, and” — She paused.

“And what, Junie?”

“And at last chivalry and—love. Is it not enough?”

Outside a tropic storm was sweeping down the Gorge with the splendor of an avalanche. To-morrow the river, fed by many streams, would with majestic force stride to the Hebron Falls, and leap down a thousand feet to the wild rapids

below. But this night Junie Cavour lived in a sunshine which had nothing to do with the wide happenings of the universe.

All that she did was carefully done. She was resting now before the last great scene. The situation of each player had been prepared, had been studied, arranged. She knew when the hour of destiny had drawn all things to itself: the minute of successful curtain-fall should be hers; the victory hers, let the after-joy be whose it would. Unseen by Tom Stormont and Rothsay Hecklar, she had witnessed that tragic comedy at the Sunburst Mine. Then she rapidly drew in the flying cords of fate. She sent such a note to Rothsay Hecklar as she knew would bring him to her, at a certain spot on the



Hebron above the Falls, at a fixed moment the next evening. She had summoned Tom Stormont; and Gustave Flavelle had promised to meet her where she said she would give him her final answer concerning their life, now and hereafter. It is one of those singular circumstances of existence, defying all calculation, but answering to the experience of the world, that Gustave Flavelle thought upon this request only as a whim of La Grive—a dramatic whim. To throw herself into his arms where nature shook its mane back in the pride of its strength seemed to him quite in keeping with the unusual character of Junie Cavour. But there was one other. Madeline, the wife, that wholly pure, and therefore far-off, sister-woman — she, too, must

be there. And so a letter sent to her failed not in its intent, as La Grive knew well it would not. It excited imagination, it hinted at mystery and wrong, it whispered with distant faintness of the dead returned to life and of the balance of happiness readjusted. Yes, Madeline, the wife, would be there.

The morning came, the long day passed, and night found La Grive arraying herself as for a bridal. At nine o'clock she passed from her hut to the riverside, and rowed slowly across the swollen stream, being careful to keep above that point where the whirlpools and the fatal currents began. A figure was waiting on the farther bank as she touched it — the figure of Rothsay Hecklar, come to meet the heroine of the *Swallow* at

ber invitation, at last — her delicate, insinuating invitation, that, as a kind of compensation to his evil heart, followed so hard upon his yesterday's overwhelming. She motioned him to get in. He did so. She instantly pushed off. He made as if to come near her; but she said, disguising her voice: "No, not so — yet. There is much time for greeting — to come." She rowed towards the middle of the stream, but *downwards*, not upwards, as safety required. The moon was hidden. He, unsuspecting, did not think of what the boat was doing. Junie Cavour suddenly rose and lighted the dry twigs in the iron cage at the stern. They were now on the verge of the fatal currents. Now he divined the danger. And at the moment she turned towards him, her

face in the reflected light from the burning wood. He was full in the glare. He recognized her. "You! *You!* Ah, Flavelle's La Grive!" he chokingly said.

Her figure dilated with a lifetime of emotion. She spoke low, though thrillingly. "Yes, I am — La Grive. You know who I once was, Rothsay Hecklar. Justice has been long afoot, but it finds its goal at last." She pointed towards the Falls.

"My God! My God! You have brought me here to kill me."

She raised the oars, and threw them from her into the stream. "It is not I that drives the lightning home," she said: "it is the hand of Heaven." She pointed to the bank. "There is safety. Win it, if you can."

He wrung his hands in impotent despair.

"You smothered my child," she said; "and now you reckon with the smothered vengeance of a mother's heart."

"You are mad! You are mad!" he moaned.

"Yes, I am mad, Rothsay Hecklar; for to live is madness. And to die— Ah, it might have been so different! My child, my sweet Faustine, and I shall never meet again; for where she is I cannot go. But you must come with me to stand before the judgment-seat of God."

He was dull with panic. There was no hope now.

"The Falls! The Falls!" he cried. "We are lost!"

“Yes,” she murmured as if in a dream, as if she now no longer thought of him, sentence being passed. “Yes, we are lost together, you and I. We sail fast and far to-night. See!” She pointed below them towards the shore. “Your wife and Gustave Flavelle, and Tom Stormont above them, there on the rocks. They know all now.”

It was at this moment that those on shore recognized the two far-travelling *voyageurs*. The wife was stricken still with horror; but Gustave Flavelle spoke painfully out across the flume of death: “Ah, Junie! *Mon Dieu!* Junie, come back! come back!”

The boat was now in the straight slide of water that ended at the cataract itself. Rothsay Hecklar was on

his knees, staring in stony dread at the gloom of the massy gorge before them. Junie Cavour was fronted to the shore. Her voice rang clearly out: "Gustave, *mon ami*, it is the Great Justice. *Adieu!* . . . the great Retribution! *Adieu!*" she added, as Tom Stormont, voiceless before this carnival of revenge and readjustment, approached the other two.

There was silence, save for the conquering rumble of the Falls. Suddenly Rothsay Hecklar fell forward, senseless, in the boat. Junie Cavour threw a kiss towards the shore, and turned swiftly to face her doom, as the boat shot like an arrow into the chasm of destruction.

Madeline Hecklar fell, fainting, backwards; but Tom Stormont caught her in his arms.





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