

UNCOLLECTED STORIES

BY

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CONTENTS

[And 'FRISCO Kid Came Back](#)
[The Captain Of The Susan Drew](#)
[Chased By The Trail](#)
[The Devil's Dice Box](#)
[A Dream Image](#)
[The End Of The Chapter](#)
[Even Unto Death](#)
["FRISCO Kid's" Story](#)
[The Grilling Of Loren Ellery](#)
[The Handsome Cabin Boy](#)
[In The Time Of Prince Charley](#)
[King Of Mazy May](#)
[A Klondike Christmas](#)
[A Lesson In Heraldry](#)
[Mahatma's Little Joke](#)
[Night's Swim In Yeddo Bay](#)
[A Northland Miracle](#)
[O Haru](#)
[Old Baldy](#)
[An Old Soldier's Story](#)
[One More Unfortunate](#)
[Plague Ship](#)
[Pluck And Pertinacity](#)
[Proper "GIRLIE"](#)
[The Rejuvenation Of Major Rathbone](#)
[Sakaicho, Hona Asi And Hakadaki](#)
[The Strange Experience Of A Misogynist](#)
[The Test: A Clondyke Wooing](#)
[Thanksgiving On Slav Creek](#)
[Their Alcove](#)
[A Thousand Deaths](#)
[Two Gold Bricks](#)
[The Unmasking Of The Cad](#)
[Up The Slide](#)
[Who Believes In Ghosts!](#)
[Housekeeping In The Klondike](#)

AND 'FRISCO KID CAME BACK

“HELLO ye stiff!—got the makin's? I got ter smoke so bad I can taste it. Say! it's like t'ree squares a day an' a hold me down, ter be wid yer onst more.

“Wot'v I been doin' wid meself? an, w'ere did I snare me good togs? Well, it's dis way. I wuz down in my luck—way down in G—way down under me uppers—Say! I wuz down dat far I fell clear troo' an' cum up on top on de udder side—way up in C. Say! yer wudn't a knowed me!

“Dis is how de presto change happened. I struck a jay town on de C. B. and Q. jerk an' got hoodooed. I battered a house fer me breakfas' an' bumpt up inter a red-headed woman. Say! I wuz dat rattled I fergot ter steal de soap. De nex' house I slammed de gate at, dere wuz a cross-eyed man, an' I didn't spit in me hat. Dat done me all up. I was clean off me nut wid de hoodoo.

“After dat I cudn't put me han' ter nuthin' widout gettin' de gee hee. Nuthin' went O. K. Bimeby, w'en I wuz mopin' up de main-drag, I struck a guy fer de price, an' he wuz a fly-cop an' I got thirty days. Dat settled me. Me name wuz Mud. I wuz not in it. I wuz outen de movement.

“W'en I did me time I wuz goin' ter give de burg de swift an' elegant side sneak—but I didn't. An' dats how I fell clean troo'. Dere wuzn't a freight along 'till dark, so I chases meself around ter have a swim. Den I swiped a kid's line an' went ter fishin'. Dey wudn't bite. I cudn't ketch a cat. I cudn't ketch nuthin' 'till an old Rube take a tumble to himself offen de end. He cum sailin' by wid a horrible thirst on—he cudn't get enuff. I trowed 'm de line an' snared 'm de firs' rattle outen de box.

“W'en I got 'm landed, he sez, 'Yer me saviour.'

“So yer tellin' me,' sez I.

“Yer an angel,' sez he.

“Yer bet yer sweet life,' sez I.

“I'll reward ye,' sez he.

“Now yer shoutin',' sez I.

“Say! dat old guy chases me home, an' after he chewed de rag wid his ole woman—mebbe yer tinkin' I'm tellin' yer a fairy story—but may I never get der price again, if dey didn't adopt me.

“I tole dem me tale of woe. Wot did I w'isper? I tole 'm how me ole man uster t'ump me ole woman w'en he got an edge on, an' I tole 'm how pious she wuz, an' how she uster tell me to be upright an' noble—an' how she kicked de buycket wid a broken heart, an' how de ole man kicked me out, an' how he swilled like 'r fish till he kicked de pig, too. Me little song wuz nuthin' but kick—'fer tell yer de truth,' sez I, 'I wuz never growed up, I wuz kicked up. Dat's how I cum here—I wuz kicked here.'

“Den de ole girl took me in her arms an' sez, 'Me poor boy.' An' de ole boy blows his bandana fit ter kill, an' I makes de stage hit by cryin' meself. Say! dat brung down de house—we all blubbered.

“De old girl—say! she was a nice ole girl—she sez I wud never get kicked no more, an' de ole hoss, he sez he had enuff fer ter take care 'v me too. Dat's how I fell troo' me luck an' cum out on top.

“W'y didn't I hol' it down? Wot are yer givin' us? Wait till I give yer me spiel. It was no snap. see! Dey wuz too good fer me. Every time I'd get settled down ter tinkin' 'v de gang, he'd ask me wot de las' verse wuz, an' w'en I didn't know, he'd look dat hurt it 'd make me feel bad. I never cud listen, 'cept w'en he'd read about Joshua. Say! he wuz a scrapper fer yer life! Den I liked Samson, too. De barbers were on a strike w'ere he lived, an' he wuz stronger dan a locomotive. Parts wuz as good as Deadwood Dick an' Nick Carter, an' w'en he cum to w'ere an ole bloke wuz dat long winded, he lived over nine hundred years. Say! it wuz out uv sight; but den dey wuz a whole lot 'v dem an' I got weary. An' w'en he'd read about dere sons, an' de sons of dem sons, an' de sons of dem sons, an' all de udder sons beside, I'd pound me ear an' snore.

“Den, I cudn't quit swearin', an' every time I'd rip a big 'n out, de old gal'd show de whites 'v her eyes an' say, 'Thomas!' long an' solem' an' reprov'in' like.

“An' dey wud allus smell me breath ter see if I'd ben smokin'. An' dey wudn't let me eat wid me knife, nor spill de java out 'n me saucer. I cudn't never ketch on ter dere style. I was allus jabbin' me knife inter de butter dish, or fergettin' ter put de sugar spoon back in de bowl. Den I chewed out loud an' dat scraped on dere nerves. An' I'd allus fergit an' put de napkins in me pocket w'en I wuz done. Den dey made me sport me head piece straight on me nut, an' dey sed I swung me shoulders too much w'en I walked.

“Den I kep' gettin' inter scraps wid de kids on de block. Had to do somethin' fer excitement, see! One time I got a lot 'v dem on de back fence, an' made 'm sit in a row, wid each a chew of Star in his han'. W'en I guv de word dey all began ter chew. De kid dat chewed de longes' wuz ter get a bird uv a kite I made fer de occasion. Say! yer outen seen dem kids. W'en I called time, dere wuzn't one left on de fence. Yer'd t'ink de cholera 'd struck de town de way all chased home, sick. Say! yer outen ben dere. Dere mudders waltzed over ter de house in flocks an' pestered de life outen de ole girl. Dey sed I wuz corruptin' de good morals uv dere sons, an' dat I was a menace ter dere lives an' property.

“I got inter lots uv scrapes like dat; but I allus jollied dem up an' made it all right. Dey tried ter sen' me ter school—Say! I got de G. B. de firs' day. Dey never got tired—dey wuz allus tryin' ter improve me. Dey wuz bound ter make a good boy outen me, an' I wuz boun' dey wudn't.

“Bimeby I got homesick. I got ter t'inking of de road again—of de gang an' de good ole times I had wid dem. Say! it'd make me heart jump w'en I'd hear an engine whistle, an' I'd t'ink 'v freights an' passengers, an' remember how I uster ketch de blind an' shinny up ter de decks, or grab a gunnel an' swing underneath. An' I wuz jes' dyin' fer a game uv craps 'r seven up. I made up me mind date de adoption scheme was N. G. One day I got ter rememberin' de las' mulligan I had. Yer knows de time—w'en Pittsburg Joe bummed de butcher-shops, an' Chi Slim de bakeries, an' de Montana Sports de groceries, an' you an' I swiped de chickens, w'ile Moulder Blackey got de beer, an' Leary Joe made de fire, an' Skysail Jack did de cookin'. Say! it made me mouth water ter t'ink uv it. I cudn't stand it no longer, so I guv me adopted parents de ditch, an' hit de road onst more.

“Ah! dere's de greasy, old deck again. Don't care 'f I do. I'll go yer jes' onst fer luck. Cut fer deal—Jack High.”

THE CAPTAIN OF THE SUSAN DREW

I

A SUNSET of gilt and blue and rose palpitated on the horizon. A tapestry of misty rain, draping downward from indefinite clouds, obscured the eastern line of sea and sky. Midway between, slightly nearer to the rain, a painted rainbow reached almost to the zenith. So lofty was its arch that the ends seemed to curve inward to the ocean in a vain attempt to complete the perfect circle. Into this triumphal arch, toward the blue twilight beyond, sailed an open boat.

Nor did ever more strangely freighted boat float on the Pacific. In the sternsheets, on the weather side, a stupid-looking Norwegian sailor, in uniform of a quartermaster, steered with one hand while with the other he held the sheet of the spritsail. From a holster, belted about his waist, peeped the butt of a business-like revolver. His cap lay on his knees, removed for the sake of coolness; and his short flaxen hair was prodigiously ridged over a bruise of recent origin.

Beside the sailor sat two women. The nearer one was comfortably stout and matronly, with large, dark eyes, full, direct, human. Her shoulders were protected against sunburn by a man's light overcoat. Because of the heat, this was open and unbuttoned, revealing the decolleté and rich materials of dinner dress. Jewels glinted in the hair, at the neck, and on the fingers. Beside her was a young woman of two- or three-and-twenty, likewise decolleté, sun-shielded by a strip of stained oilskin. Her eyes, as well as the straight, fine nose and the line of the red curve of the not too passionate mouth, advertised the closest relationship with the first woman. In the opposite sternsheet and on the first cross-seat, lolled three men in black trousers and dinner jackets. Their heads were protected by small squares of stained oilskin similar to that which lay across the young woman's shoulders. One, a youngster of eighteen, wore an expression of desperate yearning; the second, half as old again, talked with the daughter; the third, middle-aged and complacent, devoted himself to the mother.

Amidships, on the bottom alongside the centerboard case, sat two dark-eyed women, as evidently maids as their nationality was respectively the one Spanish and the other Italian. On the other side of the centerboard, very straight-backed and erect, was an unmistakable English valet, with gaze always set on the middle-aged gentleman to anticipate any want or order. For'ard of the

centerboard and just aft the mast-step, crouched two hard-featured Chinese, both with broken heads swathed in bloody sweat-cloths, both clad in dungaree garments grimed and blackened with oil and coal dust.

When it is considered that hundreds of weary sea-leagues intervened between the open boat and the nearest land, the inappropriateness of costume of half of its occupants may be appreciated.

"Well, brother Willie, what would you rather have or go swimming!" teased the young woman.

"A cigarette, if Harrison were n't such a pincher," the youth answered bitterly.

"I 've only four left," Harrison said. "You 've smoked the whole case. I 've had only two."

Temple Harrison was a joker. He winked privily at Patty Gifford, drew a curved silver case from his hip pocket, and carefully counted the four cigarettes. Willie Gifford watched with so ferocious infatuation that his sister cried out:

"B-r-r! Stop it! You make me shiver. You look positively cannibalistic."

"That's all right for you," was the brother's retort. "You don't know what tobacco means, or you 'd look cannibalistic yourself. You will, anyway," he concluded ominously, "after a couple of days more. I noticed you were n't a bit shy of taking a bigger cup of water than the rest when Harrison passed it around. I was n't asleep."

Patty flushed guiltily.

"It was only a sip," she pleaded.

Harrison took out one cigarette, handed it over, and snapped the case shut.

"Blackmailer!" he hissed.

But Willie Gifford was oblivious. Already, with trembling fingers, he had lighted a match and was drawing the first inhalation deep into this lungs. On his face was a vacuous ecstasy.

"Everything will come out all right," Mrs. Gifford was saying to Sedley Brown, who sat opposite her in the sternsheets.

"Certainly; after the miracle of last night, being saved by some passing ship is the merest bagatelle," he agreed. "It *was* a miracle. I cannot understand now how our party remained intact and got away in the one boat. And if it had n't been for the purser, Peyton would n't have been saved, nor your maids."

"Nor would we, if it hadn't been for dear brave Captain Ashley," Mrs. Gifford took up. "It was he, and the first officer."

"They were heroes," Sedley Brown praised warmly. "But still, there could have been so few saved, I don't see. . . ."

"I don't see why you don't see, with you and mother the heaviest stockholders in the line," Willie Gifford dashed in. "Why shouldn't they have made a special effort? It was up to them."

Temple Harrison smiled to himself. Between them, Mrs. Gifford and Sedley Brown owned the majority of the stock of the Asiatic Mail—the flourishing steamship line which old Silas Gifford had built for the purpose of feeding his railroad with through freight from China and Japan. Mrs. Gifford had married his son, Seth, and the stock at the same time.

"I am sure, Willie, we were given no unfair consideration," Mrs. Gifford reproved. "Of course shipwrecks are attended by confusion and disorder, and strong measures are necessary to stay a panic. We were very fortunate, that is all."

"I was n't asleep," Willie replied. "And all I 've got to say is it's up to you to make the board of directors promote Captain Ashley to be Commodore—that is, if he ain't dead and gone, which I guess he is."

"As I was saying," Mrs. Gifford addressed Sedley Brown, "the worst is past. It is scarcely a matter of hardship ere we shall be rescued. The weather is delightful, and the nights are not the slightest bit chilly. Depend upon it, Willie, Captain Ashley shall not be forgotten, nor the first officer and purser, nor—" here she turned with a smile to the quartermaster—"nor shall Gronwold go unrewarded."

"A penny for your thoughts," Patty challenged Harrison several minutes later.

He startled and looked at her, shook off his absentmindedness with a laugh and declined the offer.

He startled and looked at her, shook off his absentmindedness with a laugh and declined the offer.

"For he had been revisioning the horrors of less than twenty-four hours before. It had happened at dinner. The crash of collision had come just as coffee was serving. Yes, there had been confusion and disorder, if so could be termed the madness of a thousand souls in the face of imminent death. He saw again the silk-gowned Chinese table stewards join in the jam at the foot of the stairway, where blows were already being struck and women and children trampled. He remembered, as his own party, led by Captain Ashley, worked its devious way up from deck to deck, seeing the white officers, engineers, and quartermasters buckling on their revolvers as they ran to their positions. Nor would he ever forget the eruption from the bowels of the great ship of the hundreds of Chinese stokers and trimmers, nor the half a thousand terrified steerage passengers—Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans, coolies and land-creatures all stark mad and frantic in desire to live.

Not all the deaths would be due to drowning, he thought grimly, as he recollected the crack of revolvers and sharp barking of automatic pistols, the thuds of clubs and boat-stretchers on heads, and the grunts of men going down under the silent thrusts of sheath-knives.

Mrs. Gifford might believe what she wished to believe, but he, for one, was deeply grateful to his lucky star which made him a member of the only party of passengers that was shown any consideration. Consideration! He could still see the protesting English duke flung neck and crop from the boat deck to the raging steerage fighting up the ladders. And there was number four boat, launched by inexperienced hands, spilling its passengers into the sea and hanging perpendicularly in the davits. The white sailors who belonged to it and should have launched it had been impressed by Captain Ashley. Then there was the American Consul-General to Siam—that was just before the electric lights went out—with wife, nurses, and children, shouting his official importance in Captain Ashley's face and being directed to number four boat hanging on end.

Yes, Captain Ashley surely deserved the commodoreship of the Asiatic Mail—if he lived. But that he survived, Temple Harrison could not believe. He remembered the outburst of battle—

advertisement that the boat deck had been carried—which came just as their boat was lowering away. Of its crew, only Gronwold, with a broken head, was in it. The rest did not slide down the falls, as was intended. Doubtlessly they had gone down before the rush of Asiatics, and so had Captain Ashley, though first he had cut the falls and shouted down to them to shove clear for their lives.

And they had, with a will, shoved clear. Harrison recalled how had pressed the end of an oar against the steel side of the *Mingalia* and afterward rowed insanely to the accompaniment of leaping bodies falling into the sea astern. And when well clear, he remembered how Gronwold had suddenly stood up and laid about with the heavy tiller overside, until Patty made him desist. Mutely taking the rain of blows on their heads and clinging stedfastly to the gunwale, were the two Chinese stokers who now crouched for'ard by the mast. No; Willie Gifford had not been asleep. He, too, had pressed an oar-blade against the *Mingalia's* side and rowed blisters into his soft hands. But Mrs. Gifford was right. There were several things it would be well to forget.

II

Daybreak found the boat rolling on a silken sea. Half the night had been dead calm. The big spritsail had democratically covered coolies, servants, and masters. It was now thrown aside, and Harrison began doling out half-cups of water. Willie, smoking another of the precious cigarettes, looked studiously away when a sip more than the others received was poured for his sister.

A screeched "Santa Cristo!" from Mercedes Martinez, Patty's maid, startled them. Harrison nearly spilled the water he was passing to Sedley Brown. The two Chinese had set up an excited chatter. Peyton was turning his head stiffly to see what all quickly saw: a large, yacht-like Schooner, with an enormous spread of canvas, becalmed half a mile away. The Chinese were the first to get oars over the side. Peyton delayed, until ordered by Sedley Brown.

"Row, Willie, row—we 're saved," Patty cried.

"Nothing to stop me from getting my drink of water first," replied that imperturbable youth, addressing himself to the forgotten waterbreaker and drinking cupful after cupful.

As the boat drew near the schooner, they saw several faces peering at them over the rail in the waist of the ship. On the poop a large, heavy-shouldered man smoked a blackened pipe and surveyed them stolidly.

Sedley Brown did not know the etiquette of being rescued at sea from an open boat; but he felt that this somehow was not the way. It was embarrassing. He resolved to make an effort.

"Good morning," he said politely.

"Good morning," growled the big man in a vast husky voice that seemed to proceed from a scorched throat, and that caused Mercedes and Matilda to jump and cross themselves. "What luck?"

"Finest in the world," Sedley Brown replied brightly. "We 're saved."

"Aw hell!" was the surprising comment. "I thought you was out fishing."

This was too much for Sedley Brown, who retired from the negotiations.

"We're the sole survivors of the *Mingalia*, sunk in collision night before last," Willie cried out.

"I suppose I 'll have to let you come aboard," came the coffee-grinder voice. "—Harkins!—throw 'em a line there!"

"You don't seem a bit glad to see us," Mrs. Gifford criticized airily, as she descended on deck from the rail.

"I ain't, madam, not a damn bit," was the reply of the strange skipper.

III

Mrs. Gifford came up the companion ladder from the stifling cabin, looked vainly about for a deck chair, and collapsed against the low side of the cabin house. Her handsome black eyes were flashing.

"It's atrocious," she cried. "It is not to be endured. He is an insulting brute. Anything—the open boat—is better than this horrible creature. And it is not as if he did n't know better. He does it deliberately. It is his way of showing we are not welcome."

"What has he done now?" Patty Gifford asked, from where she stood with Harrison in the shade of the mainsail.

There was no awning, and the pitch oozed from the sizzling dock. From below came the mild protesting accents of Sedley Brown, and squeals and Ave Marias from the maids.

"Done!" Mrs. Gifford exclaimed. "What has he not done? He has insisted on putting Mr. Brown and me into the same stateroom. — They 're awful little cubby-holes, no ventilation, no conveniences—"

She ceased abruptly as Captain Decker emerged from the companion-way and approached her. Patty shuddered and drew closer to Harrison, for the skipper's brown eyes were a-smoulder.

"You must excuse me, madam," he rumbled at Mrs. Gifford. "How was I to know? I thought you and the gentleman below was married. But it's all right." His face beamed with a labored benevolence. "I tell you it's all right. I can splice the two of you legal any time, such bein' a captain's authority on the high seas."

"Go away, go away," Mrs. Gifford moaned.

Captain Decker fixed his terrible eyes yearningly on Patty and Harrison.

"I've pulled teeth," the skipper began, voluminously husky, "and I 've buried corpses, and, once, I sawed off a man's leg; but damn me if I 've ever spliced a couple yet. Now how about the two of you?"

Patty and Harrison shrank instantly apart.

"It might make things more convenient down below," the other was urging, when Sedley Brown arrived on deck.

Him the captain immediately addressed.

"Hey—you; don't you want to get married? I can do it."

Sedley Brown looked involuntarily at Mrs. Gifford and gasped in astonishment.

"No; bless me, no; of course not, certainly not," he declined with embarrassed haste.

Captain Decker's disappointment was manifest in his coffee-grinder throat.

"All right my bully. Maybe you ain't seen the cook yet. I won't say he's clean, but I will say he's a Chinaman. You 'll bunk with him." He turned upon Harrison. "You still got a chance. Say the word an' I 'll tie you up to the girl tigher 'n all hell."

"And if I don't?" Harrison demanded.

"Why, you 'll bunk with—"

At that moment the cabin boy, a grinning, turbaned, moustached Lascar, passed aft along the poop.

"With the cabin-boy—that's him," the skipper completed his sentence.

"Then I 'll bunk with the cabin boy," Harrison decided.

"Suit yourself." Captain Decker strode to the companionway and shouted down. "Where's that mate?. . . . asleep, hey?. . . . Rout 'm out. Tell 'm I want 'm.—Jump, you black devil, you! Jump!" He turned about to the survivors of the *Mingalia*. "Now, here's the sleepin' arrangements. Down below there's six rooms: two starboard, two port, two after under the deck. You two women 'll bunk in number one port; the two Dago girls in number two port; the cook and his nibs here in port after-room—"

"I shall not sleep there," Sedley Brown announced. "I shall sleep on the cabin floor." "You 'll sleep where I tell you to," Captain Decker roared. "Who asked you aboard the *Susan Drew*? I didn't. You 'll sleep with the Chink or I 'll know the reason why, or my name ain't Bill Decker. That servant of yourn 'll sleep on the cabin floor." He now addressed Harrison. "You will bunk with the cabin boy in the starboard after-room. — Where's that mate?"

A most forbidding individual came up through the companion. He was as large as the skipper and as heavily built. Swarthy skinned and high-cheeked, his features were distinctly mongoloid,

despite cut lips, lacerated ears, a blackened eye, and a monstrously swollen nose. He was perplexed, stupid, and in very evident fear of the captain.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is the mate of the *Susan Drew*. He was a beauty once upon a time. He was some man before he run foul of me, which was only yesterday. Look at 'm now. Flat-Nose Russ is his name. An' take it from me that nose was flat before I landed on it. Flat-Nose, you got to take a bunk mate. —Where's that young whelp?"

Captain Decker turned and glared at Willie Gifford sauntering aft from the break of the poop, a brown-paper cigarette carelessly stuck to his lower lip.

"Here, you!"

Willie stopped short.

"Take that cigarette out of your mouth when I talk to you!" the skipper bellowed.

Willie hesitated, the skipper sprang toward him, and Mrs. Gifford screamed. The cigarette came out with dispatch, and Captain Decker turned on Mrs. Gifford.

"Madam, is there any reason why you and his nibs ought n't to be married?"

Mrs. Gifford disdained reply.

"Is there any reason you ought?"

She looked appealingly to Patty, who came to her side. The captain returned to Willie.

"That's right, youngster. Learn to take orders. You see that handsome man by the companionway. That's Flat-Nose. And that's what I do to them I don't love. Throw that cigarette over the side—that 's right—and smoke no more of 'em. Take a pipe if you want to smoke like a man. Now you an' Flat-Nose are going to bunk together. —Flat-Nose, you 're responsible for 'm. If he cuts up any didoes, spank 'm."

Captain Decker strode the length of the poop and back, studied the cloud-driftage crossing the sky from the northwest, debated a moment, then remarked to the company in general:

"It's mighty hot on this deck. Now if by chance anybody might want to get married, I guess I could manage to rig up some sort of an awning."

IV

Below, they sat in anxious council. A week had passed, in which everybody had been bullied and variously insulted, while Willie had been rope's-ended twice for smoking cigarettes and then turned to at holystoning the poop and scrubbing paint-work. Mrs. Gifford and Patty sat at the cabin table, their shoulders and arms at last covered by extemporized shirts of cotton drill. The *Susan Drew* was in violent motion. The surge and gurgle of the water could be heard through her thin sides, and by her long lifts and lunges it was apparent that she was winged out and running before a stiff breeze.

"He is going to Hawaii," Sedley Brown was reporting to Mrs. Gifford. "I charged him with it to his face—told him it must be so, judging by the course he was steering."

"And it is only six days by our steamers, from Honolulu to San Francisco," Patty cried joyously.

"But he refuses to land us," Sedley Brown went on. "He gives no reason. He merely reiterates that we 'll see neither hair nor hide of the islands any more than he will. I can't make out this vessel. There is something wrong about her. But what?"

"Begging your pardon, sir," the valet spoke up, "but I know what. This ship is a smuggler, sir."

"Nonsense, Peyton," Mrs. Gifford reproved sharply. "That's just your imagination. The age of smuggling is past, except among passengers from Europe landing in New York."

"What could he smuggle?" Patty asked.

"Opium, Miss, begging your pardon," the valet replied.

"By George, that's right!" Harrison smote his leg loudly. "The new tariff law's been in effect over a year now. Opium is way up. I remember jading about it six months ago in the San Francisco papers."

"But what will we do if he is a smuggler and won't put us ashore?" Mrs. Gifford demanded.

All stared hopelessly. No suggestions were offered.

"Very well then," she said firmly, "I shall speak to this brute myself. I shall pay him to land us. I shall—"

A pair of feet and legs appeared on the companion ladder, and Captain Decker descended.

"Look here, sir," Sedley Brown gallantly sprang into the breach. "We've been discussing the situation—"

"What situation?" demanded the skipper.

"We know all about this ship," Mrs. Gifford said sternly. "We know you are smuggling opium into Hawaii, and that is why you refuse to land us. But I will pay you to land us. I will pay you five thousand dollars."

"I wouldn't if you made it fifty thousand," was the gruff rejection.

"I do make it fifty thousand. I will pay you fifty thousand dollars to put our party ashore anywhere on the Hawaiian Islands."

Captain Decker gave her a searching glance, and seemed convinced that she meant it. But the effect upon him was contrary to what they expected. His smooth-shaven face, harsh and savage, set obstinately.

"You can't walk over me with your money," he sneered. "Bill Decker ain't a pauper. Fifty thousand ain't no more to me than a piece of shavin' paper. Yes; the *Susan Drew* is a smuggler, and I don't give a rap who knows it, an' I 'll see to it none of you get shore in Hawaii to spread the news. Fifty thousand! Huh! Me and my partners make enough on this one run to retire. I got fifty tons of the dope below. It's worth fifteen dollars a pound. Figure it out. Think I 'd risk a million an' half just to please you. Why, I 'd give fifty thousand myself to get rid of you if there was any way. But there ain't. Take it from me, madam, I ain't stuck on you."

V

The days came and went. In vain Harrison and Sedley Brown scanned the sea-line for land. They knew the high peaks of the Hawaiian Islands were often sighted a hundred miles away; but Captain Decker was true to his word and raised neither hide nor hair of them. His rendezvous was a matter of prearranged latitude and longitude in the ocean waste far off from the traveled steamer tracks. One day, after the morning observation, he shortened sail and hove to. Though days and nights of fresh winds blew, the *Susan Drew* drifted idly. After each morning observation, he would put on sail, regain the lost position, and heave to again.

"Of course—the fox—he is too cunning to venture in to land," Harrison remarked to Patty. "This is the meeting place, where he will transship the opium. He's made a good passage and is ahead of his time, that is all."

Captain Decker grew more insufferable. He had little manners and less courtesy. He dominated any conversation he engaged in, and rudely broke in upon any conversation in which others chanced to be engaged. His table conduct was abominable. He could never keep out of paint or tar, nor refrain from springing to haul on a rope. He was stronger than any two of the sailors, and it was a splendid sight, swinging on a halyard with a turn under a pin, to see him throw himself back and down till his broad shoulders almost touched the deck. But the effect on his hands of this inveterate sailorizing was not nice—at least for those who sat with him at table. His hands, skinned and scarred, gnarled and I calloused, filthy with dirt grimed deep into the texture of the skin, were anything save appetizing to contemplate. Furthermore, he insisted on serving, and did so with those same members, upon which, during the performance, every eye was glued. Stewed prunes was a prime favorite of his, which graced the table three times daily. When he began on his full saucer, all conversation died away. Every person at the table gazed fascinated at the prunes disappearing into his mouth. But no pits came forth. Toward the last his cheeks would begin to bulge and his eyes to I roll. Then, at the end, he would solemnly bow to the empty saucer and I spit out the accumulation in one single, heroic effort.

Mrs. Gifford he made especially uncomfortable. He would gaze at |her for long periods in a curious, speculative way. They even knew him |to break off in the middle of a sentence and so gaze at her, with dropped jaw and puzzling eyes.

"No, you are not my style," he remarked, emerging from one such wown study. "I never did see anything in stout brunettes. Besides, it wouldn't be legal. A sea captain can splice anybody but himself. He's like a lighthouse that way."

A *lighthouse?*" Patty asked, boldly striving to divert the conversation.

"A lighthouse?—oh, a sky-pilot, a parson," was the answer. "When a parson wants to get married he has to get some other parson to do the job. Same with sea captains. Anyway, blonds is what I run to."

With her daughter and Temple Harrison very much occupied in aiding each other to pass the time, Mrs. Gifford was driven more and more by Captain Decker's persecution to accept the attentions of Sedley Brown.

"Now don't worry," she told Patty, who had twitted her. "I have n't the slightest intention of marrying Sedley. He is too much like your dear father. —No, no, nothing invidious. Your father was a dear; but he was too good, too sweet, too mild. I never understood it, either, how such a gentle, non-assertive man could so successfully wield the immense financial power that was his. Of course, Old Silas laid the foundation and built the structure, but your father ably realized all that Silas had planned and not yet achieved. And he did more. The Caledonia and North Shore was entirely his own idea; and in the face of their calling it 'Gifford's Folly' for years, look at what it is to-day."

"But I don't object to Sedley Brown," Patty hastened to disclaim.

"But I do—as a husband," Mrs. Gifford went on. "I know all you would say—our financial interests are so similar, Asiatic Mail, Carmel Consolidated, and all the rest; but. . . . well, I couldn't bring myself to marry him, that's all. He's a dear, kind friend. As such, I adore him. But as a husband—Patty, dear, if ever I marry again it shall be a man—a big strong man."

"But father was big and strong," Patty defended. "He played football at college. Sedley Brown says so, and says that he weighed nearly two hundred pounds. I scarcely remember him myself. I was n't more than four or five years old at the time."

"You've seen photographs and portraits of him though. Don't you remember that ridiculous beard of his? —and on so young a man! Don't you see, Patty? That beard tells the whole story. He hid his

face from men's eyes. He was not aggressive. He could never nerve himself to walk over the face of things rough-shod. He was an adept at finding peaceful ways around. If ever I marry again, it will be a human man, with spunk, who can raise his voice and swear at least once in a while, and fly off the handle, and if he does play the fool play it with strength. I could even forgive such a man for drinking too much on occasion. Your father, my dear, was too perfect for a commonplace mortal woman like me. But it is all beside the question. I shall never marry. There is no proof of your father's death—"

"But the law?" Patty interposed.

"Oh, of course, it is legally established, for business purposes. But I want moral proof."

"Yet there was his hat, picked up off Yerba Buena a week after his disappearance," Patty argued. "In my mind, in everybody's mind, there is n't the slightest doubt but that he was drowned in San Francisco Bay—"

Through the open skylight from below came squeals of terror from Mercedes and Matilda, the servile tones of Peyton, and the roaring huskiness of Captain Decker's whiskey-corroded throat.

"Begging your pardon, sir, I don't understand," Peyton was apologizing.

"Then I say it again," rasped the skipper. "There's the two skirts. Cast your lamps over 'em. Which'll you have?—the Dago? or the Eyetalian?"

More squeals and Ave Marias from the two maids, and reiterations on the valet's part of non-understanding.

"By the tarpaulins of Tartarus!" cursed Captain Decker. "Ain't it plain as the nose on your face? Ain't you a man? Ain't these here women? Ain't I goin' to marry you to one or the other?"

"But you can't, sir—"

"Can't! Maybe you don't know the authority of a captain on the high seas? I can do anything! I can mast-head you, I can keel-haul you, I— and I will, if you don't pick one of them skirts, an' damn lively about it!"

"But I won't be a bigamist, sir, begging your pardon," Peyton wailed. "I 've got a wife, sir, home in England—"

Further explanations were cut short by a snort of rage from the skipper.

"I always thought there was something underhanded about you—you, with your lick-spittlin' an' cringin'. An' a married man all the time!"

"Begging your pardon, sir," Peyton stammered, "Mr. Brown, my employer, sir, knows that I am married. You ask him, sir. He knows I send regular remittances home, sir. He can tell you—"

"Ar-r-r-g-g-g!" Captain Decker's inarticulate disgust was as a coffee-grinder in violent eruption. "Shut up! What are you making all the noise about?"

Mrs. Gifford and Patty heard the skipper's heavy tread on the companion ladder, and in trepidation awaited his appearance on deck. Instead of an explosion, all he was guilty of was a long stare across the sea, culminating in a woe-begone, "Oh dear, oh dear."

VI

He would have been forty-eight years old—had he lived," Mrs. Gifford was telling Temple Harrison.

Most of the party of survivors were sitting on the lee of the poop, in the shady down-draught of the big mainsail.

"Who would?" Captain Decker demanded with his wonted rudeness, as he stood in the nerve-stabbing sunshine, sextant in hand, taking a meridian observation.

"My husband," Mrs. Gifford answered.

The skipper proceeded at once to dominate the conversation.

"How old d' ye think I am?"

Nobody displayed interest, though Willie, on hands and knees, scrubbing paintwork, favored his persecutor with a glare of hatred.

"I am eighteen years old, madam," the skipper continued. He struck his chest with emphasis. "I, me, this man you see before you, for a fact, has lived eighteen years."

"You must have been born man-grown," Sedley Brown observed.

"I was, and with whiskers, sir, and a mustache. I never had a father or mother. I was born, a man, in a ship's fo'c's'le."

"How did you get your name, then?" Harrison queried.

"From the ship's papers. There it was, in black and white, Bill Decker —me. The first thing I did after I was born"

"Was to wipe up the forecandle with the crew," Harrison interpolated.

"On the contrary, sir. The crew wiped up the fo'c's'le with me. I was the willingest fighter you ever saw; but I did n't know how. They licked me singly, an' by twos and threes; but they couldn't keep a good man down. I wouldn't stay licked. If a man batted an eye, I reached for him. Oh, they licked me, but I kept learnin' the curves while they were doing it; and before the voyage was over I was cock of the fo'c's'le. I licked every man jack, both bosuns, and the preventer carpenter. I licked the second mate for'ard of the 'midship house the last night before we made Liverpool. And when we got ashore an' paid off, I caught the first mate in an alley in sailor-town. They carted what was left of him to hospital. He was never the same man again. A broken wreck, madam. His sea days was over, and he was shipped to 'Snug Harbor.' "

Captain Decker detected a shudder on Mrs. Gifford's part.

"And proud of it, madam!" he thundered. "Proud of it!"

"But what is the joke. Captain Decker?" Patty asked.

"It ain't a joke. It's facts. I first opened my eyes in this world in the fo'c's'le of the Ermytrude, eighteen years ago. That's how old I am— eighteen years. And I fought my way up. When I was one year old I was bosun. Before I w^{as} two, I was second mate. By the time I was three, I was mate, an' a proper bucko at that—"

He broke off abruptly. His seaman's eye, mechanically roving the sea-rim, had lighted upon something.

"Sail ho!" he cried. "Where's that lookout? —Two points on the weather bow, there! —I'll attend to his case. —Flat-Nose, you! Take the glasses up to the crosstrees and see what you can make of it."

VII

After dinner, that same day, the survivors of the *Mingalia* were not permitted to come on deck. They remained in the cabin through long, stifling hours, while they listened to boats coming alongside, to strange voices on deck, and to the varied noises that carried the tale of cargo being broken out and hoisted overside. The opium was being transshipped. Willie, who had been released from his paint-scrubbing and sent below, reported no less than four small schooners and sloops which he had seen bearing down on the *Susan Drew*.

No meal was served that evening, and the prisoners panted and went hungry in the narrow cabin. By eleven o'clock the transfer of the opium was completed, and they could hear Captain Decker roaring out his orders as he put sail on his vessel. Then he came below, poured himself half a tumbler of Scotch, and drank it neat.

"It's all right now," he said. "You can go on deck if you want. The cook is making coffee, and the cabin-boy will set a cold snack of canned goods."

"Where are you taking us to now?" Mrs. Gifford demanded.

Captain Decker divided a pondering gaze between her and the bottle of Scotch, then silently repeated his half-tumbler dose. Never was his voice more like a coffee-grinder.

"I don't know, madam. I 'm runnin' westward across the Pacific, and I 'll drop you somewhere. You see, there's too many of you to swear to any secret. You 've got to stay with me, till all the opium is distributed and safe. I 'm not stuck on your company. I run to blonds, as I told you before. But it's business. That cargo's got to be made safe. Now if you was a blond—"

He ceased speaking and stared at Mrs. Gifford steadily and long, to that lady's great irritation. His expression was trance-like, and he seemed dreaming far dreams. A curious light began to glow in his eyes; while a grin, unthinkable significant to them, curled across

his mouth. Still in his seeming trance, he reached forth his dirty hand and in playful fashion touched her on the shoulder.

"I got you," he said. "Tag! You 're it."

He returned to himself with startling suddenness, and recoiled from her.

"Why, damn it all, you ain't a blond, are you?" A step brought him to a chair, into which he sank, burying his face in his hands and moaning, "Oh dear, oh dear."

"Faugh!" Mrs. Gifford enunciated in disgust.

"The brute is drunk," Temple Harrison explained to Patty.

VIII

In the days that followed, while the *Susan Drew* ran before the Northeast Trades, Captain Decker's ways did not mend. His hands and nails were grimed with tar and paint, ground in by his inveterate pull and haul on sheet and halyard. He devoured prunes in the same magnificent manner, interrupted conversations, bullied Flat-Nose, rope's-ended Willie, and drank his half-tumblers of Scotch. With each drink the vastness and voluminousness of his huskiness increased. His trance-like gazes at Mrs. Gifford continued. His protestations of dislike for brunettes did not diminish. And often he would bury his face in his hands and moan, "Oh dear, oh dear."

Worst of all, was his persecution of Mrs. Gifford. He seemed drawn to her continually, and continually he recoiled from her. Patty was tearfully apprehensive. Temple Harrison consoled her. And Sedley Brown grew more than mildly jealous. They were in 18° North and 166° West, and Captain Decker was talking of running them to the south and west and landing them at some outlying trading station of New Britain or New Ireland, when occurred a strange and incomprehensible happening that gave them all pause for thought.

It was at dinner. The conversation had been upon occult matters, and a general disbelief had been expressed concerning such phenomena as telepathy and clairvoyance.

"The content of consciousness is experience," Temple Harrison was saying. "There is no discussion about the existence of the subconscious mind. But it has never been demonstrated that the subconscious mind has known anything outside experience—outside the content of consciousness, I mean, which is experience. Therefore, it is impossible—"

He ceased, for he had lost the attention of his listeners. Captain Decker had begun to eat prunes, and they were watching him with the old, never-failing infatuation. He had received an unusually large serving, and was heroically emptying the saucer. His cheeks bulged more and more with the pouched pits, while his jaws chewed, and the spoon moved back and forth. Also, he was thinking; and, further, he desired to speak. His eyes were rolling, and his ears seemed trying to wiggle, so strong was his desire. At last came the supreme moment. He bowed his head over the saucer and spat out a mighty mouthful of prune-pits, then glared savagely at Temple Harrison.

"Talky-talky, talky-talky—that's all you know about it," were the skipper's opening words. "You don't know. But I do know. I can deliver the goods. I know things outside my experience—things I don't know, but I know 'em."

"A miracle is no miracle at second hand," Temple Harrison retorted patronizingly. "The drunkard's snakes are real only to the drunkard. We know they are not snakes. The dreamer's dream is real—to the dreamer, while he dreams."

"Talky-talky, talky-talky, too much talky along you," Captain Decker went on explosively. "I know real things that I don't know, I tell you."

"An instance, please," said Sedley Brown.

"All right." The skipper turned his eyes on Mrs. Gifford. "Madam, I know things about you that I have no right to know. That I don't know. But I know 'em. Do you dast me to tell 'em?"

Mrs. Gifford's head was poised very haughtily, as she replied, "I am very sure you know nothing about me that I am ashamed to have told."

"Very well, madam." Captain Decker's gaze burned upon her until it seemed he must be looking right through her. "Under your left shoulder-blade, midway between it and the hip, is a mole—Ha!"

His exclamation was of triumph, caused by Patty's instant cry of alarm, and by the tell-tale blood mounting in Mrs. Gifford's cheeks.

"Now that mole's outside my experience," he continued. "I never saw it. I leave it to you. Yet I know it."

"Nevertheless, the existence of the mole is not proved," Sedley Brown observed dryly.

"Madam, have you that mole?" the skipper demanded.

Mrs. Gifford disdained reply.

"Very well, then. I 'll tell you some more. You have a corn on the inside of your left little toe. Your arms—and I observed them when you came on board—show no scar of vaccination. Yet you are vaccinated. Oh, and I can tell you other things. For instance—"

"No! No! —don't!" Mrs. Gifford cried out, while her cheeks flamed confirmatory shame.

Sedley Brown stared at her, mildly suspicious and mildly jealous.

"Well, I guess I know what I don't know," Captain Decker bragged. "Things outside my experience. I've delivered the goods, ain't I?"

"But you have no right—" Patty began indignantly and brokenly. "Besides, you don't know. You can't know."

"No! No! No!" Patty entreated.

"Huh!" Captain Decker shrugged his shoulders, shifting his gaze from one mortified woman to the other. "I guess I 'm some psychologist. I know lots of things outside my experience."

"Why don't you tell me something about myself?" Temple Harrison challenged, out of pity for Patty and her mother.

"I don't know anything about you," was the answer. "Maybe I'm not interested."

Afterward, in a secluded moment on deck, Harrison told Patty that the whole thing was impossible.

"But mother has the mole," she replied.

"I am firmly convinced of telepathy," was Mrs. Gifford's judgment. "But oh, that terrible man! I shall not dare think any thought in his presence. He is able to read my mind like a book."

"I don't know what to believe," said Sedley Brown. "It is all very strange, I am sure, and I should like to see it cleared up."

His wish was destined to be quickly gratified. That afternoon Captain Decker caught Willie smoking a cigarette in the sail locker and promptly rope's-ended him. Then he sent him aloft in a bosun's chair to tar down the main rigging. By this time the skipper was in a nasty temper. He scared the two maids to the verge of hysteria, bullied Peyton into a semi-comatose condition of yammering apology for existing, cursed the cabin-boy, went for'ard to the galley and thrashed the cook among his pots and pans, and, returning to the poop, flew into a proper sea-rage with Flat-Nose Russ. That cowed mariner muttered and mumbled excuses, and cowered away each time the skipper, pacing the deck like a wild animal, passed him.

The survivors of the *Mingalia* were compelled to listen to this tirade. There was no escaping it by going below, for the skipper's voice penetrated everywhere. Besides, they had tried that in previous outbursts, and by so doing, had only succeeded in arousing greater ire in Captain Decker. Sedley Brown stood in a passively protecting attitude beside Mrs. Gifford, who was seated in a canvas deck chair. Patty and Temple Harrison had drawn close together, and he was holding her hand. And still Captain Decker raged and roared up and down.

It was Harrison who saw the whole extent of what happened. Chancing to glance aloft at Willie swaying airily in his bosun's chair, Harrison was amazed at the ferocious hatred that contorted that mild youth's face.

From the bosun's chair was suspended a tar pot. As Harrison watched, Willie wrapped his legs about the shrouds, and, both hands free, proceeded to untie the tar pot. Holding it in his hand, he waited. Captain Decker was pacing back and forth beneath him. Harrison saw the youth poise the tar pot, time the captain's stride, and let go.

Without turning over, bottom downward, the pot struck Captain Decker's head. He immediately sat down on the deck. None of the tar fell on him. The pot struck his head so squarely that it bounced off and spilled on the deck. Mrs. Gifford, a vision of violent death for her youngest born strong upon her, screamed

and fainted. Patty likewise screamed, and was caught about the waist by Harrison. No one moved nor spoke. All gazed upon Captain Decker.

He still sat on the deck, stupidly looking at his hands. On his face was painted a curious disgust. He did not like his hands. He tried to get away from them, to fling them from him. Failing this, as in a dream he contemplated them. He rubbed them together, and into his eyes sprang astonishment, in that sensation told him that they belonged to him. He stared at his clothes, and about him at those who looked on.

"What'll I do with the boy, sir?" asked Flat-Nose Russ, hovering solicitously near.

Captain Decker looked at his mate and shrank away.

He strove to speak, and seemed to fail to manipulate his voice.

"What boy? —What?" he managed to articulate at last, in tones of modulated huskiness unlike anything they had ever heard from his lips. He gazed at the mate long and wonderingly. "Who are you? Please go away. Will you call the police? Something terrible has happened to me."

Aloft, terror-stricken, Willy Gifford peered down. The big mate, perplexed, could only stare and sway to the roll of the schooner. All stared—even the man at the wheel, whose expressionless face was belied by the eager curiosity in his eyes.

"Something terrible has happened," Captain Decker repeated, his voice huskily plaintive.

He started to get to his feet, and shrank away from the mate who helped him. He staggered to the rail and held on to the shrouds, looking in bewilderment at the trade-wind sea.

At this juncture Mrs. Gifford arose from her chair, supported by Sedley Brown's arm around her waist. The skipper looked at him and startled.

"Why, Sedley," he said. "It is you. But what has happened? You look so old. Have you been sick?" His eyes passed on to Mrs. Gifford. "Amelia!" he cried. The arm around her waist seemed to excite him. "Sedley, are you aware of what you are doing? That is my wife. Kindly remove your arm. —Amelia, I..... I am surprised."

He stepped toward her, but she cowered away.

"Oh, that terrible man!" she sobbed, and hid her face against Sedley Brown's shoulder.

"Amelia! —what is the matter?" the skipper pleaded anxiously. "Sedley, please remove your arm from my wife. You will make me very angry."

Patty was the first to divine the situation.

"Father!" she exclaimed. "Oh, father! And we all thought you were dead."

"Dead? Fiddlesticks. I don't know you. Go away. I am not your father, young woman. I wish to know—"

But here the skipper again caught sight of his hands and tried to fling them from him.

"Mother—don't you understand?" Patty was now by Mrs. Gifford's side. "It's father! Look at him. Speak to him."

Mrs. Gifford stole a shuddering look. Captain Decker was running the tips of his fingers over his face.

Seth—is it you?" she murmured faintly.

"What silliness!" the skipper retorted. "Of course it is I. But my face, my beard what has happened. I am smooth shaven Amelia, tell me. Who is this young woman? —Sedley, for the third time I ask you to remove your arm."

"Seth! Bless me, it is Seth." Sedley Brown advanced to shake hands, then staggered away to the cabin wall, against which he leaned.

"But why are we out sailing?" Mr. Gifford complained. He looked about, and his eyes lighted on Flat-Nose Russ. "If you are the captain, sir, it will be best for you to put your vessel about at once and return to San Francisco. —Oh, I know. I am beginning to remember. It was an outrage. The police must investigate at once. Last night . . . I was set upon. I was clubbed on the head repeatedly. It's a mercy my skull was n't broken." He gingerly felt his head until he encountered the welt raised by the tar pot. "There. It is badly swollen. It was at half past eleven, last night. . . ."

"Listen," Patty pleaded. "It was not last night. It was eighteen years ago, I am your little Patty. Don't you remember her? I am grown up, of course. —Mother, why don't you kiss him? —Father. Kiss her."

Mrs. Gifford recoiled; nor did Seth Gifford take advantage of the invitation. Again he tried to fling his unrecognizable hands from him.

"I . . . I need a bath," he muttered, then tottered to the edge of the cabin and sat down. "Oh dear, oh dear," he moaned, and burst into tears.

IX

"Really, you know, he's the same Seth—not changed a particle in all that time," Mrs. Gifford announced.

She had just come on deck and joined the others in the morning cool.

"But he makes me feel so elderly," she went on. "He has stood still. He is all those years younger."

"I feel as if I had witnessed a murder," said Temple Harrison.

"I don't see why," Patty objected.

"I do. What has become of Captain Bill Decker? He is now dead, isn't he?"

Patty shook her head.

"There is no corpse," she said. "Captain Bill Decker has merely gone into the silence which father occupied for eighteen years."

"And I hope, I most fervently hope, that Captain Bill Decker stays there," was Sedley Brown's contribution.

"It is very strange," said Patty. "A miracle," Mrs. Gifford added. "Me—I did it—with my little tar pot," said Willie, brazenly puffing a cigarette to windward of his mother.

All turned to regard the miracle, who was standing by the lee rigging, gazing seaward and unconsciously striving to fling overboard his dirt-grimed hands.

CHASED BY THE TRAIL

WALT first blinked his eyes in the light of day in a trading post on the Yukon River. Masters, his father, was one of those world missionaries who are known as "pioneers," and who spend the years of their life in pushing outward the walls of civilization and in planting the wilderness. He had selected Alaska as his field of labor, and his wife had gone with him to that land of frost and cold.

Now, to be born to the moccasin and pack-strap is indeed a hard way of entering the world, but far harder it is to lose one's mother while yet a child. This was Walt's misfortune when he was fourteen years old.

He had, at different times, done deeds which few boys get the chance get the chance to do, and he had learned to take some pride in himself and to be unafraid. With most people pride goeth before a fall; but not so with Walt. His was a healthy belief in his own strength and fitness, and knowing his limitations, he was neither overweening nor presumptuous. He had learned to meet reverses with the stoicism of the Indian. Shame, to him, lay not in the failure to accomplish, but in the failure to strive. So, when he attempted to cross the Yukon between two ice-runs, and was chased by the trail, he was not cast down by his defeat.

The way of it was this. After passing the winter at his father's claim on Mazy May, he came down to an island on the Yukon and went into camp. This was late in the spring, just before the breaking of the ice on the river. It was quite warm, and the days were growing marvelously long. Only the night before, when he was talking with Chilkoot Jim, the daylight had not faded and sent him off to bed till after ten o'clock. Even Chilkoot Jim, an Indian boy who was about Walt's own age, was surprised at the rapidity with which summer was coming on. The snow had melted from all the southern hillsides and the level surfaces of the flats and islands; everywhere could be heard the trickling of water and the song of hidden rivulets; but somehow, under its three-foot ice-sheet, the Yukon delayed to heave its great length of three thousand miles and shake off the frosty fetters which bound it.

But it was evident that the time was fast approaching when it would again run free. Great fissures were splitting the ice in all directions, while the water was beginning to flood through them and over the top. On this morning a frightful rumbling brought the two boys hurriedly from their blankets. Standing on the bank, they soon discovered the cause. The Stewart River had broken loose

and reared a great ice barrier, where it entered the Yukon, barely a mile above their island. While a great deal of the Stewart ice had been thus piled up, the remainder was now flowing under the Yukon ice, pounding and thumping at the solid surface above it as it passed onward toward the sea.

"To-day um break um," Chilkoot Jim said, nodding his head. "Sure!"

"And then maybe two days for the ice to pass by," Walt added, "and you and I'll be starting for Dawson. It's only seventy miles, and if the current runs five miles an hour and we paddle three, we ought to make it inside of ten hours. What do you think?"

"Sure!" Chilkoot Jim did not know much English, and this favorite word of his was made to do duty on all occasions.

After breakfast the boys got out the Peterborough canoe from its winter cache. It was an admirable sample of the boat-builder's skill, an imported article brought from the first mail in six months into the Klondike. Walt, who happened to be in Dawson at the time had bought it for three hundred dollars' worth of dust which he had mined on the Mazy May.

It had been a revelation, both to him and to Chilkoot Jim, for up to its advent they had been used to no other craft than the flimsy birchbark canoes of the Indians and the crude poling-boats of the whites. Jim, in fact, spent many a happy half-hour in silent admiration of its perfect lines.

"Um good. Sure!" Jim lifted his gaze from the dainty craft, expressing his delight in the same terms for the thousandth time. But glancing over Walt's shoulder, he saw something on the river which startled him. "Look! See!" he cried.

A man had been racing a dog-team across the slushy surface for the shore, and had been cut off by the rising flood. As Walt whirled round to see, the ice behind the man burst into violent commotion, splitting and smashing into fragments which bobbed up and down and turned turtle like so many corks.

A gush of water followed, burying the sled and washing the dogs from their feet. Tangled in their harness and securely fastened to the heavy sled, they must drown in a few minutes unless rescued by the man. Bravely his manhood answered.

Floundering about with the drowning animals, nearly hip-deep in the icy flood, he cut and slashed with his sheath-knife at the traces. One by one the dogs struck out for shore, the first reaching safety ere the last was released. Then the master, abandoning the sled, followed them. It was a struggle in which little help could be given, and Walt and Chilkoot Jim could only, at the last, grasp his hands and drag him, half-fainting, up the bank.

First he sat down till he had recovered his breath; next he knocked the water from his ears like a boy who had just been swimming; and after that he whistled his dogs together to see whether they had all escaped. These things done, he turned his attention to the lads.

"I'm Muso," he said, "Pete Muso, and I'm looking for Charley Drake. His partner is dying down at Dawson, and they want him to come at once, as soon as the river breaks. He's got a cabin on this island, hasn't he?"

"Yes," Walt answered, "but he's over on the other side of the river, with a couple of other men, getting out a raft of logs for a grub-stake."

The stranger's disappointment was great. Exhausted by his weary journey, just escaped from sudden death, overcome by all he had undergone in carrying the message which was now useless, he looked dazed. The tears welled into his eyes, and his voice was choked with sobs as he repeated, aimlessly, "But his partner's dying. It's his partner, you know, and he wants to see him before he dies."

Walt and Jim knew that nothing could be done, and as aimlessly looked out on the hopeless river. No man could venture on it and live. On the other bank, and several miles up-stream, a thin column of smoke wavered to the sky. Charley Drake was cooking his dinner there; seventy miles below, his partner lay dying; yet no word of it could be sent.

But even as they looked, a change came over the river. There was a muffled rending and tearing, and, as if by magic, the surface water disappeared, while the great ice-sheet, reaching from shore to shore, and broken into all manner and sizes of cakes, floated silently up toward them. The ice which had been pounding along underneath had evidently grounded at some point lower down, and was now backing up the water like a mill-dam. This had broken the ice-sheet from the land and lifted it on top of the rising water.

"Um break up very quick," Chilkoot Jim said.

The Indian boy laughed. "Mebbe you get um in middle, mebbe not. All the same, the trail um go down-stream, and you go, too. Sure!" He glanced at Walt, that he might back him up in preventing this insane attempt.

"You're not going to try and make it across?" Walt queried.

"But you mustn't!" Walt protested. "It's certain death. The river'll break before you get half-way, and then what good'll your message be?"

But the stranger doggedly went on undressing, muttering in an undertone, "I want Charley Drake! Don't you understand? It's his partner, dying."

"Um sick man. Bimeby—" The Indian boy put a finger to his forehead and whirled his hand in quick circles, thus indicating the approach of brain fever. "Um work too hard, and um think too much, all the time think about sick man at Dawson. Very quick um head go round—so." And he feigned the bodily dizziness which is caused by a disordered brain.

By this time, undressed as if for a swim, Muso rose to his feet and started for the bank. Walt stepped in front, barring the way. He shot a glance at his comrade. Jim nodded that he understood and would stand by.

"Get out of my way, boy!" Muso commanded, roughly, trying to thrust him aside.

But Walt closed in, and with the aid of Jim succeeded in tripping him upon his back. He struggled weakly for a few moments, but was too wearied by his long journey to cope successfully with the two boys whose muscles were healthy and trail-hardened.

"Pack um into camp, roll um in plenty blanket, and I fix um good," Jim advised.

This was quickly accomplished, and the sufferer made as comfortable as possible. After he had been attended to, and Jim had utilized the medical lore picked up in the camps of his own people, they fed the stranger's dogs and cooked dinner. They said very little to each other, but each boy was thinking hard, and when they went out into the sunshine a few minutes later, their minds were intent on the same project.

The river had now risen twenty feet, the ice rubbing softly against the top of the bank. All noise had ceased. Countless millions of tons of ice and water were silently waiting the supreme moment, when all bonds would be broken and the mad rush to the sea would begin. Suddenly, without the slightest apparent effort, everything began to move downstream. The jam had broken.

Slowly at first, but faster and faster the frozen sea dashed past. The noise returned again, and the air trembled to a mighty churning and grinding. Huge blocks of ice were shot into the air by the pressure; others butted wildly into the bank; still others, swinging and pivoting, reached inshore and swept rows of pines away as easily as if they were so many matches.

In awe-stricken silence the boys watched the magnificent spectacle, and it was not until the ice had slackened its speed and fallen to its old level that Walt cried, "Look, Jim! Look at the trail going by!"

And in truth it was the trail going by—the trail upon which they had camped and traveled during all the preceding winter. Next winter they would journey with dogs and sleds over the same ground, but not on the same trail. That trail, the old trail, was passing away before their eyes.

Looking up-stream, they saw open water. No more ice was coming down, although vast quantities of it still remained on the upper reaches, jammed somewhere amid the maze of islands which covered the Yukon's breast. As a matter of fact, there were several more jams yet to break, one after another, and to send down as many ice-runs. The next might come along in a few minutes; it might delay for hours. Perhaps there would be time to paddle across. Walt looked questioningly at his comrade.

"Sure!" Jim remarked, and without another word they carried the canoe down the bank. Each knew the danger of what they were about to attempt, but they wasted no speech over it. Wild life had taught them both that the need of things demanded effort and action, and that the tongue found its fit vocation at the camp-fire when the day's work was done.

With dexterity born of long practice they launched the canoe, and were soon making it spring to each stroke of the paddles as they stemmed the muddy current. A steady procession of lagging ice-cakes, each thoroughly capable of crushing the Peterborough like an egg-shell, was drifting on the surface, and it required of the boys the utmost vigilance and skill to thread them safely.

Anxiously they watched the great bend above, down which at any moment might rush another ice-run. And as anxiously they watched the ice stranded against the bank and towering a score of feet above them. Cake was poised upon cake and piled in precarious confusion, while the boys had to hug the shore closely to avoid the swifter current of midstream. Now and again great heaps of this ice tottered and fell into the river, rolling and rumbling like distant thunder, and lashing the water into fair-sized tidal waves.

Several times they were nearly swamped, but saved themselves by quick work with the paddles. And all the time Charley Drake's pillared camp smoke grew nearer and clearer. But it was still on the opposite shore, and they knew they must get higher up before they attempted to shoot across.

Entering the Stewart River, they paddled up a few hundred yards, shot across, and then continued up the right bank of the Yukon. Before long they came to the Bald-Face Bluffs—huge walls of rock which rose perpendicularly from the river. Here the current was swiftest inshore, forming the first serious obstacle encountered by the boys. Below the bluffs they rested from their exertions in a favorable eddy, and then, paddling their strongest, strove to dash past.

At first they gained, but in the swiftest place the current overpowered them. For a full sixty seconds they remained stationary, neither advancing nor receding, the grim cliff base within reach of their arms, their paddles dipping and lifting like clockwork, and the rough water dashing by in muddy haste. For a full sixty seconds, and then the canoe sheered in to the shore. To prevent instant destruction, they pressed their paddles against the rocks, sheered back into the stream, and were swept away. Regaining the eddy, they stopped for breath. A second time they attempted the passage; but just as they were almost past, a threatening ice-cake whirled down upon them on the angry tide, and they were forced to flee before it.

"Um stiff, I think yes," Chilkoot Jim said, mopping the sweat from his face as they again rested in the eddy. "Next time um make um, sure."

"We've got to. That's all there is about it," Walt answered, his teeth set and lips tight-drawn, for Pete Muso had set a bad example, and he was almost ready to cry from exhaustion and failure. A third time they darted out of the head of the eddy, plunged into the swirling waters, and worked a snail-like course

ahead. Often they stood still for the space of many strokes, but whatever they gained they held, and they at last drew out into easier water far above. But every moment was precious. There was no telling when the Yukon would again become a scene of wild anarchy in which neither man nor any of his works could hope to endure. So they held steadily to their course till they had passed above Charley Drake's camp by a quarter of a mile. The river was fully a mile wide at this point, and they had to reckon on being carried down by the swift current in crossing it.

Walt turned his head from his place in the bow. Jim nodded. Without further parley they headed the canoe out from the shore, at an angle of forty-five degrees against the current. They were on the last stretch now; the goal was in fair sight. Indeed, as they looked up from their toil to mark their progress, they could see Charley Drake and his two comrades come town to the edge of the river to watch them.

Five hundred yards; four hundred yards; the Peterborough cut the water like a blade of steel; the paddles were dipping, dipping, dipping in rapid rhythm—and then a warning shout from the bank sent a chill to their hearts. Round the great bend just above rolled a mighty wall of glistening white. Behind it, urging it on to lightning speed, were a million tons of long-pent water.

The right flank of the ice-run, unable to get cleanly round the bend, collided with the opposite shore, and even as they looked they saw the ice mountains rear toward the sky, rise, collapse, and rise again in glittering convulsions. The advancing roar filled the air so that Walt could not make himself heard; but he paused long enough to wave his paddle significantly in the direction of Dawson. Perhaps Charley Drake, seeing, might understand.

With two swift strokes they whirled the Peterborough downstream. They must keep ahead of the rushing flood. It was impossible to make either bank tat that moment. Every ounce of their strength went into the paddles, and the frail canoe fairly rose and leaped ahead at each stroke. They said nothing. Each knew and had faith in the other, and they were too wise to waste their breath. The shore-line—trees, islands and the Stewart River—flew by at a bewildering rate, but they barely looked at it.

Occasionally Chilkoot Jim stole a glance behind him at the pursuing trail, and marked the fact that they held their own. Once he shaped a sharper course toward the bank, but found the trail was overtaking them, and gave it up.

Gradually they worked in to land, their failing strength warning them that it was soon or never. And at last, when they did draw up to the bank, they were confronted by the inhospitable barrier of the stranded shore-ice. Not a place could be found to land, and with safety virtually within arm's reach, they were forced to flee on down the stream. They passed a score of places, at each of which, had they had plenty of time, they could have clambered out; but behind pressed on the inexorable trail, and would not let them pause.

Half a mile of this work drew heavily upon their strength; and the trail came upon them nearer and nearer. Its sullen grind was in their ears, and its collisions against the bank made one continuous succession of terrifying crashes. Walt felt his heart thumping against his ribs and caught each breath in painful gasps. But worst of all was the constant demand upon his arms.

If he could only rest for the space of one stroke, he felt that the torture would be relieved; but no, it was dip and lift, dip and lift, till it seemed as if at each stroke he would surely die. But he knew that Chilkoot Jim was suffering likewise; and their lives depended each upon the other; and that it would be a blot upon his manhood should he fail or even miss a stroke.

They were very weary, but their faith was large, and if either felt afraid, it was not of the other, but of himself.

Flashing round a sharp point, they came upon their last chance for escape. An island lay close inshore, upon the nose of which the ice lay piled in a long slope. They drove the Peterborough half out of the water upon a shelving cake and leaped out. Then, dragging the canoe along, slipping and tripping and falling, but always getting nearer the top, they made their last mad scramble.

As they cleared the crest and fell within the shelter of the pines, a tremendous crash announced the arrival of the trail. One huge cake, shoved to the, shoved to the top of the rim-ice, balanced threateningly above them and then toppled forward.

With one jerk they flung themselves and the canoe from beneath, and again fell, breathless and panting for air. The thunder of the ice-run came dimly to their ears; but they did not care. It held no interest for them whatsoever. All they wished was simply to lie there, just as they had fallen, and enjoy the inaction of repose.

Two hours later, when the river once more ran open, they carried the Peterborough down to the water. But just before they launched it, Charley Drake and a comrade paddled up in another canoe.

"Well, you boys hardly deserve to have good folks out looking for you, the way you've behaved," was his greeting. "What under the sun made you leave your tent and get chased by the trail? Eh? That's what I'd like to know."

It took but a minute to explain the real state of affairs, and but another to see Charley Drake hurrying along on his way to his sick partner at Dawson.

"Pretty close shave, that," Walt Masters said, as they prepared to get aboard and paddle back to camp.

"Sure!" Chilkoot Jim replied, rubbing his stiffened biceps in a meditative fashion.

THE DEVIL'S DICE BOX

*We worshipped at alien altars; we bowed our heads in the dust;
Our Law was might is the mightiest; our Creed was unholy lust;
Our Law and our Creed we followed—strange is the tale to tell—
For our Law and our Creed we followed into the pit of hell.
-The Mammon Worshipers*

NOT only do I know of these things from the finding of the manuscript, but I helped bury the Man who came out of the East; I knew the other men before they disappeared into the East; and I also know that they never came back. It occurred in the old days before the great discoveries on Bonanza and Eldorado, in the times we called the Clondyke the Reindeer River. There were about one hundred white men scattered through all that vast wilderness; perhaps a score of us, because of a great faith in the Upper Country, being in winter quarters where the Stuart River flows into the Yukon.

It was in April, when our grub was running short, that I trailed a wounded moose through many creeks and over many divides, camping on the track by night and hungering for the kill. On this day he headed for the north east, doubled, then broke for the Stuart River, crossing it fifty miles from its mouth. I found a dead Indian woman on the ice, a half-breed, and for all she must have suffered, still very beautiful. She had starved to death, for her squirrel-skin parka had been cut away, strip after strip, and the tops of her moccasins also showed the Indian manner of appeasing hunger. I looted her, and being in great pain through lack of food, continued after the moose, leaving the body to go down with the ice when the river broke. I found in the grub pouch a piece of partially chewed leather, a little over five pounds of large nuggets, and Ae birch-bark manuscript which is here printed. I purposely disguise the location of the place, for some day I shall go there myself, and come back very rich.

(here begins the story proper)

It is all so strange and horrible—I can hardly realize it, hardly realize that I am dying. And to die in the possession of boundless wealth, to die in the treasure chamber of the world, is the hardest part of it. And again, the strange fatality; is it merely a peculiar chain of circumstances? or is it a curse imposed by that First Man from over the mountains? O why this medley of bloodshed, murder, death? Can none escape the—but I must calm myself. Let me begin at the beginning. This Indian woman was once a Mission girl of the Coast, and she writes as I tell her. Perhaps after I am dead she may reach civilization and give my tale to the world.

In the beginning, there were seven of us, eight, counting the girl, located on the third island below the mouth of the Stuart. We were soldiers of fortune whom chance had thrown together, and little was known of each other's antecedents. We had all been several years in the Yukon Basin, while our leader, Inuit Kid, had put in no less than seven and knew the country as few men ever did or ever will. The half-breed, Lucy, was his wife whom he had brought from Haine's Mission on the Coast. Then there were the two Randolph brothers, claiming kinship with the famous Kentucky family of that name; two sailors who had adventured together the whole world over; and a young college graduate (Yale man, if I remember rightly) named Charley. We never knew him by any other, for he had evidently fled some scrape at home and desired to hide it. As for myself, the least said the better. Let it suffice that I had lost my partner in an ice-jam the preceding fall and then drifted into my present company.

It was in the short days of December that the first of the many things I shall speak of occurred. Night had just fallen, and we were smoking, yarning, and sewing moccasins, when the dogs set up a racket. Then we heard some one cursing and the sharp slash of a dog whip, followed by a knock at the door. Before we could open it, the Man from out of the East came in. His first words were 'For Christ's sake, a smoke!' Charley thrust a live pipe into his hand, and he fell to puffing with long sighs of satisfaction. Tall, dark-eyed and black-whiskered, with the muscular leanness habitual to one who travels the Long Trail, he was as graceful and handsome a man as ever delighted the eye of woman. I have often thought that this was the cause of the trouble which afterward came upon him. In answer to our question as to where he came from, he pointed toward the east and went on smoking and sighing. We scented a mystery; never before had we heard of a man coming out of the east, nor had we ever dreamed of it being done in winter time. We made him comfortable, however, and as he stayed over several days to buy dogs for the trip to Dyea, we managed to get a few inklings to his history.

In the first place, we back-tripped his trail and found it led out of Stuart River; and in the second, he had brought over a hundred pounds of gold on his sled, every bit of it being large nuggets with an assay value of over eighteen dollars. These are the facts, the rest being caught from his lips and pieced together. In the summer of two years previous, in the company of two French-Canadian half-breeds, he canoed and portaged from Lake Athabasca to Great Slave Lake, and then down the Mackenzie to the sixty-fifth degree or in a line with Bear Lake. There they waited till the first snow, when they abandoned the river and faced west into the Rockies.

After a year's wandering in that unknown region, ever continuing westward, he had encountered the head-waters of the Stuart and journeyed down to the Yukon. He spoke incidentally of the loss of his two comrades, nor was he shy in the exhibition of his gold, frankly telling us that it was merely a sample of what he had discovered. Beyond this we could gain nothing, for he kept his lips resolutely sealed on his previous life. Still, disguise it as he would, there was a certain, vague smack of the man of the world about him which I could not fail to recognize.

Despite our solicitations, he prepared to set out on Christmas Day. He had just harnessed his dogs and was preparing to pull out, when a bunch of dog teams, fresh from the Coast, pulled in. We were at once struck by the similarity between him and the leader of the arrivals. Even before salutations could be exchanged, the explosion took place. The new arrival gave a start of surprise and covered our guest with his rifle. The latter's *sang froid* was remarkable, for he smiled with a peculiar mockery of the lips and said, "Ah! brother mine." That was all; not another word passed between them; their understanding was too good for that.

The scene which followed would be highly improbable among ordinary people, but all things are possible to the men who face the dangers of the dreary Northland. It seemed like an appointment, long since made, to be kept at this time and place. Rifle in hand and back to back, each paced off fifty yards and faced about, while we drew out of the line of fire.

Never did Christmas Day look down on stranger scene. It was high noon, and the upper rim of the sun, barely showing above the southern horizon, cast a blood-red streak athwart the heavens. On either hand a sun dog blazed, while the air was filled with scintillating particles of frost. A great silence prevailed. The vast expanse of snow seemed a Sahara of monotonous white, broken only by the dark forms of the brothers. A moment they faced each other, then, as the new arrival counted the customary "One, two, three," rifles came to shoulders and began to speak. Such was the rapidity of our guest's fire, that for six shots he kept a shell constantly in the air and then went down, bored through the lungs. His opponent was more deliberate, firing but three. J But he had not escaped unscathed, for a bullet had cut his mitten string, a second had smashed a couple of ribs, while his right arm hung useless, the work of a third.

He staggered across the snow to his brother and gazed upon him with great satisfaction. We raised the stricken man to a sitting posture, and as he showed a desire to speak, his brother bent over

him. We never knew what he whispered, but his look of mockery as his soul passed was a keynote to the stranger's sudden anger. He unsheathed his hunting-knife and would have stabbed the dying man, had not Innuit Kid dashed his fist into his face, knocking him backward into the snow. There was a slipping of mittens and a clicking of rifles among the newcomers, and the broil would have become general, had not the stranger gained his feet and stepped between. In response to his orders, the sleds were un-lashed, the loads shifted, and his wounds dressed. Then he was swathed in robes and tied to a sled. The whole thing had happened in less than five minutes—the stranger had arrived, killed our guest, and departed. Men think and act quickly in the Northland.

Stowing the body on the roof of the cabin so that the dogs could not get at it, we entered and held a council of war. The sailors emptied the; two fifty-pound sacks of nuggets on the table, and from this moment the Madness began to grow. Even Lucy, for all her impassive Indian nature, was so fascinated by the glittering heap that she could hardly cook dinner. After a few minutes of talk and conjecture, Innuit Kid returned with the information that the strangers had turned into the Stuart River. Confusion prevailed. Even the woman understood its import. Charley thanked all the heathen gods that men could not hide their trail in the Arctic, while Innuit Kid thumped the table and swore that he would be the first in at the kill.

Then came the planning and the question as to who should stay behind. Then the Madness broke out. Man after man swore roundly that he would not be left, while the quivering of Lucy's nostrils and the fact that she always followed her lord and master settled the matter for her. And there we sat, gazing on the yellow heap, thinking the strange things and dreaming the strange dreams that men always do, when this thirst of thirsts is on them.

We soon settled it by all hands going, and buckled down to the work of getting ready. Sleds were strengthened, harnesses and moccasins made and repaired, and every dog and every pound of dog-food to be obtained for love or money skirmished from White and Indian. So bust were we, that when we pulled out the following morning, we left a notice for the first comer to bury the man on the roof. And so the Madness grew; for when one fails to bury the dead at his door, he is indeed ready to be destroyed.

A brave sight we made with our eight sleds and five score dogs. While the ordinary team is from five to seven dogs, we had twelve to the sled. Still, though we did not have to go ahead and break

trail for our dogs, we were three days in overtaking them. It was plain that they were traveling fast. Contrary to our expectations, however, there was no trouble when they discovered our pursuit—nay, they did not evince the slightest surprise when we overhauled them. We did not like this, and that night and for many nights we kept watch. Nor were we alone, for reconnoitering in the direction of their camp Abe Randolph discovered that they had taken similar precautions.

Though we knew they knew the location of the treasure, they did not know that we were ignorant of it. Each party knew that the other could not give it the slip, because the pursued always breaks a trail for the pursuer in an Arctic chase. It was like two racers, riding easily and waiting for the sprint at the finish to settle the matter. To an onlooker our race must have appeared ludicrous, for we alternated, day by day, in going to the fore and breaking trail. Yet this was the only understanding, for both parties maintained a rigid silence.

Such a contest would have been bearable under ordinary circumstances, but here food was too precious to lag by the wayside. How the dogs suffered; we were forced to stint them in their allowance, at the same time working them to the utmost. By the time we entered on the third hundred miles they began to play out; these we shot and fed to those which still kept their legs. The January days were very short, and at the best we could not knock out more than twenty miles, often not as much as ten. But the heavy work told on us, and at night we crawled into the snow and slept like dead men. How the leader of the other party stood it, I cannot imagine. Often we heard him cursing with the pain, when the sled he was lashed to jolted over rough ice. But his was an indomitable spirit. Not only did he stand it, but his ribs so knitted and healed that when the period of intense cold came, he began to leave the sled and walk. It was a case of have-to, though, else he would have frozen.

But we were all tired and worn, and one of our party began to break under the strain. It was not the girl. God bless her, for she was born and bred to the trail, but the Yale man. He finally became so weak that he could do nothing. Then we forced him onto the trail as soon as he had breakfasted, while we broke camp, lashed the sleds and harnessed the dogs. We always overtook and passed him in a couple of hours, and long after we had pitched camp and eaten supper, he would come staggering in, nearly dead. Though also very tired, the other party was in fair condition, and perceiving our plight, cruelly though of course fairly, took advantage of it. They increased the hours of traveling; yet while we

kept up, it was too much for Charley. They no longer waited for us to take our turn in breaking trail, and gradually began to pull away from us. What could we do? We had lost so many dogs that we had already abandoned four of the sleds and every surplus article we possessed. Each man even carried his rifle and ammunition, when previously they had been packed on the sleds.

Slowly, though we never spoke or hinted of it, the question took shape. Were we to abandon Charley or the treasure? Three more days we forced him to the pace, but by the last day he no longer suffered. Though he still stumbled along on his snow shoes, he had lost consciousness, and laughed and cried and babbled about his people, his home, his childhood days. Once he regained consciousness long enough to realize how slender was his thread of life, and to beg us to shoot him. That night the other party traveled four hours after dark, and it exhausted Abe and John Randolph to drag him into camp. He could not eat and slept like a log where he fell, his moccasins scorching in the fire. Next morning they broke camp two hours earlier than usual, and we found it impossible to get Charley up. His brain would rouse but his body could not respond. He was not sick, only exhausted. Rest was the only medicine for him, and we could not give it. We found four more of the dogs unfit for travel and had to shoot them, else we would have lashed him to a sled.

The sleds were loaded, the dogs were harnessed, but we waited and tried and tried in vain. As Old Sol dipped over the horizon at meridian, we rose to our feet. The moment had come. We looked into each other's eyes coldly and without emotion. Lucy's face, though her throat was silent, voiced an eloquent appeal. The Madness was on us; we could not yield. The snapping whips and lunging dogs roused him, and by the look on his face, we knew he understood. It was a piteous look—the look of a wounded doe or of a seal at the killing. So we left him because of the Madness, and small wonder that our gods forsook us as we forsook our comrade.

We took to the trail in silence, the first to break it being Lucy, who dropped back to the side of Innuite Kid and pleaded in low tones. He reluctantly consented to her taking the back trail. She was with us in a few minutes, but we noticed that the holster above the hip was empty. Then a shot rang out, and we knew that Charley had passed beyond the toil of the camps and trail.

They were so bent on losing us that they traveled far into the night—so far that we could not overtake them. The next day had a similar ending, and it was not till the evening of the third day that

we pulled into their camp. As before, they showed no signs of surprise, though we could see that they eyed us pretty thoroughly and noted Charley's absence. With shame, we had noted the same; but by neither sign or word did one comrade show another his heart.

We were sorely tried by the work, by the inexorable morrow which constantly fled across the snow. Hard as it was to struggle on, still harder was it to struggle against the desire for rest. What would I not have given just to cease for one day from all action. How I envied my prosaic boyhood days—nay, I even envied Charley. Often I thought of blowing out my brains to get the peace I so hungered for. For the first time I understood the terrible significance of Longfellow's lines:

The sea is still and deep;

All things within its bosom sleep;

A single step and all is o'er;

A plunge, a bubble, and no more.

And during the long hours of toil, with the monotonous grind of the steel-shod sleds and the perpetual uplifting of the snow shoes, they were always in my thoughts. But the great lust, the Madness, kept me up and prevented me throwing my revolver away. Nor did I suffer alone, for we were all light-headed, babbling and staggering along like drunken men. All, except Innuït Kid and Lucy; their pluck was superhuman. Not only did they take their pain without sign, but at the labor of cooking, pitching and breaking camp, they did double duty.

The intense cold made it harder. For two weeks the thermometer had been ranging under fifty degrees below zero; for eight days it had been below sixty; and now it sank past seventy-four. At this temperature, our "painkiller" (our only and entire medicine chest) froze solid. How much colder it got we could not tell. Our faces were frozen a purplish-black and covered with great scabs, while we were in continual agony from our feet. Constant snow shoeing had developed large running sores on the soles. Our dogs were dropping fast. There were barely twenty left out of our five score. But it could not last forever, and one morning our quarry turned out of the river, taking a small tributary entering from the left. The chase was drawing to a close.

A day's journey up this brought us to its forks, where we camped, a good watch being kept so they could not slip away from us in the dark. Dawn found us under way again. We were in the Rockies now, almost to the backbone, and the branch had become a gorge. We felt sure that the end was at hand, looked to our weapons, and made all arrangements for the final sprint. All day we fought our way through the cold and snow, and when nightfall and the end of the gorge appeared, we were sorely disappointed. But imagine our astonishment when the quarry strained at the divide, and with axes, began to cut steps in the hard snow for themselves and dogs. No sign of camping, so we figured that our goal must be very near.

We cleared the crest as the rising moon silvered the snow, and found ourselves on a large plateau, above which towered lofty peaks, dismal and repellent in their white splendor. Up to now the course had evidently been clear, but when the other party began to travel by compass, we swung abreast and feigned great interest in our own. So well did we play our game, that our opponents never knew our utter ignorance of the location of the treasure. It was a beautiful night, and the ghostly, Arctic silence enveloped us like a shroud. The cold was bitter, every breath cutting our lungs like a knife, while our faces were massed I with ice. And on all our misery, the stars looked down unpityingly—nay, exultantly, as they danced and leaped as they always do in the Great Cold.

Suddenly, in the very center of the plateau, their dogs were forced to a gallop. There was a general loosening of knives and pistols as we followed suit and swept along, still abreast. It was weird indeed, this last stretch of a mighty race—men, gold-thirsty, a thousand miles beyond the uttermost bounds of civilization, in the heart of the Northland wastes, running neck and neck for they knew not what. Of a sudden the dogs threw themselves back on their haunches. We were on the edge of a great hole, which seemed to sink to the heart of the tableland. Round, perhaps three hundred feet in diameter, it was a sheer thousand to bottom. The walls were everywhere perpendicular, save in one place on the opposite place, where erosion and successive slides had broken up the precipitous formation. It seemed like a great dice box, and to complete the illusion, at the bottom were five enormous cubes of stone.

Cursing, lashing, *mushing* the dogs, we skirted the dizzy edge at full gallop; nor paused, taking the steep descent like mad-men. Side by side, Innuut Kid and the stranger leader led, followed by both parties, men and dogs, confusedly mixed together. The sleds turned over and went down sideways, backwards and upside down, dragging after them the dogs, which had flown at each

other's throats. We tried to escape the tangle but were swept off our feet and carried along. It was a veritable avalanche of life. In our pell-mell progress we dislodged great quantities of snow, on the breast of which we were carried along like a swimmer on the crest of a wave. We overtook and enveloped the two leaders in the common ruin, and naught could be heard above the roar of our transit, save a confused treble of snarling and cursing.

I cannot even now understand how we escaped total destruction; but escape we did, fetching up among the great blocks of stone on the bottom. Groaning from our wounds, we dragged each other out of the mess, disentangled the dogs, and counted losses. Two of their men had been badly crushed; one of our sailors had broken both legs; while half a dozen dogs had been torn to pieces in the fighting.

The moon had now passed beyond the rim of the pit and darkness was about us. We stumbled upon a small, single-roomed log cabin, and into this both gangs crowded. After a little delay in thawing the fat, a bacon-grease slush-lamp was lighted and we gazed about us. It was an ordinary cabin, with a rock fireplace and chinked with moss; but on a rough table was heaped a pile of nuggets, worth perhaps forty or fifty thousand dollars. As this was but a foretaste, we paid little attention to it. Underneath the table were fragments of a human skeleton, perchance that of the original discoverer. On top the gold we found numerous pieces of birch bark, covered with writing. It was in French, and one of the other party translated it aloud.

Over twenty years before, we learned, the writer, "sick unto death and deserted by his comrade," had laid him down to die. He had wandered here from the Hudson Bay Company's posts above Athabasca, and discovered the treasure. He described his theory of its deposit, and dwelt at great length on the cowardice and treachery of his partner, concluding by calling down a curse upon the gold in the name of all that was most holy and most diabolical. (I shudder now, as I think of those terrible words, and if ever a curse was efficacious, this one was.) Beneath it, another hand had dated ten years later and written:

Ha! Ha! Though his partner died, I am here, and by all the Saints it won't work with me.

—Donald Ross."

Another one took up the strain, evidently our unlucky December guest, for it was dated but three months back. It ran:

"Poor devil! he laughed before he was out of the woods. But he laughs best who laughs last. Ha! Ha! Ha!

—Griffith Benson."

We all burst into laughter as the reading finished—partly hysterical, I'll admit, but with a ring of derision, satisfaction, and blind egotism. Of course the others had succumbed to the potency of that First Man's curse, but we knew it was different with us. Most truly were we mad.

The fireplace was soon roaring, supper cooked and eaten, the wounded men made comfortable, and the rest of us turned in. The cabin had been divided between the two gangs, each setting a watch through fear of treachery.

Morning brought with it the discovery of the mine—in short, the whole bottom of the pit was the mine. Bed-rock had been tapped in several previous workings, and every one was rich, beyond our wildest dreams. Fine gold, coarse gold, nuggets—one could simply shovel it out. Panning and rocking was unnecessary; it had only to be picked up. Evidently in the cycles of the dim past, a great quartz ledge had reared itself for thousands of feet above the present hole; and by erosion, the action of ice during the Glacial Period, or some other freak of nature, it had disintegrated and deposited its golden spoil. We could not even hazard a guess as to how the pit had been formed or what had come of the debris, though we were sure of some subterranean outlet, else would it have been filled with water.

Gold there was, and in plenty for all, and I believe we would have soon reached an amicable division of it, had not Fate been against us. Both parties were at the tail end of their grub. We killed our dogs one by one, went on short rations, and searched the whole country round for game. Moose or cariboo, and all would have been well; but the best the hunting parties could do was to knock over an occasional partridge or snowshoe rabbit. The country seemed barren, and even this small game disappeared at last.

It was now straight dog. But the dogs were thin and the men hungry, so they did not go very far. We had still four left when the other party reached the end of its tether. For two days their hunters returned empty handed and food did not pass their mouths. Of course we could not whack up, and of course they could not starve peaceably. The outlook was dark indeed, and

though no word was spoken, many the black scowl was cast between.

Affairs reached a crisis on the evening of the third day. After lengthy consultation in a corner, their leader left the cabin. There was a snarling among the remnant of the dogs, and the next instant he staggered in, dragging one of them by the scruff of the neck. Everything followed like a flash. Lucy sprang for the dog, but Innuite Kid caught her a back-handed sweep of the arm, hurling her into the corner. At the same instant the Frenchman threw his hunting-knife. Just as Innuite Kid clenched with the stranger, it whistled through the air, burying itself in his shoulder. The work was too close for rifles, but revolvers and knives played merrily. The golden table and the slush-lamp went crashing over, and by the deceptive firelight we fought like fiends. It was give and take, without mercy and without quarter; when opportunity permitted, a wounded adversary was always finished. Even the stricken, underfoot, used the overhand stab on the combatants above them, or gave each other the quietus. Two men clinched and rolled into the fireplace, from which arose the sickening smell of burning flesh. Nor was I idle, till I went underfoot and a great darkness came upon me.

I have heard of the Kilkenny Cats, but never did I dream of taking part in a similar combat. A week has passed since the battle, and I alone am left. In fact, I alone had life when Lucy overhauled the shambles. Grim is the irony of Fate; shortly after the battle she shot two moose, ⁵⁰ she is in no danger of starving. But she is busy preparing a stock of meat, and I know that she will strike out as soon as I am dead. Heaven help her, for she faces what few men dare face. Should she succeed, of whomsoever gets this I ask to treat her kindly, and if any of the treasure is obtained to give her a fair share. I would advise him, though, to shun this spot, for of a verity it is the pit of hell; but I know it is useless, for what can bid him pause when the thirst of thirsts is on him?

My time is near. Though I may wander, I behold the signs. Often I hear thunder of the rolling dice and see my comrades there at play. Soon I shall go to join them in the game. Should this chance the eyes of my people, I sign my name. Thus may they know my death, and that in sorrow for the wrong I did them, I met it.

James Ralington

A DREAM IMAGE

"WHOOOP! Rah! Rah! Rah! Get out of the way!"—A thunder of hoofs from behind, and she sprang to the roadside as the turbulent troop dashed by, and in an anarchy of dust and tumult, was lost round the next turn of the road. But in the passing, she had time to note the fierce beauty, the rugged manhood of each flying figure. "Always the same, reckless fools and madmen," she thought, as she heard them swing to the left at the cross-roads and take the giddy path by the cliffs at a killing lope. Now they stood out in bold relief as they scaled the frightful head of Point Pedro, and she counted six riders ere they turned its flank and were out of sight.

Yes, they were all there, each strapping, wayward son of Old Ralston—Old Ralston, who was as effeminate as any man possibly could be. Whence came this wild strain? And she pondered over the enigma which had so worried the countryside these many years. True, their beauty had come from the mother; but she had never evinced any signs of that savage unconventionality which had been theirs from the cradle. Helen was conversant with the ordinary history of the family. Old Ralston was a self-made man, who, from the drudgery of office boy and clerk, had become a merchant prince. Retiring from business at forty-five, he had married, purchased his beautiful country home, and settled down to become the progenitor of this marvelous race. What wild ancestral strains had been reborn in this wild progeny, she had often speculated on, and her thoughts had always strayed to a picturesque buccaneer of the Spanish Main. It was a pretty fancy, and about the only one she could harmonize with the subject.

And the boyhood of this ungovernable brood: That of the elder sons had come before her time; but like legends, the history of their doings had gone from mouth to mouth. As a little girl she remembered much of the younger boys, and particularly of the youngest, the seventh son. And she remembered now, with a merry smile, an incident of her childhood. How she, six years of age, had been exposed to the wicked wiles of this lad of eight. Meeting accidentally and for the first and last time, in his father's woods, where she had disobediently wandered, he stormed her heart so valiantly that she surrendered on the spot. There they plighted their troth and spent the afternoon in childish frolic. And when discovered by her people, they found a much-berumpled little maid, crowned with wild flowers and honeysuckle, goddesslike, smiling on young Guilbert's homage. And then the scene—how he threw one arm about her and doubled up his fist in angry menace. And the attack—how he struck John and kicked his

shins, twice returning to the repulse; once, leaving an arm of his jacket in his captor's clutch and attacking her father so vigorously from behind, as to rip his broadcloth all up the back; and again, when the coachman held him, wriggling from out the jacket's remnants and striking him so as to quite blacken one I eye. And the retreat—how he crept from tree to tree, bellowing like a young bull in the rutting season. Then the incessant fusillade of clods and stones, and the spattering of mud he gave them as they recrossed the brook. And as they neared the house his attacks became so bold that they sought refuge in the hot-houses. **HERE** he smashed the glass and behaved so outrageously, that they were forced to gain the shelter of the roof-tree while the coachman was engaged in giving him a good trouncing. **But** nothing seemed to daunt the little savage, for all during tea he wandered round and round the house, howling in insatiable fury. Nor did he retreat till after having fruitlessly challenged every, male inmate, from her father to the gardener's boy, and then it was to escape from his father's servants, who had made a sally in force.

The boyhood of each had been very similar. After terrorizing the country till their sixteenth or eighteenth years, each had followed in the footsteps of the other, by running away. At first, this characteristic had sorely perplexed the father, but he soon grew to regard it as a childish ill, similar to mumps and measles; and when his last-born, Guilbert, at twenty had manifested none such symptoms, he was surprised and feared for the boy greatly. **But** Guilbert redeemed the family trait by disappearing while still in his nonage. A living refutation of wagging heads and muttered hints of bad endings, they all came back. And save the broadened polish of the world, they were in no wise changed. Always the same—generous, brave, impulsive; indomitable, wild and fiercely unconventional. **But** they only sought the home as a pleasant asylum, in which to rest a space from their many adventures, and it was rare coincidence to find the six together in their father's house. As a household, theirs seemed the reverse of a circle of world-weary wanderers, seeking seclusion from the rush of events. Every outside sport was theirs, and the countryside saw them continually, but the social side, never. Their stables and kennels were a sportman's delight; their gymnasium and training quarters a miniature duplicate of those found in the best colleges; and their boathouse the finest on Arunda Bay. Passionately fond, were they, of the water, and in Ralston's Cove, besides the litter of smaller craft, lay six trim yachts—the best productions of the most famous shipyards. And they were not bay craft, either, but outside schooners, the sum of whose voyages embraced the four quarters.

Yet the gossips, as the countryside, had forgotten Guilbert, the last to leave the nest. He seemed more like the dim recollection of a dream-image, merged in past obscurity. So long had his returning been delayed, that, though with an intuitive belief that it would happen, they no more expected him to appear than Christ himself to herald the Millennium. Of his wild doings there had at first been dreadful tidings; but so completely had he gone beyond the ken of rumor, that in the last several years nothing had been heard of him—of course by the countryside, for what the ostracised Ralstons knew was kept to themselves. But the impression prevailed that Guilbert was the worst, the wildest of the whole brood; that in him was the ripened maturity of every trait which had so served to make the Ralston name notorious. In truth, vague as the impression was, it was so strong, that he was never mentioned without a certain indefinable awe, such as is unconsciously used when men speak of things unusually sacred or terribly evil.

As she continued her stroll, she thought of these things. And as she paused at the cross-roads to drink in the beauty of the nestling bay, she burst into merry laughter, as for the moment she wandered in that magic glen with eight years old Guilbert.—This Guilbert, and she imagined the man he had evolved into; and herself, Helen Garthwaithe, Masters of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy, the college bred woman who had seen and understood the world. The juxtaposition, in thought, of a man such as he must have become, with a woman such as she felt herself to be, was indeed ludicrous.

However, all thought of the wild Ralston race vanished with the contusion of her stroll, when she found herself on the busy pier, pleasuring in the throb of life about her. But her interest lay in a yacht, which had just come to anchor on the channel's edge. Already a boat had been lowered and covered half the distance, springing gayly to each quick stroke of the oars. As it makes the landing, two flannel-clad men leap ashore, saluting and receiving her welcome. One, slender and boyish, with the first down of manhood sullyng his rosy cheek, crushes her in a bearish hug—her brother, returning from his summer holidays to spend a short week or so at home before the opening of the college year. The other, broad-shouldered, not over handsome, but whose powerful face bore the stamp of intense intellectuality and whose eyes emitted the deep gaze of the thinker, took her hand with a subdued expression of earnest regard. He was her brother's friend—not chum, but rather idol, at whose shrine he worshipped with the enthusiasm of youth. He was a marvel of learning, and could string behind his name many proud degrees of collegiate

endowment, had played "full," pulled stroke on the 'Varsity, and broken more than one inter-collegiate record, and again; since entering the world, had well laid the foundation for a brilliant literary and scientific career—in short, was one of those bright, all-round men which the American universities have so well succeeded in turning out. By the analytical mind, such friendships are easily accounted for. But when the childish fondness of the one is reciprocated by the other to such an extent that he is willing to waste his vacations and spare moments upon him, even to going down to visit his people and to endure the usual inflictions of such rashness—well, the analytical mind searches for some hidden spring, while the unconsciously logical animal asks "What's the sister like?"

Having received the assurance of a late tea and the carriage's arrival within the hour, Albert descried a group of chums down the pier, and with the glaringly bald diplomacy of all brothers, was off and away. It was not the first time that he had thus displayed his nude tact, and the bareness of it would have been embarrassing, but that they merrily laughed at him and themselves and frankly accepted the situation.

Merged in easy conversation, they strolled down the pier. As they reached its end, his description of the trip was interrupted by the espial of a large schooner-yacht entering the bay, and they paused to admire her beautiful appearance. A gallant sight she was, as she scudded the channel swell. When well a-breast, spinnakers, balloon jib and water-sails came in on the run, and she luffed up, full and by, heading directly for the pier. A hum of admiration rose all a-down the jetty at the searanship displayed in this manoeuver. On she came, a towering pyramid of snowy canvass above a leaping hull of ebon-black. Nearer and nearer—the yachtsmen began to show surprise and Stanton remarked that it were time she went about. Still on she came, devouring the intervening water at racehorse speed. The old salts began to murmur and in a panic, the crowd swayed back from the pier's end, leaving Stanton and Helen behind. Each had been in momentary expectancy that she would change her course, but her proximity now denied it. The crash seemed inevitable. Stanton threw an arm about Helen's waist to drag her back. But at that instant, clear as a bell, with the quick incisiveness of accustomed command, came the order "Hard-a-lee!"

Slapping and snarling, the three jib sheets were cast off; the topsail halyards let go and clewed up on the run by the down-hauls; and the mainsail backed over to windward with a weather tackle. They saw the bow sheer into the wind; but so close, that

they crouched to avoid the overhanging bowsprit, which descried an aerial circle above them as it swept up, obedient to the helm.

Parallel with the pier and not a dozen feet away, glided the yacht, the cynosure of all eyes. The recklessness of the exploit and the perfection of its execution drew the praise from Stanton's lips, as they gazed upon the long sweep of the decks. Beautiful as was the picture, it served but as a background for the real picture. Lightly twirling the wheel part over and gazing at the astonished pier with a wickedly exasperating smile, stood a man of such attractive aspect that every eye was drawn to him. His excellent physique was shown off to advantage in an easy yachting costume. But it was in his face that attraction chiefly centered. Handsome were not strong, nor beautiful appropriate, in describing it: beauty would be the only adequate symbol. Nor was it exactly beauty, for while the features were strong and pleasantly regular, one felt that the charm was due more to the expression, or rather, reflex of the inner man—a reflex of intense, almost animal, masculinity. But this, in turn, was redeemed by a certain, indefinable something, a sort of higher dominance.

Helen beheld him with a troubled sense of familiarity. It seemed a dim recollection of a dream-image, merged in past obscurity. Her prominent position on the deserted pier end was rendered the more conspicuous, by the fact that Stanton's arm still unconsciously circled her waist. The yachtman's roving eye caught hers, and never before had a man's eyes so affected her, made her so cognizant of sex distinction. For an instant his bold eyes held hers, then dropped to her waist, returned; and with roguish audacity, he laughed full in her face. Keenly appreciating the embarrassing situation, she disengaged Stanton's arm. Half angry, half hurt, she felt the flush mounting to her face, and as he tossed his head in mock reproof and cast at her a teasing glance of interrogation, her eyes involuntarily dropped. The next moment, he had glided past, leaving her very uncomfortable, indeed. Down the pier slipped the schooner, while the stranger swept the onlookers with his audacious stare.

"All about!" he cried as he whirled the wheel hard down. The jib and fore-sheets were hauled flat and the yacht sprang away on the other tack.

"Now indeed will this theatrical stranger come to grief," said Stanton. "They'll be resting on the mud in a minute, for there's but six men can take a boat her size across the Flats."

"Now indeed will this theatrical stranger come to grief," said Stanton. "They'll be resting on the mud in a minute, for there's but six men can take a boat her size across the Flats."

Nor can it be confessed that Helen felt at all sorry at this prophecy. It was soothing balm to her wounded conceit. But no—across the Flats ran a devious channel, bare of dolphins, buoys, or marks of any description. Thrice he threw the schooner into the wind, and once jibed all over, as he rounded the more difficult turns. Then on and away, straight for the Ralston boat-house. As he neared, the boat-house burst forth in a flame of bunting and roar of salute, while at the mast-head, the yacht *I* ran up the Ralston pennant.

"Guilbert, wild Guilbert has returned at last," was the hum of surprise which traveled up and down the jetty.

She had stolen away from the noisy group about the campfire, for on this night she had lapsed into one of her moods and wished to be alone. She was tired of gregarious humanity and suffered from a stress of entertaining. Her brother's vacation drew to a close, and for the past three days the brunt of hostess had fallen upon her in seeing to the accommodation and amusement of his friends. A score of lusty undergraduates they were—the Glee Club of his college. To-night, on this moonlight sail, their rough hilarity had jarred upon her, and when the wind dropped, she had hailed with delight the proposition to go ashore and build a campfire.

And so she strolled down the moonlit sands, communing with herself, dreaming strange dreams, and giving full rein to her restless ambition. In the dawning of her creative intellectuality, with the world before her and the field of action barely entered upon, was it strange that her talent throbbled within her to the pulse of unknown forces, to the rising fermentation of desires which bade her spring out into rushing humanity and invest with her individuality some of its shifting scenes, or to give the permanency of the terrestrial absolute to some of its transient formulas?

Mid the chaos of her thoughts and longings, she heard the strong young voices rise on the windless air, as they sang the *Pilgrim's Chorus*. She paused to listen, only to lose herself in the embrace of her desires. Lone strayed in meditation, she again roused when the full, rich tones of Stanton's voice, invested with all the sweet sadness of *Ah! che la morte!*, held the calm night with their magic.

As she listened, to her surprise she heard, quite close, a tenor subduedly take up the strain. Startled, interested, she rounded the small bluff, and there, in sharp relief against the yellow stretch of sand and bathed in the silvery moonlight, beheld wild Guilbert Ralston. Bewildered, she came to a halt and watched him. As he sang, his face, raised full to the moon, seemed lighted with a bright glow, as of spirituality. And gazing, she endeavored to analyze: it was not the Saintlike, Christlike reflex of pure divinity—mortality, with all its strength and weakness, was too manifest—rather, it seemed, a soul, heir to fierce passions and the trammels of the flesh, bathing in the effulgence of a latent nobility. It seemed to symbolize in fiery lettering, I AM: I MIGHT BE. It was as a rebellious spirit, linked to the earth by its pride and weakness, and the phrase, "Lucifer, bright son of the morn," came into her thoughts, unsummoned.

The song ceased. The bright glow faded softly away, and his soul returned to earth and beheld her. Mortality usurped divinity: the god had flown, the man returned: and in his eyes shone the careless, open admiration of man.

He advanced to meet her, doffed his hat, and with bold assurance said, "As you have surreptitiously gazed upon the beauty of my abstraction, so let me gaze, frankly and openly, on yours." And gaze he did, till her eyes were wet with the mute protest of indignation.

"We have met before," he continued. "The other day on the pier, you know. Of course, no introduction; but then how delightfully informal." And he smiled so ingenuously, and with such an air of good fellowship, that her resentment was already half removed.

"And that was not the first time," she enigmatically replied.

"Ah, at a distance I suppose, where you had the advantage."

"No."

"Then who are you? You must be some forgotten friend of my boyhood."

"You were a very small boy at the time, and you will, or rather should remember an instance in which you behaved abominably."

"I'm afraid I can remember too many—which one were you concerned in?"

"Don't you recollect the time you wrecked the hot-houses and our coachman gave you a thrashing?"

"Oh! Then you are Helen Garthwaithe, whom I wooed and won and lost with such celerity. You cut me the very next day."

"And you must confess you deserved it."

"Yes, I suppose so. But think of the blight you cast on my budding genius. Why, I had commenced a poem to you, of most wonderful-versification, and I never touched it again. I found it yesterday, in overhauling some of my boyish traps. How time flies—it seems only the other day that I met that little maiden wandering in my father's woods and to day—'why I've taken great pleasure in reading your *As the Heart Desires*."

"And how did you find it? I suppose you reached the generous masculine conclusion, that it was a pity women would insist going in for the Higher Education."

"O no. I've become reconciled to it. And I found it very readable, though disagreeing with a number of the conclusions."

"So little Guilbert has turned critic—it's much easier than writing poems of wonderful versification, isn't it? But I hope you'll be as lenient as were my reviewers."

"There's the rub—simply because you were a woman, they handled you with gloves. Or—O I don't know—perhaps they look at it differently than I do. It was admirably, and in the main, correctly handled; but as I said before, some of your conclusions were wrong. To appropriate a delightful phrase, you have not yet 'solved the mystery of woman,' and as to that of man, you're lamentably ignorant."

"And of course that statement puts you in the position of one who has. I'm afraid egotism—but there, we'll not quarrel. And I do hope, Mr. Ralston, that we shall become good friends; though I'm afraid we shall see little of each other."

"I am home to stay."

"But—"

"You are not going away?"

"No, but—"

"But what?"

"I can hardly express myself—"

"Oh! I see what you mean—our ostracisation. I suppose my brothers never attempted to redeem it. It does not hurt me. One sows the wind and must harvest the same. But I'd storm Olympus for desire's sake, and since I desire to know you better, I'll cultivate society. The doors will be opened, never fear."

"Then we shall—there! They are calling me, and if I don't come, they will. I am really glad to have met you, Mr. Ralston. Goodbye."

He took the extended hand, and then, as she fled down the beach, muttered "Gad! That's part of the mystery I'd like to solve!"

True to his word, Guilbert cultivated society—not that it was a new venture, but that here he had to face a long established and deep rooted prejudice. It was a society which had witnessed the birth, boyhood and manhood of himself and brothers, yet had never opened its doors to them. Furthermore, he and his had never attempted to propitiate it, but rather had taken pleasure in the estrangement, never missing a chance of displaying their disregard and contempt. But now things were changed, and Guilbert set about the conquest with an earnestness which brooked no defeat. Through his forceful personality, his charm of manner, his traveled polish and his knowledge of men and things, he soon became popular; and before long, no social function was complete without him. To him, it was a fascinating game, and even society felt the pleasant danger-thrill of contact with this social pariah. In fact, though fond mothers often looked askance, he became quite a lion. A clever conversationalist, familiar with the most diversified subjects, and with both a high intuitive and educated knowledge of human nature; small wonder that he pleased all and became one of the most favored.

They met often, and Helen beheld with dismay the increasing glamor of his presence. Many a stern self-analysis she gave herself; yet the problem was as perplexing as ever. At last she evolved the hoary axiom —human nature is not logical. Still, little satisfaction was to be gleaned from it. But one day a light broke in upon her. Summoning her soul to Judgement, she confessed that it was love—love that was not to be found within the narrow limits of reason—and strangest of all, that this absurd, illogical malady was hers.

In vain she endeavored to stem the tide; but she could not force her reason to reassert itself. The daring intrepidity of his race brooked no defense and hurried her on, till he had stormed her heart as valiantly as in that magic dell of long ago. The struggle was short but severe, and on the crumbling ruins of her philosophy, she realized that there was much to learn from the dual mystery of man and woman.

With the surrender, her alliance of the emotions with the concise particles of gray matter was dissevered, and conscious of loving and being loved, she wonderingly gazed on the broadening sweep of life. It seemed as though she had been translated to a new sphere, a delicious fairyland of reality. And she was appalled at the absurdity, the ludicrousness of the ideals she had builded or the tenets she had held in her previous existence. Never had she idealized such a character as Guilbert's, I and constantly had she frowned upon the recognition of a double moral standard. Dry logic and philosophy had fled before the glorious front of love she no longer thought; she felt.

Bright summer had fled, and lingering autumn prepared the stern advent of winter. But the sun beat warm on the breathless air and the land seemed to forget that the days of cold and gloom were so near at hand.

She brought her horse to a walk, listening with vague pleasure to the soft swish swish of the fallen leaves as he picked his steps on the narrow path. With her trained physique, she thought nothing of forty miles a-horse, and though appreciating the advantages of modern travel, thoroughly enjoyed it. The day before, she had taken the road around the outlying spurs of Delarado and spent the night at Irving, at the home of a college chum; but in returning, she had chosen the rough bridle-path across the mountain.

Lost in a reverie, she forgot the miles before her and let fall the rein on Dick's neck. Tonight, Guilbert and she had decided the announcement was to be made; tonight, the die was to be irrevocably cast; I tonight, this heralding of her own happiness was to bring disappointment and sorrow to another. Stanton had written that he was coming down this day, not for long, perhaps to return immediately. And her, woman's heart knew why.

Suddenly she heard a childish laugh, and Dick stopped midway in a narrow turn, to lazily contemplate a little boy who blocked the way. His hands were manfully buried in jacket pockets, his face wreathed in the merry wonder of childhood.

"How beautiful!" she thought, for she worshipped at the shrine of young life unsullied, yet pregnant with the secrets of futurity.

"I wish you a good morning," he said, doffing his hat with a rare, aint grace. "Don't you like riding?" he continued. "I do—that is, I'd like to, but papa thinks I'm not old enough—I'm not six yet, you know."

"Yes," she replied absently, studying his face and endeavoring to recall some familiar likeness.

"Yes, and when I'm six he's going to give me a little pony." And he drew himself up in the pride of prospective ownership.

"But are you not afraid to go so far in the woods, and all alone?"

"My papa is not afraid of anything and neither am I. You ought to see the lions and tigers he's killed—and elephants too. And he says it's wrong for a man to be afraid."

"You are a stranger here, a city boy, I suppose?"

"O no, not a city boy," he corrected. "I live in town, but you see, I often go to the country. Nana is only a little ways behind. May I ride back with you to meet her?"

Grasping his outstretched hands, she pulled him astride of Dick's neck, facing her. Brushing back the wavy hair from his forehead, she looked into his black eyes and scanned the dark beauty of his face. And as she pondered with a vague sense of foreboding, he prattled on, telling her of his toys, his pets, but principally of his father, for whom he evidently had great admiration. He did not live with him but in town, and Nana sometimes brought him down to see him. He came on a horse too, with his big dog. "My father is a man," he concluded proudly, "a man just like I want to be."

"O the familiarity of that face!" she thought. It seemed the dim recollection of a dream-image, merged in past obscurity.

"Guilbert!" A woman's voice rang out. "Guilbert! Come here you naughty boy! How can Nana find you?"

How it stung her! A frightful speculation assuming confirmation! But restraining herself— "And your name, my little man?"

"Guilbert, Guilbert Ralston."

She could hardly keep the saddle; but the mother appearing, she returned the boy, uttered a few conventionalities, and was away at a wild gallop down the rail.

The crash had come. Her philosophy had dissolved before her great love; now that was gone and nothing but a void remained. She could not think—only conjecture and fret. In short, now that the first pain was past, she had fallen into a mood of disgust, aimless and passive.

A sleepless night and a headache had been her portion, and now, events of yesterday seemed a half dream. Returning from her ride, she had barely gained her room when pounding hoofs on the drive-way announced Guilbert's arrival. Coming late, he had evidently learned of her presence from the woman and boy, and failed to overtake her in those swift twenty miles. But she had denied herself to him.

Today he had returned, but she kept to her room, pleading sickness. Besides, divining Stanton's mission, she was afraid to meet him. Like, wounded animal, she wanted to crawl away and suffer alone.

The afternoon was well along and the house quiet: evidently everybody had gone off. In an endeavor to escape herself, she would go down to the boat-house and take out her canoe. Slipping through the deserted house, she gained her wheel and was down the drive, barely escaping the ambushed Stanton who was lying in the hammock with his book. Down the grounds and into the road, she sped through the lengthening shadows.

"Helen!" And from the bushes by the wayside, sprang Guilbert.

"Helen!" in entreaty. But she was already beyond earshot.

But no, not safe. Few were the minutes before she heard the unmistakable sound of a loping horse. At the crest of the hill, just catching the first glimpse of the boat-house, she looked back down the long stretch of road. Guilbert had mounted a horse from the paddock, and hatless, *sans* bridle or saddle, guiding with his knees, he was riding like a Comanche Indian.

"Verily, for his desire would he storm Olympus," she thought, as she flew down the long grade. Nor could she deny a certain pleasurable thrill at this exhibition of his ardour. But she gained the boat-house and watched him go on down the beach.

The wind was strong and squally, already blowing half a gale. Soon she was out on the edge of the bar, breasting the tremendous seas and forgetting herself in the keen struggle. For an hour she beat back and forth in her frail craft, skimming the whitecaps which would have swamped many a larger boat.

"Helen!" Peremptory—no longer entreating. He had seized some fisherman's plunger on the beach and continued the chase.

The boat dashed past; so closely, that he dropped the tiller in a vain effort to catch her canoe. Her cockleshell handling in less room, she clacked off the two little sheets and headed for the boat-house. But he wore around, jibed over, and cut off her retreat.

It was contested skillfully on either side. Twice he blanketed her, and in the calm of his lea asked her to listen to him. Yet she refused. Again he took the wind from out her small sails and attempted to catch the canoe with a boat-hook. But she was out with her paddle and away, this time getting to windward to prevent the repetition of this manoeuvre. With the certitude of fate, he beat up against the wind in her wake, edging her nearer to the breaking bar. Merciless, he forced her closer to the, danger.

Then the untamable spirit of her Teutonic ancestry flamed up—the dogged obstinacy, the fearlessness, the wild danger-love. The bar was a stretch of death, yet she would venture it. Drawing the canvass coverings about her body so that no water could enter the canoe, she shook her sails close into the wind and headed across. Perhaps that buccaneer ancestor, with the passion of burning ships and sacking cities for gold and maidens, animated Guilbert, for he also plunged into the threatening ruin.

Three great combers passed her before they broke, but the fourth could not be escaped. She was caught by the cap and hurled like a cork into the great hollow, buried in a smother of foam. Yet the canoe was staunch and righted without difficulty. The plunger met a similar sea and emerged with the cockpit half afloat. At last they shot out from the last great wave, into the long swell of open ocean.

But she heard the churn of the fore-shoe, the complaining after-leach, and the jerk of the sheet on the noisy traveler, as the plunger gradually drew near. Now the bow was abreast of her, and so close that she could have touched it with her paddle. She shot up into the wind; but the plunger luffed, followed her about, and blanketed her on the other tack. It poised above her on a great sea—for he had thrown the helm hard up in order to run her

down. There was a crash of splintering wood and a rush of water, then a strong arm grasped her and she was drawn into the cockpit.

How happily the years had flown!—she gazed dreamily into the fire and her thoughts sped back to that wild night at sea. How, amid the howling elements, he crushed her to him and forced her to listen—laid his life bare, told her all, each mishap, every error. The mother, his wife, but dead. And the boy had found a second mother in her sister. So the darkness was dispelled, and for the third time and more tempestuously than ever, he had wooed and won her.

Though the countryside shook its head and muttered fearful prophecies, they had married, and strange to say, happiness had been her lot. As for Guilbert—I AM, BECAME I WAS: I MIGHT BE, BECAME I AM.

"Helen!"

She awoke to greet him, and the dream-image, merged in past obscurity, vanished—the realization, the reality remained.

THE END OF THE CHAPTER

"YOU'VE been beastly. You've taken no interest in anything, gone nowhere, done nothing—played the hermit. What's come over you, anyway? Hermitage, old man, is a synonym for hell."

"Why search so far?" Jack Lennon favored his interlocutor with an apathetic glance. "The world complies more precisely with the invoice. The world, dear chap, is the only original and simon-pure synonym for hell."

"Not so long as it holds one honest man or woman."

"Go on, Lennon prompted. "It's certainly invigorating to listen. The enthusiasms of youth, its unsullied ideals, were ever a pleasure to me. They come like the fresh winds of the sea, rampant with the large airs of unworldly wisdom—"

"And killing with their salt the dismal fungus which rots on the worldly wise."

"Good! It *is* a dismal fungus—rotten, noisome. Keep to your potent illusions. Like the chastity of woman, like the bloom on her cheek, they can never renew. Once brushed aside, they can but curse by recollection: memory becomes a blight, a blasted tablet to one's own iniquities. Ah, Golden Youth, thrice Golden Youth, trail thou thy clouds of glory elsewhere. I'm going home."

"I say, don't be in a rush. Let's wander around town and have a—a—dickens of a time. Come on, I'll cheer you up."

"Avoid the paths of dalliance, O Golden Youth; for with the primroses you gather, one by one; just so, one by one, do your bright-winged illusions slip away. You cannot eat your cake and keep it. I'm going home. Good-night."

"Blues, blacker than the hinges of Sheol!" the Golden Youth commended with himself as he watched Jack Lennon's back disappear through the swinging doors. "Ten thousand a year, and not an interest in life. And nothing the matter with him." There was an aggrieved pitch to his thought. "First thing I know I'll be called out of bed at an unseemly hour to identify some horrible cadaver at the morgue. See if I don't. Scare-heads in the morning papers. Shocking Event. Prominent Clubman. The Erstwhile Jolly Bohemian—ough!"

The Gilded Youth shivered and sought refuge from his imagination in the noise and clatter of the billiard-room.

Home! Jack Lennon mouthed the word with intense vindictiveness and loathing of spirit, Home! This bemirrored hotel, this gaudy palace—home. He rubbed shoulders with his gregarious species, and took the elevator through the many-floored, many roomed bee-hive to his own apartments.

"Ring up for a whiskey and soda," he said to his brass-imaged serving man, "and then you can go."

"Go?"

"Yes, go! To bed—anywhere. I won't need you. In the morning, before you do anything else, you will find a couple of letters on my desk. Mail them. Understand? Before you do anything else."

"Yes, sir."

Left to himself, for a while he stood absently at the window, mooning down upon the scintillating street. Then, as though in sudden recollection of an appointment, he proceeded to make his toilet, scrupulously, if anything, with more than his customary care. When he shaved, it was with the greatest circumspection that he went over with his razor a second time. Even from the corruption of death do they draw their vigor, he thought; and Hawthorne's auburn-haired woman in her secret sepulchre came to him with unpleasant vividness.

After manicuring his nails with fastidious consideration, and pinning a bud to the lapel of his coat, he wrote a couple of short notes at his desk, addressing, sealing, stamping them with the business-like precision of a clerk. It seemed as though many little things clamored for his attention, and that there should be nothing slovenly in the attention he afforded them. He paused in the act of drawing a black leather case from the desk drawer to light a cigar. The anodyne of the weed painted its pleasure in his eyes. Then he secured a current magazine from the reading stand, and in the company of the black leather case, stretched himself with a comfortable sigh on the sofa.

For while he read, consciously, receptively, so much so that he permitted the cigar to go out. He laid the periodical aside in order to relight it.

"The end of the chapter," he murmured aloud, idly watching the fantastic smoke-wreathes ascend toward the frescoed ceiling.

And why not? Was not that the one prerogative granted to him and denied to God? And being granted, why should he not exercise it? Unbidden he had come; without summons he could go. Who should say him nay? An experiment, he remembered some one had said, a question put by man to nature, an endeavor to force from her the fecund mystery or the barren falsity of existence. And either way, he reasoned, there was little to lose and much to gain.

He smiled at his dialectical subtleties, and fell to watching the lengthening ash of his Havana. Then his thoughts flew to Claudio's panic terror and grewsome speculations on the aftermath of death: "Or to be worse than worst of those that lawless and uncertain thoughts imagine howling."

He laughed softly at the wanton vagaries of his mind, and returned to the smoke-wreathes. The humors of his imagination seized upon him, and he gave free rein, following its whimsicalities through the eddying draperies in much the manner of a bubble-blowing child. It gave zest to the game, to play thus on the giddy verge. The mood pleased him.

But suddenly, so swift that he failed to trace the nexus of his jostling fancies, the smoke resolved itself into white surf thundering on an ocean shore. The couch took unto itself the likeness of a yellow-sanded sea-beach. The golden-balled sun poised at the zenith, while far away, in the haze of the windless sea, melting into the mists of the sky-line, he could discern the dim canvas of a merchant-man.

He was interested. His curiosity was aroused. For a moment he tore himself away from his subjective self that he might identify the scene. Somewhere, sometime, it had been recorded on his brain, had been one of the countless factors in deepening the convolutions of his rugged gray matter. When? Where? Ah, the day he had dared Kitty to be a child again and go in wading! And did she dare? Yes; for he remembered their Predicament—how the wet sand clung to their feet when they came to resume the wool and leather gear of civilization; how they buried them in warm sand till the tiny particles were dried and brushed away; how they laughed, devoid of guile or convention. Jove! a day for the gods!

Where was Kitty? He returned to the thundering surf and the yellow beach. Holding his breath the while, he brushed the sand from one rose-tinted foot. How small it was! and soft! He caught himself covertly comparing it with his own. And he smiled at his grave deceit as he needlessly protracted the task. And the final inspection, in case one glittering grain remained—from the slender ankle, discreetly veiled by the corduroy-braided skirt, over the white-arched instep, down to the last pink wee toe. Jove!

His cigar was out. With the vision still strong upon him, he opened the black leather case and drew forth the world's modern asp—that which was to drop the last period at the chapter's end. He threw out the cylinder with an adroit twist of the wrist, assured himself of its contents, and jerked it into place again. But up there, among the vanishing smoke clouds, palpitated a foot, rose-tinted, white-arching. He laid the revolver on his breast and closed his eyes. It was still there, shimmering through his eyelids as though they were of gauze. A foot, replete with tender and bewitching memories. A foot, which had tripped lightly across his life's scroll and left no trace. Well, well, the confounded thing was pretty. He would wait until it was gone. His aesthetic sense revolted at doing the deed in so fair a presence. Yes, he would wait until it saw fit to go.

An hour later he came to his feet with sudden determination and looked at himself in the mirror. A facetious smile played upon his lips.

"Jack Lennon," he said, "you've been a fool, a gorgeous fool, and now you're going to bed to escape being a greater one."

One hand drew the bud from his coat lapel; with the other he aided the two notes in a precipitate descent from the writing desk to the paper basket.

As he drew the coverings to his chin and felt the cool contact of the sheets, he muttered: "The world? Not so long as one woman's foot twinkles above ground. For with each foot there goes a chapter, and there be many such feet."

EVEN UNTO DEATH

IT might have been due to mere coincidence, it might have been because there are undreamed-of bonds between the quick and the dead, and it might have been that Bat Morganston felt a blind consciousness of the future, when he turned suddenly to Frona Payne and asked, "Even unto death?"

Frona Payne was startled for the moment. Her shallow nature would not permit her to understand the strength of a strong man's love; such things had no place in her fickle standard. Yet she knew men well enough to repress her inclination to smile; so she looked up to him with her serious child's eyes, placing a hand on each brawny shoulder, and answered: "Even unto death, Bat, dear."

And as he crushed her to him, half doubting, he passionately cried, "If it should happen so, even in death I shall claim you, and no mortal man shall come between."

"How absurd," she thought as she freed herself and watched him untangling his dogs. And a handsome fellow he was as he waded among the fierce brutes, pulling here and shoving there, cuffing right and left, and dragging them over and under the frozen traces till the team stood clear. Nipped by the intense cold to a tender pink, his smooth-shaven face told a plain tale of strength and indomitability. His hair, falling about his shoulders in thick masses of silky brown, was probably more responsible for winning the woman's affections than all the rest of him put together. yet when men ran their eyes up and down his six foot two of brawn, they declared him a man, from his beaded moccasins to the crown of his wolf-skin cap. But then, they were men.

She kissed him once, twice and yet a third time, in her shy, trusting way; then he broke out the sled with the gee-pole, "mushed-up" the dogs as only a dog-driver can, and swung down the hill to the main river trail. The meridian sun, shouldering over the snowy summits to the south, turned the tiny frost-particles to scintillating gems, and through this dazzling gossamer Bat Morganston disappeared on his journey down the Yukon to Forty Mile. Down there he was accounted a king, in virtue of the rich dirt which was his after the dreary years he had spent in the darkness of the Artic circle. Dawson had no claims upon him. He did not own a foot of gravel in the district, nor was he smitten with its inhabitants—the Che-cha-quas that had rushed in like jackals and spoiled the good times when men were men and every man a brother. In fact, the only reason for his presence, and a most unstable one at that, was Frona. He had harnessed his dogs and

run up on the ice to renew the pledged of the previous summer, and to plead for an early date. Well, they were to be married in June, and he was returning to the management of his miners with a light heart. June!—the clean-up promised to be rich; he would sell out; and then, the States, Paris, the world! Of course, he doubted—most men do when they leave a pretty woman behind; but ere he had reached Forty Mile he no longer mistrusted, and by the time he froze his lungs on a moose-hunt and died a month later, he had attained a state of blissful optimism.

Frona waved him good-bye, and also with a light heart, turned back to her father's cabin; but then, she had no doubts at all. They were to be married in June. That was all settled. And it was no unpleasant prospect. To tell the truth, she thought she would rather like it. Men thought a great deal of him, and it was a match not to be ashamed of. Besides, he was rich. People who should know said he could at any time clean up half a million, and if his American Creek interests turned out anywhere near as reported, he would be a second MacDonald. Now this meant a great deal, for MacDonald was the richest miner in the North, and the most conservative guessers varied by several millions in the appraisal of his wealth.

Now be it known that the sin Frona Payne committed was a sin of deed, not fact. There were no mail teams between Forty Mile and Dawson, and as Bat Morganston's mines were still a hundred miles into the frozen wilderness from Forty Mile, no news of his death came up the river. And since he had agreed to write only on the highly improbable contingency of a stray traveler passing his diggings, she thought nothing of his silence. To all intents, so far as she was concerned, he was alive. So the sin she committed was of a verity a sin of deed.

By no method may a woman's soul be analyzed, by no scales may a woman's motive be weighed; so no reason can be given for Frona Payne giving her heart and hand to Jack Crellin within three months of her farewell to Bat Morganston. True, Jack Crellin was a Circle City king, possessed of some of the choicest Birch Creek claims; but the men who had made the country did not rate him highly, and his only admirers were to be found among the sycophantic tenderfeet who generously helped him scatter his yellow dust. Perhaps it was the way he had about him, and perhaps it was the impulsive affinity of two shallow souls; but be it what it may, they agreed to marry each other in June, and to journey on down to Circle City and set up housekeeping after the primitive manner of the Northland.

The Yukon broke early, and soon after that important event, the river steamer, *Cassiar*, captained by her brother, was scheduled to sail. The *Cassiar* had the mingled honor and misfortune to be both the treasure ship and the hospital ship of the year. In her strong boxes she carried five millions of gold, in her staterooms ten score of crippled and diseased. And there were also Lower Country traders and kings, returning from their winter labors or pleasures at Dawson. Among these—a little anticipation of the event—were listed Mr. and Mrs. Jack Crellin. But when the sick and heart-weary lifted their voices to heaven at the cruel delay, and the gold shippers waxed clamorous, the *Cassiar* was forced to sail before her time, and Mr. and Mrs. Jack Crellin were yet man and maid.

"Never mind, Frona," her brother said; "come aboard and I'll take charge of you. Father Mahan takes passage at Forty Mile, and you'll be snugly one before we say good-bye at Circle City."

Plimsol marks, boiler inspectors and protesting boards of underwriters, not yet having penetrated the dismal dominions of the North, the *Cassiar* cast of her lines, with passengers, freight and chattels packed like badly assorted sardines. Wolf-dogs, whose work began and ceased with the snow, and who grew high-stomached with summer idleness, rioted over the steamer from stem to stern or killed each other on the slightest provocation. Stalwart Stick Indians of the Upper River regions lightened their heavy money pouches in brave endeavors to best the white man at his games of chance, or outraged their vitals with the whisky he sold at thirty dollars the bottle. There were squat Mongolian-featured Malemute and Inuit wanderers from the Great Delta two thousand miles away; not among the whites was the jangle of nationalities less pronounced. The nations of the world had sent their sons to the North, and the tongues they spoke were many. In short, the brother of Frona Payne commanded a floating Babel, commanded and guided it unerringly through uncharted wilderness upon the breast of a howling flood—for the mighty Yukon had raised its sullen voice and roared its anger from mountain rim to mountain rim. Nine months of snow was passing between its banks in as many days, and the journey of the sea was long.

At Forty Mile more passengers and freight were crowded aboard. Among the pilgrims was Father Mahan, and in the baggage was an unpainted pine box, corresponding in size to the conventional last tenement of man. The rush of life has little heed for death, so this box was piled precariously upon a pyramid of freight on the *Cassiar's* deck. But Bat Morganston, having lain till

the moment of shipment in a comfortable ice cave, did not care. Nobody cared. There were no mourners, save a huge wolf-dog, to whom the taste of his master's lash was still sweet. He crept aboard unnoticed, and ere the lines were cast off had taken up his accustomed vigil on the heap of freight by his master's side. he was such a vicious brute, and had such a fearful way of baring his fangs that the other canine passengers gave him a wide berth, choosing to leave him alone with his dead.

The cabins were crowded with the sick, so the marriage began on the stifling deck. It was near midnight, but the sun, red-disked and somber, slanted its oblique rays from juts above the northern sky-line. Frona Payne and Jack Crellin stood side by side. Father Mahan began the service. From aft came the sound of scuffling among half a dozen drunken gamblers; but in the main the human cargo had crowded about the center of interest. And also the dogs.

Still, all would have been well had not a Labrador dog sought a coign of vantage among the freight. He had traveled countless journeys, was a veteran of a dozen famines and a thousand fights, and knew not fear. The truculent front of the dog which guarded the pine box interested him. He drew in, his naked fangs shining like jeweled ivory. They closed with snap and snarl, the carelessly piled freight tottering beneath them.

At this moment Father Mahan blessed the two, which were now one, and Jack Crellin solemnly added, "Even unto death."

"Even unto death," Frona Payne repeated, and her mind leaped back to the other man who had spoken those words. For the instant she felt genuine sorrow and remorse for what she had done. And at that instant the dogs shut their jaws in the death grip, and the long pine box poised on the edge of its pyramid. her husband jerked her from beneath it as it fell, end on. There was a crash and splintering; the cover fell away; and Bat Morganston, on his feet, erect, just as in life, with the sun glinting on his silky brown locks, swept forward.

It happened very quickly. Some say that his lips parted in a fearful smile, that he flung his arms about Frona Payne and held her till they fell together to the deck. This would seem impossible, seeing that the man was dead; but there are those who swear that these things were done. However, Frona Payne shrieked terribly as they drew her from beneath the body of her jilted lover, nor did her shrieking cease till land was made at Circle City. And Bat Morganston's words were true, for today, if one should care to journey over to the hills which lie beyond Circle City, he will see,

side by side, a cabin and a grave. In the one dwells Frona Payne; in the other Bat Morganston. They are waiting for each other till their fetters shall fall away and the Trump of Doom break the silence of the North.

"FRISCO KID'S" STORY

WHO am I? Why I'm de "Frisco Kid." An wot do I do? I'm on de "road," see! Say, youze ain't got nothin' agin me, have yer, mister? Cos if yer has, I'll chase meself off, fer I'm pretty good at pacin'. No, you hasn't? Well, den I guess it's all square. Yer see I took yer fer a fly cop, an' I'm onto meself fer a jigger w'en it comes to dem people.

Wot! A quarter? Dat's very kind in yer, mister. Now I'se solid fer me bed an' a bowl of java in de mornin'. Yer wants ter ast me a few questions? Den fire away. I'se yer red hot tamale.

A kid wid curley golden hair an' fair complexshun, an' 'bout de size of me? Well, I guess I seed stacks like'm, but I never took pertic'lar notiss, dough if I spots'm, I'll put yer on. W'en did he stray away, an' wot's his monica? I mean wot's his name? Yer see we all travels by monicas on de road. Charley wuz his handle? Say! did he wear his hair middlin' long like a girl's an' hail from Frisco? Den I guess I knowed'm onst. Say! if I tells yer all I knows about'm, yer won't give me de cross hop, will yer? Didn't he sport a little hoop—Hoop?—O' I see yer a gentleman, an' don't talk like me and de people I travel wid. I mean a ring, a gold un, set wid little red rubies?—I guess dat's wot yer calls'm. An' a locket? Yes, I knows de locket too. It opens an' shuts, an' dere's a little pitcher of a lady on one side an' some hair, yaller hair like his, only diffrent, on de other. Do I know w'ere dey is? Yer jest bet I do—here dey is. I allus wore dem roun' my neck since he—Say! Leave go! Don't squeeze me arm like dat. Yer hurts, yer do, an' wot der yer tink I am? A cheap guy?

Yer wants ter know w'ere he is? Den jes' take it easy, an' don't get leary and grab me like dat again, an' I'll tell yer all I knows.

Yer see it wuz dis way. Las' year 'bout dis time, me'n and my pal, "Leary Joe," come down to Sacramento to work de fair. Well, one hot day—an' it wuz a scorcher—Leary Joe got to sloppin' up on white line, an wuz orioide. Den I takes'm to bed, an' not knowin' wot to do wid meself, took a stroll. I wuz mopin' down de main-drag, I mean de main street, w'en I bumped up gainst de kid wid de yaller hair. He was wid four er five hobos, an' w'en I seed his good togs, an' hoop an' gold ticker, I tumbled to wot de gang wuz up to. So I t'ought I'd snare'm meself, an' I up an' sez, jest like we wuz ol' fren's, "Say, kid, w'ere yer ben all day? Come on; let's go swimmin'." Yer see, I tought I'd like ter get a finger in de pie meself.

I guess he didn't kinder like de tuff looks of de crowd, an' de swimmin' got his eye, so he gives de push de shake and does de swift sneak. An' yer ough'to seen de gang. Dey'd liked ter a chewed me up an' pushed me nose in, only dey dassant, cos dey wer' fraid of me pal, Leary Joe, fer he wuz de swiftest scrapper on de drag.

Well, we went swimmin'. On de way I found dat de kid'd run away from home an' jest hit de road. So I ast 'm if he wanted ter travel wid me an' my pal! Leary Joe, cos if he did, we were willin' an' he said –Yes.” Somehow, I cudn't tell why, I kinder took ter dat kid. He wuz so pritty an innisent like, jest as if he wuz a girl. An' if I cussed, he'd kinder blush an' wudn't look at me fer a long while. An' den I tumbled dat he had good people an' wuzn't ust to swearin'. An' jest like yer, he wuz allus callin' me down, cos he didn't understand de words I talked, an' den I'd cut de rag short an' tell'm wot dey ment. But he wuz smart, I tell yer; yer didn't have ter give 'm de drop more'n onst to make 'm tumble.

Well, we moped up above de railroad bridge an' undrest on a san'bar w're a lot other road-kids, wot I knowed, wuz in swimmin'. Say! it wuz a sight ter see dat yaller-haired kid's clo's. Right down ter de skin dey wuz as fine as fine cud be. A good 'eal better'n I ever wore.

At first, de road-kids, wuz fer guyin' 'm, but I blufft 'm wid der stiff lip, an' dey let up an' wuz very kind ter 'm. It wuz a picnic ter see dat kid. He wuz so funny an' diffrent from de rest of de push. He wuz so innisent an' trustin' like. Why, he guv me his hoop ter wear fer 'm, cos he wuz leary dat it'd slip off'n his finger in de water. An' w'en he took his locket off'n his neck an' put it in his pocket, curius like, I took it ter see wot it wuz like, an' if it wuz snide. But it wuz eighteen K., an' den I kep' it, so de odder kids cudn't swipe it.

Well, we had lots of joy, an' so did de kid, dough he cudn't swim a stroke. Bime'by we all cum out an' lay on de sand in de sun 'cept 'm, an' he said in, foolin' 'round in de shaller places. Pritty quick I got ter jokin' wid 'm, an' I can see 'm now wid his han's claspt behind his head, an' his pritty face all smiles an' laffin', an' his yaller hair flyin' ev'ry way, like a girl's. He wuz walkin' out backwards from de san'bar.

All of a sudden like, he struck a hole an' went down. We wuz all in de water like a shot, but he never cum up any more. Yer see, he struck de undertow an' wuz sucked down. Well, bime'by we all got out an' sat in der san' kinder solem' like fer a long while. Yer see, it

wuz hard ter see a poor innisent kid like dat get drowneded, even dough we hadn't knowed 'm very long.

Pritty soon, after a while, de “Punk Kid” goes up an' takes de ticker, I mean watch, sayin' fer an excuse like, “Mine's broke.” But he didn't need ter 'polygize, fer up goes de “Miget Kid” an' takes his coat, an' de “Cooley Kid” his shirt, an' so on, till dere wuz nothin' left but his kicks, I mean shoes, w'ich I took, coz mine wuz no good. Den we piles up our ole rags in place of his good 'uns, an' drest.

De “Orator Kid” went an' gave de coroner de tip, an' den run out of de office, so dey cudn't pinch 'm. An' w'en de coroner cum down, all drest up fine, an' took de clo's, he said kinder offhand like, w'en he saw de poor, mis'erable rags: “It's only a tramp kid, anyhow.”

Well' t'ree days went by, an' den dey foun' de poor little kid way down de river, an' w'en he wuz at de morgue, I went an' took a look at 'm.

Wot? Yer say, why didn't I 'dentify 'm? Well, yer see it wuz dis way: “Leary Joe” an' me wuz goin' ter pull out nex' day, an' I didn't wanter be held fer de inquest, an' besides, dey might ast me some curius questions 'bout wot became of his good togs and jewelry.

Wot? Yu're not cryin', are yer, mister? Well, yu're de funniest guy I ever seen. O! I tumbles now. Yer wuz de kid's ole man. Den I'm sorry fer yer, an' here's my hand on it.

Wot? Five big cart-wheels! I'm much obliged, mister, an' I guess yu'd better keep de hoop an' locket, cos dey belongs ter yer anyways. Well, I must be sayin' “So long,” cos here cums my pal Leary Joe, an' we're goin' out on dat freight over dere. Dere she whistles now, an' I must be movin'. Cum on, Leary Joe, an' take de second, she's nice an' clean, an' we can have a good snooze.

THE GRILLING OF LOREN ELLERY

THE bon Dieu, in His inscrutable wisdom, had seen fit to place two women's souls within two fairly beautiful bodies, and to cause them to love each other dearly. He had likewise deemed it discretionary to create them sister and sister, that this affection might bloom rich and full, nor fall a prey to the deadly germs ordinarily sown in the course of feminine existence. Having done these things, it is evident He rested from His labors, leaving these two creatures to whirl of chance.

Chance behaved sanely for a long while; but, having permitted them to gain womanhood in each other's companionship, it flung them apart by half the girth of a Western State, and caused them to dwell in separate places, one in a smoky metropolis by the seaboard, and one in a great valley where meridians were as common as pebbles in a gravel bank. Chance also brought many strange things into their lives, and last of all, a man. And this man came well recommended, with moral probity, business integrity, healthy bank books, unqualified letters of credit and introduction, and looks. He became great friends with Ernestine, who lived in the city by the sea, and thought he thought much of her. After they had come to know each other well, Lute, whom an imbecile ancestor had classified as Luella, and who lived in the valley, came on a visit to her sister Ernestine. And the man, who may be known as Loren Ellery, came to know her likewise.

"And what do you think of Lute?" Ernestine, who was the elder, asked one day, after her sister's visit had terminated in a climacteric of sisterly love, kisses, admonitions, and promises.

"Now, Erna," Ellery answered—he had long since taken unto himself this prerogative of address; "it's this way: Lute's a fine girl. There's no mistaking it. She is bright, good looking, with vim and go about her, and a glorious colour. But her brightness is of a different order from yours, as are her looks, her vivacity, her complexion. You understand. She's a pretty little witch and all that, but—" Here he threw the proper expression into his eyes and gazed upon his interlocutor just the correct number of instants to be thoroughly effective, and resumed: "But she could never be to me what you are. I like her, but in a different way from you. I admire her, but not as I admire you. I can respect her, and I might have loved her had you and I never met. As it is—"

Ernestine said "Oh!" afterward. and they both felt a high satisfaction with themselves, each other, and things in general and particular.

After some time Chance, with his accustomed arch manipulation of his human dice, tossed a man with a mine across Loren Ellery's path. And according to the affinity which exists between men possessing natural capital and men possessing industrial capital, these two foregathered for cooperative exploitation and mutual benefit. In the course of the deal Loren Ellery, not desiring to be mulcted by the Western Gentile, hired a mining expert and went to investigate the pretensions of the hole in the ground. It so happened that the mine lay among the outjutting spurs of the mountains which fringed the rim of the valley where Lute lived and moved.

Naturally, society being limited, and travellers rare, she and Ellery met, and they saw much of each other. So pleasurable did he find her company that he dallied, day by day, and postponed the date of his return. And as he took liberties with time, so did his tongue with him, till he said to Lute things which he should not have said, and which he had said before.

"It's something like this, Lute," he said one day, as they drank iced tea on her long, shaded piazza and thus strove to adapt themselves more comfortably to their torrid environment. "It's something like this, you see, now that sister of yours is a jolly nice girl, clever and all that. Not the slightest doubt in the world of it. She's got looks and health, and complexion, and all that sort of stuff. You understand. She's just the kind of a girl to carry most fellows away, fall in love with her on the jump, but—" and here he expressed that "but" in a mild pantomime, rendered more effective by long practice, and went on: "But she never could be to me what you are. She is pretty, but so are you, and in a different way. She may appeal to most men, but not to me as you can. In short, I like your sister, but there is no similarity between that and my affection for you. I can admire her and respect her, and it might have been I could have loved her had I not met you. As it is—tell me, Lute dear, tell me you understand."

As this repetition of stereotyped niceties is an infirmity from which all masculines suffer to greater or less extent, and which, in like measure, gives pleasure to all feminines, it can be considered no great evil; and evil things would not have resulted from it had not the bon Dieu made Lute's a very confiding nature and Chance sent her down on another visit to the seaboard city.

In the meantime Ellery was prevented from changing the trend of events by catching the mining fever and going off to the outjutting spurs to explore more holes in the ground.

No matter how slightly and carefully some women lift the lids of their hearts in confidence, like the box of Pandora, the contents thereof are likely to fly out to the last little particle. Lute happened to be such a creature, and it also happened that Ernestine had acquired a certain knack necessary to draw from her her maiden secrets.

The night they remained awake, and talked so long, Lute's intentions were to divulge, oh, such a little bit of the case; but gradually, insensibly, she drifted on, giving notice to more and more, till suddenly Ernestine's ears caught the concatenation of familiar phrases, and her "What's that?" precipitated affairs. Then a reciprocal relation attached itself to their confidences, and they weighed and balanced their respective merits and demerits as interpreted by the protean-tongued Loren Ellery. After that, and the immediate pangs of chagrin and personal affront had passed, they laughed and fell asleep in each other's arms, as sisters should.

Loren Ellery unconcernedly staged and trailed it through the mountains, descending deep shafts and winding through deviously constructed man burrows, learning the ways of the Western man and his habitat, and adding to his vocabulary the nomenclature of the mines and the idiom of the frontier. And he had become quite Western himself, don't you know, and quite proud of his attainments and his mineral properties by the time of the fall of the year, when he returned to the city and betook himself to a certain residence and sent up his card. He had asked for Ernestine, but incidentally it so happened that Lute aided her sister in receiving him.

Conversation picked its sinuous thread through the unctuous nothings and polite inanities of impersonal small talk; Ellery contriving, in his subtle way, to convey to each that his interest had not dwindled, and all went well. Words flowed easily, naturally, without jar or premonition of coming discord.

"Ah, what a striking young man," Ellery murmured, in a lull, gazing admiringly upon a portrait suspended from the wall opposite him. "And may I ask whose it is?"

"My cousin George," Ernestine informed him; "the one in the navy I think I told you about."

"And is he not a handsome chap?" he continued.

"Indeed he is," authenticated Ernestine.

"Ah?"

"But not like his brother Herman," Lute chimed in.

"An extremely nice young man," Ernestine continued, "with a vim and go about him, and energy and manliness."

"Yes, I dare say," Ellery put in, absently, puzzling over the vague familiarity of the phrases.

"And yet so different from his brother," came back from Lute's side of the duet.

"Isn't it funny," from Ernestine; "he's just the kind of a man girls lose their hearts to, yet—"

"I could not love him as I would Herman," Lute interpolated, taking up her portion of the measure.

"How strange!" Ellery was beginning to fall a victim to decidedly definite suspicions.

"An estimable young man—"

"Whom I could like—"

"But not as I could his brother—"

"Whom I could admire—"

"But not as Herman—"

Ellery knew they were grilling him and smiled vacuously.

"Whom I can respect—"

"And might have loved—"

"Had I not met—"

"His brother Herman—"

"And who—why, Mr. Ellery," Ernestine broke off, as innocently as she did abruptly; "you are not going? And so soon?"

"Most charming time, I assure you," Ellery had glanced at his watch and risen to his feet, a barely discernible colour in his cheeks, but managing to hold himself in hand. "So nice to see you girls again, don't you know; but I must be moving on."

"But won't you stay just a moment and have some tea?" Ernestine made a half move to strike the bell.

"Really, I would like to, ever so much." He was methodically edging to the door the while he spoke. "Had no idea it was so late, time flew so; but I must meet a man with a prospectus—this mining, you know, is so deucedly distracting."

"Then good-bye, Mr. Ellery." Ernestine's larynx was delicately vibrant with disappointment as she finally extended her hand. "You must come again—"

"And see our cousin George—"

"And his brother Herman—"

"He's just as he is in his picture, and I know you will like him—"

"But different from the way you will like his brother Herm—"

But Loren Ellery, fearing an attack of primordial passion, fled incontinently down the stairs.

THE HANDSOME CABIN BOY

"AND the dapper young fellow was—"

"None other than the veiled woman, of course."

"O, pshaw!" I cried. "That's well enough for a Sunday newspaper, but in real life people are not so easily misled."

"Look at the authentic instances—women serving as soldiers, sailors, scouts—"

"Bosh!"

"Why, there's my little brother Bob, as clever an impersonator—"

"Bosh!"

"People are fooled every day and—"

"Stuff and nonsense," I said. "Any one but a ninny should penetrate such a make-up at a glance. I don't think much of a fellow who can't tell a man from a woman. Catch me napping that way."

"I'll catch you," cried Jack.

"I like that," was my reply.

"I'll wager I fool you within six months."

"Done! For how much?"

"The loser to foot a supper; the setting, ordering, and inviting of the same to be at the winner's discretion."

"Done!"

We shook hands, and the fellows crowded round with all sorts of advice and persiflage. Thus was the seed sown, out of which was to spring the never-to-be-forgotten romance of "The Handsome Cabin Boy."

The succeeding fortnight found me in solitary grandeur aboard my schooner yacht *Falcon*, bound for a short cruise to Honolulu. We had hardly sunk the Farralone Light, when my suspicions

were aroused. From the cook to the sailing-master complaints began to pour in about the new cabin boy. They held he was willing enough, but worthless. At the last moment, Billy, the old boy, had left us in the lurch, and my agent, to whom all such matters were entrusted, had hastily procured the present incumbent.

As they said, he was willing enough, but—in short, he was ignorant of his duties and totally unfit for such a position. Yet he tried so hard that everybody was drawn toward him. And he was such a handsome lad. Dark-eyed, rosy-cheeked, with a delicate olive complexion and an exquisite oval—small wonder that he recalled to my mind the bet with Jack Haliday. And then, for the slender lad of fifteen or sixteen that he appeared, there was a vague, insinuating fullness about the figure, which did not fail to corroborate my suspicions.

But I held my hush and awaited confirmation. This came sooner than I expected. The sailing-master and myself were on the poop, one noon, with our sextants, bent on shooting the sun. The lad came up the companionway with a pan of soot and ashes; he had just cleaned the cabin stove. Instead of going to the lee, he stepped to the weather rail and let fly the refuse. And fly it did—backwards, of course, and all over us.

Digging a handful out of his eyes, the sailing-master grabbed the young rascal by the arm. Now Nelson was a rough son of the sea, and had a mellifluous command of the vernacular which serves for emphasis to those who sail the same. He shook him up and down and cursed him with as virile a combination of English and Scandinavian oaths as was ever my luck to hear.

The boy lost his wits and began to cry. Picking up the pan, he started for the cabin, but just opposite me, reeled and toppled over. I caught him before he could fall, and—well, my arm had strayed in forbidden pastures too often to be mistaken now.

"Why, you're a girl!" I cried.

The man at the wheel began to snicker, so I hurried her below to save her from confusion before the men. There she cried, and sobbed, and carried on, till I was almost as distracted myself, in my efforts to soothe her. At last she calmed down.

"O, sir," she began, "I hope you won't be angry with me. I—he—Mr.—"

"It's Jack Haliday's doing, isn't it?" I interrupted.

"Yes, sir."

"Then you know all about the bet, and you'll have to testify that I discovered your—er—identity."

"Yes, sir, and he'll be angry because I lost. Boo—hoo—oo—"

"O, you did very well." I thought she needed a little cheering. "The cook would never have discovered—say! how the deuce—you'll have to change your—"

It was indeed embarrassing for both of us. And that blundering cook had never tumbled! I called him into the cabin.

"Tell off that German deck boy to help you," I ordered. "And go to your room and pack up Miss—er—"

"E—E—Eastman," sobbed the disconsolate bundle on the floor.

"And pack up Miss Eastman's belongings. Take them to the spare state-room, and make everything comfortable. I'll see you get extra pay for this trip. Go! Don't stand there all day!" I could not help laughing at his round-eyed wonder.

"I don't know what to do in the way of suitable clothes," I said, as she entered her new berth in the wake of a trim little sea-chest.

"That's all right, sir," she replied, between her sobs. "I b—brought some dresses along."

"Strike me blind!" cried the cook, as the door shut. "O, I beg your pardon, sir; but do you mean to tell me, sir, that he's a—a she? Think of it!—and me a married man! What'll my wife say?"

Though I tried to explain that there was no necessity of his wife knowing, he wandered away to the galley, more woe-begone, if anything, than the poor creature who had caused his distress. Still, I could sympathize with him, realizing as I did, my own false position, and knowing how the sailors must be haw-hawing among themselves.

Dinner was sent into her, and it was not till next morning that she showed herself. And then it was a demure little maid, for all her short brown locks. It seemed a pity they had been clipped for the sake of a paltry bet.

"What will your people say?" I asked, in the course of explanations. "Do they know?"

"My brother does. I came with his consent."

"Your brother's a scoundrel and ought to be horse-whipped. It's disgraceful, to say the least."

"How?"

This was a poser. How? I began to comprehend the mess Jack Haliday had got me into. How? What innocence!

"You must have been brought up in a convent," I said bluntly.

"Yes, sir; I went to the Sacred Heart until a year ago."

Worse and worse—it was no light responsibility thus thrust upon me. I finally wormed her story from her. She had lost her mother during her childhood, and her father, a small tradesman, had educated her at the Convent of the Sacred Heart. Things had gone from bad to worse with him, and when he died, she and her brother were left penniless. To curtail the story: they had become protégés of Haliday's. She had shown an aptitude for the stage, and Haliday encouraged her, prophesying that some day the metropolitan vaudeville would open its arms to a soubrette of no mean ability.

"And when he asked this favor of me," she concluded, "what could I do? Refuse, after all he had done for me?"

Well, the yacht took on new life. Strange how this chit of a child, this girl of sixteen, brightened things up! She became the idol of all hands and even Nelson apologized—first time the stubborn dog ever did such a thing, I'll wager. She could play the piano fairly well, and though her voice was not strong and had no register, her singing was sweet indeed.

When we arrived at Honolulu, I was for making arrangements to send her back by steamer; but the guileless creature would not hear of it, and looked so miserable when I insisted, that I gave in. Besides, nobody knew us. And she—why, she had no conception of evil, and to undeceive her was a task beyond my power. I supplied her with funds, and she soon had a stunning array of gowns and other female fripperies. Then we took in the concerts of the Hawaiian Band, made long drives into the country, and visited many places of interest and recreation. We had a delightful

time; but the best of good things must end, and a month later found us off the Golden Gate. To-morrow we should be in San-Francisco.

To-morrow—I half sighed as I lighted a cigar, and glanced at her state-room door. What were her dreams, I wondered. Then I thought of my long, lonely cruises. How bright this one had been! Life took on new possibilities, as I began to realize some of its hitherto unknown charms—charms which my benedict friends never ceased to dwell upon. How she had changed things! A neatly turned ankle on the cabin stairs, a twinkling slipper along the deck, a girl's light laughter, a song at twilight, a—in short, the ineffable something of a woman's presence. I was startled at the thought. Let me see: sixteen—twenty-six; nineteen—twenty-nine; no, that would be too long to wait, eighteen—twenty-eight—that's it. And not such a disparity after all. Two years! What would not two years do? Development, the rounding of that mind—aye, and that form, already so rich of promise. Two years, and then—

"Eight bells!"

The clamor of changing watch had destroyed the fairy pictures; so I tossed away my cigar and went to bed.

Jack Haliday and the whole crowd were at the club-house pier to meet us. Evidently, the lookout of the Merchants' Exchange had telegraphed our arrival off the Heads the previous night. They trooped aboard in a body, and I trembled for Miss Eastman. However, Clara, as I had come to call her, faced the ordeal bravely. The subdued expectancy and smothered giggles angered me. Jack Haliday opened the ball at once.

"I say, you know, about that supper—"

"What about it?" I asked sharply.

"Well, I've made all the plans, but I thought it better to submit them to you. You might make a few suggestions, you know."

"You've made all the plans!" I shouted. "I have an idea that the ordering of this supper belongs to me."

"Ha! ha! ha!" Everybody began to laugh.

"Hope you had a pleasant trip, Miss Eastman," he said, turning to her.

"O, I did," she assured him, though I could see her lips were trembling.

"How did you discover it?" he asked, addressing me.

"Why she fainted in my arms, and—"

"ho! ho! He! he! he!" the crowd fairly roared, and I beamed triumphantly on my discomfited opponent.

"Was he angry?" continued the imperturbable Haliday.

"No," Clara replied, "he was real nice. And when we got to Honolulu he wanted to send me home on the steamer, but I wouldn't let him. Then we had a gorgeous time—bought me candy and gloves, took me buggy riding, and—"

With this the crowd went mad. They slapped Jack on the shoulder, poked him in the ribs, and hugged each other in ecstasies of glee.

"Why, you ninny!" Jack cried. "That's my brother Bob."

"Impossible," I rejoined. "Why, when she fainted in my arms, I—"

At this juncture speech failed me, for the modest Miss Eastman turned a couple of back-flips, came up smiling, thrust a hand into her maidenly bosom and drew forth—heavens!—a couple of pneumatic cushions, the kind used by football players.

It were needless for me to tell how I led the stampede to the club-house; how the supper came off, with Bob Haliday at the head of the table; or how, to this day, the mere mention of "The Handsome Cabin Boy" arouses a certain choler which I can never hope to overcome.

IN THE TIME OF PRINCE CHARLEY

"YOU say you love me better than life—I don't believe it."

It is impossible to put to paper the faint, very faint. Highland accent—an accent which never ceased to charm my ear; and long, afterward, often roused me from my sleep, playing the responsive chords of memory like mellow strains from some old song.

"Better than life? No, no, it cannot be."

"I would to God there were a test," I answered, pressing her closer, till, with a sudden impulse, she touched my neck with her lips. "You have but to ask, and I fulfill."

"Suppose, then, just suppose I ask you to be false to your duty?"

"Such would be asking more than life; 'twould be honor."

"But would you?" she persisted. Her warm breath faded from neck as she raised her head and gazed into my eyes.

"Love would not ask it."

"Suppose he were my father?"

Prince Charley her father! I smiled at the supposition, as I answered. "But you have no father. Still, I would not, could not. Now let me suppose. Suppose you were I, and I were you, and he my father." (I did not dare mention the prisoner's name, for she still thought him Roderick Mackenzie, the unfortunate merchant of Edinburgh.) "Suppose all this, and that I should ask of you such a favor?"

"Then would I say, 'Yours to ask; mine to fulfill.' O you men! Spendthrifts with vows and fine speeches! Yesterday you breathed the sweet phrases in some other lassie's ear; to-morrow—aye, to-morrow, you may deem them fit for the first snoodless maid you meet."

With glowing cheeks and flashing eyes, she sprang away and faced me. Her years in England and on the continent were flown, and the wild blood of her Highland ancestry sounded the charge. I could almost see the deadly claymore flashing above plaid and tartan, and hear the clangs of the gillies, charging with their chiefs, as I had seen and heard at Preston-Pans. For a moment Aline

stood thus, then the fire eloquently melted to a luminous softness. Oh! the seductive abandon! At the instant I was so swayed that hell held no abyss too deep to venture. I had been so long in the field with drunken brawlers, an alien to the better parts of man or woman, that this clean, wholesome maid well-nigh carried me away. But I had gone through a hard school, untarnished, and though I loved her dearly, I could not besmirch my plume, even in giddy love-chatter—for such it was.

"O you men!" she went on. "You have passion and honor, but love, ah! love,—that is reserved for us. Passion and honor, our dearest hopes, our brightest dreams, are lost, all lost, when we love—no, not lost, but bent to do love's bidding. When we love, we give all—body and soul—all we possess or ever hope to possess. As Raleigh spread his cloak in the mire, so would I my body, that he, for whom my heart beats, might tread upon it and pass over, dry-shod. O Griffith—you—I—"

The high-strung creature broke down, bursting into a storm of tears on my shoulder. There she sobbed, till a knock from the inner chamber interrupted us. As I had dismissed Jeannie for the night, I must wait upon the prince myself; so I hastily kissed away her dear tears, and went to the door—and just in time, for I could hear my lieutenant's boots on the stairway.

It were meet that I here set down how I, Griffith Risingham, captain to our good king, George II, find myself protagonist (as my old tutor would say) in the scene just described—alternating between hysterical love rhapsodies and gaol duty; now wooing the daughter of a Highland wef, and again, tending the wants of my princely prisoner.

From '42 to '45 I had served on the Continent with the allied armies, now 't Germany and England, now of Holland, Austria and England. ur campaign in Flanders was brought to a close by the defeat of Fontenoy, when, because of the threatened French invasion and the Jacobin Prising in Scotland, King George summoned all his soldiers home.

Of a surety, three years of hard fighting merited a rest; but I was at once dispatched into Scotland with my troop, for the Highlands were aflame and Prince Charley was marching on Edinburgh. The very day I joined Cope came the miserable defeat of Preston-Pans, and my wearied troopers were scattered as chaff before the four winds of heaven. Whatever became of them I do not know, for I barely succeeded in collecting a remnant of five score.

Then came the retreat, then the advance, and the sun shone our arms at Culloden. Our soldiers fought like demons, and who Scottish line wavered and broke, they gave no quarter, lining the ways as far as Inverness with dead. From this slaughter I was due, to the pursuit of the Pretender and the laying waste of the rebellious territory. With fire and sword we harried Prince Charley's steps, harking back to old scents from the false ones given us by the perfidious mountaineers. With thirty thousand pounds on his head, small wonder we failed to dally by the way.

By the middle of July, though my men were clamorous for hastened to join Campbell and Scot, who, with a thousand men, were rumored to have surrounded the prince. At the same time a little incident occurred, which was quickly noised abroad. A half score of my troopers, while beating up the desolate stretch of land known as the Braes of Glenmoriston, came upon a skulker whom they took to be the prince. In a trice they were speeding to Fort Augustus with his head, bent on receiving the thirty thousand pounds. In truth this poor devil was none other than Roderick Mackenzie, a strong Jacobin who was waiting a chance to escape overseas. In consequence of this report, the pursuit languished; and there were few, if any, of the men who had the Pretender surrounded, but believed him to be already taken. It was due to this and his good fortune, that he slipped past the English campfires and headed for the Braes of Glenmoriston, in the hope of meeting Lochiel.

It was thus, of a drizzly afternoon, I encountered him. And no pleasant sight he was when one thought of his proud lineage. Little did this barefooted, bewiskered renegade, in dirty shirt and ragged plaid, resemble Charles Edward, heir-apparent to the worse than worti crown of James II. He was heavily armed—a gun in his hand and dirk and pistol at his belt—but misery and hardship had broken his spirit, and he gave no trouble; and for private reasons, he so comported self that my troopers never learned his identity, believing him Roderick Mackenzie. Nor was I anxious that they should, for I recollected the treachery of the knaves who had fled to Fort Augustus with their bootless trophy instead of coming to me.

Leaving the pursuit to go on unchecked, I withdrew with my royal prisoner to Colin na Gaugh, a miserable fishing village of several hundred souls, situated on the mainland opposite the Isle of Skye. It was my intention to wait here the coming of the king's ship, Balmoral, which expected at any moment; for the Highlands were still smoldering, and in this way I deemed it easier to bring my prisoner to England.

The fishers stolidly eyed our entry, and naught but sullen brows and smothered curses served to greet us. Though the prince was unknown to them, they guessed him to be some Jacobin refugee, and sympathized accordingly. But as I looked over my sturdy lads, weather-beaten and battle-scarred by a dozen continental campaigns, I was sure little trouble would be given us; besides, I half forgave the poor devils, for our flag had never gone among them save with fire and sword and the plundering of a licentious soldiery. Verily, they had just cause for bitterness.

For all its dog-hole hovels, the town did a fair coastwise, and as I afterward learned, overseas trade. A very fair hostelry was the result, and in this I purposed quartering, after allotting my men among the villagers.

It was here I met Aline. As we rode up, a crowd about the door of the inn and a hubbub of voices gave sign of some unusual happening. The innkeeper's face was flushed with anger, while the strident tones of his wife rose higher and higher; but they could not drown the sharp voice of a Lowland woman, who gave her as good as she sent. Right well they fought with their tongues, cutting and thrusting with rare vigor. Red with shame, Aline was vainly trying to draw her duenna away—for such was this Lowland female with acrid tongue. I could see they were strangers, evidently in trouble, so I called a gillie to my stirrup for an explanation. With the aid of the prince, who was better versed in the outlandish gibberish, I learned that they had but lately come into these parts; that they were without money, nobody knew them, and the landlord was putting them out.

I sprang from my saddle. Aline was a lady—a lout could see that—and in trouble. My troopers cleared the street, while I so settled with the knavish landlord that his knees were knocking with fright when I finally dismissed him. Aline and her duenna, a Mrs. Saunders, quickly reinstated, and I was favored with the former's presence at the table. She was a frank, winning lass, and threw herself completely on my honor, telling me all the circumstances of her trouble and about herself.

Her father was a certain Lord Kilmarnock, who had died across seas, in exile for the part his clan had played in a previous uprising. The latter part of her childhood had been spent in England; then she had joined her father. It was plain their peregrinations to the various foreign courts had rounded her education and polished her manners; but nevertheless, these sat quaintly upon her—and charmingly so, for never had I yet seen her like.

Her brother, a mere boy, who had been wholly reared abroad, had drawn his sword for the Stuarts and crossed with Prince Charley at the commencement of the rebellion. Torn with suspense for his safety, and the knowledge that he must be fleeing for his life somewhere in this bleak wilderness, had decided her. Thus her adventures had begun. First, she had gone through the military prisons; then, convinced that he was still at large and most likely in the neighborhood of the prince, she had taken passage on a lugger up the east coast to the Isle of Skye. Disappointed here, she crossed the mainland in a fishing boat and penetrated the fastnesses of Lochiel's territory. She had met this great chieftain, and he had treated her most courteously, advising her to try in the direction of Colin na Gaugh. He himself was in hiding and powerless to aid her.

Crossing the pass of Ben-Moidart, her servant was killed, and she was robbed of everything, even to her father's brooch, by a band knaves whose description seemed to tally with my soldiers who had run away with Roderick Mackenzie's head. She had managed to make Colin na Gaugh, and as to her trouble with the innkeeper, had I not witnessed it myself. Through all these vicissitudes, the faithful Mrs. Saunders had accompanied her; and by this voluble female she had been preserved more than once. Aline had kinsmen in England who were bound to help her, she said, and to them I promised to take her, at the same time thanking the gods for the privilege. She had given up finding her brother, who had doubtless already crossed the water, or else was in hiding with the prince. It was apparent she had not seen the prince abroad, or if she had, had forgotten his face.

So this is how Prince Charley, Aline and Mrs. Saunders, my lieutenant and myself, came to take up our abode in the same inn, the which was destined to lead to strange complications.

But a word of Julian Ramsay, my lieutenant. We had been in harness nearly a year now, yet I had not really come to know him. He was of good stock, a gentleman, a good soldier, and brave, but—well, it seemed he had mistaken his calling. He was too stiff, too good, too gloomy, for a camp life. In him the church would have found a wonderful servant. Withal, he was a clever swordsman and a handsome fellow, just the sort to break women's hearts; but his taciturnity and habitual coldness seemed to belie all this. In short, while we made our plans and discussed all moves together, we were not what could be called brothers-in-arms.

I was a little fearful of Aline at first, and was at a loss how to proceed. Hers was such a queer, quaint blend of girlish innocence

and of woman's knowledge of the world. But we soon fell into each other's ways, and a delightful tenderness began to mark our intercourse,—nay, we became very dear to each other, living only for the present, and shunning all thoughts of the future.

And the gods were propitious. Unexpectedly, Mrs. Saunders gave no trouble, having fallen into a deep study of the New Testament, from which she rarely emerged, save to thrill our blood with Calvinistic diatribes on the sins of the flesh and the woes of the spirit. As for the prince, he was a jolly good fellow, sympathizing with us in a fatherly way and playing the role of unfortunate merchant to perfection. Once, only, did we clash, and that, when he spoke of his good friend, Louis Quatorze, the advancement a soldier of my ability would gain in his service, and a possible fifty thousand pounds I might receive did I act with discretion. I am afraid I shut him up rather bluntly; but the next morning saw him more affable than ever, and he showed no sign of bearing me ill-will.

But Julian Ramsay bothered me not a little. He became sullen, his austerity increased, and he glowered blackly whenever he came upon Aline and myself together. Once I chanced upon him wrestling with the spirit; and the sight of the strong soldier, down on the floor, groaning wailing and raising his plaint to heaven, caused a strange fear to come over me. It is not good that a gentleman and a soldier to the king should take upon himself the work of the priest. Another time we had sharp words, for he took our inaction with a very ill grace, and was for heading the troop across the Highlands into England instead of waiting for the Balmoral.

One other thing I must mention, which occurred before the scene I have first described. One evening, returning from a visit to the rumored hiding place of Lochiel, I came upon Aline in conversation with stalwart-looking Highlander. I caught one fair sight of a bearded face and fierce black eyes. Before I could lay hands upon him he slipped away in the darkness, and though my troopers beat up the moor with care, they could get no sign of the knave.

I did not know what to think. At first I thought of treachery; but Aline frankly confessed, telling me the fellow had brought news of her brother from Lochiel, and that our appearance had frightened him away. On hearing this, I promised her, if she could get word to her brother, and if he came in, that I would do my best and was sure I could gain his pardon. I was safe in this, for I knew my high

kinsman could command the power, and would, when I turned over my royal prisoner in England.

About the middle of September, word was brought by a fisherr of two French ships seen off Moidart, evidently waiting a chance to embark the prince. But so well had his identity been covered that I feared nothing, and several days later brought the Balmoral into harbor.

Since her outbreak, Aline had become more tender. Methinks she had grown sadder, too, though always had she a sweet smile and a loving word for me. I once found her in tears, and another time she wept upon my shoulder as though her heart were breaking. However, I attributed it to a girlish sentiment, which was natural, deeming her the sweeter for her pensiveness.

On the day we were to embark, news came that Lochiel was drawing to the coast in an attempt to get away on one of the French ships. He was said to have a large following, so I dispatched Ramsay with nearly the whole troop to intercept him, reserving but half a dozen men for the prince's guard.

Then Aline began to beg me not to go aboard till next morning, and so well did she plead for just one more quiet hour together, that I consented, having been informed by the captain of the Balmoral that the tide would not favor till high noon.

Early in the evening the innkeeper delivered a verbal message he had just received from a gillie belonging to Lochiel's clan. He said the messenger was a foolish, ignorant lad, so fearful of being carried away in the king's ship, that he had skurried off at once. The import was that Aline's brother, having received her word and resolved to come in, had fallen sick not over eight miles away, in the hut of one Dougald, a fisherman. She was overjoyed at the news, and I sent four of my lads to bring him in.

After a rubber of whist, the prince retired, leaving us to ourselves; and for a long while we sat in dreamy silence, pleasuring in the mere clasp of hands. Never before had I realized the sweet bliss of such a silence, and never again do I hope to enjoy the like. We heard the ship's bell strike again and again; but shortly after six bells, one of my remaining men stumbled up the stairway and knocked at the door. A beacon had been lighted on the great bluff back of Colin na Gaugh, and he had come to call my attention to it. It was a signal of some sort. As the disturbed times gave the smugglers the run of the coast, they were not to be thought of.

Perhaps half an hour later, I heard steps on the stairs. They could not have returned so soon, I thought; but before I could rise, Aline sprang into my arms in a frightened manner, almost as though she divined what was coming. I strove to put her aside, but she wound her arms about my neck. Even then I did not understand. It was the tread of many men. The door opened as I sprang to my feet, and I caught a glimpse of the black-bearded Highlander, of French uniforms, and the glint of candlelight on naked claymore and cutlass. I tried to tear Aline away, but she clung the closer, twining her limbs about mine and preventing me drawing my pistol.

"Don't hurt him!" she cried. "O don't hurt him!"

But I swore heavily, threw her against the table from where she still cried for them to not hurt me, and backed against the prince's door. The circle of steel drew closer. Though I saw no hope, I beat back the points fiercely, and would doubtless have left my body on the threshold had not the prince thrown open the door and laid me by the heels. Then the gang swept over me.

O don't, please don't hurt him!" cried Aline again.

Then somebody clouted me over the head with the flat of a cutlass, and I was dragged to one side.

I was not badly stunned, for when I opened my eyes, the prince - just leaving, with a French officer and a chieftain on either hand. I was still so dazed I could not gain my feet. And well I had cause to be, for there, in the black-beard's arms, lips to lips, nestled Aline. Only a second's space, then he put her down. She made as though to come to me, but he threw his arm about her waist and dragged her away.

The town was in an uproar, I could hear them beating to quarters on the Balmoral. Then came a roar of hoofs down the rocky street, the rattle of small-arms and clash of steel. Julian Ramsay had returned.

I staggered down the stairs into the inn-yard. In the bright moonlight I could see the last boat push off from the beach, and those on the shore raking them with a sharp fire. The Balmoral began to fire her six-pounders and lower her boats, but as far as we were concerned, the battle was over—over and lost!

"By the saints, you've done well! Where's Aline?"

Ramsay had come up, and the troopers were crowding round. I wiped away the blood which persisted in streaming into my eyes laughed,—aye, loud, and heartily, and bitterly. At another time I would have laid the flat of my sword across his priest's face for his insolence her, but now he could have wiped his bloody hands on her petticoat and I would still have laughed.

Half a score of prisoners, French sailors, and Lochiel's Highland were brought before me.

"Turn them loose," I ordered.

"But—," expostulated Ramsay.

"Turn them loose," I repeated.

"You'll reckon dear for this—."

"By God! I'll have you know I'm captain here!" I burst out, th
"Pshaw! Ha! Ha! Ha!"

The soldiers were perplexed, and several on the outskirts began snicker an accompaniment to my mirth. Then two of them brought M Aline. Her lover had evidently lost her in the fight.

"Turn her loose," I commanded.

They saluted and fell back, leaving her alone in the center of circle with Ramsay and myself. I remember the scene perfectly; j pale face, Ramsay's flushed with anger, the ring of soldiers, and especially one, engaged in cinching his arm above a great slash on the wrist. He had paused with the knot half drawn, one end of the kerchief between his teeth, his eyes fixed upon me with an amused, expectant look. The blood ran down his saddle and dripped, dripped, on the soggy dirt between his horse's hoofs.

I was quite calm. The whole trick was clear now, from the innkeeper nutting her out of the house, to the bearded Highlander and the escape of Prince Charley. What would my high kinsman say? Thirty thousand pounds, a glorious chance for advancement, a sweetheart, honor—tricked of everything! Yet I was very calm, even curious of the outcome.

She stepped toward me, but I waved her back.

"Griffith—I—if I can explain—"

"If you can explain!" I cried. "There shall come a day when Judas Iscariot shall explain away his thirty pieces of silver, and on that day, so may you your kisses. You told me once what you would do for a man's sake. I was a fool. I deemed myself that man. So, you lay in my arms, breathed on me your caresses and your lies—pfaugh! you wanton!"

She took it quietly, but when my teeth cut that last, harsh word, she cried, "No! No! Not that!" and reeled softly, as about to fall.

Unwittingly, I stretched forth my arm to catch her, but Ramsay struck me back on the breast.

"Cur!" he said, meanwhile drawing her against him. "But lay your hand on her, and I will forget all things, save that you—"

"Are your captain and a cur." I was minded to pay him, but wished first my say. "Softly, softly, I pray you. So? Another lover? I wot not she wasted many hours on you; aye, perhaps my troopers, too. Hildgart! Come thou here."

The huge fellow slipped from the saddle, strode awkwardly forward, and saluted with a foolish grin on his face.

"Knowest thou this woman? Hast listened to her devil-singing? Hast kissed light kisses from her lips? or rumbled her pretty hair with that bear's paw of yours? Look closely, belike you may remember. No? trange, passing strange. Mayhap she overlooked you among so many braw lads. Begone, since thou dost not know her!"

So I had it in mind to say many bitter things and cut her harshly, for my heart was sore; but Ramsay hurled his cap in my face and bade me draw.

"As there is a God above, I am going to kill you, Griffith Risingham."

So spoke Ramsay. He believed it; so did I. I fought carefully, drawing strange satisfaction from prolonging the game. There was nothing to live for. Death seemed even welcome. And he was a clever swordsman, taught in the Italian school. I had no hope, felt that I could not touch him.

The circle widened. Strive as I would, I failed to break his guard. Then I worked him round till the moon shone in his eyes; but he seemed not to mind it, as though sure of the outcome. Right

carefully I watched his eyes, for I feared his Italian tricks. Then suddenly, piff!—his hand had not followed his eye, and I, misled, felt my ribs turn aside the steel. I knew I had met my master. It is the devil who can work hand eye apart.

Twice he pinked me sharply, and I grew weak, losing much blood. At last he worked me into the moonlight. I knew the end was at hand—a feint, a quick cross and engagement, then a twist, and the blade jerked from my hand. Up came his sword for the final pass. I caught a glimpse of Aline over his shoulder. She was praying. I noticed the trooper, with the knot half drawn and the kerchief still in his teeth.

But the gods loved me. His arm fell to his side; a stream of blood gushed from his mouth; and he sank down slowly, O so slowly. Then the circle began to fade away, to grow misty. The trooper drew the knot tight and doubled it. The show was over—the play-actors left the stage.

A year later found me in France on a secret mission. The real history of Prince Charley's escape had never become known, and the days I held him at Colin na Gaugh, he was popularly supposed to have spent in the romantic refuge called the "Cage." Nay, I am told that to-day this place is still pointed out by the Scottish guides. So be it. My high kinsman never knew, and one more blunder may be accredited to history. On my return, the king saw fit to reward me for my services.

Julian Ramsay still sleeps in the bleak fisher-village. As I afterward learned, his death was due to a ball through the lungs, received in a fight on the beach, just before our duel. Poor devil! I was harsh and unjust to him and her that night. If he had loved her, he had kept his secret well. But a bitter heart says bitter things. As for her—I had not seen her again. My surgeon drove her away from me, and the troopers put her out of the inn.

Ah! if I could only forget her! And forgive her? I had forgiven her all but one. As I held my allegiance to King George above love, above all things, just so had she been true to her father, to the cause he died for, and to Prince Charley. I could understand and forgive that, but—that black-bearded Highland lover! Ah, why could I not forget her? Why should I still dream of her, and hear her voice, and see her as in the old days?

So I picked my way along the dark street, forgetting my mission, musing over by-gones. It was early evening, and Paris still hummed with life.

I could see ahead of me another pedestrian,—a gentleman and a soldier, if I mistook not his carriage. He walked idly, and I soon overtook him. One glance and we knew each other. It was the Highlander, though his beard was gone.

"Ha! comrade!" he cried gayly in English, holding forth his hand.

"Comrade? Nay; I owe you too much for that," I answered hotly. For I was wroth at this man, permitting, even for his prince, such liberty as he had to Aline.

"Not so," was his reply; "'tis I am debtor, and to something like thirty thousand pounds. You lost that. So?—but such is war. Yet had you gained the heart's desire, had you so willed."

"In your teeth, your cast off tinsel toys!" I cried. "Your heart's desires! In my country we do not bandy such things from man to man." (As I wished, this seemed to cut him for he started and looked at me sharply.) "In my country, we treat our toys more wholesomely; but you—if you are a man, draw!"

"Strange, strange; I had not thought of that," he mused, half aloud.

"Come," I sneered; "or must I put the poltroon's badge upon you?"

"Softly, softly; there is a new edict anent the duello, and Louis does not greatly favor foreign adventurers. Yet will I give you satisfaction; but first my affairs. On my honor, I meditate no wrong. Come with me, that I may say good-bye to one, near of kin. Then I will lead you to a quiet place, where all differences may be meetly settled."

I nodded curtly, and we set off. This Highlander, without the Highland brogue, was no coward. And Aline—was he leading me to her that he might say good-bye? At last we came to broader streets and entered an old-fashioned stone house.

Pausing before a door on the second landing, he said, "I must have a few words with my servant. My sister will entertain you till my return."

He pushed me in and closed the door. And there, bending over an embroidery frame, her face a little thinner, a little sadder than of yore, was Aline. I looked about, as though for a second person. was none.

What a fool I had been! Would she, could she ever forgive me?

An hour later he returned.

"Pardon my delay," he said, advancing to me. "We will now step into the courtyard. A very quiet place, I assure you, and—"

But the breach between the House of Stuart and the House of Hanover was forgotten in an embrace, such as is sometimes becoming between men.

KING OF MAZY MAY

WALT MASTERS is not a very large boy, but there is manliness in his make-up, and he himself, although he does not know a great deal that most boys know, knows much that other boys do not know. He has never seen a train of cars or an elevator in his life, and for that matter, he has never once looked upon a corn-field, a plow, a cow, or even a chicken. He has never had a pair of shoes on his feet, or gone to a picnic or a party, or talked to a girl. But he has seen the sun at midnight, watched the ice-jams on one of the mightiest of rivers, and played beneath the northern lights, the one white child in thousands of square miles of frozen wilderness.

Walt has walked all the fourteen years of his life in sun-tanned, moose-hide moccasins, and he can go to the Indian camps and "talk big" with the men, and trade calico and beads with them for their precious furs. He can make bread without baking-powder, yeast or hops, shoot a moose at three hundred yards, and drive the wild wolf-dogs fifty miles a day on the packed trail.

Last of all, he has a good heart, and is not afraid of the darkness and loneliness, of man or beast or thing. His father is a good man, strong and brave, and Walt is growing up like him.

Walt was born a thousand miles or so down the Yukon, in a trading-post below the Ramparts. After his mother died, his father and he came on up the river, step by step, from camp to camp, till now they are settled down on the Mazy May Creek in the Klondike country. Last year they and several others had spent much toil and time on the Mazy May, and endured great hardships; the creek, in turn, was just beginning to show up its richness and to reward them for their heavy labor. But with the news of their discoveries, strange men began to come and go through the short days and long nights, and many unjust things they did to the men who had worked so long upon the creek.

Si Hartman had gone away on a moose-hunt, to return and find new stakes driven and his claim jumped. George Lukens and his brother had lost their claims in a like manner, having delayed too long on the way to Dawson to record them. In short, it was an old story, and quite a number of the earnest, industrious prospectors had suffered similar losses.

But Walt Masters's father had recorded his claim at the start, so Walt had nothing to fear, now that his father had gone on a short trip up the White River prospecting for quartz. Walt was well able

to stay by himself in the cabin, cook his three meals a day, and look after things. Not only did he look after his father's claim, but he had agreed to keep an eye on the adjoining one of Loren Hall, who had started for Dawson to record it.

Loren Hall was an old man, and he had no dogs, so he had to travel very slowly. After he had been gone some time, word came up the river that he had broken through the ice at Rosebud Creek, and frozen his feet so badly that he would not be able to travel for a couple of weeks. Then Walt Masters received the news that old Loren was nearly all right again, and about to move on afoot for Dawson, as fast as a weakened man could.

Walt was worried, however; the claim was liable to be jumped at any moment because of this delay, and a fresh stampede had started in on the Mazy May. He did not like the looks of the newcomers, and one day, when five of them came by with crack dog-teams and the lightest of camping outfits, he could see that they were prepared to make speed, and resolved to keep an eye on them. So he locked up the cabin and followed them, being at the same time careful to remain hidden.

He had not watched them long before he was sure that they were professional stampeders, bent on jumping all the claims in sight. Walt crept along the snow at the rim of the creek and saw them change many stakes, destroy old ones, and set up new ones.

In the afternoon, with Walt always trailing on their heels, they came back down on the creek, unharnessed their dogs, and went into camp within two claims of his cabin. When he saw them make preparations to cook, he hurried home to get something to eat himself, and then hurried back. He crept so close that he could hear them talking quite plainly, and by pushing the underbrush aside he could catch occasional glimpses of them. They had finished eating and were smoking around the fire.

"The creek is all right, boys," a large, black-bearded man, evidently the leader, said, "and I think the best thing we can do is to pull out to-night. The dogs can follow the trail; besides, it's going to be moonlight. What say you?"

"But it's going to be beastly cold," objected one of the party. "It's forty below zero now."

"An' sure, can't ye keep warm by jumpin' on the sleds an' runnin' after the dogs?" cried an Irishman. "An' who wouldn't? The creek as rich as a United States mint! Faith, it's an ilegant chanst to be

getting' a run fer yer money! An' if ye don't run, it's mebbe you'll not get the money at all, at all."

"That's it," said the leader. "If we can get to Dawson and record, we're rich men; and there is no telling who's been sneaking along in our tracks, watching us, and perhaps now off to give the alarm. The thing for us to do is to rest the dogs a bit, and then hit the trail as hard as we can. What do you say?"

Evidently the men had agreed with their leader, for Walt Masters could hear nothing but the rattle of the tin dishes which were being washed. Peering out cautiously, he could see the leader studying a piece of paper. Walt knew what it was at a glance—a list of all the unrecorded claims on Mazy May. Any man could get these lists by applying to the gold commissioner at Dawson.

"Thirty-two," the leader said, lifting his face to the men. "Thirty-two isn't recorded, and this is thirty-three. Come on; let's take a look at it. I saw somebody working on it when we came up this morning."

Three of the men went with him, leaving one to remain in camp. Walt crept carefully after them till they came to Loren Hall's shaft. One of the men went down and built a fire on the bottom to thaw out the frozen gravel, while the others built another fire on the dump and melted water in a couple of gold-pans. This they poured into a piece of canvas stretched between two logs, used by Loren Hall in which to wash his gold.

In a short time a couple of buckets of dirt were sent up by the man in the shaft, and Walt could see the others grouped anxiously about their leader as he proceeded to wash it. When this was finished, they stared at the broad streak of black sand and yellow gold-grains on the bottom of the pan, and one of them called excitedly for the man who had remained in camp to come. Loren Hall had struck it rich, and his claim was not yet recorded. It was plain that they were going to jump it.

Walt lay in the snow, thinking rapidly. He was only a boy, but in the face of the threatened injustice against old lame Loren Hall he felt that he must do something. He waited and watched, with his mind made up, till he saw the men began to square up new stakes. Then he crawled away till out of hearing, and broke into a run for the camp of the stampedeers. Walt's father had taken their own dogs with him prospecting, and the boy knew how impossible it was for him to undertake the seventy miles to Dawson without the aid of dogs.

Gaining the camp, he picked out, with an experienced eye, the easiest running sled and started to harness up the stampede's dogs. There were three teams of six each, and from there he chose ten of the best. Realizing how necessary it was to have a good head-dog, he strove to discover a leader amongst them; but he had little time in which to do it, for he could hear the voices of the returning men. By the time the team was in shape and everything ready, the claim-jumpers came into sight in an open place not more than a hundred yards from the trail, which ran down the bed of the creek. They cried out to him, but he gave no heed, grabbing up one of their fur sleeping-ropes which lay loosely in the snow, and leaping upon the sled.

"Mush! Hi! Mush on!" he cried to the animals, snapping the keen-lashed whip among them.

The dogs sprang against the yoke-straps, and the sled jerked under way so suddenly as to almost throw him off. Then it curved into the creek, poising perilously on one runner. He was almost breathless with suspense, when it finally righted with a bound and sprang ahead again. The creek bank was high and he could not see, although he could hear the cries of the men and knew they were running to cut him off. He did not dare to think what would happen if they caught him; he only clung to the sled, his heart beating wildly, and watched the snow-rim of the bank above him.

Suddenly, over this snow-rim came the flying body of the Irishman, who had leaped straight for the sled in a desperate attempt to capture it; but he was an instant too late. Striking on the very rear of it, he was thrown from his feet, backward, into the snow. Yet, with the quickness of a cat, he had clutched the end of the sled with one hand, turned over, and was dragging behind on his breast, swearing at the boy and threatening all kinds of terrible things if he did not stop the dogs; but Walt cracked him sharply across the knuckles with the butt of the dog-whip till he let go.

It was eight miles from Walt's claim to the Yukon—eight very crooked miles, for the creek wound back and forth like a snake, "tying knots in itself," as George Lukens said. And because it was so crooked, the dogs could not get up their best speed, while the sled ground heavily on its side against the curves, now to the right, now to the left.

Travellers who had come up and down the Mazy May on foot, with packs on their backs, had declined to go around all the bends, and instead had made short cuts across the narrow necks of creek bottom. Two of his pursuers had gone back to harness

the remaining dogs, but the others took advantage of these short cuts, running on foot, and before he knew it they had almost overtaken him.

"Halt!" they cried after him. "Stop, or we'll shoot!"

But Walt only yelled the harder at the dogs, and dashed round the bend with a couple of revolver bullets singing after him. At the next bend they had drawn up closer still, and the bullets struck uncomfortably near to him; but at this point the Mazy May straightened out and ran for half a mile as the crow flies. Here the dogs stretched out in their long wolf-swing, and the stampeded, quickly winded, slowed down and waited for their own sled to come up.

Looking over his shoulder, Walt reasoned that they had not given up the chase for good, and that they would soon be after him again. So he wrapped the fur robe about him to shut out the stinging air, and lay flat on the empty sled, encouraging the dogs, as he well knew how.

At last, twisting abruptly between two river islands, he came upon the might Yukon sweeping grandly to the north. He could not see from bank to bank, and in the quick-falling twilight it loomed a great white sea of frozen stillness. There was not a sound, save the breathing of the dogs, and the churn of the steel-shod sled.

No snow had fallen for several weeks, and the traffic had packed the main-river trail till it was hard and glassy as glare ice. Over this the sled flew along, and the dogs kept the trail fairly well, although Walt quickly discovered that he had made a mistake in choosing the leader. As they were driven in single file, without reins, he had to guide them by his voice, and it was evident that the head-dog had never learned the meaning of "gee" and "haw." He hugged the inside of the curves too closely, often forcing his comrades behind him into the soft snow, while several times he thus capsized the sled.

There was no wind, but the speed at which he travelled created a bitter blast, and with the thermometer down to forty below, this bit through fur and flesh to the very bones. Aware that if he remained constantly upon the sled he would freeze to death, and knowing the practice of Arctic travellers, Walt shortened up one of the lashing-thongs, and whenever he felt chilled, seized hold of it, jumped off, and ran behind till warmth was restored. Then he would climb on and rest till the process had to be repeated.

Looking back he could see the sled of his pursuers, drawn by eight dogs, rising and falling over the ice hummocks like a boat in a seaway. The Irishman and the black-bearded leader were with it, taking turns in running and riding.

Night fell, and in the blackness of the first hour or so, Walt toiled desperately with his dogs. On account of the poor lead-dog, they were constantly floundering off the beaten track into the soft snow, and the sled was as often riding on its side or top as it was in the proper way. This work and strain tried his strength sorely. Had he not been in such haste he could have avoided much of it, but he feared the stampeders would creep up in the darkness and overtake him. However, he could hear them occasionally yelling to their dogs, and knew from the sounds that they were coming up very slowly.

When the moon rose he was off Sixty Mile, and Dawson was only fifty miles away. He was almost exhausted, and breathed a sigh of relief as he climbed on the sled again. Looking back, he saw his enemies had crawled up within four hundred yards. At this space they remained, a black speck of motion on the white river-beast. Strive as they would, they could not shorten this distance, and strive as he would he could not increase it.

He had now discovered the proper lead-dog, and he knew he could easily run away from them if he could only change the bad leader for the good one. But this was impossible, for a moment's delay, at the speed they were running, would bring the men behind upon him.

When he got off the mouth of Rosebud Creek, just as he was topping a rise, the ping of a bullet on the ice beside him, and the report of a gun, told him that they were this time shooting at him with a rifle. And from then on, as he cleared the summit of each ice-jam, he stretched flat on the leaping sled till the rifle-shot from the rear warned him that he was safe till the next ice-jam.

Now it is very hard to lie on a moving sled, jumping and plunging and yawing like a boat before the wind, and to shoot through the deceiving moonlight at an object four hundred yards away on another moving sled performing equally wild antics. So it is not to be wondered at that the black-bearded leader did not hit him.

After several hours of this, during which, perhaps, a score of bullets had struck about him, their ammunition began to give out and their fire slackened. They took greater care, and only

whipped a shot at him at the most favorable opportunities. He was also beginning to leave them behind, the distance slowly increasing to six hundred yards.

Lifting clear on the crest of a great jam off Indian River, Walt Masters met his first accident. A bullet sang past his ears, and struck the bad lead-dog.

The poor brute plunged in a heap, with the rest of the team on top of him.

Like a flash, Walt was by the leader. Cutting the traces with his hunting knife, he dragged the dying animal to one side and straightened out the team.

He glanced back. The other sled was coming up like an express-train. With half the dogs still over their traces, he cried, "Mush on!" and leaped upon the sled just as the pursuing team dashed abreast of him.

The Irishman was just preparing to spring for him,—they were so sure they had him that they did not shoot,—when Walt turned fiercely upon them with his whip.

He struck at their faces, and men must save their faces with their hands. So there was not shooting just then. Before they could recover from the hot rain of blows, Walt reached out from his sled, catching their wheel-dog by the fore legs in midspring, and throwing him heavily. This brought the whole team into a snarl, capsizing the sled and tangling his enemies up beautifully.

Away Walt flew, the runners of his sled fairly screaming as they bounded over the frozen surface. And what had seemed an accident, proved to be a blessing in disguise. The proper lead-dog was now to the fore, and he stretched low to the trail and whined with joy as he jerked his comrades along.

By the time he reached Ainslie's Creek, seventeen miles from Dawson, Walt had left his pursuers, a tiny speck, far behind. At Monte Cristo Island, he could no longer see them. And at Swede Creek, just as daylight was silvering the pines, he ran plump into the camp of old Loren Hall.

Almost as quick as it takes to tell it, Loren had his sleeping-furs rolled up, and had joined Walt on the sled. They permitted the dogs to travel more slowly, as there was no sign of the chase in the

rear, and just as they pulled up at the gold commissioner's office in Dawson, Walt, who had kept his eyes open to the last, fell asleep.

And because of what Walt Masters did on this night, the men of the Yukon have become very proud of him, and always speak of him now as the King of Mazy May.

A KLONDIKE CHRISTMAS

*Mouth of the Stuart River,
North West Territory,
December 25, 1897*

My dearest Mother:-

Here we are, all safe and sound, and snugly settled down in winter quarters.

Have received no letters yet, so you can imagine how we long to hear from home. We are in the shortest days of the year, and the sun no longer rises, even at twelve o'clock.

Uncle Hiram and Mr. Carter have gone to Dawson to record some placer claims and to get the mail, if there is any. They took the dogs and sled with them, as they had to travel on the ice. We did expect them home for Christmas dinner, but I guess George and I will have to eat alone.

I am to be cook, so you can be sure that we'll have a jolly dinner. We will begin with the staples first. There will be fried bacon, baked beans, bread raised from sour-dough, and—

He seemed perplexed, and after dubiously scratching his head a couple of times, laid down the pen. Once or twice, he tried to go on, but eventually gave it up, his face assuming a very disgusted expression. He was a robust young fellow of eighteen or nineteen, and the merry twinkle which lurked in his eyes gave the lie to his counterfeited displeasure.

It was a snug little cabin in which he sat. Built of unbarked logs, measuring not more than ten by twelve feet on the inside, and heated by a roaring Yukon-stove, it seemed more homelike to him than any house he had ever lived in, except—of course, always the one, real home.

Two bunks, table and stove, occupied two-thirds of the room, but every inch of space was utilized. Revolvers, rifles, hunting-knives, belts and clothes, hung from three of the walls in picturesque confusion; the remaining one being hidden by a set of shelves, which held all their cooking utensils. Though already eleven o'clock in the morning, a sort of twilight prevailed outside, while it would have been quite dark within, if it had not been for the slush-lamp. This was merely a shallow, tin cup, filled with

bacon grease. A piece of cotton caulking served for a wick; the heat of the flame melting the grease as fast as required.

He leaned his elbows on the table and became absorbed in a deep scrutiny of the lamp. He was really not interested in it, and did not even know he was looking at it, so intent was he in trying to discover what else there could possibly be for dinner.

The door was thrown open at this moment, and a stalwart young fellow entered with a rush of cold air, kicking off his snow shoes at the threshold.

"Bout time for dinner, isn't it?" he asked gruffly, as he took off his mittens. But his brother Clarence had just discovered that "bacon," "beans" and "bread" all began with "b," and did not reply. George's face was covered with ice, so he contented himself with holding it over the stove to thaw. The rattle of the icy chunks on the sheet-iron was getting monotonous, when Clarence deigned to reply by asking a question.

"What's 'b' stand for?"

"Bad, of course," was the prompt answer.

"Just what I thought," and he sighed with great solemnity.

"But how about the dinner? You're cook. It's time to begin. What have you been doing? Oh! Writing! Let's see."

His jaw fell when he got to "bacon, beans and bread," and he said; "It won't do to write home that that's all we've got for Christmas dinner. It would make them worry, you know. Say, haven't we some dried apples?"

"Half a cup. Not enough for a pie."

"They'll swell, you ninny. Sit down and add apple pie to that list of yours. And say dumplings, too, while you're at it. We can make a stagger at them—put two pieces of apple in two lumps of dough and boil them. Never say die. We'll make them think we're living like princes when they read that."

Clarence did as directed, and then sat with such a look of query on his face as to make George nervous and doubtful.

"Pretty slim after all," he mused. "Let's see if we can't find something else—bread, flapjacks and—and—why flour-gravy, of course."

"We can bake, and boil, and fry the beans," Clarence suggested; "but what's to be done with the bacon except to fry it, I can't see."

"Why parboil it; that makes another course, nine altogether. How much more do you want, anyway?" And then to change the subject, "How cold do you think it is?"

Clarence critically studied the ice which had crept far up the cracks in the door, and then gave his judgment; "Past fifty."

"The spirit thermometer gives sixty-five, and it's still falling." George could not prevent an exultant ring in his voice, though if he had been asked why, he would not have known.

"And water freezes at thirty-two degrees above zero," Clarence began to calculate. "That makes ninety-seven degrees of frost. Phew! Wouldn't that open the eyes of the folks at home!"

So, like the two boys that they were, they temporarily forgot their monotonous fare in an exciting discussion of the whys and wherefores of cold. But when one is afflicted with a healthy appetite he can not escape from it very long at a time, and at twelve o'clock they set about cooking their slender meal.

George went into the *cache* for bacon, and begun to rummage about in odd places to see what he could find. Now the *cache*, or place where their food was stored to keep it away from the perpetually-hungry native dogs, was built onto the back of the cabin. Clarence heard the racket he was making, and when he began to cheer and cry out "Eureka! Eureka!" he ran out to see what had happened.

"Manna! brother mine! Manna! dropped from the clouds for the starving children of Israel!" he cried, waving a large can above his head. "Mock-turtle soup. Found it in the tool box," he went on, as they carried it into the cabin.

True enough; it was a quart-can of specially prepared and very rich mock-turtle soup. They sang and danced and were as jubilant as though they had found a gold mine. Clarence added the item to the bill of fare in his letter, while George strove to divide it up into two items, or even more. He showed a special aptitude for this kind of work; but how many tempting dishes he would have finally

succeeded in evolving out of it, shall never be known, for at that moment they heard a dog team pull up the river bank before the cabin.

The next instant the door opened, and two strangers came in. They were grotesque sights. Their heads were huge balls of ice, with little holes where their mouths should have been, through which they breathed. Unable to open their mouths or speak, they shook hands with the boys and headed for the stove. Clarence and George exchanged glances and watched their strange visitors curiously.

"Wal, it's jes' this way," one of them began, as he shook the remaining chunks of ice from his whiskers; "me an' my pard ha' ben nigh on two months, now, over on the Mazy May, with nothin' to eat but straight meat. Nary flour, nary beans, nary bacon. So me an' him sorto' talked it over, an' figgered it out. At last I sez, 'Wot yeh say, Jim? Let's cross the divide an' strike some camp on the Yukon, an' git some civilized grub again? Git a reg'lar Christmas dinner? An' he sez 'I'll go yeh, by gum.' An' here we be. How air yeh off fer meat? Got a hundred pound or so, on the sled outside."

Just as Clarence and George were assuring him that he was heartily welcome, the other man tore away the last hindrance to his speech, and broke in; "Say, lads; yeh haint got a leetle bit o' bread yeh might spare. I'm thet hungry fer jes' a leetle bit—"

"Yeh jes' shet up, Jim!" cried his partner indignantly. "Ye'd make these kids think yeh might be starvin'. Haint yeh had all yeh wanted to eat?"

"Yes," was the gloomy reply; "but nothin' but straight meat."

However, Clarence put an end to the discussion by setting the table with sour-dough bread and cold bacon, having first made them promise not to spoil their appetites for the dinner. The poor fellows handled the heavy bread reverently, and went into ecstasies of delight over it. Then they went out, unharnessed the dogs, and brought some magnificent pieces of moose meat in with them. The boys' mouths watered at the sight, for they were longing for it just as much as the others longed for the bread.

"Porterhouse moose-steak," whispered George; "tenderloin, sirloin and round; liver and bacon; rib-roast of moose, moose stew and fried sweet breads. Hurry, Clarence, and add them to the bill of fare."

"Now don't bother me. I'm cook, and I'm going to boss this dinner, so you obey orders. Take a piece of that meat and go down to the cabin on the next island. They'd give most anything for it, so see that you make a good trade."

The hungry strangers sat on the bunk and watched proceedings with satisfied countenances, while Clarence mixed and kneaded the dough for a baking of bread. In a short time George returned, with one cup of dried apples and five prunes. Yet they were all disappointed at his failure to get sugar. But the dinner already promised to be such a grand affair that they could readily forego such trifling matter as sweets.

Just as Clarence was shortening the pie-dough with bacon grease, a second sled pulled up at the door, and another stranger entered. A vivid picture he made, as he stood for an instant in the doorway. Though his eyebrows and lashes were matted with ice, his face was clean-shaven, and hence, free from it. From his beaded moccasins to his great gauntleted mittens and wolf-skin cap from Siberia, every article of wearing apparel proclaimed him to be one of the "Eldorado Kings," or millionaire mine-owners of Dawson.

He was a pleasant man to look at, though his heavy jaw and steel-blue eyes gave notice of a firm, indomitable will. About his waist was clasped a leather belt, in which reposed two large Colt's revolvers and a hunting-knife, while in his hand, besides the usual dog whip, he carried a smokeless rifle of the largest bore and latest pattern. They wondered at this, for men in the Klondike rarely go armed, and then because of necessity.

His story was soon told. His own team of seven dogs, the finest in the country and for which he had recently refused five thousand dollars, had been stolen five days before. He had found the clue, and discovered that the thieves had started out of the country on the ice. He had borrowed a team of dogs from a friend and taken their trail.

They marvelled at his speed, for he had left Dawson at midnight, having traveled the seventy-five miles in twelve hours. He wished to rest the animals and take a few hours sleep, before going on with the chase. He was sure of overtaking them, he said, for they had foolishly started with an eighteen-inch sled, while the regular, trail Yukon-sleds were only sixteen inches wide. Thus, they had to break trail constantly for one of the runners, while his was already broken.

They recognized the party he was after, and assured him that he was certain to catch them in another twelve hours' run. Then he was made welcome and invited to dinner. To their surprise, when he returned from unhitching and feeding his dogs he brought several pounds of sugar and two cans of condensed milk.

"Thought you fellows, up river here, would be out of luxuries," he said, as he threw them upon the table; "and as I wanted to travel light, I brought them along, intending to trade for beans and flour whenever I got a chance. No, never mind thanks. I'm going to eat dinner with you. Call me when it's ready." And he climbed into one of the bunks, falling asleep a moment later.

"I say, Jim. Thet's travelin', aint it?" said the Man from Mazy May, with as much pride as though he had done it himself. "Seventy-five mile in twelve hours, an' thet cold he wa'nt able to ride more'n half the time. Bet ye'd be petered clean out if yeh done the like o' thet."

"Maybe yeh think I can't travel," his partner replied. But before he could tell what a wonderful traveler he was, their dogs and the dogs of the new arrival started a fight, and had to be separated.

At last the dinner was ready, and just as they were calling the "Eldorado King," Uncle Hiram and Mr. Carter arrived.

"Not an ounce of sugar or can of milk to be bought in Dawson," he said. But his jaw dropped as he caught sight of the sugar and milk on the table, and he sheepishly held up a quart-can of strained honey as his contribution.

This addition necessitated a change in the bill of fare; so when they finally sat down, the first course of mock-turtle soup was followed by hot cakes and honey. While one after another the delicacies of "civilized grub," as they called it, appeared, the eyes of the Men from Mazy May opened wider and wider, and speech seemed to fail them.

But one more surprise was in store for them. They heard a jingle of bells, and another ice-covered traveler entered and claimed their hospitality. The new-comer was an Associated Press reporter, on his way to Dawson from the United States. His first question was concerning the whereabouts of a Mr. Hiram Donaldson, "said to be camped on the Yukon near the mouth of the Stuart River." On Uncle Hiram being pointed out to him, the reporter handed him a letter of introduction from the Mining Syndicate which he, Mr. Donaldson, was representing. Nor was

this all. A fat package of letters was also passed over—the longed-for letters from home.

"By gum! This do beat all," said the Man from Mazy May, after a place had been made for the last arrival. But his partner had his mouth so full of apple dumpling that he could only roll his eyes in approval.

"I know what 'b' stands for." whispered George across the table to Clarence.

"So do I. It stands for 'Bully' with a big 'B'."

A LESSON IN HERALDRY

SHE was such a demure little creature. Sobriety had marked her for his own, while her limpid blue eyes were twin founts of sincerity. And she was so fragile. On the street, the casual passerby turned for a second look, likening her to a little lost angel or an embryonic St. Cecelia. And well he might, so evanescent did she appear—a delicate dewdrop, ready to vanish with the first stray sunbeam. At school, she was a paragon, astonishing the instructors with her insatiable thirst for knowledge. Her playmates looked up to her with certain vague awe, suspending ruder sorts of play when she came among them; while the rowdiest boy, after five minutes in her presence, was reduced to a forced silence, verging very close to a condition of frozen idiocy.

And she was grown up, having drifted, years before her time, from the nursery to her mother's tea table. There she dabbled in the stereotyped conventionalities and unctious nothings, till her mother's feminine visitors were petrified at her precocity. The ordinary gossip and petty scandal of such circles were dropped on her appearance, the conversation leaping to the opposite extreme, and the atmosphere she radiated had a most wonderful effect on such visitors as happened to be of the masculine gender. Old General Wetherbee visibly trembeled whenever he took her hands in his, and stooping, gazed into her saintly eyes. Spiteful people intimated approaching palsy, but this must not be credited; for did he not yield to her gentle missionary efforts, and forswear and abjure, for all time, the solace of his Havana. And did he not keep his word, incidentally enduring the tortures of the damned?

In short, Mabel Armitage, for all her twelve years, was taken seriously and correspondingly stirred all who knew her. She seemed too delicate, too good, too angelic, for this world. She was an apotheosis of all that was best, a radiant, celestial creature—one who would have surprised no one, had she followed in the footsteps of Elijah and taken her rightful seat among the elect. Even Cap Drake, intimate with her from birth, believed this; which goes to show how little knowledge of our fellow beings may penetrate our understandings.

Her father was possessed of numerous minute wrinkles at the corner of either eye. It may have been because of this, and it might have been due to the innate perversity of things; but deep down in this innocent child's heart there lived a devil—a devil which sometimes issued forth, and under divers guises, perturbed men's souls greatly.

Now, Cap Drake was numbered among her most devoted subjects, serving as prime minister to her in a sort of unofficial way. He happened to be possessed of a vast erudition, and she had also constituted him the final court of appeal, referring to him the myriad debatable questions which constantly arose in her pursuit of knowledge. Her brother Bobbie, who had appeared before this court at various times, seditiously and openly proclaimed collusion between the queen and the chief magistrate; others held that he but loyally bent to her imperial ukase; but be this as it may, one thing was certain—Cap Drake never had known to render a verdict which did not doubly fortify her position or throw her assailants into utter confusion. In thus conniving at her many victories, he often found himself hard put; he then had recourse to the most amazing sophistries, weaving a mesh of audacious fallacy which so paralyzed their understandings that they always capitulated on the spot.

But this really pardonable lapse from the straight and narrow path bred in Cap Drake a consequent infirmity. He grew able to tell the most astounding whoopers, with an unfaltering tongue, and a face which fairly shone with genial sincerity. All well and good, till one day, yielding to a traitorous impulse, he confided to the queen certain zoological wonders, yet unknown to science, whose habitat was the unexplored jungle-land of Africa. Still well and good, had not the trusting Mabel proceeded to electrify both her class and teacher with the lurid tale. Its Munchausen-like simplicity and earnestness took them aback, and they pleaded for further information. Mabel keenly felt the atmosphere of suspended judgment, and vouched for the authority, though loyally withholding that authority's name; for she had begun to fear her faithful prime minister had imposed upon her. And when she went home that afternoon, sadder and wiser, it was with the laudable intention of bringing about, in some way, her erring servant's discomfiture.

Cap Drake came for an early tea, feeling very much at peace with himself and the world in general. Looking into the library, he found Mabel deep in her composition book, and refrained from the customary quiz on the little happenings of the day. Later, at table, the conversation turned upon national banners, and he found himself, as usual, officiating as the final court of appeal.

"But Mabel," Bobby blurted out, "you're wrong, way wrong. There's only one Union, isn't there? The American Union, you know, and that's why the Union Jack's an American flag."

"Isn't the Union Jack the flag of the English, Cappy?" Mabel appealed.

"Why yes, Mabel, it is. It stands for the United Kingdom, the Union, as Bobbie calls it, of England, Ireland, and Scotland. Yes, Mabel, you're right."

"And what do the stripes mean?" asked Mabel.

"The stripes? Let me see—. Now the stars stand for the number of states, don't they?" he was maneuvering for time, and inwardly wondering what they did mean.

Mabel acquiesced silently.

"And for every state that's added, another star is placed in the blue field."

Again Mabel nodded.

"And how many states are there?"

"Forty-four," she volunteered.

"No; forty-five," asserted Bobbie.

"Look here, Sis; there's Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont—"

Cap Drake withdrew from the controversy in haste, congratulating himself upon his cleverness; and during the rest of the tea he talked politics most assiduously with Mr. Armitage. Of course, there could be no interrupting, but Mabel had found her cue, and an hour later she captured him with his cigar on the veranda.

"What do the stripes mean, Cappy?"

"The stripes? Oh, yes, we were talking about flags, weren't we? Which reminds me of the banner we captured on the Little Round Top. It was very amusing, and—"

And he proceeded to spin out wartime reminiscences till twilight came on, and they went within. Mabel was in no hurry, however, while he forgot it all in a rubber of cribbage. But the corner wrinkles of Mr. Armitage's eyes had become more manifest, and though Mabel did not know, he was taking huge interest in the proceedings. And the rubber could not last all evening.

"Cappy, what do the stripes mean?"

The deuce take it, that question again! Such a little thing—surely he had learned and forgotten it years ago. How annoying! And Mabel was such a hyper-sensitive little creature, with such an insatiable appetite for facts—why, she was liable to worry herself sick over it. Yet he must crawl out somehow. He cast a helpless glance in the direction of Mr. Armitage; but that gentleman was deeply engrossed in what was evidently a very amusing magazine article. Mrs. Armitage was busy resurrecting old favorites from amongst a great mass of sheet music.

"The stripes?"

Cap Drake gazed at her so absently and so long, that Mabel felt it incumbent upon her to repeat the question.

"Oh! now I remember!" he cried, his face brightening up hypocritically. "Flags, wasn't it? Come over on the sofa and I'll tell you all about it. It's a deep subject, a very deep subject." he shook his head profoundly. "In the old Roman Republic, before Christ, you know, the soldiers used to carry a handful of hay on the end of a pole. And before that, the soldier who slew Cyrus, the great Persian king, was highly honored when his comrades allowed him to carry a golden cock at the head of the army. Thus, you see, there were no real banners in those days, but—"

And in this wise, Cap Drake proceeded, mopping his perspiring forehead and racking his brain for more data upon the detestable subject. Mabel did not interrupt; but he saw her azure eyes fixed upon him in mute approach, and he could have sworn she was ready for tears.

"But, Cappy, the stripes?" she interjected, softly, once, and thereat he plunged into a description of the flags borne by the knights of William the Conqueror, as portrayed in the Bayeux tapestry. After exhausting that he took up the oriflamme of France, and from there to the *fleurs-de-lis*, regained his scattered wits by relating a long legend of the days of chivalry. As he described the blue imperial standard, with its yellow eagle and golden bees, he managed to get to his feet, and with the tricolor of the Revolution he gained the door.

"Why so early?" asked Mrs. Armitage. "I'll sing the 'Garden of Sleep' if you stay, and you know you'll forego anything for the sake of that."

"No, I'd rather not, thank you. A slight headache to-night, and—" He paused almost in terror as his eyes fell on Mabel, and saw her lips beginning to form "The stripes, Cappy?" and he said good-night very abruptly and hurried down the hall. Instead of going to his room he stole to the library, where he did contract a headache in an hour of bootless rummaging. He discovered two atlases which contained color-symphonies of the flags of all nations, but not a line could he find on the subject in hand. A reference to the encyclopaedia developed the fact that the one volume which was sure to hold the secret, "Dan-Fra" was missing. Then he went to bed.

"Cappy! O Cappy!"

Mabel knelt before his door, having floated down the hallway more angel-like than ever in her snowy nightdress, her delicate face framed in an aureole of unbound gold. Mr. Armitage had ensconced himself in the curtained oriel at the head of the stairs.

It was a very timid little knock, and there was a pitiful quaver to her voice. Cap Drake groaned and sat up.

"Won't you tell me what the stripes mean, Cappy? Oh, won't you tell me, Cappy? I've tried ever so hard, but I can't go to bed till I know."

"The stripes?"—in muffled syllables from the further side of the door. "Hadn't you better go back to bed?"

"Tell me, Cappy, and then I will. It bothers me so I can't go to sleep till you tell me."

"Well—er—really, I don't know." Having at last taken the bull by the horns he felt somewhat relieved. At least no more circumlocution was necessary.

"I'll never believe it, Cappy: no, never!"

"Perhaps they have no meaning?"

"Yes they have. I know they have, and so do you. And you just won't tell me, and I think you're too mean for anything—there, now!"

"But, Mabel, I tell you I don't know. I'd tell you if I did—you know I would but I honestly don't. I'll find out to-morrow for you. Now go down-stairs, there's a good girl."

"O Cappy, don't be cruel. I—I'm going to cry."

Cap Drake bespoke his agony in certain intensive adjectives, unmentionable and shocking, save in the mouths of pious divines. But he smothered them deep down in his larynx and resolutely shut his lips. Then the heavy silence of the night settled down upon them, broken by disconsolate sobs and pathetic chokings from Mabel's side of the door. There was also suppressed laughter from the direction of the oriel; but Cap Drake did not hear that.

A long silence.

He wonders if she has gone, and ventures "Good-night, Mabel."

She responds with a miserable little wail.

He has recourse to more intensive adjectives, strikes a light and begins to dress.

He opened the door cautiously and saw at his feet the woeful little creature, in ruffled white, sobbing convulsively. There had been a great deal of the woman born into Cap Drake, and, though he was now jogging down the shadowy slope of life in single blessedness, it had never been stunted nor held back in its growth as is the case with most men similarly circumstanced. So he took her into his arms, in much the same way he had done a memorable twelve years ago, and carried her down-stairs to the nursery. And there he soothed her, and held her hand in his till midnight chimed and her honest blue eyes were veiled in slumber. The he softly kissed the saintly forehead and went upstairs, feeling somewhat soothed, yet deeming himself very much of a brute.

The next day when Mr. Lennon, the head bookkeeper, in response to Cap Drake's call stepped into the inner office, he expected nothing less than a consultation on an important business interest then at issue. A glance at his employer's clouded countenance convinced him that this was so.

"Mr. Lennon, do you happen to—a—"

Mr. Lennon shaped his austere features into their best judicial expression. It must, indeed, be important,

"Mr. Lennon, do you—I say, what do the stripes mean, any way?"

To his everlasting credit, the bookkeeper relaxed never a muscle, but, as he afterward confided to the copying clerk, "You could have knocked me over with a feather."

"The stripes, sir? I hardly understand." At the same time a haunting suspicion crossed his mind that it was one of those new-fangled business college notions introduced by his latest assistant.

"The stripes in the American flag?"

"Oh! Well, the stars mean—"

"Dash the stars! The stripes, man! the stripes!"

But whatever recollection—if recollection he ever had—was dissipated by his employer's purple forehead, and he respired in a relieved sort of way when he regained the cooler atmosphere of the counting-room. Then the first-assistant was called in, and finally, when the establishment was exhausted, the office boy was dispatched on a mission to Judge Parker's office, and the typewriter detailed to finish the morning, and if needs be, the day, in the reference department of the near-by library.

Cap Drake took a much earlier train home than was his wont on Saturday afternoons, armed with a huge bunch of violets, and the solution of that most momentous of problems—the significance of the stripes in the American banner. Mabel was not personally in evidence, but she apparently had just come in, for her school books lay upon the reading stand in the library. Among other things, he had taken it upon himself to be her literary mentor; so he at once buried himself in her composition book, pausing with a start at her most recent production. It was very interesting; he skimmed down the page without noticing her entry, and when the bunch of violets had fallen to the floor, read on regardless.

He gasped in an apoplectic manner as he turned the page and read: "The United States flag has silver stars on a blue field, and red stripes on a white ground. For every state a star is added. The number of stripes never change. There are thirteen stripes, counting the white ones, too. And there were thirteen original states—"

He looked up and saw her for the first time. "When did you write this?" he asked.

Her blue eyes, with their usual expression of wondering innocence, never faltered. "Yesterday. Don't you remember when

you came into the library and saw how busy I was? And Miss Storrs said it was excellent, and made me read it out before all the class, and—"

But Cap Drake never heard. He was at the telephone endeavoring to get the switch on Red 17.

"Anywhere to-night?" he asked her, while waiting on Central's pleasure.

Mabel shook her head, her wide-eyed wonder deepening.

"Well, you're going with me."

"That's all right," he added. "I'll fix it with your mother."

"Red 17?—Yes—How are the box seats?—Yes—Two—yes; t, w, o, two—All right—thank you."

MAHATMA'S LITTLE JOKE

"TO me, it seems strange that in this age of reason, when the supernatural is rejected by normal minds and the church hastens to harmonize its teachings with those of science, that a sect or coterie of thinkers—brilliant ones, too—should attempt to foist upon the world such fantastic infractions of natural law."

"But Charley, they do no such thing. While miracles of the adepts may seem infractions to the uninitiated, they themselves do not endorse them as such. As the wonders of to day would have been miracles to a past age, so do the marvels they produce, appear to science in its present stage. They merely contend that their so-called miracles are but the manifestations of eternal laws, too subtle for the present day physicists to grasp, but which, through ultimate evolution, they will some day not only accept but demonstrate."

"With all respect to our friend, I still hold that their propositions are absurd, and that hypothetical possibilities, such as yours, may be carried beyond the limits of legitimate scientific speculation. For instance, take Madame Blavatsky's miracle of the plate. The set was of a peculiar make, no duplicates of which were to be found in all India. At a picnic lunch, having received an unforeseen addition to their number, they are one dish short. She calls the adepts—at that moment in the Himalayas or Thibet—to her aid. They project an intense psychic force across oceans and continents to Germany, where, in the factory, are to be found the only duplicates. There, with successful ascendancy of mind over matter, they break the cohesion which holds the molecules of a certain plate together; disintergrate the molecules to atoms, till it becomes merely a force or the extremest refinement of matter; and bring these vaporous constituents of the plate to India. All this time, which is in the twinkling of an eye, the manipulators have remained in their mountain fastnesses. When the disembodied plate arrives at the picnic ground, it reintegrates; each molecule resumes its old position relative to all companion molecules; and deposits itself under the bushes, where it is the next instant discovered by one of the party. If that is not the wildest of poppy-cock, I leave it to our friend, who is certainly deep enough in theosophic lore, to set me aright."

The person thus addressed, a middle-aged gentleman, whose face combined the brooding wisdom of the Sphynx and the mysterious solemnity of a Monte Cristo, replied:

"You are right and you are wrong; right, by the glasses through which you view the phenomena of the universe; wrong, because of the narrow limitations inherent with such lenses. You acknowledge the philosophical axiom, that the finite cannot contemplate the infinite? Then, as the finite evolves and increases its powers of reception and conception, the field of its contemplation widens; as witness the science of to day, which you have mentioned. Since this contemplative or conceptionate territory which the world at present enjoys is greater than that of the preceding century, may not the same difference be found between individuals existing contemporaneously? Thus, one hundred years ago, telegraphy was beyond practical conception; and thus, to day the disintegration and reintegration of form by psychic impulses, is beyond both yours and the popular conception. You consider it hypothetically unreasonable. But is your fiat absolute? Do you take upon yourself the infinite knowledge necessary to declare that such is infinitely impossible? Surely you would not be so egotistical. On this point, then, your only consistent attitude must be that of agnosticism—you do not know but would like to know. Do you follow me?"

"Yes," returned Charley, "but such a passive position, long continued, is not compatible with my positive temperament: I inevitably slip into the illogical ratiocinations of skepticism. If I were to receive demonstrations, proofs, occasionally, I would not lapse. But there's the rub—how am I to obtain them?"

"Perhaps I can aid you," replied the mysterious personage. "I have profoundly studied the tenents and natural philosophy of esoteric Buddhism; nay, though this be a secret, I have not only served my adeptship in that weird brotherhood, but have become a full-fledged mahatma. It is in my power to convince you, and I shall so do if you are willing. Shall I tear your astral form from its sublunary habitation and send it gasping through the empyrean? But these celestial peregrinations are tiresome rot after all—can you not think of something original?"

"While I must confess that I never looked upon you in the light of a Heliobas the Second, I'll take your word for it. There is nothing I would like better than to leave this mundane sphere for a space; to gaze from afar, upon this clayey habitation of mine; to—but I have it—best of all! Jack, you remember that little wish you uttered, sailing home yesterday?"

"What wish? You know they are legion. Was it that castle of mine in Spain? Or the Duchess—fond creature of my imagination?"

"No, no. Come back to earth. Can't you recollect? Haydee and Dora, you and I?"

"Oh! the very thing!" Turning to the mahatma—"we may as well let you into our little secret: perhaps you can help us. Charley has a sister—an adorable creature—far prettier than her pretty name, Haydee, and as good as she is beautiful. I also have a sister, Dora, over whom Charley likewise raves. Charley and I like each other; but we love each other's sister. We are not bashful—er—that is, we don't know how exactly—ah—well, we don't know each other's sister as well as we should. Not that we are not well enough acquainted, but we don't know the right way to go at it—you comprehend. Now if I were Charley, that is, if Charley were to propose to his sister, he would understand her so well that he would know just how to do it. The same is true of me and my sister. So if Charley and I could change places for awhile, we could carry off things swimmingly, then change back again, and hail for the wedding day!"

"Ah! I see," interposed the mahatma. "What you would desire is that each proposes to the other's sister by proxy, the brother of the girl proposed to, to be the proxy. I believe that I can arrange it. I have merely to separate your astral forms from your bodies; then to return them, each into the other's corporosity. Thus: the spirit personality of Jack shall inhabit and actuate the material personality of Charley and vice a versa. Are you ready?"

"Ready for what?" in chorus.

"To be translated."

The chums glanced at each other in surprise and trepidation, then burst into hearty laughter, while the mahatma regarded them with imperturbable expectancy. Their laughter died away and his solemnity begat a similar seriousness with them. Again he asked if they were ready, but this time received a skeptical affirmation.

The process was simple. Placing them side by side on a divan, he literally stared each in turn out of countenance, and incidentally, consciousness. What he then did was of a too esoteric nature to be revealed to the vulgar mind; but it was evident that he had succeeded, for with a smile of satisfaction he put on his gloves, took his hat and walking stick, and went down town, leaving them on deep slumber.

The shadows lengthened across the room and the afternoon had worn well along, before the stentorian breathing of the sleepers

ceased. Awakening, they regarded each other with wondering eyes, each acutely susceptible to the fact that change had been accomplished.

"Who would have believed it," cried Charley, "that we could so successfully swap souls!"

"That involves a doubt," Jack replied, as he drew from his pocket and dubiously regarded a packet of pet cigarettes. "Which is the dominant factor? The body or the soul? If it is the latter, we have merely swapped bodies, and incidentally, clothes. By the way, take these cigarettes and feel in my pockets, or rather, in the pockets of my agrments, which clothe my body, but which you now inhabit, and pass me my cigar case. I never could stand those coffin nails of yours."

"Let's trade the contents of our pockets at once."

"No. I had not thought of it before, buut it would be absurd. Think of me appearing at my—I mean your house—and every body taking me to be you, with all my things in your pockets. And vice a versa: think of yourself at my house, and considered by my family as myself, with all of your belongings in my pockets—O pshaw! This commingling of the first and second persons is too puzzling to allow perspicuity of diction; but you see my point I hope."

"O yes, I can grasp it quickly as an abstraction, but fail in lucidity were I to attempt a concrete analysis. It is like the process of assigning the quantities of X and Y when constructing an equation. Let's see if we can make a formula—one easy to remember:

*X Jack's soul A Jack's body
Y Charley's soul B Charley's body*

*Therefore X A Jack
and Y B Charley.*

*But Jack is now: [X A] A] B or X B
And Charley is: [Y B] B] A or Y A*

"Do you now comprehend who and what you are, Jack?"

"O yes, and I'll never forget it. I am X A B A. And you are—"

"Y B A B."

"Well, since we have settled our identities, let's go home—here! that's my hat!"

"No, it is not. Don't you remember I am Y A and this is A's hat, or your body's hat, but your hat for you are X B and must take B's hat."

"Oh! I see."

And they awkwardly exchanged *chapeaux*, and as awkwardly descended the stairs; for at first it was quite difficult to navigate each other's bodies. Acquaintances who passed them on the street, thought that they were behaving rather strangely. For instance, Careleton, a friend of Charley's but unacquainted with Jack, was surprised when Charley passed him with a stoney stare, while Jack affably nodded.

NIGHT'S SWIM IN YEDDO BAY

"YES, a mighty nice set of people are them Japs, for all their being half civilized, which I deny, and say right here that for smartness, push and energy, learning, honesty, politeness and general good-naturedness, their like can't be beat. And when it comes to comparing them to our people, for real moral goodness and purity, why, we ain't in it." And the speaker, a grizzled, old merchant seaman, drained his glass and set it down on the bar with a slam, as though inviting criticism or controversy. But none dared to oppose him. Good-humoredly glancing round on his little group of listeners, he called for another round of drinks.

"An enterprising people, they are," he went on, leaning comfortably back against the bar and striking an attitude, without which, as his old chum, Bill Nandts, said, it was impossible for him to spin a yarn.

"They're always longing to be, as they call it, Europeanized or Americanized. They're only too quick to discard their old habits and way of doing things for the newer and more improved customs and methods of ours. Why, take the simple matter of dress, for instance. From the lowest beggar in the street to the highest dignitary in the land, they all want to be European in their dress. Pretty near all that can afford it dress like us, and sometimes those who can't put themselves to pretty shifts in order to do so.

"Why, there isn't a ship that leaves Yokohama but with a fo'ks'le full of slender, dilapidated wardrobes, the rest of which the Japs have obtained by shrewd trading and sharp tricks. Of course, the curio traders that come aboard while in port get more than a fair share of the spoils; but still, the 'sam pan' or boat men do a fair trade in that line.

"God pity the sailor who finds himself down on the pier without the necessary 'ten sen' to pay the boatmen's hire out to his vessel. Unless he can find a shipmate, from whom to borrow the money, he will usually end in parting with his shirt or singlet, or some article of wearing apparel; for the rapacious 'sam pan' men just ache to dress like us, though they can't do it on the square. They tried that game on me once, but it did not succeed.

"It was my first trip to Yokohama, and I had been ashore half the night, carrying on as only a reckless young rat knows how. I had been up in 'Bloodtown', for that is what the low white quarter is called by the natives, because of the many drunken brawls and fights that occur there. Well, it was 'do in Rome as Rome does',

and, of course, I had got mixed up in a couple of rows and street fights, for I was about half seas under, and did not care a snap for anything. Just about midnight I came wandering down to the little stone pier, or jetty, which was Yokohama's only apology for the long line of docks to be met with in every seaport. In Yokohama, as you know, all the shipping lays out to anchor or to huge buoys; the work of loading and unloading being carried on by hundreds of lighters and thousands of low class Japanese laborers. I hear, however, that the Government has now erected a splendid steel pier, which cost a couple of million.

"But to return to my yarn. Along I came, taking in the whole street in a way that reminded me of the drunken fishermen, who, with thirty-two points in the compass, steered thirty more. My hat was gone; the sailor's knot, with which I had tied the silk handkerchief round my neck, had been slipped and drawn tight against my windpipe, nearly choking me; my clothes were all dusty and awry, from where I had been rolling on the ground with two doughty 'ricksha' men and a policeman; and, in fact, I must have presented a most charming appearance as I came under the lights of the police station and custom-house.

"About a hundred paces farther on, I came to the stone steps where the 'sam pans' clustered, while their owners solicited custom, for all the world like our own cabmen and hotel runners down at the ferries when the overland passengers are due.

"I soon engaged an old codger, who seemed like those battered armors which one sees in museums and such places. He must have been at least sixty years old, and, with great height, he was as lean as a skeleton; while his whole body was nothing but a mass of wrinkles. Here and there, as the light from a brazier, charcoal fire, shone on his sunburned hide, I could see big black and white scars of all descriptions. He was the most battered old hulk one would wish to meet with, and his voice was in harmony with the rest of him. It was as thin and shrill and piping as a child's, and it made me fidget as he bowed and ducked before me.

"Following him, I climbed aboard the 'sam pan', where I made the acquaintance of the rest of his crew. It was as startling a contrast as I ever saw. It was a little lump of a boy, not much larger than a good-sized chaw of tobacco. He was a precocious little youngster, with plump, well-formed body, and the bearing and assurance of a full-grown man. I proceeded to take a seat; but, what with my condition and the shaky, old concern, I came down all in a heap, as though I intended going through the bottom of the rickety craft.

"As I lay there, sprawling, I saw the little shaver glance sharply at me, and then jabber away to the old fellow, who, in turn, stared at me and paused in the very act of shoving the 'sam pan' off. I managed to gain my feet, and, irritated at the delay and my own clumsiness, I told them rather sharply to go ahead. They refused to do so. By this time the steps were crowded by the rough watermen, who were all laughing and jeering at me.

"I began to get angry at all this, and was about to shove off myself when the youngster came up to me and said very laconically, as he held out his hand, 'Pay now'. At first I did not understand, so closely were the two words run together; but after he repeated his 'pay now' several times, to the great delight of the crowd, I comprehended. Of course, I had no objections as to when I paid; but, digging down into my pocket, I found I was broke. Then I carefully searched every pocket, and the result was the startling knowledge that I hadn't a 'sou markee' to my name.

"When this became apparent, the crowd on the steps fairly howled in their glee, as they chattered away and hurled whole strings of advice and admonitions to my triumphant 'sam pan' crew.

"The youngster, after sharply scanning me with his shrewd, black eyes, laid hold of my shirt, which was bran' new from the slop chest, and said, 'Gimme shirt'. To this request the crowd signified their approval by sundry hand-clappings and with much laughter enjoyed my predicament.

"Not by a long-shot', sez I, and, finding him obstinate, I climbed out on the pier, feeling pretty cheap.

"Well, I fooled around a long while; but not one of all the 'sam pan' men would take me out without being paid in advance. To my every appeal, they would answer, 'Gimme coat', 'Gimme shirt', and so on. I was very obstinate myself in those days and wouldn't give in.

"I remember getting up on a big block of hewn granite and delivering an impassioned harangue to the motley mob, who cheered and jeered me by turns, not understanding a word of my discourse. Bye and bye I fell off the stone on top of them, nearly mashing two or three.

"Then I wandered down to the police station, and made known my ridiculous plight to the lieutenant. He seemed a very affable, good-natured man, and he went out and addressed the 'sam pan'

men in choice Japanese. But they still refused to take me unless I parted company with my coat or shirt, or some article of wearing apparel, worth ten times the necessary money.

"Well, to make a long story short, after puzzling my head a little, I decided to swim aboard. As quick as it takes to tell it, I stripped myself, and, telling the lieutenant to take care of my clothes, I started out the pier on the run, closely followed by the 'sam pan' men, who seemed to hugely enjoy the queer caper I cut. I started down the stone steps with the tread of a hero; but the tide was out, and slipping on the slimy ooze which covered them, I went heels over head, bumpety bump, all the way down to the bottom. I struck the water with a mighty splash, to the accompaniment of the hoarse shouts of the enthusiastic crowd.

"However, when I came to the surface, they all signified their willingness to take me aboard if I would return. But I was stubborn now. I waved them good-bye, and paddled away in the dark. I had no fear, for I could swim like a fish, and, as it was mid-summer, the water was quite warm. Besides, the freshening effect of the salty brine was rapidly clearing my muddled head.

"Far ahead of me our anchor light burned brightly, and, with a strong, steady stroke, I struck out. It was not much of a swim—hardly a mile—and I soon found myself alongside. Climbing silently on deck, unperceived by the anchor watch, who was no other than my old chum here, Bill Nandts, I made my way to the fo'ks'le. I took my blankets up on the fo'ks'le head, near the catheads, and laid down, for the fo'ks'le was too stifling for a comfortable sleep.

"Before I could close my eyes, I heard a boat come alongside and hail the anchor watch. Then quite a conversation followed, and some one climbed over the side and threw something down on the deck. This Bill Nandts examined. All of a sudden, he jumped to his feet, and exclaimed, 'My God! They're Charley's'

"It was one of the harbor police boats, which had brought my clothes aboard and inquired about my safety. Of course, Bill hadn't seen me, and, after rousing the fo'ks'le to find me, he made sure that I was drowned. The Captain, aroused by the noise, came on deck. After listening to the story, he ordered a boat over the side to search for me.

"Away both boats pulled, and I could hear Bill Nandts shouting again and again, 'Charley! O Charley! Where are you?'

"After vainly hunting for me in the water, they inquired of all the ships, thinking that I might have swam aboard one of them in the dark. Before long the whole harbor was in an uproar. The hailing of the anchor watches roused the dogs, which many of the ships carried, and soon every dog in the harbor was baying vigorously. The noise was contagious and spread to the shore, where all their canine friends came in on the grand chorus. And the cocks began to crow and the chickens to cackle, as though the last day had come, while a general alarm of fire was turned in by a nervous watchman; and all Yokohama awoke, thinking the city was being burned down.

"The bay was now swarming with the 'sam pan' men, who lent their hoarse cries to swell the tumult. Lights were flashing hither and thither across the water. The police tug, having got up steam by this time, came out to see what was all the uproar was about, and but added to the general confusion. Then the Harbor Master, aroused by some over-zealous official, with a wild tale of disaster, came hurrying out in his six-oared gig. But the scene of excitement had spread so far that he could neither make head nor tail out of it.

"Suddenly he was run down and spilled into the water by the police boat, which was just then engaged in an exciting chase of a poor, bewildered fisherman, to whom, with startling intuition, they had attributed all the trouble. The frightened fisherman, now that he was saved by the accident, lost his head, and fouled the bowsprit of a Norwegian bark, near us, and capsized. Then a whole fleet of custom-house boats, thinking it was a preconcerted plan of the smugglers to land illicit goods during the excitement, came dashing across the harbor in all directions. And how they overhauled the frightened 'sam pans' and fishing craft with great fierceness, in the heroic discharge of their duty!

"And to cap the climax, the aged keepers of the two light ships, on either side of the narrow opening in the great breakwater, seeing the lights of a P. and O. steamer approaching, thought it was an invasion of the Chinese. So they hurriedly extinguished both lights, and the big passenger steamer ran aground in the darkness.

"The excitement was intense; but, after an hour's duration, it died away, and I fell asleep, hugging myself in glee at the great prank I had played.

"The next I knew I was being roughly awakened. Opening my eyes, I found the sun rising in the East. Bill Nandts was a-shaking

me like mad, so happy as not to know whether to be angry with me or not. Of course, explanations followed, and it was a long time before I heard the last of it. And as for the 'sam pan' men—why, I had the freedom of the harbor. For, ever after, they refused to take money from me, though they would always set up a great jabbering and laughing whenever I hove in sight."

"Well, boys," said Bill Nandts when he concluded, "that's one on me. So come up, all hands, and drink to the health of Long Charley, the best old 'shell back' that ever sailed out of Frisco."

A NORTHLAND MIRACLE

THIS is a story of things that happened, which goes to show that there is an eternal core of goodness in the hearts of all men. Bertram Cornell was a bad man, and a failure. In a little English home overseas there had been sorrow unavailing and tears shed in vain for his earthly and spiritual welfare. He was bad, utterly bad. There could be no doubt of it. Thoughtless, careless and uncaring were mild terms with which to brand his weaknesses.

Even in his boyhood he had been strong only for evil. Kind words and pleadings had no effect on him, and he had been callous to the wet eyes of his mother and sisters and the sterner though no less kindly admonitions of his father. So it could hardly have been otherwise, when yet a very young man, that he fled hurriedly out of his home in England, carrying with him something which should have burdened his conscience had he but possessed one, and leaving behind a disgrace on his name for his people to bear. And so it was that those who had known him spoke of him in bitterness and sadness, until the memory of him was dimmed with time. Of what further evils he wrought there was never a whisper, and of his end no one ever heard. In his last hour he made recompense and wiped clean his tarnished page of life. But he did this thing in a far country, where news travels slowly and gets lost upon the way, and where men oftentimes die before they can tell how others died. But this was the way of it. Strong of body and uncaring, he had laughed at the great rough hand of the world and had always done, not what the world demanded, but whatever Bertram Cornell desired. And he had met harsh words with harsher, and stout blows with stouter. He had served as sailor on many seas, as shepherd on the Australian ranges, as cowboy among the Dakota cattlemen, and as an enrolled private with the Mounted Police of the Northwest Territory. From this last post he had deserted on the discovery of gold in the Klondike and worked his way to the Alaskan coast. Here, because of his frontier experience, he speedily found place to fit into in a party of three other men.

This party was bound for the Klondike, but it had planned to abandon the beaten track and to go into the country over a new and untraveled route. With a pack train of many horses (cayuses from the mountains of eastern Oregon), the four men struck east into the desolate wilderness which lies beyond Mount St. Elias, and then north through the upland region in which the headwaters of the White and Tanana rivers have their source. It was an unexplored domain, marked vaguely on the maps, which was yet to feel the foot of the first white man. So vast and dismal was it

that even animal life was scarce, and the tiny Indian tribes few and far between. For days, sometimes, they rode through the silent forest of by the rims of lonely lakes and saw no living thing, heard no sound save the sighing of the wind and the sobbing of the waters. A great solemnity brooded over the land, and the quiet was so profound that they came to hush their voices and to waste few words in idle talk.

As they journeyed on they prospected for the hidden gold, groping in the chill pools of the torrents and panning dirt in the shadows of the mighty glaciers. Once they came upon a body of virgin copper, like a mountain, but they could only shrug their shoulders and pass on. Food for their horses was scarce, and quite often poisonous, and the patient animals died one by one on the strange trail their masters had led them to. Crossing a high divide, the party was overwhelmed by a sleety storm common to such elevations, and, when finally they struggled through to the warmer valley beneath, the last horse had been left behind.

But here, in the sheltered valley, John Thornton cleared back the moss and from the grassroots shook out glittering particles of yellow gold. Bertram Cornell was with him at the time, and that night the twain carried back to camp nuggets which weighed a thousand dollars in the scales. A stop was called, and at the end of a month the four men had mined a treasure far greater than they could carry. But their food supply had been steadily growing less and less, till one man could bend forward and bear it all on his back.

What with the bleak region and fall coming on, it was high time to be going along. Somewhere to the northeast they knew the Klondike lay and the country of the Yukon. How far they did not know, though they thought it could not be more than a hundred miles. So each took about five pounds of gold, or a thousand dollars, and the rest of the great treasure they cached safely against their return. And to return they intended just as soon as they could lay in more grub. Their ammunition having given out, they left their rifles with the gold, burdening themselves only with the camp equipage and the scant supply of food.

So sure were they that they would shortly reach the gold diggings, that they ate unsparingly of the provisions; so that on the tenth day they found but a few miserable pounds remaining. And still before them, in up-heaved earth-waves, range upon range, towered the great grim mountains. Then it was that doubt came, and fear settled upon the men, and Bill Hines began to ration out the food.

They no longer ate at midday, and morning and evening he divided the day's allowance into four meager portions. It was evenly shared, but it was very little—enough to keep soul and body together, but not enough to furnish the proper strength to healthy toiling men. Their faces grew wan and haggard, and day by day they covered less ground. Often the nausea of emptiness seized them, and their knees shook with weakness, and they reeled and fell. And always, when they had gasped and dragged themselves to the crest of a jagged mountain pass and eagerly looked beyond, another mountain confronted them. And always the brooding peace lay heavy over the land, and there was nothing but the loneliness and silence without end.

One by one, they threw away their blankets and spare clothes. They dropped their axes by the way, and the spare cooking utensils, and even the sacks of gold dust, until at last they staggered onward, half-naked, unburdened save for the pittance of grub that remained. This, Jan Jensen, the Dane, divided by weight into four parts so that the burden might be equally distributed. And each man, by the holy though unwritten and unspoken bonds of comradeship, held sacred that which he carried on his back. The small grub-packs were never opened except by the light of the campfire, where all could see and where just division was made.

Of bacon they possessed one three-pound chunk, which John Thornton carried in addition to a few cups of flour. This one piece they were saving for the very last, when the need would be greatest, and they resolutely refrained from touching it. But Bertram Cornell cast hungry eyes upon it and thought hungry thoughts. And in the night, while his comrades slept the sleep of exhaustion, he unstrapped John Thornton's pack and robbed it of the bacon; and all through the hours till dawn, taking care lest the unaccustomed quantity turn his stomach, he munched and chewed and swallowed it, bit by bit, till nothing at all of it was left.

On the day which followed he took good care to hide the new strength which had come to him of the night and, if anything, appeared weaker than the rest. It was a very hard day; John Thornton lagged behind and rested often; but by nightfall they had cleared another mountain and beheld the opening of a small river valley beneath, running to the eastward. To the eastward! There lay the Klondike and safety! A few more days, could they but manage to live through them, they would be among white men and grub-caches again.

But, huddled by the fire, the starving men looking greedily on, Bill Hines opened Thornton's pack to get some flour. In an

instant each eye had noted the absence of the bacon. Thornton's eyes stared in horror, and Hines dropped the pack and sobbed aloud. But Jan Jensen drew his hunting knife and spoke. His voice was low and husky, almost a whisper, but each word fell slowly from his lips, and distinctly.

"My comrades, this is murder. This man has slept with us and shared with us in all fairness. When we divided all the grub by weight, each man carried on his back the lives of his comrades. And so did this man carry our lives on his back. It was a trust, a great trust, a sacred trust. He has not been true to it. Today, when he dropped behind, we thought he was weary. We were mistaken. Behold! He has eaten that which was ours, upon which our very lives were hanging. There is no other name for it than murder. For murder there is one punishment, and only one. Am I not right, my comrades?"

"Ay!" Bill Hines cried; but Bertram Cornell remained silent. He had not expected this.

Jan Jensen raised the long-bladed knife to strike, but Cornell gripped his wrist. "Let me speak," he demanded.

Thornton staggered slowly to his feet and said, "It is not right that I should die. I did not eat the bacon; nor could I have lost it. I know nothing about it. But I swear solemnly by the most high God that I have neither touched nor tasted the bacon!"

"If you were sneak enough to eat it, certainly you are sneak enough to lie about it now," Jensen charged, fingering the knife impatiently.

"Leave him alone, I tell you," threatened Cornell. "We don't know that he ate it. We know nothing about it. And I warn you, I won't stand by and see murder done. There is a chance that he is not guilty. Don't trifle with that chance. You dare not punish him on a chance."

The angry Dane sheathed the blade, but an hour later, when Thornton happened to speak to him, he turned his back. Bill Hines also refused to hold conversation with the wretched man, while Cornell, already ashamed for the good which had fluttered in him (the first in years), would have nothing to do with him.

The next morning Bill Hines lumped the little remaining food together and redivided it into four parts. From Thornton's portion he subtracted the equivalent of the bacon, which same he shared

among the other three piles. This he did without a word; the act was too significant to need speech.

"And let him carry his own grub," Jensen growled. "If he wants to eat it all at once, he's welcome to."

What John Thornton suffered in the days which followed, only John Thornton knows. Not only did his comrades turn from him with abhorrent faces, but he was judged guilty of the blackest and most cowardly of crimes—that of treason. And further, eating less than they, he was forced to keep up with them or perish. Even then, when he had eaten his very last pinch, they had food left for two days. So he cut the leather tops from his moccasins and boiled them and ate them and during the day chewed the bark of willow-shoots till the pain of his swollen and inflamed mouth nearly drove him mad. And he dragged onward, staggering, falling, crawling, as often in delirium as not.

But the day came when the three other men fell back upon their moccasins and the green shoots of young trees. By this time they had followed the torrent down until it had become a small river, and they were counseling desperately the gathering of the drift-logs into a rickety raft. Then it was that they came unexpectedly upon an Indian village of a dozen lodges. But the Indians had never seen white men before and greeted them with a shower of arrows. "See! The river! Canoes!" Jensen cried. "We're saved if we can make them! We must make them!"

They ran, drunkenly, toward the bank, the howling tribesmen on their heels and gaining. Suddenly, from behind a tree to one side, a skin-clad warrior stepped forth. He poised his great ivory-pointed spear for a moment, then cast it with perfect aim. Singing and hurtling through the air, it drove full into John Thornton's hips. He wavered for a second, tripped and fell forward on his face. Hines and Jensen, running just behind him, swerved to the right and left and passed him on either side.

Then the miracle came to pass. The spirit of Goodness fluttered mightily in Bertram Cornell's breast. Without thought, obeying the inward prompting, he sprang forward on the instant and seized the fleeing men by the arms.

"Come back!" he cried hoarsely. "Carry Thornton to the canoes! I'll hold the Indians back until you shove clear!"

"Leave go!" the Dane screamed, fumbling for his knife. "I wouldn't touch the dog to save my life!"

"I stole the bacon. I ate the bacon. Now will you come back?" Cornell saw the doubt in their eyes. "As I hope for mercy at the Judgment Seat, I stole it." A flight of arrows fell about them like rain. "Hurry! I'll hold them back!"

In a trice they were staggering toward the canoes with the wounded man between them; but Bertram Cornell faced about and stood still. Surprised by this action, the Indians hesitated and halted, while Cornell, seeing that it was gaining time, made no motion. They discharged a shower of arrows at him. The bone-barbed missiles flew about him like hail.

Half a dozen arrows entered his chest and legs, and one pinned into his neck. But he yet stood upright and still as a carved statue. The warrior who flung the spear at Thornton approached him from the side, and they closed together in each other's arms. At this the rest of the tribesmen came down upon him in a flood of war.

As they cut and hacked, he heard Jan Jensen shouting from the water, and he knew that his comrades were safe. Then he fought the good fight, the first for a good cause in all his life, and the last. But when all was still, the Indians drew back in superstitious awe. With him lay their chief and six of their fellows.

Though he had lived without honor, thus he died, like a man, brave and repentant, and rectifying evil. Nor was his body dishonored. For that he fought greatly, and slew their own chieftain, they respected him and gave him a warrior's burial. And because they were a simple people, who had never seen white men, they were wont to speak of him, as the seasons passed, as "the strange god who came down out of the sky to die."

O HARU

“WHO is she?’ What, chum, hast been sleeping?’ ’Tis O Haru— of all *geishas*, the best, the purest; of all dancers, the matchless, the gracefulest; of all women, the most divinely beautiful, the most alluring. ’Tis O Haru, the dream of the lotus, the equal of Fugi, and the glory of man. Truly hast thou squandered thy last years in America, else wouldst thou have known her, else seen her in our great festival processions, raised aloft on immense *dashi* and dancing to the admiring multitudes. Call thyself lucky; consider this tea house the shrine of your *geisha*-girl worship; thank the father that gave thee life that thou art here! Bless the illustrious Lord Sousouchi, who has thrice-blessed thee by bringing thee here! For ’tis O Haru, the spring, the glorious dancer, the heavenly beauty; peer unto none of all *geishas* and dancers!”

This, amid the hum of admiration and burst applause which succeeded O Haru's dance. The most illustrious, the most honorific, the Lord Sousouchi, had invited the great British nobleman to a supper with music, singers and dancers, so that he might gain an insight of Japanese pleasures. The most famous *geishas*, singers and players had been hired for the occasion, nor had his hand been sparing in aught that would diminish its charm and brilliancy. There were perhaps a dozen that partook of Sousouchi's hospitality and that now vied with each other in applauding O Haru.

The *geishas* or dancing-girls are the brightest, most intelligent and most accomplished of Japanese women. Chosen for their beauty they are educated from childhood. Not only are they trained in all the seductive graces of the dance and of personal attraction; but also in singing, music, and the intricate etiquette of serving and entertaining; nor are their minds neglected, for in wit, intelligence and repartee, they excell. In short, the whole aim of their education is to make them artistically fascinating. In class, they occupy much the same position as do our actresses, and though many are frail beauties that grace the tea house festivals, here and there will be found gems of the purest luster.

O Haru, as was the custom, now that her dance was finished, attended upon the Lord Sousouchi, and her quick wit, beauty, silvery laughter, and fascinating personality, set the guests a-throb with the pleasure of her presence. To the Occidental she could not but appeal, while to the Japanese, she was the ideal of beauty. Her figure, slender, long-waisted and narrow-hipped, was a marvel of willowy grace, rendered the more bewitching by the ease and charm of her carriage. Her bust was that of a maid's—no full

suggestion of luscious charms beneath the soft fold of her kimono—rather the chaste slimness of virginity. Long, slender, beautifully curved, the neck was but a fitting pedestal for the shapely head, poised so delicately upon it. Her hair, long, straight, and glossy black, was combed back from the clear, high forehead—a wondrous dome to the exquisite oval of the face. High above the long, narrow eyes, arched the brows, seemingly stencilled, so extreme the delicacy of their lines. The nose, while not prominent, aquiline; and the mouth, small, approached lips, full and scarlet-red. Of a clear, ivory white, her complexion pled all innocence of the customary rouge, while in the cheek lay the faintest suggestion of color—color, which could mount to the heights of passion or sink to the imperceptibility of placidity. The expression, never the same, the shifting mirror of every mood, of every thought: now responsive to vivacious, light-hearted gayety; now reflecting the deeper, sterner emotions; now portraying all the true womanly depths of her nature. Truly was she “O Haru, the dream of the lotus, the equal of Fugi and the glory of man!”

The *samisens* strike up: the drumming girls cease. A group of *geishas*, clad in robes of scarlet and yellow, dance the pretty dance of maple leaves, shivering and shaking in the autumn wind. But the eyes and souls of the company are bent on O Haru, whose ravishing beauty and inimitable wit bind them her slaves, and even the senility of the Right Honorable Lord Sousouchi vanishes before her irresistible charms. Soon she leaves them to expatiate upon her wondrous self, while she retires to dress for her next dance, her last for the evening.

A burst of music and she appears, clad in the armor and complete war-panoply of the ancient *samurai*—the *samurai* of feudal Japan, whose whole duty was embraced within the single term, loyalty; loyalty, so pure, that wife, children, kindred, all human ties, even his gods must be, if needs, sacrificed for his master the *daimiō*. It was one of her masterpieces, the interpretation of Oishi, the leader of the “Loyal Rōnins,” plotting the revenge of his master's death. Oishi, who, that nothing may distract him from his contemplated vengeance, divorces his wife and sends his children away.

Full well she understood her past. Of *samurai* blood; the daughter of *daimiō's* favorite, who had gone through the fiery ordeal of the *shogunate*; who had seen the son of heaven come forth from his centuries of seclusion to hurl to earth the proud feudal nobility of old Japan; she was possessed, by heredity and tradition, of all the pride of her race. Fired by the wild rush of her father's blood, her slender form seemed to vibrate with intensity of

Oishi's emotion, seemed to suffocate with the scorching heat of his passion. A hush of awe fell upon the company, as with martial tread and gesture she personified the oldtime hero. With superstitious reverence and bated breath they followed her in her wildly-graceful pantomime. Vanished the bright lights, the cheery tea house, the laughing *geishas*, as her audience followed her into the reality of old Japan. Through the depths of melancholy, grief and anguish, up the heights of stormy passion and soul-consuming thirst for vengeance, she led them—on—on—till, in a wild burst of rhythmic motion, the *diamiō* is avenged and the consumation all but attained. Then the last scene, the dramatic climax, the *hara-kiri*. All hopes, all joys of life forgotten, Oishi follows his lord into the nether world. A flash of steel, the simulated death thrust in the abdomen, and the dance is over. No applause, glistening eyes and weeping *geishas*, and O Haru, with heaving breast and flashing eyes, overcome by the excess of her feeling, forgets to make due obeisance to the Lord Sousouchi, omits the customary *sayonara* and retires in a tumultuous flood of tears.

Home at last. O Haru sat in the soft halo of the *andon*, deep-sunk in dreamy reverie. But her thoughts were far away from tea house revels and her soul wandered in strange lands, with the image of one, Toyotomi. Toyotomi the brave, the venturesome; the love her girlhood, the desire of her womanhood.

Strange had been the mingling of their lives. Both of the *samurai* class, his father had prospered, hers had died, and she, an orphan, had gone into the possession of Saisdashai, the master of a *geisha ya*. There she had passed her childhood, spent in the cultivation of all the arts and graces of the accomplished *geisha*; there, in the first bloom of her maturity had she met Toyotomi; there, and in many the tea house he chose to frequent, had she learned to love him.

Peculiar had been their courtship: contrary to all tradition and custom. No fathers or mothers to choose for their children, for his also had journeyed on in quest of that silent Nirvana. Saisdashai opposed, as by law he could, her marriage, for she was his by the contract, his to hire out to the tea house patrons, and well he was paid for her marvelous dancing. But Toyotomi had been hot on the chase and one day—ah well she remembered—selling all his possessions, paid Saisdashai the last *yen* he could claim on her, and she found herself free—free to love and marry her lover.

But Toyotomi was ambitious. Penniless, he cared not for poverty, so they plighted their troth and she was left to her dancing, while he sailed over the sea to the white barbarians,

promising to come back, rich and powerful, and marry her. What his fortune had been she knew not and save for short and infrequent letters, his wanderings were sealed to her. For a decade now, had she waited for him and saving her earnings, she recked not whether he returned rich or poor. She was rich, nay, wealthy—for was she not the most popular *geisha*, the people's idol, the noblemen's despair? And thanks to her lover, she had not to surrender her earnings to a *geisha ya* master, for she was free, independent. And though dangerous had been the path of her journey, had she not trod it unswervingly? The temptations of her position had been many, and often, most powerful; aye, and many were honorable and of the greatest inducement. There was Hakachio, the rich silk merchant, who had begged and pleaded with her to marry him; and Honondo the lieutenant, and Ueuado the *diamiō's* son, and even Ogushi, the staid professor of the Royal College, who had been bewitched by her charms. Yet had she saved herself for Toyotomi, her girlish sweetheart, her woman's passion. Always had the lotus been her emblem, the symbol of purity. And glory of glories, he was returning at last: to-morrow his steamer came in: to-morrow she would take the train and journey down to Yokohama to meet him.

The sweet tears of joy bedimmed her eye and moistened her cheek, she opened the camphorwood chest beside her and drew forth a parcel wrapped in many a fold of cotton. Undoing it she held before her an *obi*, a girdle of beautiful silk. The symbol of woman's betrothal; Toyotomi's symbol of her betrothal. Again she opened the chest, this time drawing forth two swords, the swords of her father the *samurai*. With the deep pride of race and the reverential love of her people she gazed long and earnestly upon them. How near it brought her to him, her father, whom she sometimes forgot for Toyotomi. Her father, the grim old warrior, the chivalrous captain, who had so long upheld his *diamiō's* house with this long sword, and who, when all was lost had saved all with this short one, then sought oblivion through the honorable death by *hara-kiri*. In the heat of the lotus-time night, she slumbered before these, her most precious of relics, and in the morning, Hohna Asi, her hair-dresser, found her smiling with joy in her sleep.

O Toyotomi! Wild Toyotomi! Cruel Toyotomi!—A year had passed since his return, since their marriage; and what a year! What a marriage! What a return for her years of waiting, for her years of clinging to the lotus-flower emblem!

How handsome and noble he had looked, clad in his barbarian garments, when she met him on the pier at Yokohama. Truly she

had thought that her fondest dreams were realized, that the world, in the highest sense of the word, had made a man of him. But alas! How changed! She had not understood then, had not comprehended the customs of the "foreign devils" among whom he had wandered. And he had come back with many of those fiend-begotten customs clinging to him.

Extravagance! It had affrighted her—such lavishness, such unwonted prodigality. She had known that in those far away lands, money was earned so easily; but till now she had not understood the ease with which it was spent. And Toyotomi—ah! he had learned how to spend it. To her economical soul, invested with all the saving Oriental traits of heredity, such extravagance was repulsive, crushing. Her fortune—with trusting faith and wifely obedience she had made it over to him. Ah! The crystallization of her years of labor—how he had spilled it like water! And now, in a year, nothing remained.

Many tricks had he gained in the "white devil" country and now he had become a professional wrestler. A wrestler to be proud of, and one who often made large money; but wrestler, the companion of rougns and *jôrô*s, the frequenter of low tea houses, and one who had abjured his native *sak'e* to take those expensive foreign liquors. And now she must go out and dance again, for he never brought a *sen* home.

O Toyotomi! So great was her love that all this was forgotten; but he was even worse. He had come back with the foreign standard of beauty, and to him she was no longer beautiful. She, the most beautiful of all *geishas*, the most beautiful of all Japanese women, the personified ideal of the Japanese standard, was no longer beautiful to Toyotomi, her old-time lover. He would come home drunken and surly and criticize her walk, her carriage, her narrow hips, her flat breast, slim face and slanting eyes; then rave in ecstasies of delight over the Occident beauties. Buddha! That such could be! That her Toyotomi could admire those fierce, masculine creatures, that strode, long-stepping, like men; that had great hips and humps like actual deformities. Those repulsive creatures, with their large mouths, high noses, and eyes, deep-sunk in horrid sockets beneath fierce, heavy brows. Those creatures, so terrible, that when they looked on a Japanese baby it must burst into tears of fright. Those animals, who were loathsome, disgustingly mouthing themselves and their men—Toyotomi called it kissing and had tried to teach her. Ach! How could it be!

And even was he worse than all that: sometimes he had beaten her, and still worse, he loved that half-caste *jôrô* from *yoshiwari*.

That girl of the Japanese mother and the English father, whom he thought so bewitching, whom he loved for her resemblance to the "white devil" beauty.

And worst of all, had he not said to day "O Haru, go thou out to night and dance, else will I not only beat but divorce thee."

"O jizo! Jizo!" she moaned. "That such could be! That such could be!

The pleasurable stillness of the lazy lotus-time afternoon, pressed heavily against O Haru, as she said her prayers to her Shinto gods. But the gods gave no sign: no rest came to her, the young, almost boyish priest gazed curiously at her as she prostrated herself in her devotions. He knew her (who did not), the wonderful dancer, whose life had seemed such a joyous span; but of late she had come to the temple often and he wondered what might burden her. He drew near, and as her prayer ceased, blessed her and spoke soothing words. She was married? Yes. And prayed for children? No. For her ancestors? Yes, as she had always done. Then for what? But she burst into tears and would not answer.

The priest paused and his sensitive, intellectual face clouded in a moment's thought—she was brighter than most who prayed their in their childish sorrows; she was in trouble, suffered. Why not? Surely she could understand a few slight glimmerings of his esoteric knowledge. His face illumined with the divine compassion of Siddārtha Guatama. He raised her and led her before the stau of the sitting Buddha: there, in simple language, he told her of the birth, the boyhood, the manhood of Guatama, afterward the Buddha; of his grief for the sorrow of the world; of his discovery of the great truth. Self, the mere clinging to life, was the evil: self was the illusion, whereby the soul endured the pain of countless incarnations: self was to be annihilated, and when destroyed, the soul passed to Nirvana. Nirvana, the highest attainable sphere, where peace and rest and bliss unuttered soothed the soul, weary from many migrations. Thus had the divine Buddha done, thus might she do—annihilate self and gain Nirvana. Then he blessed and left her soothed, soothed, but with too faint a glimmering of his secret wisdom.

She gazed on the sweet, mysterious face of the Buddha, brooding in ineffable calm above her. O the peace, the rest, the awful placidity of his face! And gazing, she repeated the words of the priest: self, the mere clinging to life was evil. Nirvana, the

highest sphere where there was naught but rest and bliss unutterable.

Thrice the priest passed by and beheld her still kneeling, still contemplating the wondrous face of the Holy One. More than one curious devotee glanced at her and thrilled on beholding the peaceful expression of holy joy which lighted her face.

The fountain in the courtyard splashed dreamily; the shadows lengthened; the somber silence of the temple deepened: O Haru prostrated herself before the great-hearted Buddha, and rose, soothed and at rest with herself and all the world. She paused on the temple steps, and with her last few coppers, bought of the old woman all her caged sparrows. One by one, she gave them liberty, and with each breathed a prayer—a prayer to attain Nirvana.

"All hail to O Haru, the wandered, the lost one! For she has returned to her tea houses and dancing! All hail to O Haru, the lotus-flower beauty, the dreamy-bewitching, the ideally perfect! Blessed are we, her slaves, to behold her! Blessed are we that drink of her sweetness, her beauty! Blessed are we, happiest of mortals! For 'tis O Haru, the wonderful dancer, come once again among us, her bondmen! 'Tis O Haru, the joy and the pride of all mankind, the ruler of beasts, the conquerer of men! O Haru, the dream of rhythmical beauty, of fiery emotion, of terrible passion! O Haru, the wondrous, the queenly, the radiant; the gracefulest, sweetest and purest of dancers! Rejoice O my fellows! For she has returned, come among us! Rejoice! Rejoice! For 'tis O Haru, the spring, the glorious dancer—peer unto none of all *geishas* and dancers!"

The enthusiasm was boundless. The news had gone abroad that this night she was to dance, and her admirers had flocked to her as they had never before. Triumphant had been her return, but with all the sweet modesty of her nature, not unmingled with a certain sad pride, she received their homage. To accommodate the throng, the whole tea house had been thrown into a single, pavilion-like room, and even then, the crush was suffocating. She was simply superb, totally eclipsing her previous self. Never had she appeared so beautiful, so merry, so witty. In her moments of rest she kept them convulsed with her brilliant repartee and good-natured badinage. With each moment of the growing evening did she discover new graces, charms and glories. And now, in the ecstasies of worship, a hush of expectancy and awe fell upon the audience. She was to close with her favorite, Oishi, the "Loyal Rōnin."

A wild burst of *samisens* and the rolling of *tom-toms* greet her appearance: the dance begins. Again the fierce and haughty *samurai* blood courses like fire through her veins: again she holds all with the magic sway of her personality: again she leads them with her into the illusory realities of old Japan. She surpassed herself in the force, the vividness, the emotion of her portrayal. With bold confidence she essayed flights hitherto undreamed of, playing the gamut of their feelings with the intrepidity of inspiration. Never before had the sentiment and the dramatic of her nature been so unified, so harmoniously one.

On—on—she led them into chaos of conflicting emotions: yet distinctly grew the picture of true ancient chivalry. Ever they beheld Oishi treading the mighty heights of his true manhood; casting aside all doubts and fears, all human ties; walking of a verity with the gods. Up—up—they forgot their baser selves, were raised to the sublimities of seemingly realized ideals. The climax approaches. But hush! A throb of emotion, intuitive, anticipatory, sways with an audible sob, the anguished beholders.

O Haru, before the *hara-kiri*, undergoes a transfiguration. Her face illumines with angelic glory, with a brightness, too dazzling, almost, to gaze upon, she seems a being not of the world. The *samisens* wail in heart-breaking sorrow: the low *crescendo* roll of the finale commences: she kisses her father's sword and the audience shudders expectantly. She is to follow her lord into the nether world, into the silent Nirvana. Her body sways in rhythmical undulations: her face is a-glow with heavenly rapture: she poises for the blow. Now—the music rolls and crashes—swift, that deft, upward thrust—swift the mighty gush of blood—

And the sweet silence of the lotus-time night is rent with the sobbing agony of many voices:

"Woe! Woe! Woe! O Haru, the divine O Haru is no more!"

OLD BALDY

“I DECLARE! so the deacon's goin' to try his hand on Old Baldy, eh?” Jim Wheeler chuckled gleefully at the news, and rubbed his hands. “Wall, mebbe somethin' 'll happen,” he went on, “an mebbe it won't, but I sha'n't be a mite s'prised if Old Baldy comes out a-top.”

“The deacon's got a right powerful will,” Sim Grimes suggested dubiously. “An' so has Baldy—powerful'st will in the country, bar none. But critters is critters and—” And Grimes was just preparing to unload his mind of certain ideas concerning man's primacy in the physical world, when the other cut him short.

“Now jest look here, Sim Grimes! Have you ever hearn tell of one man what limbered up Old Baldy when Old Baldy wa'n't so minded? There's Tucker an' Smith an' Johnson, an' Olsen, an' Ordway an' Wellman—didn't the whole caboodle try their luck at breakin' Old Baldy's sperrit, an' didn't the whole caboodle give it up? Jest tell me this, Sim Grimes—did you ever in yer born days hear on one man or passel of men gittin' Old Baldy on his feet when he took it into his head to lay down?”

“Mebbe yer right,” Sim Grimes assented mildly, then his old faith in Deacon Barnes returning, “But the deacon's got a right powerful will.”

“But Deacon Barnes jined a Prevention of Cruelty to Animals society, didn't he?” Grimes nodded. “An he don't b'lieve in whippin' dumb brutes?”

“Nope.”

“Then how in the land of Goshen kin he make Old Baldy git up when he ain't in the mood?”

“It's more'n I kin tell,” Grimes answered, at the same time starting up his horses. But before he was out of earshot he turned and called back, “But the deacon's got a powerful will!”

The farmers of Selbyville had little use for Old Baldy, and less regard; yet he was one of the finest oxen in the county, and perhaps the largest in the state. A good worker and a splendid yoke-animal, a stranger might have wondered at the celerity with which his various owners rid themselves of him, after having been inveigled into buying him. The same stranger might have worked

him a week before he discovered why, and again an hour would have sufficed to unearth the secret. Old Baldy had but one fault—he was stubborn. And he manifested this stubbornness in but one way. Whenever things did not exactly go to suit him, he simply lay down in his tracks, there and then, consulting neither his own nor his master's convenience. And there he would stay. Nothing could move him. Force was useless; persuasion as bad. The heavens might roll up as a scroll, or the stars fall from their seats in the sky, but there Old Baldy would stay until of his own free will he decided to get up and move along. Never from the time yoke was first put upon him had a man succeeded in budging him against his will. It was asserted that he had caused more gray hairs to grow in the heads of the Selbyville farmers than all the mortgages of the past three generations. He always went absurdly cheap, and man after man had bought him in the fond hope of conquering him, and winning not only the approbation of his fellows, but a very good bargain. And man after man sold him for little or nothing, insanely happy at being rid of so much vexation of spirit.

“As stubborn as Old Baldy” became a figure of speech, the common property of the community. Fathers conjured obedience from their sons by its use; the schoolmaster employed it on his stiff-necked pupils; and even the minister, calling sinners to repentance, blanched the cheek of the most unregenerate with its brand. But in the language Deacon Barnes alone, it had no place. It was his wont to smile and chuckle when others made use of the phrase, till people remarked it would be a blessing if he only got the tough old ox once in his hands. And now, after Old Baldy had become thoroughly set in the iniquity of his ways, the deacon had bought him off Joe Westfield for a song. Selbyville looked forward to the struggle with great interest, and sly grins and open skepticism were the order of the day whenever the topic was mentioned. They knew the deacon had a will of iron, but they also knew Old Baldy; and their collective opinion was that the deacon, like everybody else who had tried their hand at it, was bound to get the worst of the bargain.

Deacon Barnes and Old Baldy were coming down the last furrow of the ten-acre patch back of the pasture. Five rods more of the plow and it would be ready for the harrow. Old Baldy had been behaving splendidly and the deacon was jubilant. Besides, Bob, his promising eldest-born, had just run half way across the pasture and shouted that dinner was ready and waiting.

“Comin’!” he shouted back, no more dreaming that he would fail to reach the end of the furrow than that the dinner call was the trumps of judgment. Just then Old Baldy stopped. The deacon

looked surprised. Baldy sighed contently. "Get up!" he shouted, and Baldy, with a hurt expression on his bovine countenance, proceeded to lie down.

Deacon Barnes stepped around where he could look into his face, and talked nicely to him, with persuasion and pathos mixed; for he feared greatly for Old Baldy's well being. Not that he intended whipping him brutally or anything like that, but—well, he was Deacon Barnes, with the ripened will of all the male Barnes that had gone before, and he hadn't the slightest intention of being beaten by a stubborn old ox. So they just looked each other in the eyes, he talking midly and Baldy listening with complacent interest till Bob shouted a second time across the pasture that dinner was waiting.

"Look here, Baldy," the deacon said, rising to his feet; "if you want to lay there so mighty bad, 'tain't in me to stop you. Only give you fair warnin'—the sweets of life do cloy, and you kin git too much of a good thing. Layin' down in the furrer ain't what it's cracked up to be, an' you'll git a-mighty sick on it before yer done with me." Baldy gazed at him with stolid impudence, saying as plainly as though he spoke, "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

But the deacon never lost his temper. "I'm goin' to git a bite to eat," he went on, turning away; "an' when I come back I'll give you one more chance. But mark my words, Baldy, it'll be yer last."

At the table, Deacon Barnes, instead of being at all irritated, radiated even more geniality than was his wont, and this in the face of the fact that Mrs. Barnes had a mild attack of tantrums because he had kept dinner waiting. Afterwards, when he went out on the porch, he saw Jim Wheeler had pulled up his horses where he could look over the fence at the victorious Baldy. When he passed the house he waved his hand and smiled knowingly at the deacon, and went on to spread the news that the deacon and Old Baldy were "at it."

But there was a certain unusual exhilaration in the deacon's face and step as he led off to the barn with Bob following in his footsteps. There he proceeded to load up his eldest-born with numerous iron and wooden pegs and old pieces of chain and rope. Then, with his ax in hand, he headed across the pasture to the scene of mutiny. "Come! Git up, Baldy!" he commanded. "It's high time we got this furrer finished."

Baldy regarded him passively, with half-veiled, lazy eyes. "Reckon it be more comfortable where you are, eh? B'lieve in takin' it easy, eh? All right. You can't say Deacon Barnes is a hard master." As he talked, he worked, driving pegs all about the stubborn animal. Then from the pegs he stretched ropes and chains, passing them across Baldy till that worthy was hard and fast to mother earth—so hard and fast that it would have required a steam derrick to get him to his feet. "Jest enjoy yourself, Baldy," the deacon called, as he started away. "I'll come up to-morrer after breakfast an' see how you be."

True to his word, in the morning the deacon paid his promised visit. But Baldy was yet strong in his will, and he behaved sullenly as animals well know how. He even tried to let on that it was real nice lying out there with nothing to do, and that the deacon worried him with his chatter, and had better go away. But Deacon Barnes stayed a full quarter of an hour, talking pleasantly, with a cheery, whole-souled ring to his voice which vexed Baldy greatly.

In the evening, after supper, he made another visit, Old Baldy was feeling stiff and sore from lying in one position all day with the hot sun beating down upon him. He even betrayed anxiety and interest when he heard his master's steps approaching, and there was a certain softening and appeal in his eyes. But the deacon made out he didn't see it, and after talking nicely for a few minutes went home again. In the morning Baldy received another visit. By this time he was not only sore, but hungry and thirsty as well. He was no longer indifferent to his owner's presence, and he begged so eloquently with his eyes that the deacon was touched, but he hardened his heart and went back to the house again. He had made up his mind to do what all Selbyville during a number of years had failed to accomplish, and now that he had started he was going to do it thoroughly.

When he came out again after dinner, Baldy was abject in his humility. His pleading eyes followed his master about unceasingly, and once, when the deacon turned as though to go away, he actually groaned. "Sweets do cloy, eh?" Deacon Barnes said, coming back. "Even lyin' in the furrer is vanity and vexation, eh? Well, I guess we'll finish this furrer now. What d'you say Baldy? And after that you kin have somethin' to eat an' a couple o' buckets of water. Eh? What d'you say?"

It can never be known for a fact as to whether Baldy understood his master's words or not, but he showed by his actions that he thoroughly understood when the ropes and chains were loosened

and removed. “Kind o' cramped, eh?” the deacon remarked as he helped him to his feet. “Well, g'long now, le's finish this furrer.”

Baldy finished that furrow, and after that there was never a furrow he commenced that he did not finish. And as for lying down—well, he manifested a new kind of stubbornness. He couldn't be persuaded or bullied into lying down. No sir, he wouldn't have it. he'd finish the furrow first, and all the furrows all day long. He grew real stubborn when it came to lying down. But the deacon mind. And all Selbyville marveled, and a year afterward more than one farmer, including Jim Wheeler, was offering the deacon far more for Old Baldy than he had paid. But Deacon Barnes knew a bargain when he had got it, and he was just as stubborn in refusing to sell as Old Baldy was in refusing to lie down.

AN OLD SOLDIER'S STORY

*[A Real Incident Which Occurred In
The Life Of The Writer's Father]*

THE times were strange then, and at the front was not the only place to have adventures. During the war, some of the most stirring scenes I took part in were right at home. You see that old Colt's revolver which hangs by my sword? I carried it through my five years in the army, and more than once it helped me out of a bad scrape.

In '63 I went home on 30 days' furlough to see my people, also to get recruits. I was quite successful, and by the time my furlough was up, had found between 25 and 30 men who were willing to enlist. There was one young man I had tried hard to get, and though he was willing, his father stubbornly refused to let him go. The only reason he had for refusing was that corn-husking was not yet over and his son Hiram was needed for the work. The only reason which finally caused him to give his consent was the bounty. They were offering a thousand dollars for every man who would join the army, and Hiram promised to turn every cent of it over to his father. So old Zack said he would agree if I would turn in and help with the husking.

My 30 days' furlough was up, but I was young and thoughtless in those days, and paid no heed to it. I knew the other recruits wished to stay till after corn-husking, and besides, felt that nothing would be done to me when I came back to my regiment with 30 stalwart lads. So I pitched in, and in two weeks all Old Zack's corn was husked and I was ready to start.

The tickets were bought, and the next morning we were ready to take the train at Rock Island for Quincy. There the men were to be sworn in and would receive their bounties, while our township would be credited with so many recruits. But in overstaying my furlough I had forgotten one thing—the provost marshal. These marshals were men who were looked down upon and despised worse than the dog-catchers. Their duty was to arrest deserters, and since their pay was \$25 for every deserter captured, you can see they never let a chance slip. If they had only arrested real deserters, the people would not have dislike them so, but they were always bringing trouble upon good, honest soldiers whose only fault lay in being a little careless and staying too long at home. The provost marshal in our county was shrewd, brave as a lion, and as mean a man as one could meet in a whole day's travel. Only a short time before, Tommy Jingles had come home from

my regiment and thoughtlessly over-stayed his furlough. On the third day, just as he was boarding the train at Rock Island to go back to the army, Davy McGregor captured him and sent him back under arrest. The \$25 reward and the expenses were taken from poor Tommy's pay, and Tommy with never a thought of deserting. And this was not the only instance in which Davy McGregor had behaved so meanly.

But to return to my story. It was my last night at home, and I was dreaming of war and battles. I had been thrown forward with a cloud of skirmishers. The musketry was rattling about like hail, and we were storming the first outpost, when I heard a loud rap at the door and was awake on the instant. "Come out, Simon, I want you."

It was Davy's voice, and I well know what he wanted me for. I made no answer, however, and began to silently dress. His knocking soon roused the house, and by the time I was dressed my sister came slipping into the room. I told her in whispers that to do. She went to the door and talked with Davy, but would not open it. He became suspicious, and I could hear him creeping around the house so as to have an eye on the kitchen door. You see, he was certain I was in the house, and thought I would most likely come out that way. Kissing father and mother and sister, I asked them to say good-bye to the boys, and carefully opened the front door. It was moonlight, and Davy was, as I suspected, keeping watch at the rear of the house. With my shoes in my hand, taking advantage of every shadow and scarcely daring to breathe, I crawled to the barn. I saddled father's big black stallion, and when all was ready, came out of the barn like a cannon shot.

Davy ran to the road and halted me as I came up on the dead lope, my cocked Colt's in my hand. He blocked my path, ordering me to halt and flourishing his pistols. On I came straight at him, and would surely have run him down, had he not sprung aside, blazing right and left at me as I went by. I knew he would do this, and ducked to the off-side of my horse, but not quickly enough, for a burning pain told me where his first bullet had plowed across my scalp.

On and away, with Rock Island 28 miles before me, I dashed like the wind. Davy, always well mounted, was hot after me. But our horses were evenly matched. At first he took flying shots at me as we rounded the bends, but he soon gave that up. Mile after mile flew by, and I was just beginning to feel sure of escape, when I met with an accident. Dawn was breaking as I plunged into a stretch of woods where it was yet as black as night. The road was

heavy at that place, and the horse's hoofs made no sound. Suddenly, out of the darkness and from the opposite direction, leaped a horse and rider. Too late to avoid the shock, our horses struck breast on. The strange steed and rider were hurled to the ground, while I was not badly hurt. But father's stallion was strong. He shook himself, groaned, and sprang away on the gallop.

Still he had been badly hurt, and I saw that he was losing his speed. Davy slowly overhauled me. Soon he was alongside, trying to seize my rein. He had emptied his pistols, so could not shoot. Again and again I drew a bead on him with my loaded Colt's, but he was a brave man, refusing to be frightened. I did not wish to shoot him, but I think I would have done it rather than have the disgrace of deserter put upon me. You see, instead of running away, I was trying to run back to the army—a funny thing for a real deserter to do. But I did not shoot, not intending to use my revolver unless I had to.

Then we galloped, side by side, for at least 10 or 12 miles. Little by little my horse gave out and the last mile he made, Davy had to hold his horse in to keep him from running away from me. Every time he tried to catch my bridle I struck at his hand with my heavy revolver, and he soon gave that up. I felt that the stallion could not last much longer, and know I must do something to escape unearned disgrace. Now I am and always was a mild man, full of pity for dumb animals, but necessity forced me to do what I did. I played a trick I had learned out west. It is called "creasing," and is often used on wild horses. They shoot them so the bullet just grazes the top of the neck. But it does not hurt the horse. It just stuns him and in a few minutes he is as good as ever.

Quick as a flash I leaned out of the saddle, placed the muzzle of my revolver on the nape of the neck of Davy's horse, and pulled the trigger. Down he went with a crash, throwing Davy over his head. Yet Davy was on his feet instantly, and my poor horse could barely keep away from him as he ran after me on foot.

I looked at my watch. I could catch the first train, and Rock Island was only five miles away. My horse could not make those five miles and I did not know what to do. Davy gave me the idea, however. Coming around a turn in the road, I barely missed running into a farmer's wagon going to town. Not 20 feet away was another, going in the same direction. Davy stopped the first one and began to cut the traces—this was the idea. I halted the second one, which was driven by a woman, and explained as I did likewise. And she was willing for she know all about the provost marshal. We finished and mounted at the same time, with myself

20 feet in the lead. Yet fortune seemed to favor him, for his horse was a little the better of the two. But he had neglected to cut the traces quite short though, and the horse, stepping upon them, was thrown.

This gave me several hundred feet, and I was still leading by several lengths when we entered Rock Island. How we startled the city! Down the main street we thundered, while the people, who all hated the provost marshal, cheered me on. We barely missed a dozen collisions, and galloped into the depot, where the train was just ready to start. I rode through the crowd as far as I dared; the provost marshal dismounted and made a dash for the steps. You can guess how the people gave room for a wild hatless soldier, flourishing a huge revolver.

Persevering Davy was right behind, and I had to face about and keep him off with my pistol. It was not loaded, but he did not know that. I backed away from him, threatening to pull the trigger if he laid hand on me. The crowd began to take my part, and to hoot and jeer the provost marshal. "Hurrah for the soldier!" they cried. "Down with the provost marshal!" "Shoot him, soldier, shoot him!" "Who arrested poor Tommy Jingles?" "Davy McGregor, the black-hearted provost." "Hurrah for the boy in blue!"

So they kept it up, getting in his way and pushing and shoving him about. Then they became rough, and as I backed up the steps to the platform, they were stepping on his toes, pulling his coat-tails and twisting him about like a football. The conductor gave the signal, and with a last cheer from the crowd, the train pulled out for Quincy. There I met my recruits later in the day. And when I brought my sturdy lads into the regiment and told all about it, the colonel said, "Well done, Simon, and at this rate I think you have well earned a second leave of absence."

ONE MORE UNFORTUNATE

AND this was the end of his art! He saw it all now, and his soul grew sick. The hope of his life lay dead. Clearly, vividly, the shame, the misery of it, burst upon him. He had dreamed his dream, and now must come the awakening—and what an awakening!

Again the curtain rose on the dirt, ill-lighted stage, and again, with trembling, wasted fingers, he turned the pages of the score and mechanically played the prelude. The second violin was atrocious; but its marvelous execution and phenomenal time caused him to smile a bitter smile. The trombone gave vent to excruciating agonies, and the drum persisted in bursting unexpectedly at the most inopportune places, while the piano played or not as it saw fit.

The music jarred upon him, but no less than his surroundings, now that the veil had been torn aside. The prelude finished, he had time to look about him. It was the last scene. A woman, in tawdry finery and indelicate dress, had approached the footlights, and in a strained, cracked voice, she was now attempting to sing, out of her register, a popular song. The pit of the house was filled with workmen, sailors, longshoremen, toughs,—the scum of the metropolis. Waiters hurried from table to table, dispensing drinks and soliciting patronage. The women in the boxes cast bold looks, and their painted faces but served to hide the care and worry of their fierce struggle for existence. The air was rent with oaths, conversation and laughter, that often drowned the singer's voice, and brought into her face an anxious expression, for well she knew if the encore was not sufficiently loud, her services would be dispensed with—not at the end of the week, but at once.

A drunken sailor in the front row raved unceasingly, and his hoarse, meaningless babble kept fit accompaniment to the shrill treble of the singer. A couple of sturdy waiters toss him into the street; a fight in the back hardly attracts attention; and the woman concludes her song to the applause of one table—evidently friends—and leaves the stage to confront the irate manager.

Again the music strikes up, and the awakened enthusiast for the last time that evening leads his crazy orchestra. It was but the obscure work of some unknown composer, perhaps one like him who had dreamed his dream and awakened; but the beauty of it aroused his latent appreciation unconsciously. The discords of his companions became inaudible; the vile surroundings vanished,

and the musician in thought returned to his childhood and lived his life again.

Once more he trod the familiar paths of his mountain home; his brothers and sisters were around him—the home circle, complete. His father—dear kind, old man,—with his wrinkled, weather-beaten face, told stories of the Indians, the plains, the war, in his homely language and crude manner. His mother, the younger children clustering round her, heard with maternal solicitude, their little happenings of the day, joyed with their toys, sorrowed with their sorrows. But he beheld with grief, the sharp lines drawn deep about eyes and mouth, that told of hidden worries. Alas! he had not understood their import in those days of long ago. Nor was he forgotten. Many a glance of pride, not unmixed with apprehension, she cast upon as he sat with chair close drawn to kitchen table, drawing music upon paper, as had Signa of yore.

The scenes changed rapidly. Now he crept into the little village church, and the preacher's daughter, a kindly spinster, stood near him as she practiced on the organ. Now he crept away, his little heart throbbing with ecstasies of delight, and sought the stream, the little stream, that dashed so turbulently down from the snowy peaks beyond. There he listened to its song, heard the wind sighing through the pines, and with the music of all animate nature ringing in his ears, returned to his humble house and was glad. Again, deep in that beloved book of Signa, he raised his wet eyes, and ambition trod with conquering step to fame, while the future, painted with fairy touch, was revealed through the bright vistas of success, and all seemed real to his childish imagination.

Now, tossing restlessly on his bed, he rose, and in the silence of the night, standing in the shadow of the great mountains and listening to the subdued, nocturnal song of nature, felt his genius pulse feverishly within him, and great longings and desires come over him.

What had become of that genius? Certainly the present was not genius. Where and how had he lost it? And he would not answer.

Now, his father in an idle moment made him a willow flute. What dear companions they were!—this flute and he. What shrill harmonies they produced, when of a holiday he fled the boyish sports and lost himself in the dark mazes of the forest! Now the preacher's daughter gives him his first lessons. Now he plays in the village church.

Oh, happy time! All day following the plow or working in the timber, how he looked forward to night, hurrying to the church, he played to himself and to the dark. Then those improvisations—the villagers all declared it wonderful that he could make such beautiful music; and one day, he remembered, the tourist who told him he had genius, but he was wasting it there. “The city was the place,” he said.

The city! The city! How it rang in his ears and haunted him in waking and sleeping! The city! The city! Yes, he must go to the city. There he could find teachers; there could be found satisfaction of his desires; there fame and fortune awaited him.

“Music! Music!” his soul cried out, and “The city! The city!” was echoed back.

But the city was far away. The time passed by, and he still worked on, hoarding a little store of money that slowly increased. He labored on, patient and uncomplaining, looking forward and planning. But at times the yearning would come so strongly upon him that he could hardly guide the plow, and the keen, bright share would swim and dance before his eye, and even the song of the lark fell flat on his ear.

The maidens cast shy glances at him, but he had no thought of marrying—that would mean adieu to music. So he did not marry, and the country-side wonderful till it grew accustomed to him, and the maidens wedded other and more fortunate swains.

At last the fateful day arrived. He bid good-bye to his mountain home, and, full of hope, turned away to the city. But the portals of success opened not at his knocking. Unknown, a wanderer, he found himself arrayed in the lists against talent, genius and power.

He struggled on. He found teachers—he could not afford the best—and devoted himself to study. He learned more of the world he had aspired to conquer, and found the ladder to fame a colossal structure, whose very shadow awed, and against whose base was crushed the throng that struggled for a footing. To his simple, rustic soul the grandeur was overwhelming, and he was startled at the magnitude of the task before him. But not disheartened, he devoted himself to its accomplishment. Many were the rebuffs he met with, and many a pang and heartache. He struggled on, though many were they who, by wealth and influence and sometimes merit, passed him in the race.

Yet the future brightened. He fought his way into the outer circles, where his unpretentious talent soon received recognition. He had performed on the violin in public several times, and in a small way became quite in demand at musicales and theatricals. The great Padrodini had even complimented him.

But his money growing less, he economized and did not eat so often. Then, through devotion to his music, he was careless and did not take sufficient precaution against wintry weather. One day he remained in bed. A long illness followed, and his money becoming exhausted, he was turned into the street when hardly well. He was too proud to seek assistance from his grand friends.

Oh! how scene after scene flashed before him—weird nightmares, horrid phantoms of cold, and want and sickness. Oh! the misery of it all! Tramping, wearily, those long, cold streets—not a friendly eye or kindly greeting—clothes tattered and torn, and the while tormented by his feverish genius, and filled with terrible longings for his lost music. But worst of all, like an availing mother holding a dying child to her dry breasts, he felt his art growing cold within him. Was it then that it died? he thought, as he remembered the terribly lethargy he finally sank into.

At last, after a weary, weary time, it brightened. Shivering one night outside a music hall to which he had been attracted by the bright lights, he was approached by an attaché of the place. The second violin had been taken suddenly ill; could he play? Ah! it was a haven of refuge to him! How eagerly he accepted! With what joy he felt a violin again quivering in response to his trembling touch! Did his art revive then? He wondered and thought not. No; it was the mechanic, not the soul, that had performed nightly in that ill-lighted hole, year after year.

And those years had not been happy. Often, at first, had the old-time longing come upon him; yet as often had he answered, "Some day." But that some day never came. Ever, it danced before him, growing fainter and fainter, and ever his pursuit lagged by the wayside, till at last the quarry had been lost to view. Tonight he had awakened. He saw and realized it all. He was old. Hope had fled. Grief and remorse clamored at his heart.

The second violin reached the end of the score and stopped. The leader played on. The drummer awakened and spasmodically drummed for a space. The piano threw in a few chords and running passages; then gave up in despair. But the leader played on. His eyes were closed. The violin gave voice to his anguish.

The hum of conversation died away and silence fell on all. The manager looked surprised. The waiters paused from their tasks. The women craned forward. The poised glass remained undrained, and pipe and cigarette went out.

Sad, quivering notes that grieved and sobbed and wept—tremulous, long-drawn strains of agony, that mourned and cried and wailed. Weeping sorrowing, lamenting, mourning, the musician played on, and the house was silent as though icy death had breathed upon them.

Tears of anguish and distress, sighs of remorse, regret, cries of pain and despair trembled on the palpitating air. A world of feeling, unutterable. All the misery of blighted hopes and withered joys. The woe of an expiring genius. A violin and a master, one. The wretchedness and affliction of a wasted life, crying out in its distress.

The music changed, growing weird and awful—tremulous strains, grewsome and terrible—thrilling notes, shrill sounds and piercing cries. Shaking, shuddering, shivering, quivering, the violin shrieked in terror and dismay. Moans, groans, screams—a vortex of emotions—dreadful, terrifying, frightful, wonderful.

A string broke, and with jangling discord the music ceased. The violin fell from the player's nerveless hand. A woman screamed and fainted in a box; others cried. Save this, the rest were silent—an appreciation more eloquent than the thunders of applause.

The musician staggered blindly out.

“He's old, and a little bit goes to his head, now,” the waiters said.

The docks, just before dawn. A gloom-enshrouded form, that stands above the turbid tide and murmurs:

“The sea is still and deep;
All things within its bosom sleep;
A single step and all is o'er;
A plunge, a bubble and no more.”
“A plunge, a bubble and no more.”

PLAGUE SHIP

"WHAT'S this! What's this! Do you wish to kill the man? Such treatment is too heroic. Bah! An emetic of ipecacuanha, fifteen grains of powdered calomel and as many of quinine, and then castor oil! Why my dear madam, you know absolutely nothing about medicine!" and the speaker glared indignantly at her.

She flushed, half hurt, half angry, but smothering her feeling, replied, "What do you take the case to be? Typhus?"

"No. It's merely a bilious fever, made the more severe by this d—, I beg your pardon, this infernal weather."

"Bilious fever! Ha! Ha! Ha!" They had withdrawn from the side of the sufferer, and she burst forth into merry peals of laughter.

"Yes, madam, I repeat it. Bilious fever. Bilious fever! Do you hear? Bilious! Bilious! Bilious fever!"

"My dear sir, though I do not know you, from the wondrous knowledge you display I'll call you doctor. Then doctor, let me ask you if you have ever heard of black vomit, or, if that does not come within your technical nomenclature, yellow fever?"

"What symptoms does the man evince. Madam Know-It-All?"

"Miss Know-It-All, if you please. Languor, chilliness, muscular pains, headache, fa—"

"Precursors of any febrile attack. You evidently do—"

"Face flushed, eyes suffused then congested, nostrils and lips red, tongue scarlet, temperature 105, loss—"

"Loss of appetite, hot skin, thirst, nausea, restlessness, and delirium—all the usual accompaniments of any high fever—go on Miss—Miss—"

"Miss Know-It-All. But all these militant symptoms have ceased and he is now in a state of prostration and collapse. This, the *stadium*, is as you know the great characteristic of yellow fever."

"Collapse! Bah! Convalescence. The man is recovering but weak, and here I find you have given him ipecacuanha, calomel, quinine

and castor oil. Where's the ship's doctor? I'll have you out of here!"

"As for the ship's doctor, he's sick too, with bilious fever I suppose. And for you, who are you, pray? Don't rest under the hallucination that you are still walking your hospital, wherever it may be. I am as competent as you; nay, have a diploma as well as you: and as to this case, have had too much experience to be mistaken."

"Madam—A—A—Miss—I—I—I—I'll see the captain at once. You're a-a-a—don't know your business!" And in choleric wrath he left her in pursuit of the chief officer.

The steamer *Caspar* had left the West Coast, with a clean bill of health and in first class order, for San Francisco. But fortune had illy favored her and from the first day her voyage had been one of trials and tribulations. She had been fearfully overloaded with both cargo and passengers. So low did she float in the water that she seemed and behaved like a log. All buoyancy was lost: she was dead, plunging through instead of rising to the great seas she had met with. In this condition she had encountered a storm, broken her propeller shaft, and been blown hundreds of miles out of her course into the Pacific. The engineers had worked night and day but could effect no permanent repair. They would manage to run the engines a few hours, then their patches would give away and they would be forced to stop twice as long to again make ineffectual repairs. They were still far out of their course and even the captain did not know when they would get back. To make it worse, they had been blown into an unfrequented portion of the ocean, far from the beaten paths, and could look to no outside source for assistance.

There were 158 first class passengers and only berths for 95. Many of the ladies were forced to sleep on lounges and settees, while the gentlemen literally floored and walled the smoking saloon when bedtime came. While it was thus rather hard on the first class passengers, it was worse on the second, and in the steerage it was frightful. Some of second class berths were directly over the screw and so close to the Chinese quarters as to be rendered almost uninhabitable by the fumes of opium and otherwise abominable stench. In the after-lower-deck, it was more like a cattle ship. Four Chinese, half a score of Negroes, and quadruple as many white people, the majority of which were seasick, were crowded into this hole. So far down was it, that there was no ventilation save through the ports, which more often were bolted down than otherwise.

And now, in the fierce tropic heat of midsummer, to cap their misery, fever had broken forth. While many were hasty in proclaiming it the terrible yellow jack, the more clear-headed, cognizant of their horrible condition, naturally attributed it to that. The ship's doctor, a too efficient and too poorly paid man, had been the first to come down, leaving the passengers and men to take care of themselves. Their endeavors had been spasmodic and erratic. A fifth of the crew were down and the rest were on the verge of mutiny, threatening to take to the boats. The firemen and stokers were as bad, no longer yielding subordination to their officers. The Chinese, while none were taken ill, continued to stolidly smoke their opium, turning a deaf ear to the protests of the passengers and the commands of the captain, which they knew could not be enforced. The first officer, in despair, had taken to whiskey and was now locked up in a fit of horrors, while the rest of the officers were nearly crazy in their impotency. The passengers were just beginning to awake to their danger; but as yet, save for the isolated efforts of the couple that quarreled over the diagnosis, had done nothing.

Doctor Chandler, who maintained it was bilious fever, had yet to meet his thirtieth birthday. He was returning from an expedition to Peru, on which he had been absent a year. Long retired, in fact, except for his hospital experience, he had never taken up a practice; for the same hand that educated him, had, on its demise, endowed him with an ample fortune. Possessed of a scientific worship for good sanitation—it was his hobby—to the absence of it he attributed, under various names, the sickness which had fallen on them.

Miss Appleton, while possessed of a diploma, had perhaps not as much experience in hospitals, but of Southern origin, she had gone through an epidemic of yellow fever in New Orleans and was familiar with all its symptoms. She was a woman not more than twenty-five, beautiful as the word goes, but owing more to a pleasant, forceful personality than to her physical charms. Traveling with her aunt, as soon as the disease had manifested itself, she deserted her to the attention of a maid and threw herself into the breach. And thus, just as she had attempted her first case, had she encountered Doctor Chandler, who had similarly awakened and who was in search of his first patient.

Several days had elapsed and things were going from bad to worse. At last, everybody had been forced to acknowledge that the disease was yellow fever, even Doctor Chandler, who had become very contrite and usually begged Miss Appleton's pardon every other time they met. Though rather rash and headstrong, he was

really a good fellow at heart, and soon the twain were on the best of footings. He was generous and self-sacrificing to a fault and devoted himself night and day to the struggle. Maud Appleton easily penetrated his brusque exterior and grew to understand and like him. Still, they occasionally quarreled over methods of treatment, nor, it must be confessed, was she always in the right.

In the meanwhile, the ship's doctor, several of the stewards and cooks, and quite a number of the passengers and crew had succumbed and been given hasty sea burial. The captain had caught the contagion and lay helpless in his stateroom, leaving only the second and third officers to manage the men whom every day saw the more unruly and boisterous. Save the two doctors and the dozen or so that had volunteered as assistants, the passengers were sunk in a state of lethargic horror. At first they had been panic stricken, but that had now subsided and they had become stolidly indifferent to the course of events. They recognized no ties except those of blood, and selfishly struggled for their individual creature-comforts—few, it must be acknowledged, they obtained, for each hour the discipline grew more lax and nothing could be obtained from the stewards and waiters without liberal tipping. In short, the plague ship had become a floating hell in which brute struggled with brute for survival.

Sick and giddy. Miss Appleton had staggered from out the fetid atmosphere below-decks, and now was leaning over the rail in a vain effort to catch some refreshing breeze. The *Caspar* lay in the trough of the sea idly rolling to the smooth swell. She had no steerage-way; the quartermaster had deserted the wheel; the engineers had given up the struggle; and despair had settled upon the ship. The heat was suffocating, and as Maud panted for breath she was approached by the indefatigable Doctor Chandler, who had new cause of quarrel concerning the treatment of one of her patients. But they quarreled good-naturedly now, more in pleasant badinage and sharp repartee. Amid all their misery, it had become their one source of pleasure—a contest of wit and skill, in which personality was lost in the keenness of professional zeal. Though their methods were quite diverse, he had lost as many patients as she, while in the number of recoveries she was one the better of him—the patient over which they had had their first dispute being now in the last stage of convalescence. This rankled the doctor, in a professional way, and did not in the least abate his faith in his treatment, while he ascribed her success to a phenomenal streak of luck, which gave her the patients that would have recovered any way.

But while they enjoyed themselves in their merry dispute, affairs of moment were approaching a crisis. The crew had long before deserted their stuffy fore-castle and camped on deck beneath sails spread as awnings. Later they were joined by the stokers, oilers and firemen, who brought along their sea-bags and blankets. Here, in full view of the terrorized passengers, they played cards, fought, cursed God and man, and refused all duty. Too powerful to break, the officers were forced to send their meals to them and to pray that they would not take to the boats. For all their lawlessness, however, they maintained a crude organization and enforced their rules with terrible penalties. Whenever one fell sick, he was carried away to the fore-castle and attended upon by shifts appointed for that purpose. Only this morning, the remainder of the cooks, waiters and mess-boys had deserted and come forward to join them. As the crowd of them, carrying all the paraphernalia for an improvised camp, came marching along the deck, they had received an otherwise than cool reception.

"I say, lads, what the— —are we to do for cooks and mess-byes and grub?" queried one of the tars.

An instant sufficed for the mutineers to grasp the situation. With belaying pins and sheath-knives they drove the would be deserters, bag and baggage, back to their duty, incidentally breaking a few heads andj creating a momentary pandemonium. This incident had given the shifty second and third officers their cue, which they were soon to utilize with such disastrous consequence.

The mutineers quickly gave full intimation of their next procedure. They took possession of the boats; saw to it that they were seaworthy; and looting the hold, provisioned them. The passengers crowded the after-decks in a terror-stricken mass, while a few of the more clear-headed, grouped round the officers and placed themselves at their service. As the day proceeded, the panic grew: several mutineers they saw fall to the deck, overcome by the heat and the dread yellow jack. These were quickly carried away to the improvised hospital while their comrades worked the faster in completing their preparations.

Nor was this the only trouble which threatened. The three score Chinese between decks, who till now had manifested no discontent, were ripe for revolt. The contemplated desertion of the cooks and waiters had left them without food for twenty-four hours, and the officers had been forced to lock them in. Left to their fate, their yells and curses penetrated throughout the ship and at any moment they were expected to break forth. To add to

the terror, the sick and dying, actuated by some subtle impulse, had broken out in loud cries and wailing.

It was at this moment that the officers put into execution the plan they had conceived. Why not turn these two destructive forces, which threatened them, against each other? The sailors were in just the mood for a fight, and as they never lost any love for their Asiatic brethren, it would not take much to precipitate one. The second officer argued that if they left the ship, those that remained would be at the mercy of the Chinese, and, since they were bound to take to the boats, it were best to be left behind in safety by cleaning the Chinese out. And again, he thought if the conflict were severe enough, the ranks of the mutineers would be so decimated, that he could conquer them with the help of the passengers, engineers, cooks and stewards.

Maud and Doctor Chandler had concluded their quarrel with the customary assurance of good comradeship and an agreement. Each was to choose a patient that had just come down and take exclusive control, brooking no interference and applying their own method in its extremity. As chance had it, they chose a pair which had just taken to their berths: a young Californian and his sister, returning from a visit to their father, an extensive mine-owner in Peru. She selected the young man, and he, the sister. Leaving the deck, they were elbowing their way among the passengers who had been sent below by the second officer. Amid the confusion on every side, as they entered the saloon, anarchy and hell broke forth.

The hub-bub which the Chinese incessantly maintained had ceased for a space; but now, redoubled in fury, it arose, amid the crashing of heavy bodies and the splintering of wood. They heard the rapid revolver snots of the two engineers set to guard them, followed by terrible oaths and shrieks of agony. Then the passageways were thronged and the yellow devils, inflamed with blood, were upon them. At this juncture, the door of the first officer's stateroom flew open, and he sprang out, an awful sight to behold. He was evidently suffering the tortures of delirium tremens: his eyes were set and dilated; his gigantic body convulsed with nervous spasms; his mouth a mass of froth and blood. Throwing himself into the doorway, armed with nothing but a huge battle-axe (some curio of his), he held the fiends at bay. The fleeing passengers blocked the other exit while those that remained, beheld a wondrous struggle. Among the Chinese were some of the most redoubtable high-binders and hatchet-men of the coast—mercenary and trained fighters I for the societies to

which they owed their allegiance. Unlike the average Chinese, they were not cowardly: murder and bloodshed was their profession.

His battle-axe described flaming circles of steel as it flew back and forth, hither and thither, on its mission of death. At first, the marauders had rushed to their certain fate; but now they drew back, leaving several of their number beneath his feet. Into the narrow passage they knew he dare not pursue for lack of space in which to wield his great weapon. Stepping to the fore, their leader prepared to finish the struggle. It seemed as though David had come forward to face Goliath. His appearance belied his reputation as the wonderful Ah Sen, the fiercest of all hatchet-men: slender and effeminate of form, his delicate face seemed more that of a smooth-faced boy or woman, than that of a notorious desperado. Seizing the proffered knives of his men, thrice he cast one, full at his opponent. They leaped from his hand like rays of glancing light, turning half way round in mid air and burying themselves in the first officer's breast. Yet he seemed not to feel them. Again he tried; but this time, aiming at the throat, it hurtled past still intent on its mission and sank between the shoulders of one of the ladies, struggling in the press at the other door. The highbinder, evincing not the slightest irritation at his failures, changed the method of attack. Seizing a hatchet, with the speed of the lightning, it pursued the path of its predecessors. Full on the forehead, it struck the giant, who swayed, tottered, sank to his knees: like a cat. Ah Sen followed his weapon to his fate. For one second the giant was endowed with the full vigor of his strength, and in that second, Ah Sen encountered him. There was no struggle. Rising to his feet and totally disregarding the knife which entered his side, he seized the slender-necked celestial by the head with both his hands—once—twice—his body whirled in giddy orbit round his head. There was a snap of bones and rending of flesh and Ah Sen sank to the floor, his neck wrung like a chicken's. The next instant he was joined by his antagonist, who fell beside him, literally hacked to pieces by a score of knives and hatchets.

In the meantime, the officers had been busy persuading the mutineers to do the one act of mercy before they left the ship. The celerity with which the contagion spread and its malignancy, had put them in a fright, terrible to behold in strong, fearless men. They had been loth to listen, doggedly proceeding with the work of launching the boats, all bent upon their departure, but when the noise of the combat reached them and they knew that the Chinese were up, they forsook their tasks, hastily armed themselves with cutlasses distributed by the first officer, and sprang to the rescue.

Dividing into two parties, after killing a few stragglers which they caught murdering and robbing the passengers, they hemmed the remainder in the great saloon. Here, aided by the firearms of the officers, a short but sanguinary conflict ensued, ending in the complete annihilation of the Asiatics.

Exhilarated by their success; their fiercest passions aroused by the battle and blood; all the brutishness of primeval man burst forth and the sailors were in the mood for any mischief. Bloodstained and panting, they grouped about the ringleader, who, qualified with all the attributes that go to make the sea-lawyer and popular demagogue, addressed them in a short but very trite speech:

"Ho! My lads! We've blasted the heathen and saved the ship—never say die says I—we've saved the passengers too—ain't it so? (Interruptions of "Aye, aye, that we have.") and in saving their bloody necks, we save their treasures too—what say ye? (An' where do we come off? Aye, that's the ticket!) Hold your jaw, Jack Gunderson: I'm coming to that. Yes, where do we get off? The company? (Ha! Ha! Ha! The skinflints! They'll pay us—see us with Davy Jones first!) Aye, my lads, that's not true enough: they'd see you in hell first, a-simmering like pork-chops in the galley. But here's the proposition: let the blasted passengers keep their bloomin' lives and us their treasure. What say ye, mates?" A burst of applause and cries of "A loot! A loot!" signified that it had been answered in the affirmative.

Charybdis had saved the passengers from Scylla to engulf them himself. It was not destruction, however, for quickly overcoming the officers and the remnant of their supporters, they assured the passengers of their good will and desire for suitable reward. The latter they at once I proceeded to appropriate.

The sailors fell to their work with a vengeance, and in the scenes I which followed, there was much mingling of the ludicrous and the tragic. Staterooms were ransacked, baggage of all descriptions turned upside down and inside out, and articles of wearing apparel appropri-1 ated; nor did they hesitate to personally despoil the passengers. Maud's I aunt, an old lady, yet vigorous in body, mind and invective, led two of I the tars, intent on her magnificent earrings, a merry chase. She finally sought refuge in the stateroom of the Senor Morella, an Honduras patriot, martial of aspect and afflicted with a wooden leg—a memento of his latest insurrection. He lay in his berth, dying, with his artificial limb unstrapped but near him. Seizing this redoubtable weapon, she laid about her with such will and good purpose, as to down the robbers as fast as they

stuck their heads inside. Quite a crowd ceased their looting to enjoy the fun. But the "old she-devil," as they delightfully termed her, held her own against all comers.

As usual, the men broke into the spirit room, and while some became good-natured and jolly, others became the more violent. Fearing injury to her aunt, Maud hurried forward to persuade her into giving up her jewels, accompanied, of course, by Chandler, as protector. He was quickly dispossessed of his gold repeater and diamond links—little incidents which he scarcely heeded, so intent was he on guarding Maud. She, however, failed in her mission, barely missing being brained by her somewhat confused and belligerent relative. Though frustrated as a peacemaker, she well succeeded in involving herself and protector in new troubles. One of the sailors, a big, hulking brute, rendered amorous by the too-frequent caress of certain plainly labeled bottles, threw his arm about her waist and drew her to him. Quick, full on the lips, he kissed her.

In that moment did the doctor become cognizant of a new sensation—a sensation he knew to be different from any he would have felt, had it been a woman other than her. A swift shoulder-blow, and the man lay in a heap on the floor. The next instant he was on his feet, cursing and glowering malignantly at the doctor, who, in the heat of his anger, made as though to repeat the performance. To Maud, events followed like a flash: the fellow's cutlass hissed through the air; a comrade interposed another; the blow was broken but still fell upon Chandler's head; and when she beheld the rush of blood, she experienced a strangely-intense and solicitous anxiety for him.

"A breeze! A breeze! My hearties! Fair wind for Mexico!" came a cry from above. A second saw the mutineers on deck, springing into the boats which lay along side. The *Caspar* was deserted.

In the bloodstained cabin, amid the weeping and shrieking of women, the wailing of the fever-stricken, and the curses and groans of the dying combatants, Chandler, bathed in a baptism of blood, and Maud, flushed and fainting with what had transpired, sprang or rather tottered and fell into each other's arms. There, in that moment of horror, with all the hideousness of the present and terror of the future upon them, they confessed their newly-discovered and mutual love.

Many days had elapsed. Helpless, the *Caspar* drifted about with her cargo of misery and death. No help had come: none was expected, save through the safe arrival of the deserters in Mexico,

which was merely problematic. In the absence of this disorderly element, the survivors had settled down to an orderly existence, systematized everything, isolated forward the fever patients, and were getting along far better than might have been expected from people in their condition. As a traveler in Yosemite loses all conception and appreciation of height and distance, so had they lost all horror of their situation. Continually facing death, they had come to fear it not; and great indeed must have been the occurrence which could have surprised them from out their placidity. They had not broken under the strain but merely accustomed themselves to it. In fact, they were progressing finely, and too much could not be attributed to the two doctors, who, while loving, still quarreled over methods.

Meanwhile, Maud and the doctor, while in no wise neglecting their other cases, devoted themselves night and day to the particular ones of the brother and sister. They had been very sick, but never, even in the worst of crises when the toss of a penny would have almost decided life or death, had the two physicians even dreamed of consulting each other. They had put into the fullest operation their favorite methods, and so strong was their professional rivalry, that they abided the result with far more anxiety than is usually the lot of the patient to receive from its physician. In fact, so extreme had the contest become, that they devoted all their spare time to the nursing, scarcely seeing each other, save to quarrel about the merits of their respective schools or to twit each other, as the case might be, on any bad signs which might have been manifested. Still it seemed as though the superiority of either was not to be thus exemplified, for neither patient had died, and both were now fairly convalescent. Never the less, each had been surprised at the zeal displayed by the other, and now, when all danger was past, all doubts vanished, their surprise grew as their zeal flagged not.

The days took their allotted course, slipping silently, imperceptibly, each into the other, while no new incidents or happenings arose to vary the monotony of their existence. In truth, the gods had smiled upon them in their distress. The *Caspar* encountered no storms while the fierceness of the epidemic began to abate. Perhaps, because everybody, with the miraculous exception of the two physicians, had been either killed or cured. Everything was on the mend: nothing was apprehended I except bad weather, and even in that the *Caspar* stood a fair show of remaining afloat. In case of storms, small sails had been prepared by which to heave to and ride them out. With the dwindled company and the great boilers, the engineers had no difficulty in maintaining the fresh water supply, while, as part of the cargo was

composed of food, little was to be feared from starvation. Slowly the summer dragged on, but quickly the sick list grew smaller, till finally, amid great rejoicing and festivity, it had become totally negated and the ship thoroughly fumigated.

But while everything was so bright, Maud found herself tormented; by strange thoughts and discovered an inconsistent vein in her nature which she had never dreamed of. Again and again she summoned herself to judgement, but always to judge in vain, for in despair, she invariably threw the case out of court. Sometimes she came to herself and was appalled at the thoughts which had risen uncalled in her mind, at the visions she unconsciously contemplated. Her life became one tangled mesh of self-analytical whys and wherefores, its and musts, pros and cons. The more she endeavored to reason with herself the more entangled and confused she became. Cold memories of some possible past mistake caused her to often shudder, to avoid the present, and to fear the future which must be shaped by the impress of that possible wrong-doing. Still she could not find the heart to blame herself: she could only not understand.

As it fared with her, so fared it with Chandler. He also found himself involved in a sea of seeming self-inconsistency. But he behaved differently from Maud—she was a woman. His masculinity and choleric disposition asserted itself, and not only did he clearly see his past mistake, but he grew enraged and waxed indignant at himself, often cursing the son of his father with such sublime abstraction from self as to be truly startling. Still, in the obscurity of his mental vision, he could see so far and no farther. If he could have seen beyond, doubtless he would not have figuratively kicked himself so often, nor would his life had been tinged with savage melancholy which now gnawed at his heart-strings so unceasingly.

With these inward ills tormenting them, their intercourse with each other was not exactly that of fond lovers; and their very cognizance of this but increased the pitch of their misery. They constantly upbraided themselves after the many such unsatisfactory meetings, as being the causes of the same—nor was this the less severe, for each unselfishly and ignorantly pocketed all the blame, deeming the other to have the person injured. Under such circumstances, he became gloomy and irritable, while she well hid hers beneath a mask of gaiety and enthusiasm in all the little social events on shipboard. Very naturally, this diversity of mood drew them the farther apart.

And so, while the collective prospects of the little community went from good to better, their individual affairs traveled with unseemly haste from bad to worse. Logically, this stretching out to the extremes must reach an end sometime, and both, intuitively recognizing this, pondered expectantly over the outcome. To make matters worse, they no longer quarreled: this new state of affairs was imaintained with the stiff awkwardness of self-consciousness, from which each suffered the more acutely, never suspecting the other to be in the same dilemma. So affairs rapidly approached a crisis, and one night, when the situation had become almost absolutely unbearable to both parties, the electric search-light of a man of war, sent out in quest of them vaguely foreshadowed to each a cessation of their troubles.

The passengers were crowding the weather rail of the *Caspar*, devouring the lights of the vessel in the offing and feasting their eyes upon its dim, bulky loom. Amid this scene of boisterous rejoicing, Maud felt strangely out of place. It jarred upon her—this gregarious mass which clustered like bees on every hand. She became aware of a longing for solitude. Yielding to the mood, she slipped away and climbed to the deserted bridge.

Similar had been the feeling of Chandler, and similar the action. He burned from one side as she did from the other. Face to face, with the glare of the search-light shining full upon them, they met, midway on the bridge. The next instant and they were in darkness. He had taken her hand, yet they spoke not as they gazed on the dancing lights, heard the merry scream of the boatswain's whistles upon the battleship, and dimly discerned a boat as it sprang to the man of warsman stroke. Nearer and nearer it came; but it was with a strange apathy that they watched it. The next moment and it would be alongside. Seemingly, they both resolved and spoke at the same time. What each said seemed to startle the other. Surprise, doubt, assurance, gratification, happiness, in turn were mutually delineated upon their countenances. What was said they only knew, but it was with light steps and joyous faces, all wreathed in smiles, that they joined their companions of the now-to-be-abandoned plague ship.

Extract from the *San Francisco Daily Herald* of six weeks later:—

At the Palace Hotel, the consummation of a happy romance, strangely connected with the ill-fated Caspar, is about to be attained. Miss Maud Appleton— I an M.D. by the way—of New Orleans, and Doctor Chandler of Boston—the two that rendered such effective service in overcoming the plague on the Caspar—are to marry respectively, Mr. Charles Waldworth, Stanford '93, and

his sister, the charming Miss Waldworth, of local social note. It is whispered that Mr. and Miss Waldworth, while ill with the fever, were made test cases for a professional contest between the two M.D.s, and so strenuous and successful were their efforts, that the fruition is the happy dual marriage to be celebrated shortly. But more of this anon.

PLUCK AND PERTINACITY

TO P.T. Barnum is accorded the coinage of the term "stick-to-itiveness," a strong synonym for "pertinacity." Now he who possesses pertinacity must also possess pluck, another important element in the achievement of success. A man devoid of this cannot be pertinacious; his resolution melts away in the face of obstacles which require pluck to overcome.

The following story of unyielding adherence to purpose, performed under almost unthinkable hardships and dangers, is a true one, for I was personally aware of most the facts concerned. Some of the incidents, however, were given me by a surgeon travelling into the Yukon country with a detachment of the Northwest mounted police, and still others I obtained from the white trader in charge of the Sixty-Mile Post. The story is of a man who practically achieved the impossible in his hazardous ice-journey in the dead of an Arctic winter. Happily, success crowned the effort.

In the fall of 1897, the cry of famine went up from the hungry town of Dawson. Faint-hearted miners turned their backs on the golden lure. Partners, with food for but one, drew straws to ascertain which should remain and which should go. Canadian citizens and American aliens appealed to their respective governments for aid.

In October, with the last water, which was composed chiefly of running ice, a hungry exodus went down the river to Fort Yukon. Then the price of dogs went up to three hundred dollars, and dog-food to a dollar per pound. Flour was not to be had at one hundred and fifty dollars per hundredweight. In November, with the first ice, another stampeded crowd hurried up the river to civilization and safety.

This scare, which so greatly diminished the number of empty mouths, was all that saved Dawson from a bitter winter. As it was, the gold-seekers managed to pinch through; but those that fled in the height of the panic carried a terrible tale with them to salt water. After that the winter settled down and all communication ceased.

For the many faces turned south on the dismal half-thousand miles of trail, there was one that held unerringly to the north. It belonged to a Dutchman, who knew little English and spoke less. His equipment was more meagre than that of those who passed him, and he was heading away from it. He had barely enough food

to last himself and dog to Dawson. He had a dog—a bulldog, the short hair of which made it the worst possible choice of a sledge animal in that frosty land.

The refugees looked at his outfit and laughed. By eloquent signs—for misery speaks a common tongue—they explained the lack of food. When that did not startle him, they painted lurid pictures of starvation and death. But he always remained unperturbed. Then they ceased their grim mirth, and pleaded and entreated him to go back. But he invariably pressed on.

Why not? He had started to go to the Klondike, and certainly was going there. True, he had already tried the Stikine route and lost his outfit and three comrades in its treacherous waters; true, he had then gone to St. Michaels, only to get there when the Yukon had frozen and to escape on the last vessel before Bering Sea closed; true, his money was gone and he had but a few weeks' food,—all true,—but it was also true that he had left a wife and children down in the States, and he must send yellow dust of the north to them before another year had passed.

And yet again—the real stamp of the man—he had started to go to the Klondike, and he was going there. For the third time he had ventured it, this time over the dreaded Chilkoot Pass in midwinter.

After untold hardship, he arrived at the Big Salmon River, two hundred and fifty miles from the Chilkoot and an equal distance from Dawson. At that point he encountered a squad of the mounted police of the Northwest Territories. They had strict orders to allow no one to pass who did not possess a thousand pounds of provisions. As he had barely fifty pounds, he was turned back. One of the police, who understood his language, explained the terrible condition of affairs.

All others whom they had turned back had retraced their steps cheerfully. But this man was not made of such mettle. Twice nature had conspired to thwart him, when the trip was half completed, came man. However, he ostensibly started back. But that night he broke a trail through the deep snow and crossed the river, regaining the travelled trail far below the encampment.

The next heard of him was at Little Salmon River, when another detachment of police saw an exhausted man and a bulldog limping painfully down the river. They thought the upper camp had passed him on; so, without suspicion, they cordially invited him to their fire to rest and warm up, but he was afraid, and hobbled on.

The thermometer had gone down and then steadily remained at between fifty and sixty degrees below zero—equivalent to between eighty and ninety degrees of frost. The Dutchman had frozen one of his feet, but still pressed on. He passed fleeing men, young men, with frozen limbs or scurvy-rotted flesh—terrible wrecks of the country; but day by day, rigidly adhering to his object, he plodded into the north.

At Fort Selkirk he was forced to lay up, his frozen foot having become so bad that he could no longer travel. But he had been there only two days, when the surgeon from Big Salmon River arrived. He had sledged a hundred miles down the river with a government dog-team, to amputate the limbs of an unfortunate young man who had been trying to get out of the land. After that, the surgeon had gone on to Fort Selkirk, where he expected to wait till the incoming police picked him up.

He recognized the Dutchman and dressed his foot, the flesh of which had begun to slough away, leaving a raw and festered hole in the sole of the foot almost large enough to thrust one's fist into. He happened to explain, by signs, that he was awaiting the coming of the police.

That was enough for the sufferer. The police were coming. They would send him back. He cut up a blanket and made a gigantic moccasin, folding thickness upon thickness till it was the size of a water-bucket. That night, he and his bulldog headed down river to Dawson, one hundred and seventy-five miles away.

The exquisite pain the man must have endured from the cold, the toil, the lack of food, and the injured foot, can only be conjectured. And it was not as if he had comrades, for he suffered alone, and ran the dangers of the ice-journey without hope of help in case of accident.

At Stuart River he was almost gone; but his persistence and indomitability seemed limitless. The fear that the police would capture him and send him back drove him on; and he was the kind of man that did not show the meaning of the word "failure." As it was, the police, with their fine trail equipment of dogs and sleds, never did succeed in overtaking him.

At Sixty-Mile, it seemed the he must at last succumb, for the dog had finally become exhausted, as had also the supply of food. But the white trader at that point bought the dog for two hundred dollars and sufficient food to last the man into Dawson, then only fifty miles away.

Barely had he reached his goal when he was sawing wood at fifteen dollars a day, and slowly but surely curing his foot that he might go prospecting. It is no easy task to work all day in the open in such a frosty clime. But he worked steadily through the winter, while other men idled in their cabins and cursed their ill-luck and the country in general. Not only did he manage to earn subsistence, but he got himself a miner's outfit, and also sent out a snug portion of his earnings to the wife and children down in the States.

In the spring, while the majority of the gold-seekers were preparing to shake the dust of the country from their moccasins, he took part in the stampede to the French Hill benches. A little later, those that passed his claim might have seen a contented-looking man busily engaged in washing out a satisfactory amount of gold a day.

There can be no better way to conclude this narrative of unyielding adherence to purpose, than by stating that one of the first things he did was to hunt up the Sixty-Mile trader and buy back the bulldog that had been the comrade of his hardships and sufferings.

PROPER "GIRLIE"

"GIRLIE" had always been a choice term of endearment with Ralph Ainslie. And it must be confessed he had applied it with great wisdom and discretion—from the little lady who swayed his destinies as a grammar school boy down to Maud. The list of the favored was quite a lengthy one, to be sure; but then a young heart and a roving love are necessarily correlative. Such is the nature of things, and who would alter it? But when the soft madness of the courtship of Maud fell upon him, the phrase had ripened to a fuller significance, and he had thought—at the time—that it would never again be transferred. In return, Maud had called him "Boyo." Never had sweeter phrases been more sweetly mated. Girlie and Boyo! Well, the two were married and—

Ainslie idly crumbled his toast and gazed across the breakfast table at Maud, blue-eyed and matronly; but the woman's face pictured on his mind's retina at the moment was dark-eyed and rebellious. No wifely sedateness in this other, nor calm strength of control; but rather the waywardness of mutable desires, rough-shod imperiousness and strange moods. A creature slight of heart for loyalty, but great of soul for love; well he knew her.

Perhaps it was the unconscious radiation of his present mental attitude, or the sum of his attitudes through many days, that made Maud lonely on her side of the table. At least, she felt depressed and isolated, as if in some way the bonds that once so tightly bound them were undergoing an extraordinary expansion. She had expected that the fervid kisses that so sweetly punctuated their engagement period would change to the staid homage of tried affection, but not that they would become only a meaningless duty, the mere mechanical performance of a function. His whole demeanor had come to lack that subtle seriousness and enthusiasm the absence of which a woman is so quick to detect.

"What's the matter, Maud?" he asked, presently, observing for the first time how wretchedly the breakfast had passed off, and actuated by a desire to make amends. "What's the matter?" he repeated, noticing that her dreamy stare continued. "Anything wrong?"

"Ralph," with feminine irrelevance, "you never call me Girlie any more." Then, plaintively, "I'm only Maud now."

"And it's an age since I've heard you say Boyo," he retorted.

He did not appreciate the hurt flush that suffused her cheek; no more did he know how hard had been her struggle to abandon his pet name after he had ceased his Girlie. For half the tragedies of the world are worked out in the silence of women's hearts—tragedies that blundering men may never know nor understand.

Her eyes grew misty, but otherwise she made no reply. Ainslie rose and went to her side.

"Oh, Ralph, I don't know—everything's wrong, all wrong!" she sobbed on his shoulder.

The scent of her hair was like a caress, but it did not recall the erstwhile pleasant memories that it should, for he frowned unobserved while he patted her shoulder soothingly.

"I have tried so hard to be good and true—to be Ralph's wife—" she raised her head bravely and looked him in the eyes—"but everything seems wrong. Something has come over us—between us. I had pictured everything so different after we were married, and now—I don't know, I—I cannot understand."

"There, there," he murmured, his face a study in surface masculine kindness, "I'm afraid you are sick, just a little under the weather, you know. You're not quite yourself. A touch of fever, or cold, or something. I'll send up Dr. Jermyn on my way down town.

"Perhaps," he added, with wise forethought, as he kissed her at the door, "perhaps you need a little change of air or something. I think a little run or a week or so down to your mother's will do you good."

But she shook her head.

"Now the scenes begin," he muttered to himself as he boarded his car. "To-day comes the first, then to-morrow another—and they will continue to increase, quantitatively and qualitatively, till even a man's endurance can no longer stand them. Better put an end to the trouble now than to permit it to grow. I'll write Bertha at once and settle it out of hand."

It was with this laudable intention that he seated himself at his desk and invoked the epistolary demon. A peremptory call on the telephone interrupted him. It was an important deal, and Love must ever wait on Business.

"Poor little Maud! It's not her fault," he mused, as he stowed the half-finished missive away in a drawer; "only a queer concoction of Midsummer madness and my own brute selfishness. And it's Bertha who inoculated me, too."

Half-way down the elevator he had made up his mind to drop the whole thing by returning and destroying the letter; but at the bottom Business shoved Love aside, and he hurried on to meet the directors of the projected company.

By three o'clock the bookkeeper was wondering at Ralph Ainslie's prolonged absence. At half after Mrs. Ainslie tripped past into her husband's private office. She had thought it all out, after the delightful fashion of womankind, and reached the conclusion that she knew so very little of men, after all, and that whatever had happened was the result of her own morbid brooding; so she had come there to be nice to her wronged husband and be forgiven. She opened the door of his private office softly, confronted the blank emptiness of the room, and decided to wait.

Her thoughts went back to the golden days of their first housekeeping, when she had run down to the office so often of an afternoon that Ralph declared her a precious little nuisance, and secreted caramels and chocolates in his desk to encourage another visit. With a sentimental fondness and a vague half-pain she tiptoed across the room and drew open a drawer. The upturned sheet and the superscription, "Dear Girlie," caught her eye. She glanced hurriedly at the upper right-hand corner, taking it for some old forgotten letter to herself, and noted the date with happy surprise. In her delight she did not remark the addressed envelope that was lying half-concealed beneath it. She began to read:

DEAR GIRLIE:

I sometimes think we have not fully understood each other of late. I, at least, know that I may have seemed cold at times, when, in reality, I was perplexed with other things. I have been somewhat worried and not quite myself, for all of which I intend to make full atonement. I shall explain all soon.

Believe me, Girlie, that the love I give you is the true love of my heart. I am making all arrangements so that we may—

"Just his stupid business!" she exclaimed, her dimmed eyes, sparkling joyously. "And I'm sure more business made him break

it off where he did. And it's all my own letter! And he called me Girlie!"

She pressed the scented sheet softly to her lips, just as Ralph Ainslie entered the room.

"Boyo!" she cried, making a little run toward him and throwing her arms around his neck. "You dear, good fellow! And I've been behaving like a little wretch, haven't I? With you worrying so much over your business, and never once complaining! No, no," she protested, as he made an involuntary gesture of remonstrance, "it's all true, Boyo, every bit of it. And I've been, oh, such a naughty girl!"

Her moist eyes and his shirt front had approached such dangerous proximity that he was permitted to grin his perplexity above her head, unseen. Somehow, the scent of her hair tangled with his thoughts to a purpose, and recalled the golden days that he had well-nigh thrust away. Dear patient, faithful Maud, still as trusting as the first time they had laid lips to lips! And she had mistaken the broken letter for her own! The pathos of blunder softened him and helped consign the other woman to oblivion.

"There, there, Girlie. It's nobody's fault in the world but my own. I've been working too hard, and—"

"But it's my fault. I insist!" she protested.

"Then I must punish you by—ahem!—"

"Something nice?" Then, recollecting the letter: "And what were we going to do when you finished making the arrangements?"

"Europe," he lied, laconically. "I say, Girlie," he added, hurriedly, catching a glimpse of the open drawer and beginning to lead the retreat to the door, "let's not go home, but have dinner down town—"

"And after that the theatre!" she cried. "Just like old times!"

"Just a minute, Girlie," he said, at the elevator shaft. "I've forgotten something."

He hurried back to the office, closing the door carefully behind him. Then he applied a vesta to the envelope that had Bertha Something-or-Other written across its face. He poked the ashes about in the grate and swore softly at something several times, but

when he swore it was the dark-eyed woman who was in his thoughts.

THE REJUNVENATION OF MAJOR RATHBONE

"ALCHEMY was a magnificent dream, fascinating, impossible; but before it passed away there sprang from its loins a more marvelous child, none other than chemistry. More marvelous, because it substituted fact for fancy, and immensely widened man's realm of achievement. It has turned probability into possibility, and from the ideal it has fashioned the real. Do you follow me?"

Dover absently hunted for a match, at the same time regarding me with a heavy seriousness which instantly called to my mind Old Doc Frawley, our clinical lecturer of but a few years previous. I nodded assent, and he, having appropriately wreathed himself in smoke, went on with his discourse.

"Alchemy has taught us many things, while not a few of its visions have been realized by us in these latter days. The Elixir of Life was absurd, perpetual youth a rank negation of the very principle of life. But—"

Dover here paused with exasperating solemnity.

"But prolongation of life is too common an incident nowadays for any one to question. Not so very long ago, a 'generation' represented thirty-three years, the average duration of human existence. To-day, because of the rapid strides of medicine, sanitation, distribution, and so forth, a 'generation' is reckoned at thirty-four years. By the time of our great-grandchildren, it may have increased to forty years. *Quien sabe?* And again, we ourselves may see it actually doubled."

'Ah!' he cried, observing my start. "You see what I am driving at?"

"Yes," I replied. "But—"

"Never mind the 'buts,'" he burst in autocratically. "You ossified conservatives have always hung back at the coat-tails of science—"

"And as often saved it from breaking its neck," I retaliated.

"Just hold your horses a minute, and let me go on. What is life? Schopenhauer has defined it as the affirmation of the will to live, which is a philosophical absurdity, by the way, but with which we have no concern. Now, what is death? Simply the wearing out, the exhaustion, the breaking down, of the cells, tissues, nerves, bones and muscles of the human organism. Surgeons find great difficulty

in knitting the broh bones of elderly people. Why? Because the bone, weakened, approaching the stage of dissolution, is no longer able to cast off the mineral deposits thrust in upon it by the natural functions of the body. And how easily such a bone is fractured! Yet, were it possible to remove the large deposits of phosphate, carbonate of soda, and so forth, the bone would regain the spring and rebound which it possessed in its youth.

"Merely apply this process, in varying measures, to the rest of the anatomy, and you have what? Simply the retardation of the system's break-up, the circumvention of old age, the banishment of senility, and the recapture of giddy youth. If science has prolonged the life of the generation by one year, is it not equally possible that it may prolong that of the individual by many?"

To turn back the dial of life, to reverse the hour-glass of Time and run its golden sands anew—the audacity of it fascinated me. What was to prevent? If one year, why not twenty? Forty?

Pshaw! I was just beginning to smile at my credulity when Dover pulled open the drawer beside him and brought to view a metal-stoppered vial. I confess to a sharp pang of disappointment as I gazed upon the very ordinary liquid it contained—a heavy, almost colorless fluid, with none of the brilliant iridescence one would so naturally expect of such a magic compound. He shook it lovingly, almost caressingly; but there was no manifestation of its occult properties. Then he pressed open a black leather case and nodded suggestively at the hypodermic syringe on its velvet bed. The Brown-Sequard Elixir and Koch's experiments with lymph darted across my mind. I smiled with cherry doubtfulness; but he, divining my thought, made haste to say, "No, they were on the right road, but missed it."

He opened an inner door of the laboratory and called "Hector! Come, old fellow, come on!"

Hector was a superannuated Newfoundland who had for years been utterly worthless for anything save lying around in people's way, and in this he was an admirable success. Conceive my astonishment when a heavy, burly animal rushed in like a whirlwind and upset things generally till finally quelled by his master. Dover looked eloquently at me, without speaking.

"But that—that isn't Hector!" I cried, doubting against doubt.

He turned up the under side of the animal's ear, and I saw two hard-lipped slits, mementoes of his wild young fighting days, when

his master and I were mere lads ourselves. I remembered the wounds perfectly.

"Sixteen years old and as lively as a puppy." Dover beamed triumphantly. "I've been experimenting on him for two months. Nobody knows as yet, but won't they open their eyes when Hector runs abroad again! The plain matter of fact is I've given new lease of life with the lymph injection—same lymph as that used by earlier investigators, only they failed to clarify their compounds while I have succeeded. What is it? An animal derivative to stay and remove the effects of senility by acting upon the stagnated life-cells of any animal organism. Take the anatomical changes in Hector here, produced by infusion of the lymph compound; in the main they may be characterized as the expulsion from the bones of mineral deposits and an infiltration of the muscular tissues. Of course there are minor considerations; but these I have also overcome, not, however, without the unfortunate demise of several of my earlier animal subjects. I could not bring myself to work on Hector till failure had been eliminated from the problem. And now—"

He rose to his feet and paced excitedly up and down. It was some time before he took up his uncompleted thought.

"And now I am prepared to administer this rejuvenator to humans. And I propose, first of all, to work on one who is very dear to me—"

"Not—not—?" I quavered.

Yes, Uncle Max. That's why I have called in your assistance. I have found discovery capping discovery, till now the process of rejuvenation has become so accelerated that I am afraid of myself. Besides, Uncle Max is so very old that the greatest discretion is necessary. Such crucial transformations in the whole organism of an age-weakened body can only be brought about by the most drastic methods, and there is great need to be careful. As I have said, I have grown afraid of myself, and need another mind to hold me in check. Do you understand? Will you help me?"

I have introduced the above conversation with my friend, Dover Wallingford, to show by what means I was led into one of the strangest scientific experiences of my life. Of the utterly unheard-of things that followed, the village has not yet ceased to talk upon and wonder. And as the village is unacquainted with the real facts

in the case, it has been stirred to its profoundest depths by the untoward happenings. The excitement created was tremendous; three camp-meetings ran simultaneously and with marvelous success; there has been much talk of signs and portents, and not a few otherwise normal members of the community have proclaimed the advent of the latter-day miracles, and even yet their ears are patiently alert for the Trump of Doom, and their eyes lifted that they may witness the rolling up of the heavens as a scroll. As for Major Rathbone, otherwise Dover's Uncle Max, why he is looked upon by a certain portion of the village as a second Lazarus raised from the dead, as one who has almost seen God; while another portion of the village is equally set in its belief that he has entered into a league with Lucifer, and that some day he will disappear in a whirlwind of brimstone and hell-fire.

But be this as it may, I shall here state the facts as they really are. It is not my intention, however, to go into the details of the case, except as to the results regarding Major Rathbone. Several contingencies have arisen, which must be seen to before we electrify the sleepy old world with the working formula of our wonderful discovery.

Then we shall convene a synod of the nations, and the rejuvenation of mankind will be placed in the hands of competent boards of experts belonging to the several governments. And we here promise that it shall be as free as the air we breathe or the water we drink. Further, in view of our purely altruistic motives, we ask that our present secrecy be respected and not be made the object of invidious reflections by the world we intend befriending.

Now to work. I at once sent for my traps and took up my residence one of the suites adjoining Dover's laboratory. Major Rathbone, dazzled by the glittering promise of youth, yielded readily to our solicitations. To the world at large, he was lying sick unto death; but in reality he was waxing heartier and stronger with every day spent upon him. For three months we devoted ourselves to the task—a task fraught with constant danger, yet so absorbing that we hardly noted the flight of time. The color returned to the Major's pallid skin, the muscles filled out, and the wrinkles in part disappeared. He had been no mean athlete in his younger days, and having no organic weaknesses, his strength returned to him in a most miraculous manner. The snap and energy he gathered were surprising, and lusty youth so rioted in his blood that toward the last we were often hard put to restrain him. We who had started out to resuscitate a feeble old man, found upon our hands an impetuous young giant. The remarkable part of it was that his snow-white hair and beard remained unchanged. Try as we would,

it resisted every effort. Further, the irascibility which had come with advancing years still remained. And this, allied with the natural stubbornness and truculency of his disposition, became a grievous burden to us.

Sometime in the early part of April, because of a red-tape tangle at the express office regarding a shipment of chemicals, both Dover and myself were forced to be away. We had given Michel, Dover's trusted man, the necessary instructions, so did not apprehend any trouble. But on our return he met us rather shame-facedly at the entrance to the grounds.

"He's gone!" he gasped. "He's gone!" he repeated again and again, in his distress. His right arm hung limp and nerveless at his side, and it required no little patience to finally come to an understanding.

"I told him it was the orders that he mustn't go out. But he bellered like a wild bull, and wanted to know whose orders. And when I told him, he said it was time I should know that he took orders from no man. And when I stood in his way he took me by the arm, so, and just squeezed tight. I'm afraid it's broken, sir. And then he called Hector and went off across the fields to the village."

"Oh, your arm's all right," Dover assured him after due examination. "Just crushed the biceps a little, be kind of stiff and sore for a couple of days, that's all." And then to me, "Come on; we've got to find him."

It was a simple matter to follow him to the village. As we came down the main street, a crowd before the post office attracted our attention, and though we arrived at the climax, we could easily divine what had gone before. A bulldog, belonging to a trio of mill-hands, had picked a quarrel with Hector; and as it had been impossible to balance the second puppyhood of Hector with a new set of teeth, it was patent that he had been at a miserable disadvantage in the fight that followed. It was evident that Major Rathbone had intervened in an endeavor to separate the animals, and that the roughs had resented this. Besides, he was such a harmless-looking old gentleman, with his snow-white hair and patriarchal aspect, that they anticipated having a little fun with him.

"Aw, g'wan," we could hear one of the burly fellows saying, at same time shoving the Major back as though he were a little boy.

He protested courteously that the dog was his; but they chose to regard him as a joke and refused to listen. The crowd was

composed of a low breed of men, anyway, and they jammed in so closely to see th sport that we had hard work in cleaving a passage.

"Now, nibsy," commanded the mill-hand who had shoved Major Rathbone back, "don't yer think you'd better chase yerself home to yer mammy? This ain't no manner o' place fer leetle boys like you."

The Major was a fighter from the word go. And just then he let go. Before one could count three it was over; a swing under the first ruffian's ear, a half-jolt on the point of the second one's chin, and a shrewd block, with fake swing and swift uppercut on the jugular of the third, stretched the three brutes in the muck of the street. The crowd drew back hastily before this ancient prodigy, and we could hear more than one fervently abjuring his eyes.

As he arose from drawing the dogs apart, there was a cheery twinkle in the Major's eye which disconcerted us. We had approached him in the attitude of keepers recovering a patient: but his thorough sanity and perfect composure took us aback.

"Say," he said jovially, "there's a little place just round the corner here—best old rye—a-hem!" And he winked significantly as we linked arms like comrades and passed out through the petrified crowd.

From this moment our control was at an end. He always had be a masterful man, and from now on, he proceeded to demonstrate how capable he was of taking care of himself. His mysterious rejuvenation became, but would not remain, a nine days' wonder, for it grew and grew from day to day. Morning after morning he could be seen tramping home for breakfast across the dewy fields, with a fair-fill game-bag and Dover's shotgun. In previous years he had been a devoted horseman. One afternoon we returned from a trip to the city to find half the village hanging over the paddock fence. On closer inspection we discovered the Major breaking in one of the colts which had hitherto defied the stablemen. It was an edifying spectacle—his gray licks and venerable beard the sport of the wind as he dashed round and round on the maddened animal's back. But conquer the brute he did, till a stable boy led it away, trembling and as abject as a kitten. Another time, taking what had now become his customary afternoon ride, his indomitable spirit was fired by a party of well-mounted young fellows, and he let out with his big black stallion till he gave them his dust all the way down the principal street of the drowsy town.

In short, he took up the reins of life where he had dropped them years before. He was a fiery conservative as regards politics, and the peculiarly distasteful state of affairs then prevailing enticed him again into the arena. A crisis was approaching between the mill-owners and their workmen, and a turbulent class of "agitators" had drifted into our midst. Not only did the Major oppose them openly, but he thrashed several of the more offensive leaders, nipped the strike in its incipiency, and in a most exciting campaign swept into the mayoralty. The closeness of the count but served to accentuate how bitter had been the struggle. And in the meantime he presided at indignant mass-meetings, and had the whole community shouting "Cuba Libre!" and almost ready to march to her deliverance.

In truth, he rioted about the country like a young Nimrod, and administered the affairs of the town with the wisdom of a Solon. He snorted like an old war-horse at opposition, and woe to them that ventured to stand up against him. Success only stimulated him to greater activity; but, while such activity would have been commendable in a younger man, in one of his advanced years it seemed so inconsistent and inappropriate that his friends and relatives were shocked beyond measure. Dover and I could but hold our hands in helplessness and watch the antics of our hoary marvel.

His fame, or as we chose to call it, his notoriety spread till there was talk in the district of running him for Congress in the coming elections. Sensational space-writers filled columns of Sunday editions with garbled accounts of his doings and of his tremendous vitality. These "yellow-journal" interviewers would have driven us to distraction with their insistent clamor, had not the Major himself taken the matter in hand. For awhile it was his custom to occasionally throw an odd one out of the house before breakfast, and invariably, when he returned home in the evening, to attend similarly to the wants of three or four. A pest of curiosity-mongers and learned professors descended upon our quiet neighborhood. Spectacled gentlemen, usually bald-headed and always urbane, came singly, in pairs, in committees and delegations to note the facts and phenomena of this most remarkable of cases. Mystic enthusiasts, long-haired and wild-eyed, and devotees of countless occult systems haunted our front and back doors, and trampled upon the flowers till the gardener threatened to throw up his position in despair. And I veritably believe a saving of ten per cent on the coal bill could have been compassed by the burning up of unsolicited correspondence.

And to cap the whole business, when the United States declared war against Spain, Major Rathbone at once resigned his mayorship and applied to the war department for a commission. In view of his civil war record and his present superb health, it was highly probable that his request would be granted.

"It seems that before we can foist this rejuvenator upon the world, we must also discover an antidote for it—a sort of emasculator to reduce the friskiness attendant upon the return to youth, you know."

We had sat down, though in seemingly hopeless despondency, to discuss the difficulty and to try and find some way out of it.

"You see," Dover went on, "after revivifying an aged person, that person passes wholly out of our power. We can impose no checks, nor in any way can we tone down whatever excess of youthful spontaneity we may have induced. I see, now, that great care must be exercised in the administration of our lymph—the greatest of care if we should wish to avoid all manner of absurdities in the conduct of the patient. But that isn't the question at issue. What are we to do with Uncle Max? I confess, beyond gaining delay through the War Office, that I am at the end of my tether."

For the nonce Dover was so helpless that I felt not a little elarior unfolding the plan I had been considering for some time.

"You spoke of antidotes," I began tentatively.

"Now, as we happen to know, there are antidotes and antidotes, and yet again are there antidotes, some as a remedy for this evil and for that. Should a babe drink a pint of kerosene, what antidote would you suggest?"

Dover shook his head.

"And since there is no antidote for such an emergency, do we assume that the babe must die? Not at all. We administer an emetic. But of course, an emetic is out of the question in the present case. But again, say for one suffering from uxoriousness, or for an hypochondriac, what remedy should be applied? Certainly, neither of the two I have mentioned will do. Now, for a man, melancholy-mad, what would you prescribe?"

"Change," he replied, instantly. "Something else to withdraw him from himself and his morbid brooding to give him new interest in life, to supply him with a reason for existence."

"Very good," I continued, jubilantly. "You will notice that you have prescribed an antidote, it is true, but instead of a physical or medicinal one, it is intangible and abstract. Now, can you give me a similar remedy for excessive spirits or strength?"

Dover looked puzzled and waited for me to go on.

"Do you remember a certain strong man of the name of Samson? also Delilah, the fair Philistine? Have you ever noted the significance of 'Beauty and the beast'? Do you not know that the strength of the strong has been wilted, dynasties been raised or demolished, and countless nations plunged into or rescued from civil strife, all because of the love of woman?"

"There's your antidote," I added modestly, as an afterthought.

"Oh!" His eyes flashed hopefully for an instant, but dismay returned as he shook his head sadly and said, "But the eligibles? There are none."

"Do you recollect a certain romance of the Major's when he was quite a young man, long before the war?"

"You mean Miss Deborah Furbush, your Aunt Debby?"

"Yes; my Aunt Debby. They quarreled, you know, and never made up—"

"Nor spoke to each other since—"

"O yes, they have. Ever since his rejuvenation he has called there regularly to pay his respects and ask for her health. Sort of gloats over her, you see. She's been bedridden a year now; have to carry her up and down stairs, and nothing the matter except simple old age."

"If she's strong enough," Dover hazarded.

"Strong enough!" I cried. "I tell you, man, it's genuine senility—nothing in the world to guard against but a very slight valvular weak-ness of the heart. What d'ye say? Get a couple of months' delay on his commission, and start in on Aunt Debby at once. What say, old man? What say?"

Not only had I grown excited over this solution of our difficulty, but I had at last aroused his enthusiasm. Appreciating the need for haste, we at once gutted the laboratory of all essentials and took up our abode at my home, which, in turn, was just over the way from Aunt Debby's.

By this time we had the whole operation at the ends of our fingers, so were able to proceed with the utmost dispatch. But we were very sly about it, and Major Rathbone had not the slightest idea of what we were up to. A week from the time we began, the Furbush household was startled by Aunt Debby's rising to give her hand to the Major when he made his usual call. A fortnight later, from a coign of vantage in my windmill, we saw them strolling about the garden, and noted a certain new gallantry in the Major's carriage. And the rapidity with which Aunt Debby breasted the tide of Time was dizzying. She grew visibly younger, day by day, and the roses of youth returned to her cheek, giving her the most beautiful pink and pearl complexion imaginable.

Perhaps ten days after that, he drove up to the door and took her out driving. And how the village talked! Which was nothing to the way it gabbed, when, a month later, the Major's interest in the war abated and he declined his commission. And when the superannuated lovers walked bravely to the altar and then went off on their honeymoon, it seemed that all tongues wagged till they could wag no more.

As I have said, this lymph is a wonderful discovery.

SAKAICHO, HONA ASI AND HAKADAKI

"JOCK, you likee come see my house?—not far—you come see my wiffee—come' chopee—chopee'—allesamee good 'chow."

Ah! the magic of those words! ("chopee chopee!") Food! Dinner! What a relish they conveyed to me, who was as hungry a sight-seer as had ever trod the by-ways and thoroughfares of Yokohama. All morning I had wandered from tea-house to temple, through bazaar and curio-shop, "up hill and down dale," till now I was as famished as the most voracious shark that ever cut the blue waters of the tropic sea with his ominous fin, while in search of a breakfast. In fact, I felt like a veritable man-eater, and this unexpected invitation of my jin-riki-sha man was most opportune. And, of course, I accepted.

Away he sped, gradually leaving the crowded streets and entering the poorer and more squalid portion of the native quarter. At last, turning, a hundred feet or so, into a narrow alley, he stopped before an insignificant little house, which he told me, with very evident pride, was his home.

The whole side of the main, or sitting-room, facing the alley, was open, to admit the cooler air from without. To my Occidental eye it seemed a very bare little room. The floor was covered with thin, unpadded mats of rice straw, on which, beside a little table eight inches high, with a half-hemstitched silk handkerchief stretched across it, lay a woman in sound slumber. It was his wife.

As she lay there, one could see, even from a Japanese standpoint, that she was not pretty; neither was she ugly. But the stern lines of care had left their vivid impress on the face, and even as she slept she seemed troubled, and a spasm of pain or worry for a moment contracted her relaxed features.

With a light and tender caress, Sakaicho roused her. At his touch she awoke and greeted him affectionately; but when she beheld me she became suddenly abashed, and retreated across the room. Then ensued a quick conversation, in which Sakaicho probably told her that I was the American who had so graciously patronized him during the past week.

Remembering her duties as a hostess, and full of gratitude for her husband's patron, with low salaam and blushing countenance, she invited me with a quick motion of her hand to a seat on the floor. Removing my shoes at the threshold, for that is one of the

strictest rules of Japanese etiquette, I settled down, tailor fashion, in the middle of the room, opposite Sakaicho.

As his wife pushed the *hibachi* and *tabako-bon* before us, and then retired, humbly, to the background, he made me acquainted with her name, which was Hona Asi. She was only twenty-seven, he said; but she looked at least forty. Toil and worry had stamped her naturally pretty face, and left it wrinkled and sallow.

This I noticed and pondered on, as with deft fingers I rolled the little pellets of fine-cut native tobacco, inserted them in the rectangularly-bent head of the slender pipe, and then ignited them, with a quick puff at the little coal of fire in the *hibachi*. A couple of inhalations of the mild, sweet-flavored herb, emitted through the nostrils in true Japanese style, and the thimble-like bowl is emptied. Then, with a quick, sharp tap on the *hibachi*, the ashes are expelled and the operation of filling and lighting repeated.

For five minutes we smoked in silence, when the *hibachi* and the *tabako-bon* were removed, and Hona Asi placed before us two cups of weak green tea. As soon as emptied they were taken away, being replaced by a table five inches high and a foot and a half square, bravely lacquered in red and black.

According to Japanese custom, Hona Asi did not eat with us, but waited on the table as a true wife should. She removed the covering from a round wooden box, and with a wooden paddle ladled out two bowls of steaming rice, while Sakaicho uncovered the various bowls on the table and revealed a repast fit for the most fastidious epicure. The savory odors arising from different dishes whetted my appetite, and I was anxious to begin. There was bean soup, boiled fish, stewed leeks, pickles and soy, raw fish, thin sliced and eaten with radishes, *kurage*, a kind of jellyfish, and tea. The soup we drank like water; the rice we shoveled into our mouths like coals into a Newcastle collier; and the other dishes we both helped ourselves out of with the chopsticks, which by this time I could use quite dexterously. Several times during the meal we laid them aside long enough to sip warm *saki* (rice wine) from tiny lacquered cups.

By the time we concluded Hona Asi had brought from the little shop round the corner two glasses of ice cream, which she placed before us with a porcelain jar full of green plums, packed in salt. When we had done justice to this, we had resort to the inevitable *hibachi* and *tabako-bon*, presumably to aid digestion.

As a rule, I had found the Japanese a shrewd, money-seeking race; but when, as a matter-of-course, I took out my purse to pay the reckoning, Sakaicho was insulted, while, in the background, Hona Asi threw up her hands deprecatingly, blushed, and nearly fainted with shame. They gave me to understand very emphatically that it was their treat, and I was forced to accept it, though I knew they could ill afford such extravagance.

Soon Sakaicho recovered his good humor, and I enticed him into talking of himself. In his queer broken English he told me of his youth; his struggles, and his hopes and ambitions. His boyhood had been spent as a peasant in the fields, on the sunny slopes of Fujihama; his youth and early manhood as porter and driver of hired jin-riki-shas in Tokio. With great economy he had saved from his slender earnings, till now, having removed to Yokohama, he owned his little home and two jin-riki-shas, one of which he rented out at fifteen cents a day. His wife, a true helpmeet, worked industriously at home hemstitching silk handkerchiefs; sometimes making as high as eighteen cents a day. And all this struggle was for his boy—his only child. He was now sending him to school, and soon, when he would own and rent out several jin-riki-shas, the boy would receive instruction in the higher branches, and mayhap, some day, he would be able to send him to America to complete his education. "Who knows?"

As he told me this his eyes sparkled and his face flushed with pardonable pride, while his whole being seemed ennobled with the loftiness of his aspirations and the depth of his love and self-sacrifice.

Tired of sight-seeing, I passed the afternoon with him, waiting for the boy's return from school. At last he appeared; a sturdy, rollicking little chap of ten, who enjoyed, as his father said, fishing in the adjacent canal, though he never caught anything, and the water was not deep enough to drown him. Like his mother, the little fellow was very bashful in my presence; but, after a deal of persuasion, he condescended to shake hands with me. As he did so, I slipped a bright Mexican dollar into his sweaty little paw. Great was his delight in its possession, and he was most profuse in his thanks, salaaming low, again and again, as he cried in shrill, childish treble, "Arienti! Arienti!"

A week later, returning from a pleasant trip to Tokio and Fujihama, I missed Sakaicho from his accustomed stand, and so hired a strange jin-riki-sha man. It was my last day ashore, and, resolving to make the best of it, I hurried through the different sights I had not yet seen.

Late in the afternoon I found myself speeding out into the country for a passing glimpse of the native graveyard. Rounding a quick turn in the road, I espied a funeral cortege ahead. Hurrying my panting jin-riki-sha man forward, I soon overtook it. It was a double funeral, I perceived, by the two heavy chests of plain white wood, borne on the shoulders of several stalwart natives. A solitary mourner followed, and in the slender form and bowed head I recognized Sakaicho. But O! how changed! Aroused by my coming he slowly raised his listless head, and, with dull, apathetic glance, returned my greeting.

As we walked reverently in the rear, my strange jin-riki-sha man told me that a destructive fire had swept through Sakaicho's neighborhood, burning his house and suffocating his wife and child.

Presently the grave was reached, and priests from the buddhist temple near by chanted the requiem with solemn ceremony, while a group of idle natives curiously crowded round. With glassy eye, Sakaicho followed the movements of the priests, and, when the last clod had been thrown on, he erected a memorial stone to his loved ones. Then he turned away, to place among the mementos before his household God two little wooden tablets, marked with the name and date of birth and death of his wife and boy, while I returned in haste to my ship. And, though five thousand miles of heaving ocean now separate us, never will I forget Sakaicho and Hona Asi, nor the love they bore their son Hakadaki.

THE STRANGE EXPERIENCE OF A MISOGYNIST

"CONFOUND it all! But these minds of ours are curious fabrics!"

I had awakened, and remembering my dream, burst into the exclamation just recorded. It was a curious dream, seemingly without meaning, yet striking from a psychological standpoint, through the vividness of its realism and the fantastic juxtaposition of thoughts and scenes I previously experienced. The first part of it was a medley of incoherency and misty vagueness, too dim to recollect, but the conclusion was pictured in my mind's eye so perfectly, that it seemed as though the original were still before me: a little maid singing the same little song upon some metropolitan vaudeville stage. And these were the words she sang, with great seeming significance, to me in my dream:

"Reuben, Reuben, I've been thinking what a good

thing it would be,

If the women were transported, far beyond the

northern sea."

She sang it over and over again—more like a vocal fugue—ever discovering new charms of melody, new graces of expression. As she sang, strange foreboding impressions came to me, and her roguish face, enticing it is true, exasperated me.

"Begone!" I had cried. "Go to your far northern sea and leave me in peace!"

As I thus abjured her, her face became sad, compassionate; she held out her arms, beseechingly; then vanished from my dream. But in her place there was—ah! God!—the personification of one of my wildest dreams, the one woman who in all history had interested me. Grand, imperial, the mistress of kings, the friend of philosophy and art, she stood there—before me—so close I could have touched her—and just as I had always imaged her. She smiled upon me with careless abandon; then her beautiful face grew solemn and thoughtful, as, superbly tragic and with infinite pathos, she murmured, "After me, the deluge."

She too had gone: I was awake. Deeply I pondered on the incident. As an active member of our psychological society, I kept

a terse record of my dreams, in fact, had made such a modest study of them that never was I at loss for the clew to their causation. But the present one baffled me. True, years ago I had seen and heard the little Quakeress in a vaudeville show: and as truly, had I, in my student days, romanticised upon that wondrous, divinely-feminine figure, whose powerful personality had left its impress so strongly on the pages of history. But I had not recollected either in years; I had not deviated from my regular habits; I had gone to bed at my usual hour; and I could think of nothing outside my customary bill of fare which I had partaken of. In short, the little occurrence was inexplicable.

Soon, however, other sensations came over me as I acknowledged the futility of my efforts, tossed the covers back, and sprang out of bed. Something was wrong, evidently out of place—I unconsciously recognized this, but no effort of analytical reasoning could substantiate the verdict of my intuition. Bright rays of sunlight danced hither and thither; through the partially raised window, the perfume of flowers was wafted to me; the bustling life of the awakening city saluted my ears—"Ah! I have it now! Where are the sparrows?" I cried.

They were silent. No squabbling on the walks, no fierce battles on my window ledge, no chattering and scolding and noise incessant, nothing to tell me of their presence. Yet the spring was but fairly dawning and it was in the hey-day of mating time. How often, of late, had they wakened me with their mimic warfare, their martial contests, their boisterous wooing of their females! And how often had I prodigally burned a quarter-hour, watching and studying, this, the most important epoch of their lives! But they were gone: this trite demonstration of the laws of natural and sexual selection had seemingly been withdrawn from nature's billboards. With an unusual feeling of strangeness, I completed my dressing, only to discover new cause for thought, new whys and wherefores. I had asked to be called at six sharp, and here it was seven-thirty. It was evident that I had missed my train, so canceling the engagement with a slight manifestation of irritation, I whistled down the speaking-tube for my customary kettle of hot water. No reply. I listened: the house was as silent as a tomb: apparently, no one was stirring. Strange thoughts flashed to my mind. Visions of bloody horrors, burglars, thugs, hidden mysteries, murder, and what not, rose before me. This was a very strange, an unprecedented occurrence. I decided to investigate.

But first, a word for myself. I am a young fellow of twenty-eight or thirty; comfortably, though not more than so, endowed with the world's goods; and alone upon the face of the earth, save for some

distant, very distant relatives. The further to satisfy my modest but somewhat expensive tastes, I devote an occasional hour to literary drudgery—but a drudgery which permits me to be wholly my own master, little caring whether school keeps or not. It is now some two years or more that I have resided at my present quarters, which, for various reasons, are very satisfactory. The house, a cosy, two-story suburban residence, is the possession of a nice widow-lady, who, with her three spinster daughters, manages to eke out a comfortable livelihood from a small annuity and the sums they receive from me every quarter. I am the sole lodger, in fact, boarder too, though I more often dine down town or at the club. My feminine friends unite in calling me the "crusty young bachelor" and my jovial, bohemian comrades, "the misogynist." Why I have been given these respective appellations, I can readily understand; but how I have earned them I cannot conceive. I am not a woman-hater, as you may by this time have supposed me to be, far from it. Still, I must confess, I am not a woman-lover. Yet in this case I see no reason why the absence of the positive should imply the presence of the negative. I have never loved nor loved in vain, have never experienced anything which should condition me as I am—perhaps I was born that way. In short, while I do not like woman, I do not dislike her; but with such an object of neutral tints, I neither go out of my way to cultivate nor to avoid. "Confound it! How that quaint, little song rings in my ears!"

"If the women were transported, far beyond the
northern sea."

Mentally cursing the composer, I descended the stairs. No sign of life: the kitchen just as it was left last evening. It was evident that they were still a-bed. Filled with gloomy forebodings, I first knocked, then successively forced the doors to the three chambers. Each was deserted. The beds had all been slept in; but I noted with surprise, the presence of the garments, shoes, etc., which had been discarded on disrobing the previous evening. So accustomed was I to every dress in the household, that I ransacked the wardrobes, closets, and chests of drawers. Nothing was missing and I smiled to myself as I pictured their flight, clad in nothing but their sleeping robes. Imagine my consternation when I discovered in each bed, the night-dresses of their respective occupants. "Shameful!" I thought; but at the same time, I found myself entertaining a malicious desire to have been a witness of the event, to have beheld the three attenuated spinsters and their ebom-pointed mother, fleeing like veritable Eves—whither, I knew not.

A myriad hypotheses suggested themselves but I could entertain none of them. I had never suspected my sedate landlady nor her sober daughters of any wildness, and this very unconventional procedure took me quite a-back. Perhaps something serious had occurred? I would lock up the house and inform the chief of police.

On the front steps I found the morning paper, still as tightly rolled up as when it left the carrier's hand. "What's this? Phew!" These were the staring headlines which met my astonished eye:

A world catastrophe!!!
The scientific world astounded!!!
The femininity of the earth is no more!!!
All peoples have felt the heavy hand of horror!!!
The confutation of all religion, science and philosophy!!!
A universal wail of sorrow!!!
Special session of congress!!!

And much more which I dashed through to get to the pith of the matter. Impossible as it seemed and more like a gigantic hoax, here it is, in substance:

Some time last night, it had been generally agreed upon as midnight, in some mysterious, unaccountable way, every woman, the whole world over, had suddenly disappeared. There had been no warning; there had been no remains. It was total annihilation or total translation. Very graphic was the description of a great state ball in Berlin. A thousand couples were whirling in giddy waltz when twelve o'clock struck. A shudder, like the flapping of a great sail, was heard, and a thousand astonished men were rooted to the floor, speechless, each clasping the empty costume of his partner of the previous moment. Thus it had happened everywhere: none were spared, not even the female babes in the cradle. Nor had the shock been less severe among the rest of the animal kingdom. The male gender of all species remained, but the female had vanished. ("Ah," I mused, "that accounts for the sparrows.")

I hastily skimmed the account. This dreadful holocaust had put all the world aghast. Science was speechless as was also philosophy. Religion, while, on the whole, dumbfounded, among several sects there was whispering of the fulfillment of prophecy. There was no accounting for it. The immutability of natural law, the towering fabric of philosophic speculation, the dizzy atheistical negation of all supernaturalism, the adamant division, between the knowable and the unknowable, of agnosticism; these, all these, and every system of thought and mode of action, had been

overthrown, confuted by this one fell blow. A blow, so light, that the sleeper awakened not in the passing.

I could hardly trust my senses. Was I dreaming? Had the editors or the printers gone mad? Or was it nothing but a gigantic American sell? With my mind awhirl, I was just preparing for the acceptance of the latter when I suddenly paused at the gate, remembering my deserted house and the sparrows. Hardly daring to think, I hurried down the street. At the corner, I stumbled into an excited group, evidently discussing the situation.

They were local acquaintances so I did not hesitate to join them. I was amused, however, at their appearance. Their attires indicated hasty and indiscriminate dressing. Shoes were dirty, cravats missing or all awry, clothes unbrushed—in short, a general air of seediness was the most conspicuous feature. And there, I could have sworn to it, was old Dottlyboy, the precisest and neatest man of the neighborhood, without his face washed.

"Oh! It's terrible! I can hardly collect myself. What's going to become of us? The cook has gone, too, and I haven't had my breakfast. I don't see why she couldn't have stayed. O my! O my! And at my time of life too!" Thus chattered the old gentleman who lived across the way from me, mumbling and chewing his words as though his mouth were full of hot mush—he had forgotten his false teeth.

"Is it true," I asked, "that woman is no more?"

"It is true," they gasped in solemn chorus.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" I shouted. But evincing no sign of jubilancy, I looked at them, then asked "Why don't you rejoice? Come, give a hearty three times three and a tiger with me. Now—hip—hip—"

But just then I was so violently kicked from behind that other emotions claimed my attention. I whirled about with the intention of planting my deadly right in the most vulnerable portion of my assailant's anatomy, when—thwack!—old Dottlyboy's cane descended on my pericranium with periculuous energy. I had a hazy impression of being suffocated in a cloud of invective, buffets, kicks and blows; of being tossed about in the bowels of a gregarious maelstrom; and of being vomited forth, a disintegrated mass, to recline in the contumely of the gutter.

"It is a very evident fact," I murmured as I retired to the house to change my garments, "that they feel their loss deeply. I wonder

what this most reminds me of—a freshman rush, a bargain counter crush, or a scrimmage on the gridiron?"

As I prepared myself anew to sally forth, I pondered deeply upon the perversity of human nature. Day after day, I had been the companion of one or more of the group, which had so viciously assailed me, in the rides to and from the city; hour after hour, I had listened to these suburbanites' complaints against womankind; yet here—and here—and here (I was feeling my bruises) are the convincing proofs of their inconsistency. Resolving to be more prudent in my demeanor and to hide my joy beneath a show of deepest melancholy, I was soon aboard a down-town car.

So ingrained was the habit, that I found myself glancing up with an air of guilty apprehension every time the car stopped to take on ladies. Each time, I resumed my paper, breathing a sigh of relief, for among them there were never any ladies. I think it was the first time I had ever come down on such a late car without injuring my personal feelings, by relinquishing my seat, in order to satisfy the highly impersonal one which conventionality demanded of me and designated as courtesy. There were no charming creatures to hang pathetically onto the straps or to gaze beseechingly at me in a usually successful endeavor to soften my marble heart.

The streets were full of people, all discussing the one topic, while in front of the great papers, thousands were grouped, awaiting with bated breaths, the advent of every bulletin. One thing surprised me greatly: without exception, every window contained cards which informed the public that men or boys were wanted. For once, labor was at a premium and jobs at a discount. It was remarkable, the airs which the laborers now put on. It had not taken them long to grasp the situation. Proud disdain and stony indifference had taken the place of their whining and begging. "What an expansion of the currency," I thought.

Especially were the employment agencies crowded—not by applicants for positions but by prospective employers. The celerity with which wages rose was startling, particularly in those branches of labor hitherto wholly carried on by women. By mid day the almost utter futility of endeavoring to obtain men, willing to cook, make beds and wash dishes, for anything less than fabulous salaries was manifest. As a result, everybody decided to patronize the restaurants. The crush, everywhere, for meals, was frightful—so terrible that I resolved to do my own cooking at home. Of course, not for long, for so many would now enter upon this lucrative business, that a few days would see everything on its original footing.

A week soon passed, during which the newspapers were filled with fierce controversies and the whole industrial system pulsating with unprecedented vigor. Never had there been such a boom before. Everything was running full blast. A reduction of the population by one-half was equal to a doubling of the currency. There was one point in this stimulus, however, which the world had evidently forgotten to reckon on. That, while the productive facilities had all been revived, the consumptive facilities had been reduced fifty per cent. Thus, there would be extraordinary activity in trade, and, since there was a greater demand than supply of labor, wages would rise; but following the wages, there would come a rise in all prices. At first, labor, being in the ascendancy, would buy liberally of all necessaries and many of the luxuries which it had hitherto been denied; but when prices reached their proportionate ratio with wages, labor would be unable to buy a bit more than in the days before the great catastrophe. The outcome was obvious to any dabbler in the "dismal science," though neither I nor the world realized or comprehended that outcome.

One day, about two weeks after the occurrence of the wonderful event, I went down to call on Charley Eggleston, a young artist friend of mine. On the way, I dropped into my barber's for a shave. Imagine my surprise on finding a shopful of customers and an alarming dearth of barbers. While waiting his appearance, I looked over my companions and was astonished at the general picture of slouchiness which they presented. Horrors! I glanced in the mirror and beheld myself with soiled shirt, collars and cuffs, two waistcoat buttons missing, four day's growth of beard, a dirty handkerchief in my hand, the knees of my trousers bagged and the creases of the same most conspicuous by their absence, my—but why relate it all—I was as slouchy as any of them. Just then the barber arrived on the scene. I had always looked upon him as a sober, industrious man, devoted to the welfare of his family; but in he came, as drunk as a boiled owl, and ordered us all out of his shop. I remonstrated with him, though to no effect, for he informed us that he was going to close up shop. His assistants were all drunk or lost and it was impossible for him to do the work single handed.

"And besides," he concluded, "What's the good of working anyway? What can I do with my money after I've earned it?"

So he turned us out, bag and baggage, forgot to lock the door, and returned to finish his carousal.

Though Charley was a very neat fellow, careful of his appearance and a ladies' man, I knew him too well to be ashamed to visit him

in my present guise. At the same time I decided to postpone contemplated visits on my lawyer and publisher. My journey, drawing me thither, I happened to pass by the publishing house. The place was closed and there was a sign informing the public that Walker & Sons had retired from business. Glancing curiously about me, I was surprised at the number of "To Let" signs on every hand. Across the street, two men were putting up the shutters to their shops and on looking down the street, I observed several others occupied in like manner. At this juncture I unexpectedly met my lawyer. He was in a hurry, but paused long enough to tell me he had given up his practice and was going out of town, and that he had placed my papers and everything relating to me in his possession, in a safe-deposit vault at my banker's. He explained his course by informing me that he had enough to live on, so there was no use in earning more. Continuing my journey, I finally arrived at Eggleston's rooms, marveling, as I did so, at the amount of drunkenness I had witnessed on the streets.

As I entered the hallway I met Charley. He was dressed so carelessly that I felt quite relieved on the score of my own appearance.

"Hello, old man!" he cried. "Haven't seen you for an age. I was just going out, but—"

"Going out!" I stood aghast. Charley Eggleston, the immaculate, the ladies' man, the dressiest man about town, going out on the street in such a guise!

Understanding my surprise, he said "O what's the difference. No one to see me anyway, you know. But come in—it was nothing pressing—and have a chat."

His apartments were just as bad: the confusion and disorder was indescribable. It was also evident that he had been neglecting his painting, and on chiding him about it, he said "What's the use? I can't go on with it. First my model and then my muse deserted me. Besides, what does it matter whether—by the way, how are you getting along with that new poem of yours? You read me the first four stanzas—have you it finished?"

"I—I—but— —" I looked at him in dismay. Those four stanzas, lonely in their solitude, still lay upon my desk—since they were not self-procreative, they had neither multiplied nor replenished my thought. "But you see, Charley, I must acknowledge that—that— —"

Here we both burst into laughter, confessed our sins, and agreed that in some unaccountable way we had lost incentive. Having become aware of our own condition, we hit upon the idea of visiting our different chums to note how they were progressing, and we promised ourselves a very enjoyable evening.

Finding it impossible to obtain a cab, we resolved to walk. What a different scene the streets presented to that of a few short weeks ago! Everybody was disconsolate and gloomy, the stores nearly all closed, and the theatres deserted. Everything seemed going the wrong way. I noticed particularly, from a study of their faces, that everybody was suffering from dyspepsia. The absence of good cooking was beginning to tell. There was no laughter nor manifestations of good nature; but wrangling and fighting had become the order of the day, due, I surmised, among other things, to the loss of their stomachs. While excessive drinking had become quite common among all classes, it was especially noticeable among the workingmen. Nor was that all. Their demeanor was greatly changed. Dissatisfaction was the prevailing expression of their faces, while they carried themselves with an air of independence and were insolent and insulting to those of the upper classes they chanced to encounter. After some strolling I became aware that the little courtesy, previously to be found on our thoroughfares, had entirely disappeared. Selfishness had become the ruling passion. As I scrutinized the faces of all I met, I was surprised at the hardness and bullishness of their expression: all the higher, nobler attributes seemed to have been eliminated. Not only were the sidewalks thronged by the natives, but the rural population had evidently deserted the country to come to town. With an old farmer, enquiring his way, we had quite a chat. He seemed to mourn, above all, the loss of "Maria," who had worked shoulder to shoulder with him for "well-nigh thirty year." First his hired men had quit work; then his boys had gone off to the city; and, since there was no one dependent upon him, he could not see why he was not entitled to a vacation too. So here he was, out to have a good time, spending his savings of years in pursuance thereof. But above all, in the crowds that surged about me, the most prominent feature was the woeful absence of buttons.

An hour later found us seated at the hospitable board of Trombley, "the connoisseur" (not in art, however, but in gourmandizing) his chums called him. His *chef*, whom he had been paying an extravagant salary, had left him; but he was an adept in cookery, conversant with all the mysteries of the chafing-dish. Many were the lamentations he made as he served us, and many the apologies, too. At our earnest solicitation he had made some of his charming butter-cakes, and as we "fell to," with

haunting recollections of our own *cuisine*, he watched us with an anxious air.

"There, there, man!" he suddenly exclaimed.

Charley was thunderstruck. He was in the act of helping himself to a liberal supply of honey when thus admonished. Trombley saw that our mutual surprise demanded an explanation, so he gave it.

"Do you know that that is most likely the last honey which will ever pass your lips? It cost me just exactly twenty dollars and it was the last pint in the market. Haven't you heard that the honey-bees have ceased producing?"

"Ceased producing!" in chorus.

"Yes, alas! It is true. In every hive, when the queen was found to be missing, confusion and anarchy ensued. They first turned to and ate all the honey, then separated, and are now scattered from Dan to Ber-Sheba. In the absence of authority and a guiding hand, each bee shifted for itself, and it is said that the country is almost uninhabitable, so ferocious have they become. It is certain that none can survive the winter."

The next person we visited was Prescott, an old college chum, whom we had never lost sight of and who had devoted himself to the cause of temperance. Repeated ringings of his bell having elicited no response, and hearing the sound of singing, we ventured within. Tracing the voice, we arrived at the kitchen. There, surrounded by a startling array of bottles, in a slatternly dressing-gown and singing with maudlin gravity a temperance hymn, was Prescott, terrifically drunk. He evidently did not recognize us, though our reception was a warm one, for he took pot shots at us with a Smith & Wesson, as we tumbled over each other in the haste of our exit.

On recovering our equanimity, we decided to next visit George Curtis, a bright young fellow, with a future before him we were certain. As his place was some distance away, we took the shortest cuts possible. Just as we were emerging from a very dark street we heard a voice, subdued but with great dramatic intensity, soliloquizing, "To be or not to be, that is the question. Whether to—" But at that moment our footsteps aroused the person, who whirled about, pointed a pistol at us and cried "Hands up!"

We hastily complied. As the man stepped closer to rob us, Charley exclaimed "Good God! It's Haskins!"

Haskins was a well known and quite successful actor and an old-time bohemian crony of ours. The recognition was mutual and explanations followed. Haskins had always lived up to the last cent of his salary, and when the great catastrophe had burst, was playing, but penniless. His forte being in comedy and extravaganza, the chief attraction of which lay in the feminine charms displayed, he was at once thrown out of employment. Since then he had done nothing and now he was famishing. To night he had resolved to carve his way to at least a full stomach.

"Why didn't you seek work?" I asked.

"Do I look like a laborer?" was his Yankee reply.

"But good gracious! Think of the disgrace!"

"There is no disgrace," he rejoined. "My father's dead: my mother, sisters, wife, all gone. I am disgraced in no body's eyes I care for, and as for yourselves, you'll be doing as bad before the month is out.

"But business is business," he concluded. "I have resolved to become a shining light in my new profession. So hands up! It's best to get the hand in by beginning on one's friends."

And he began with such vigor that when he bid us good night, every valuable we had with us had been transferred to his possession. Several times we were thus halted before we arrived at Curtis' house. It seemed as though everybody was taking to the highway as a means of obtaining an easy livelihood. If it went on at this rate, we soon would be reduced to the condition of the Scilly Islanders, who lived comfortably by taking in each other's washing.

If Curtis were at home, he was certainly in oblivion—drunk or otherwise for our repeated knocks availed nothing. Remembering our experience with Prescott, we were very cautious this time, keeping a sharp lookout for spring-guns and man traps. We ransacked the first floor and were thoroughly overhauling the second when we discovered him. Unseen, through an open door, we gazed upon the peculiar scene presented to us. In immaculate evening dress, patent leathers, gloves, etc., complete, attired as though for a wedding, he stood before a large table, contemplatively regarding a strange assortment of articles. There was a case of champagne, one of port, another of bourbon, several bottles of absinthe, a hypodermic syringe, a complete opium-smoker's outfit, and many other drugs and paraphernalia for like purposes. George himself was terribly changed. His naturally

slender face was quite attenuated and of extreme pallor; his eyes were dilated and intensely bright; while beneath them lay great, concentric circles of scarlet and black. He seemed lost in the depths of a thought which embraced the articles before him. We crept silently away and down the stairs, then returned, noisily stumbling over every third one, swearing like troopers, and making the greatest possible racket. He turned to greet us, shook hands cordially and gayly plunged into the thought which was uppermost in his mind.

"Just in time for my wedding! No (as we glanced at the general miscellany), don't think I'm starting a harem—I'm only deliberating on my choice. I'm a monogamous man, you know. But now that you fellows are here, I want you to stand up with me—but, I had forgotten, I must first indicate my preference. Come, help me to choose. Now what do you say to this?" As he raised a bottle of bourbon aloft and sang:

"Here's to the good old whiskey, drink it down!
Here's to the good old whiskey, drink it down!
Here's to the good old whiskey,
For it makes you feel so frisky,
Drink it down! Drink it down! Drink it down!"

"Horrible!" I cried.

"Ah, perhaps you don't like it. We'll pass on to the next. Here we have absinthe, the genuine *extrait d'absinthe* of happy France. It is composed, I am informed, of the flowering tops of wormwood, of angelica and sweet flag root, the dittany leaves of Crete, of star-anise fruit and many other aromatics, macerated in the purest of alcohol. What a charming bride! What an exquisite, emerald light flashes forth from its translucent depths! What joys unutterable to the fond lover who satiates desire, discovers bliss in the circumambieny of such a mistress! Think of the pleas—"

"George, you must stop this! At once! Be a man!" I commanded. But he rattled gayly on.

"Truly, comrade, I agree with you. It is not wholly to my taste. Surely, a more charming bride awaits me. Perhaps this is she. Hasheesh, the simplest and most enticing of maidens—the leaves and the flowers of the hemp plant, graciously mingled in due proportion with butter-fat. How simple, but how fascinating! Yet she is but an immature child when compared with this, a glorious woman. One kiss, and she fills your veins with liquid fire, which through your being, boils and bubbles, sizzles, froths and foams, effervescing with tremendous throbs of maddening pleasure. One

kiss, and she takes your hand, leads you up inaccessible heights, away from the world and its sorrows—up—up—till you walk with the immortals, sip golden nectar from chalices all-divine, till in the arms of Morpheus, sweet child of Somnus, you dream, and dream, and dream—a bliss ineffable!

"Yet," he seemed to pause and reflect, "such graces are too vigorous for me. More calm and peaceful must my mistress be. One, to lead me to that Lethean plunge through enervating, placid, drowsy joys; one, to steal away my senses with insidious stealth; one, to love me so that I loose my thought unaware, to kiss me from dull, brooding care into sweet forgetfulness. And here I find her—the soul of the poppy, the radiant spirit of mercy, the ministering angel of man. Sweet, sweet, the soft embrace of thine arms! Sweet, sweet—far more than sweet—divine the wondrous pleasure of communion with thee! Two mistresses have I wooed, and won, and lost. Wooing and winning, on thy soft bosom wilt I slumber through the lapse of ages, through countless cycles of time, through all eternity. Though virgin still, hast thou three daughters—divine fruition of an immaculate conception. Thus, as on thy chaste breast I sleep, forgetful, wilt these three graces—Morphia, Codeia, Narcotin—watch over us; thus, deep in somnolent languor, wilt they guard our dreams and lull us to soft melancholy; thus, as we journey down the shadowy slopes of time, wilt they shroud us in oblivion's winding sheet. Come, dear maiden of the Orient, forget thy mountain home of Akkisar, and in forgetting, bring forgetfulness to me. One caress, and my troubles flee me; one kiss from thy pale-red lips, and my senses sway and leave me; one benediction, and in thy mercy I cease to be; once mine, I am no more. O ye gods!—No more— No more— No more."

His voice died slowly away. We were silent. What could we do? As we stood helplessly by, his mood changed, he was himself again.

"Dear friends, bear with me: my affliction, as you know, is great. What may seem the raving of a madman is but the dreary monody of a soul, crying out from amid the ashes of dead joys, lost hopes, vanished ideals. As you well know, I have wooed, won and lost two mistresses—why not a third? First, the fair daughter of Mnemosyne; my success, barely inchoate, was brought to a glorious dawn by my second; the third, which I wed tonight, becomes their *requeiscat in pace*. You remember my music; how I devoted myself to it; how well I mastered it; my successes, small though they were; the beginnings of recognition, of homage: but you will remember that there was a something lacking, a

something to stir hearts of adamant; to kindle as with fire the emotions; to wring the heart-strings; to tear the gasping soul from its habitation of clay; to send it hurtling through the glories of empyreal bliss. My technique was superb—the equal of the greatest masters—but the power of soul-stirring, of soul-translation lay not there. In a dimly conscious way I understood the vacancy, the absence of the inspiration, and I awaited it, trusting faithfully in my intuitive foresight. The moment came; the time was ripe; I had mastered all save that; and that I awaited to master me. The dawn burst; an angel's hand swept with responsive touch the harmonies of my genius. As yet strangers, did my talent and my genius meet. I burst into song—and why not?—the void was filled—I loved—before high Heaven, aye, and the uttermost depths of Hell, I loved. The world embraced me; her riches, her glory, her every treasure were cast at my feet; and sublimer still, the sublimest of all, I was loved. Then did I soar to higher and yet higher levels; my power became absolute; my genius, transcendant. But amid the dizzy thunders of a world's applause, I essayed grander and still grander flights, ever beholding with bated breath my guiding light, my polestar, my Alice. O Alice! It was all for you, all through you, all by you! Then came the marriage—but a night intervened—a few short hours before the great consummation of my life. O God! The morning never broke!—Unending night in a vale of sorrow and tears! As a fiery meteor dashing athwart the sky, for a moment dazzling the dreamer before it is gone, so flashed she across my life, and in passing, struck the grandest symphonies of my soul. But the hand is wanting, the singer dumb, the strings broken. Think of it; conjure it; give rein to the wildest flights of fantastic imagination—from out the ghastly, unknown wastes of space, of the universe, some supreme force, some hell-bound, conscious power, seized and drew my Alice from me; forsooth! To glut the idle whim or empty vagary of some celestial monster. They say that thus was lost all women: to me, there was lost but Alice: but to the world was lost incentive. Woman, the one great inciting force of man is gone. The one gauge of man's morality, of man's ideality, of man's nobility, is gone. O mourn, ye sons of earth! Cry out in blackest despair! The past is dead: there is no future. Ye fall—down—down—down—to brutishness, to corruption, to death. Yield to your prurient desires; satiate your passions in wild debauchery; forget that ye are men. It is the panacea, the only one, to remove you from your miseries. Sin! Sin! Sin! Sin and be unexcelled by Hell itself! Heed me, ye sons of woman! The afflatus of inspiration is upon me. Steep thyself in the ephemeral somnolency of vice. To morrow you are no more. There is no future—woman is gone. Thy tremendous civilization, thy knowledge, thy culture of ten times ten thousand years is crumbling on the verge—disintegration, primeval chaos awaits it,

and you, and all. I see brute struggling with brute, and these brutes are men. Down into the oblivion of night I behold the towering fabric of man's achievements, the giddy pinnacles of his creation, the miraculous productions of his finite will, sink in a sea of blood. Evanescent are the glories of his enterprise. Loose the dogs of war! Tear the throat and rend the flesh! Kill! Maim! Destroy! Tumult, anarchy and chaos shall reign, and amid the horrors of such reign, shall vanish the modicum of man's nobility—the remnant of that which was lost with womankind. A space of internecine strife, then all is over. The earth will traverse the heavens as of yore; the sun, moon, stars and constellations will go their accustomed rounds; the universe will seem not susceptible to the change: but on the earth, man, bird, beast and insect; all sentient and insensate life; all organic structure and superstructure; will cease to be!"

We were dumbfounded, awed to quiescence. Apparently unconscious of our presence, he lighted a tiny alcohol lamp and prepared his opium and pipe. When the sickening smoke had well filled the apartment, we glided out, unwelcome guests from the marriage feast. We were moody, weighed down, not only with the horror of what had been, but with a horror of what was to be. We had seen enough so parted at the corner. The cars had ceased running and I was forced to wearily tramp home through the silent city—silent, save for the many deeds of violence and cries for help which came to my eyes and saluted my ears. Murder and robbery stalked abroad, and I was thankful when my home was reached. But I could not sleep: a weird phantasmagoria of anticipatory events haunted me as I tossed restlessly about. The impression left by Curtis was not too easily forgotten. Somewhere towards morning, the house was invaded by burglars; but I was indifferent and told them to help themselves. I began to feel, though not clearly, that in some way, both my position and the position of all men, were analogous with that of Curtis.

The sun was slipping from view in the west; the air was balmy and gracious; all nature seemed at peace: but silently, exhausted and in the extreme throes of hunger, my comrade and I trudged along the deserted road.

Hush! We heard a fall of hoofs and sprang into the bushes. Grasping our bludgeons firmly, desperation nerving us to action, we awaited the traveler's approach. Round a turn in the road he came, leading a heavily loaded horse. He was an aged man, with a fringe of white hair crowning the once oval but now fearfully emaciated face, the nose of which too distinctly proclaimed the Semitic type. Nearer and nearer he came; but for his gray hairs I felt no veneration, no mercy.

Suddenly, just as he came opposite our place of concealment, we sprang upon him. He made as though to draw a pistol, but I struck him sharply on the head, stretching him in the dust. Then we unloaded the horse. The burden was heavy and our hearts rejoiced as with trembling fingers we drew our knives and cut the many wrappings. O the bitter disappointment! Out rolled rubies, pearls, diamonds, the choicest of gems, and gold without end. In our rage we kicked the prostrate form and trampled the treasure into the dust. Recovering consciousness, the old man scrambled to his feet and on beholding the wanton dissipation of his wealth, burst into wild lamentations, calling upon the Father of Israel to smite the Gentile and repossess him of his goods. At first, in half-insane jocosity, I joined him, shrieking that portion of the *Merchant of Venice* where Shylock bewails the loss of his ducats and his daughter. But the old scoundrel's howling transcended mine, so I struck him roughly on the mouth and bade him cease his racket.

We asked him if he had any food, but swearing by all the prophets that he had none, he resumed the (to him) pleasant task of tearing his hair and his soul in his anguish. However we were hungry and heeded him not. A few minutes sufficed to build a fire, kill the animal and enable us to partake of a succulent repast of roast-horse. The Jew, heart-broken, refusing to join us, busied himself in rescuing his scattered treasures. Once, in the failing light, he uttered an exclamation of joy and hurried to the fire, the better to examine a handful of gems he had just resurrected. As he bent to the flame, his eyes glowing with the fierce fire of avarice, I glanced into his hand and beheld the cause of his joy. Among twenty jewels of more than ordinary value, reposed a brilliant of superbest lustre. Paugh! It was disgusting. I struck his hand maladroitly and scattered the diamonds to the four winds. The result was unexpected and sanguinary. Uttering an unearthly cry of blended rage and sorrow, he sprang upon me, seemingly endowed with supernatural vigor; but I blanketed him before he could use his revolver. My comrade hastened to my aid and as the three of us struggled together, received a ball through the brain. A minute and all was over, however, and even after the Jew was dead, I struck him again and again with in-human delight. But as I stood gloatingly over the corpse, a revulsion of feeling overcame me: I staggered, fell by the fire, and in thought journeyed over the past several weeks.

And what weeks they had been! Most truly had the vaticinations of Curtis been fulfilled! And why not? Though I had discovered it, alas! Too late, woman, the one incentive, was lost. The world had

not been prone to realize it at first; but now, moribund, in the last stages of extinction, the truth was all-apparent.

At first, as I have described, interest lagged and man had begun to titillate his desires with liquor; but the spirit grew and things went from bad to worse. Labor, after the first kiss of prosperity, finding itself reduced to its previous state of hand-to-mouth existence, rebelled. There were no longer any ties of wives and little ones, so the men became insulting and riotous in their demands for more wages and less hours. The toiling capitalists, discovering that they also had no families to labor for, became indifferent and replied to the strikes of their employes with lockouts. Life nor property were no longer held sacred and a reign of pillage and slaughter ensued. To intensify the horror of such conditions, the degraded criminal classes, emerging from their slums, holes and dens, flew at the throat of the society which had so often and so bitterly given them the lash. And even the convicts in all the penitentiaries, revolted; succeeding often in gaining their liberty. The police forces became paralyzed and finally dissolved. However, for a space, the regular army (the National Guard having long since disbanded) checked the inevitable tide of events. The people, having degenerated to all the brutishness of primitive man, drank and fought with equal ferocity. In consequence, the great centers of trade, and even all cities and towns, became stagnated, and the country no longer sent its products thither.

With starvation in the metropolises, a wild stampede followed, and the country was inundated with starving, frantic hordes, by whom, the agriculturists were despoiled and destroyed. All production ceased and anarchy was inaugurated. The complex superstructure of government was shattered, and the gregarious manifestation of the genus homo descended to the tribal unit—a unit, of course, in which the tie of family played no part. The men collected about their more valiant comrades, whose great physical and mental brutality enabled them to predominate. By these bands, the world was ravaged, plundered and destroyed. Art, science, culture, religion, tottered and fell into complete dissolution. In short, the reign of Hell on Earth had been instituted.

Borne away on the crest of a human tidal wave, I had been carried into the suburban districts, where I had since eked out a miserable and perilous existence. My sufferings and terrors had been frightful. I felt myself rapidly descending to the brute, but in my chaotic environment could do nothing to stay my fall. My treatment of the old Jew to night, clearly illustrates the completeness with which all my higher attributes had been

annihilated. There lay no nuance between me and a hungry lion in an African wilderness. And yet, such was the inevitable result of the loss of womankind.

Death, in its most horrible forms, had become my constant companion. And strange were the struggles of the departing spirits! Worn out by suffering and hardship, men saw mirages—not of banquets, but of women. I remember one brute, with whom I had fought over the possession of half a measure of corn, and whom I was forced to kill. As I ate hurriedly, for fear of being discovered and dispossessed, he rose to his feet, crying aloud the name of his wife. With the death-sweat on his brow and the rattle in his throat, he thought he beheld her. He tried to grasp the phantom of his distorted vision: it evaded, retreated: he advanced. Though dying, the vision gave him strength and he pursued it across the dry stubble, to throw up his arms and fall a corpse in the center of the field.

And of late, I found a similar hallucination overcoming my reason. It came upon me at the most unexpected moments and places. It darted across my line of vision; danced on the path before me; and in my dreams, overwhelmed me with caresses or soothed my weary soul with the ineffable calm of a woman's presence. In the battle of Norfolk, where ten thousand starving men captured the last commissariat of the expiring government, it well-nigh caused my death. The victory was virtually ours, for the besieged, in an endeavor to save themselves, had begun to cast the provisions amongst us. In the wild scramble I captured a great ham and escaped to the adjacent woods. Here I was overtaken by a marauder, who, quarreling with me over the booty, precipitated a terrible struggle. Just as I had him at my mercy and was about to give him the quietus, the apparition intervened. Dazzled, bewildered, I suspended the blow. The next I knew, I came to consciousness, grievously wounded, to discover the absence of both my antagonist and the ham. That was the first manifestation but since then they have grown more frequent. Ah! There she is now—O Laura, Laura, my lost—like a flash she is gone again. How strange it is that I should be thus haunted!—I, the "crusty bachelor," the "misogynist"! And as for Laura: before she was taken from the earth she was no more to me than any of my chums or boon companions. We liked each other—a sort of Platonic affection, I thought. But now, too late, I discover that I loved her—O Laura, my heart's desire, fill thou this aching void! Summon me, draw me to you! Release me these bonds of clay that I may escape my degradation, and with you find peace and joy! Kill—"

Hark! Voices: the footsteps of men. A band of hungry beasts of prey are upon me. I must escape them. Seizing a leg of the butchered horse, the greatest possible treasure to me, I sprang into the bushes and fled through the night, followed by the frantic shouts of joy which heralded the discovery of my commissary.

What a dreary solitude I had ventured into! So lately seething with the hurly burly of metropolitan life, how deserted had it become! Leaving aside the mere absence of its inhabitants, the city was the shadow of its former self. Fire had so ravaged it that for blocks at a time, I walked amid nothing except chimneys, which, springing from blackened ruins, towered heavenward—ghastly indices of the wrath of God. The streets were filled with trucks, wagons, carriages, baggage—all the debris of a universal and panic-stricken flight. Everywhere, putrid corpses obstructed the way, filling the air with noisome stenches, and rendering my progress all but unendurable. Still I staggered on, in the last stages of physical and mental exhaustion. I was so weak that I had frequently to pause and rest; while my mind seemed wavering on its foundations; all things appearing to me as in a half dream. At times I mumbled and chattered aloud like a mad man: at others, I seemed to realize my condition and endeavored to rein in my fleeting senses. How or why I had wandered thither, I could not tell, for the past few days were blurred and confused to my recollection—more like a hideous nightmare than actual events.

At last I reached my home, and to my surprise found the house, untouched by fire, still standing. Upon the piazza I encountered a great dog—the first life since entering the city. How my stomach stirred at the sight! My hunter's instinct rose paramount: I had found my supper. I discovered my task to be the easier, for he had evidently narrowly escaped becoming some one else's supper. As he faced me, his hair bristling and his teeth showing, I saw that his back was broken and that he dragged his hind quarters on the ground. I drew my knife and opened the attack. But just as I closed in, my weakness asserted itself: nearly, swooning, I grasped at the pillars for support and at this moment he darted past. Making a vain effort to intercept him, I was sent sprawling down the stairs. Crying weak tears of disappointment as I saw my supper disappear around the corner, I entered the house and laboriously ascended to my room. Falling into a chair by the window, I dozed off to sleep, attended by the beatific vision of Laura.

Hush! What was that? Claspings in my arms that radiant angel, I was awakened by a furious noise at my window. The sparrows! Impossible! I looked about me: the night was gone, and there, on my window ledge, a miniature battle for the possession of a

twittering female was going on. Beyond a slight feeling of bewilderment, I was my old self again. A second's thought convinced me of the whole truth. Seized by a mighty resolve, I snatched my hat, cane and gloves, and went down the stairs three at a time. In the lower hallway I ran against my landlady. Such unwonted conduct for a person as dignified as I, so astonished her that she did something she had never done before—asked me what the matter was and where I was going.

"Going?" I cried. "Why I'm off to propose to Laura." And I threw my arms about the good, old soul and kissed her square on the mouth.

THE TEST: A CLONDYKE WOOING

THE air throbbled with the confused uproar of many sounds—swinging, waltz-time music; the clicking of chips; the sharp clattering of the roulette ball; the clear-cut decisions of the game keepers; noisy gaiety and laughter; and above, under, all about, the deep hum of conversation. Candles and kerosene lamps looked down upon the scene. The floor was alive with the flying feet of the be-moccasined dancers, while at the tables clustered the gamblers, intent on the golden chase. In groups, the men of the creeks and camps and trails, talked of past deeds and planned new enterprises. Unkempt; clad in mackinaw, furs and *muclucs*; with the worn, tired faces of those who are brothers of toil and hardship; they unbent their stiffened tongues and talked and lived the old times over once again, ere, with the dogs, they faced the trail on the morrow. The long bar was crowded by those who sought to ease their thirst, or found temporary oblivion from the heavy labor of their meager lives.

The music struck up a lively "two-step"; but it was too cultivated for the dancers, only one couple taking the floor. A moment they became the cynosure of all eyes; conversation lulled, then rose again to a drowsy hum—they had been recognized—Lucille, and Jack Harrington, the Mastadon King. A fine pair they were to look at—Lucille, as pretty and charming a woman as ever graced a mining camp; Jack Harrington, strong and handsome, the owner of the richest claim on Mastadon. She—well she was Lucille, and for her past, such things are forgiven and forgotten in Dawson. And he was, as everybody said, a jolly good fellow, who had greater luck and could play a violin better than any man in the country.

They talked as they danced—talked of many things; of royalties and Gold Commissioners, the price of dogs and grub, of mines and miners; for they did not know each other and this was all they had in common. But given two healthy beings with time on their hands for mutual intercourse, you can safely trust to Chance for the finding of something in common—nay, something uncommonly in common. Ere the music ceased, the germ was sown.

"So you play the violin," she said. "O, teach me how! Above all, I love it. Won't you teach me?"

And this is how it began.

Three weeks later:

Past midnight, the dancing and gambling at its height, as Lucille and Jack enter, finishing a conversation begun the cold northern lights.

"And you are sure?" he asks.

"O Jack, I do love you for yourself, and I don't care whether you're broke or can count your ounces by the thousand. I know my feelings."

It slips trippingly from your tongue and feelings are easily mistaken. Can you prove it?"

"Prove it? How can I? I wish it were so, but it can't be done."

"O yes it can."

"Can?"

"Come."

Then did a comet flash athwart the Dawson sky. Limits were removed and the tables crowded by the miners, intent on seeing the high play. The last turn at the faro table, and he plays the queen to win and "coppers" the deuce for an even thousand apiece, with another thousand on the high card. The deuce follows the queen and the three bets are lost. The onlookers are breathless with admiration. In fifteen minutes the whole town knows that "Lucky" Jack Harrington has broken loose, and comes to see. The test has begun.

Ever, as he ventures the markers he repeats his question, and as often she reiterates her reply. At the end of an hour he is fifteen thousand to the bad; still the play is not fast enough for him. He sends for the chairman of the committee, appointed by the miners to aid several score of unfortunates, who had lost their all in the "great fire." Laconic the conversation:

"There's ten thousand behind the bar for you, on one consideration."

"And that—"

"Is that you weigh it out and take it away at once."

"Done."

Father B—is summoned and the scene repeated; this time twenty-five thousand for the hospital. And the town voices one conclusion: either "Lucky" Jack Harrington is drunk or has gone clean daft.

"I've sold my mine and this is the last of it," he says to Lucille as he scatters a final handful of dust under the feet of the dancers. "What do you think of me now?"

"Jack! Jack! the test is hard! I had thought we could do so much, that we could have gone away and forgotten all this—I hate it so! But you should know that I cannot change. I would do anything, endure anything for your sake. Thank God! you've done your worst and I'm not altered."

"Would you cleave unto me and follow me to the ends of the earth, in misery, toil and hardship?"

"Why jangle words? Can a woman do more? I have told you: you have tried me. Is there aught under the sun a woman won't do when she truly loves?"

"But would you?"

"If you will have it so, yes. Like the squaw, it is my duty to follow my lord and master—aye, and my pleasure."

Old Sol, attended by twin sun dogs, has just cleared the southern horizon at meridian, and pauses for a peep at the Northern Eldorado. Before he can slip behind the mountain over which he rose, he catches a glimpse of a scene, which all Dawson has turned out to behold. Two heavily laden sleds and an Indian dog driver, wait where the throng is densest, before the Opera House. A passage is forced through the onlookers and he is joined by Jack and Lucille.

Cold, the morning; dreary, the scene; crude, the environment: but withal, magnificent, the picture. Filled with scintillating frost particles, the air is a sparkling, silvery sheen, a fairy gossamer. The mighty Yukon, the towering peaks, the far-reaching forest; monotonously white and sphinx-like in their brooding calm, sleep on the bosom of the awful Artic silence. In garments of leather and fur, toil-worn and hardy, their eyes slumbering with latent action and power, the gold-seekers group like heroes of the Elder World. And there, in their midst, a veritable King of the Northland—"Lucky" Jack Harrington. From his wolverine cap to his Innuite *muclucs*, he stood a MAN amongst MEN. And she, in

buckskin and furs and beaded moccasins, with her rosy cheeks and laughing eyes, was truly a dainty, Artic princess.

The air is filled with goodbyes and good wishes. The whips snap spitefully; the wolf-dogs lunge in the traces with the quick, impatient whine of their wild progenitors; and the steel-shod sleds crunch into the river trail. Some one in the crowd sings

"And Ruth clave unto her—"

And Dawson wondered over "Lucky" Jack Harrington's latest freak, and would be wondering yet, had it not forgot it all that night in a wild stampede to Swede Creek.

For a month, now, entirely isolated on the head waters of the Clondyke, had they lived in a rough cabin of Jack's building. Meager had been their fare—bacon, beans and flour, with an occasional moose steak. Meager had been their lives, shorn of all but the barest necessities. And for a woman, bright, accomplished, and who has known so much better, to settle down to the coarse, dreary round of housekeeping in such a camp, windowless and cheerless, with its tin plates and pine bough bed and guttering slush-lamp, it was indeed hard. Lucille stood it, however, because she was with the man of her choosing; though little did she see of him, for he was in the forest or over the mountains from morning till night.

But she was a woman in whom the emotions were important factors of her existence, and when they mounted the throne of her reason they ruled with a rod of steel. Finely strung, sensitive, delicate, with the sensuous soul of the artist, loving the rhythmic pulse of harmony and responding to its loftiest flights; small wonder she took pleasure in the violin during his constant absences. And small wonder in the long evenings when he could be induced to play, that she sat as one entranced. Nor was it the instinctive delight of the untutored animal that bade her best. She was more like a thirsty soul, wandered afar in the desert and harking back to the founts and springs of its childhood.

But of her love for the music, Jack thought strange things, and a certain, unconscious jealousy, grained and distorted his conclusions. So, on this night of nights, he played as one possessed. He excelled himself, venturing difficult flights, half in bitterness, half in pleasure born of the consciousness that he was soon to know. Clever at improvisation, he at last essayed one, that soared to heights and sank to depths, hitherto unattainable. And

in the voluptuous harmony he enticed and lost, not only her, but himself.

The tremulous, long-drawn strains, saddened to a minor of gentle runs and soft, melancholy cords. For a space, the air thrilled with the pathos of the theme; then the *finale* begun. The *adagio* changed to *allegretto*, to *allegro*, from *allegro* to *velocissimo*. Shaking, shuddering, shivering, quivering, the violin shrieked its passion, bursting into one final vortex of emotions.

A string broke: a jangling discord died away: they looked at each other across the beloved instrument. Without, a wolf-dog howled mournfully: the slush-lamp guttered gloomily. All else was silent. Into her eyes he gazed as though he would lay bare her soul.

"For myself, or the music?" he asked. And with one fierce stroke the violin crashed into fragments.

An early April morning—there is a low hum of life, a subdued murmur of running waters, a vague feeling of preparation, in the air. Spring, that bursts into an instant miracle of bloom and life and action, has crept in insidiously and unawares. Yesterday, the ghastly silence of winter weighed upon us; to-day we have a strange sensation of unrest, an unconscious expectancy; and to-morrow there is a crashing and rending of fetters, and the full-grown Spring breaks upon us like a marvelous vision.

All Dawson awoke and drank the exhilarating tonic of the air; felt the premonition of things to come; and wandered up and down the main street through the very joy of living. And not among the least, was its interest in the dog-teams, ready to commence their long journey to "salt water," to the Outside. Again the hearty grip and good luck blessing; again the whips snapped, the dogs howled, and the sleds churned into the river trail; and for the last time, Jack and Lucille turned their backs on the Golden City.

As usual, Dawson was excited, and several of her most respected citizens so far forgot themselves as to baptize the departing travelers with rice—rice, worth a dollar a pound and only purchasable in small quantities.

A few comments were made.

"'Lucky' Jack Harrington stands pat," quoth one of the gambling fraternity.

"Why shouldn't he?" said another. "He's a good hand at the game. Who'd have thought he owned a mile of Dominion all the time, and it as rich as Eldorado?"

"They say he bought it up for a song when it wasn't worth the recording fee."

"I say, boys, he may have an Eldorado in Dominion, but we know he's got a Bonanza in Lucille."

"Bet you the ice breaks before he makes Chilkoot!"

"Even it don't!"

"Who'll give me odds?"

"Two to one it does!"

And herewith, all Dawson fell to gambling on the race "Lucky" Jack Harrington was running with the Spring.

THANKSGIVING ON SLAV CREEK

SHE woke up with a start. Her husband was speaking in a low voice, insistently.

"Come," he added. "Get up. Get up, Nella. Quick. Get up."

"But I don't want to get up," she objected, striving vainly to lapse back into the comfortable drowse.

"But I say you must. And don't make any noise, but come along. Hurry! Oh, do hurry! Our fortune's made if you will only hurry!"

Nella Tichborne was now wide awake, what with the suppressed excitement in his whispers, and she thrust her feet out with a shiver upon the cold cabin floor.

"What is it?" she asked, petulantly. "What is it?"

"Ssh!" he sibilated. "Don't make a noise. Mum's the word. Dress at once."

"But what is it?"

"Be quiet, if you love me, and dress."

"Now, George, I won't move an inch until you tell me." She capped the ultimatum by sitting back on the edge of the bunk.

The man groaned. "Oh, the time, the precious time, you're losing! Didn't I tell you our fortune was made? Do hurry! It's a tip. Nobody knows. A secret. There's a stampede on. 'Ssh! Put on warm clothes. It's the coldest yet. The frost is sixty-five below. I'm going to call Ikeesh. She would like to be in on it, I know. And oh, Nella—"

"Yes?"

"Do be quick."

He stepped across to the other end of the cabin where a blanket partitioned the room into two, and called Ikeesh. The Indian woman was already awake. Her husband was up on his Bonanza claim, though this was her cabin, in which she was entertaining George Tichborne and Nella.

"What um matter, Tichborne?" she asked. "Um Nella sick?"

"No, no. Stampede. Rich creek. Plenty gold. Hurry up and dress."

"What um time?"

"Twelve o'clock. Midnight. Don't make any noise."

Five minutes later the cabin door opened and they passed out.

"Ssh!" he cautioned.

"Oh, George! Have you got the fryin-pan?"

"Yes."

"And the gold-pan? And the axe?"

"Yes, yes, Nella. And did you remember the baking-powder?"

They crunched rapidly through the snow, down the hill into sleeping Dawson. Light stampeding packs were on their backs, containing a fur robe each, and the barest necessities for a camp in the polar frost. But Dawson was not sleeping, after all. Cabin windows were flashing into light, and ever and anon the mumble of voices drifted to them through the darkness. The dogs were beginning to howl and the doors to slam. By the time they reached the Barracks the whole town was aroar behind them. Here the trail dropped abruptly over the bank and crossed the packed ice of the Yukon to the farther shore.

George Tichborne swore softly and to himself; but aloud: "It's leaked out somehow, and everybody's in it. Sure to be a big stampede now. But hurry up; they're all behind us, and we'll make it yet!"

"George!" A frightened wail punctured the still air and died away as Nella slipped on the icy footing and shot down the twenty-foot embankment into the pit of darkness beneath.

"Nella! Nella! Where are you?" He was falling over the great ice-blocks and groping his way to her as best he could. "Are you hurt? Where are you?"

"All right! Coming!" she answered, cheerily. "Only the snow's all down my back and melting. Brrr!"

Hardly were the trio reunited when two black forms plumped into their midst from above. These were followed by others, some arriving decorously, but the majority scorning conventional locomotion and peregrinating along on every other portion of their anatomies but their feet. They also had stampeding packs on their backs and a great haste in their hearts.

"Where's the trail?" the cry went up. And thereat all fell to seeking for the path across the river.

At last George Tichborne found it, and, with Nella and Ikeesh, led the way. But in the darkness they lost it repeatedly, slipping, stumbling, and falling over the wildly piled ice. Finally, in desparation, he lighted a candle, and as there was not a breath of wind, the way was easier. Nella looked back at the fifty spanpeders behind and laughed half-hysterically. Her husband gritted his teeth and plunged savagely on.

"At least we're at the head of the bunch, the very first," he whispered to her, as they swung south on the smoother trail which ran along under the shadow of the bluffs.

But just then a flaming ribbon rose athwart the sky, spilling pulsating fire over the face of the night. The trail ahead lighted up, and as far as they could see it was cumbered with shadowy forms, all toiling in the one direction. And now those behind began to pass them, one by one, straining mightily with the endeavor.

"Oh, Nella! Hurry!" He seized her hand and strove to drag her along. "It's the one chance we've been waiting for so long. Think of it if we fail!"

"Oh! Oh!" She gasped and tottered. "We will never make it! No, never!"

There was a sharp pain in her side, and she was dizzy with the unwonted speed. Ikeesh grunted encouragement and took her other hand. But none the less the vague forms from the rear continued steadily to overtake and pass them.

Hours which were as centuries passed. The night seemed without end to Nella. Gradually her conciousness seemed to leave her, her whole soul narrowing down to the one mechanical function of walking. Ever lifting, ever falling, and ever lifting anon, her limbs seemed to have become great pendulums of time. And before and behind glimmered two eternities, ever lifting, ever falling, she pulsed in vast rhythmical movement. She was no

longer Nella Tichborne, a woman, but a rhythm—that was all, a rhythm. Sometimes the voices of Ikeesh and her husband came to her faintly; but in her semiconscious condition she really did not hear. To-morrow there would be no record of the sounds; for rhythm is not receptive to sound. The stars paled and dimmed, but she did heed; the aurora-borealis shrouded its fires, and the darkness which is of the dawn fell upon the earth, but she did not know.

But ere the darkness fell, Ikeesh drew up to Tichborne and pointed to the loom of the mountains above the west shore of the river.

"Um Swede Creek?" she asked, laconically, pointing whither the trail led.

"No." he replied. "Slav Creek."

"Um no Slav Creek. Slav Creek—" She turned and pointed into the darkness five degrees to the south. "Um Slav Creek."

He came suddenly to a stop. Nella persisted in walking on, heedless of his outcries, till he ran after her and forced her to stop. She was obedient, but as a rhythm she no longer existed. The two eternities, which it was her task to hold apart, had rushed together, and she was not. She wandered off to the old home down in the States, and sat under the great trees, and joyed in the warm sunshine—the old home, the old mortgaged home, which had driven them poleward after the yellow gold! The old home which it was their one aim to redeem! But she forgot all this, and laughed, and babbled, and poured the sunshine back and forth from hand to hand. How warm it was! Was there ever the like?

Tichborne conferred with Ikeesh. She stolidly reiterated that Slav Creek lay farther to the south than he believed.

"Somebody went astray in the dark," he exulted, "and the rest followed his trail like sheep. Come on! Come on! We'll be in at the finish yet, and ahead of no end of those that passed us!"

He cut across a five-mile flat into the southwest, and two hours later, with gray dawn creeping over the landscape, entered the wood-hidden mouth of Slav Creek. The fresh signs of the stampede were so many and so various that he knew Ikeesh had spoken true, though he feared that the mistake had occurred too late in the night to have led enough on the wild-goose chase up Swede Creek.

"Oh, Nella," he called to his wife, stumbling blindly at his heels, "it's all right. We are sure to get a claim. Day has come. Look about you. This is Slav Creek, and behold, the day is Thanksgiving day!"

She turned a blank face upon him. "Yes, the mortgage shall be lifted, principal and interest, I promise you—George and I both promise you. Even now, to-morrow, do we go north to lift the mortgage."

Tichborne glanced helplessly at Ikeesh.

"Um much tired," she commented, dryly. "But um be all right bime-by. Bime-by make camp, um be all right."

They hastened on for five miles more, when they came to the first white-blazed trees and fresh-planted stakes of the newly located claims. Hour after hour they travelled up the frozen bed of the creek, and still, stake to stake, the claims stretched in an unbroken line. Even the man and the Indian woman grew weary and panted. Ikeesh kept a jealousy eye on Nella's face, and now and again, when it turned white, rubbed with snow the tip of the nose and stretched skin of the cheek-bones. They passed many men—the successful ones—rolled in their furs by the side of the trail, or cooking and warming themselves over crackling fires of dry spruce. At eleven o'clock the sun rose in the southeast; but though there was no warmth in its rays, it gave a cheerier aspect to things.

"How much farther do the stakes run?" Tichborne asked of a man limping down the trail.

"I staked 179," the man answered, stopping to pound the aching muscles of his legs. "But there were about ten more behind me; so I guess they've run it up to 189."

"And this is 107," Tichborne calculated aloud. "Five-hundred-foot claims—ten to the mile—about eight miles yet, eh?"

"Reckon you've about hit it on the head," the other assured him. "But you'd better hurry. Half the stampede went wrong up Swede Creek—that's the next one to this—but they're onto themselves now, and crossing the divide and tapping Slav Creek in the hundred-and-eighties.

"But they're having a terrible time," he shouted back as he went on his way. "I met the first one that succeeded in crossing over. He

said the trail was lined with people tee-totally played out, and that he knew himself of five frozen to death on the divide."

Frozen to death! The phrase served to rouse Nella from her maze of memory visions. Her glimmering senses came back to her, and she opened her eyes with a start. The interminable night was gone—spent where or how she could not say—and day broke upon her with a blinding flash. She looked about. Everything was strange and unreal. Both her companions were limping pitifully, and she was aware of a great dull pain in her own limbs. Her husband turned his head, and she saw his face and beard a mass of bristling ice. Ikeesh's mouth was likewise matted with frost, and her brows and lashes long and white. And Nella felt the weight on her own lashes, and the difficulty of drawing them apart from each other whenever she closed her eyes. The doubly excessive demand of the toil and the frost had burned up all the fuel of her body, and she felt cold and faint with hunger. This latter she found worse than the agony of the overused muscles; for a quivering nausea came upon her, and her knees trembled and knocked together with weakness.

Occasionally Tichborne made excursions to one side or the other in search of the claimstakes, which were not always posted in the creekbed. At such times Nella dropped down to rest, but Ikeesh dragged her afoot again, and shook her, and struck her harsh blows upon her body. For Ikeesh knew the way of the cold, and that a five-minute rest without fire meant death. So Nella had lapses and cruel awakenings till the whole thing seemed a hideous nightmare. Sometimes the trees became gibbering shades, and Slav Creek turned to an Inferno, with her husband as Virgil, and leading her from circle to circle of the damned. But at other times, when she was dimly conscious, the memory of the old home was strong upon her, and the mortgage nerved her on.

A long, long time afterward—ages afterward, it seemed—she heard George cry aloud joyfully, and looking at him as though from a great distance, she saw him slashing the bark from a standing tree, and writing on the white surface with a lead-pencil. *At last!* She sank down into the snow, but Ikeesh struck her a stinging blow across the mouth. Nella came back angrily to her feet, but Ikeesh pushed her away and set her to work gathering dry wood.

Again came a long lapse, during which she toiled mechanically and unknowing; and when she next found herself she was in the furs by a big fire, and Ikeesh was stirring a batter of flour and water and boiling coffee. To her surprise, Nella felt much better

after the rest, and was able to look about her. George ran up with a gold-pan of gravel which he had got from the creek bottom through an air-hole, and warmed his hands by the fire. When he had panned it out he brought the prospect over to her. The streak of black sand on the bottom was specked with yellow grains of glistening gold, and there were several small nuggets besides. He leaped up and down and about like a boy, for all his weary body.

"We've struck it at last, Nella!" he cried. "The home is safe! If that is a surface indication, what must it be on bed-rock?"

"Tell you what—"

They turned their heads, startled. A man had crawled up to the fire unobserved in their excitement.

"Tell you what," he glowed, "it's the richest creek in Alaska and the Northwest. Sure! He sat down uninvited, and tried to unfasten his ice-bound moccasins. "Say, I broke through the ice up here a piece and wet my feet. I kind of think they're freezing."

Ikeesh stopped from her cooking, and Tichborne lending a hand, they cut off the newcomer's moccasins and socks and rubbed his white feet till the glow of life returned.

"Tell you what," the sufferer went on, unconcernedly, while they worked over him, "judging from indications, you people are located on the richest run of the creek. Sure! But I got in on it; you betcher life I did! Got lost on Swede Creek, too, and hit across the divide. Say! No end of frozen men on the trail. But I got in on it, tell you what!"

"A true Thanksgiving, Nella."

George Tichborne passed her a tin plate of flapjacks swimming in bacon grease and a great mug of piping black coffee. She seized his hand impulsively and pressed it, and her eyes grew luminously soft. . . .

"Tell you what—" she heard the newcomer begin; but a vision of the old home, warm in the sunshine, came into her eyes, and she dropped off to sleep without hearing "what."

THEIR ALCOVE

HE crumpled each dainty note with a steadfastness of purpose that surprised him. He had not thought it would be so easy. In fact, he felt a sort of passive elation as he laid them carefully upon the hearth, side by side and in intermingled tiers. He began to take a curious pleasure in the task, and his habitual neatness asserted itself till the pile began to assume architectural proportions. How like a pedestal, he mused. He regarded it critically. One little missive—her latest and last—protested with the lusty strength of youth at such untimely incineration. It bulged forth distressingly, ruining the lines of the parallelogram. A few gentle pokes and it subsided among its fellows.

How like a shrine, an altar, it was; and he, apostate to the gentle Hymen, officiating as high priest. The fancy pleased him; there was a hint of poesy about it. After all, this was the better way. He was glad she had been so sensible about it. Paugh! this giddy return of trinkets and tokens! What right had she to her letters, or he to his? A senseless custom at best. And how readily she had acquiesced when he mentioned it! He confessed to a momentary pang at this; he had expected some show of sentiment, of womanly weakness; but no, she had merely nodded her head and smiled. Why, it was very plain that she had grown tired. Of course, she had not said as much to him, but it was clear, even clearer now that it was over. And it was to be admitted he had behaved splendidly; even she must acknowledge that. If aught were said it was he who must bear it. How the fellows would cod him! And at teas and numerous other feminine functions sly whispers and little giggles and significant nods—well, he was a man, and he could bear it.

He was glad that he had done this, for in no way could there be reproach, while there was much to admire about his conduct. In after-years it would endear him to her, and her memory of him could not but be sweet. Certainly she would marry, and perhaps the thought of all this would come to her some day and she would know what she had lost. He would take up his work with new vigor, and with the ripening years his name would be respected, admired and often on the lips of men; and then he would go to her and they should be friends, merely friends; she would see all that was best in him—those sterling qualities he knew she did now now appreciate—and she would perhaps feel sorrow that things had not been different. The thought of the regret that would be hers when she saw into what manner of man time and his efforts had wrought him bore to him a sweet satisfaction. But as in his reverie he saw himself in the days to come, when time should have

white-lined his hair and brought him fame, looking down upon her and speaking calmly, he knew that he would not have had his life shaped otherwise. Yet, withal, it was sweet to feel that perhaps the years that would give to her another for husband would leave with her also regret.

He made little journeys between the fireplace and various portions of the room. How vacant the wall seemed! He must get something to replace it, he thought, as he knelt before the altar he had reared and placed up it a photograph—her photograph. And before it he laid a glove, once white, but now soiled with much carriage in coat breast-pocket. How foolish he had been! Then he added a lock of hair, nut-brown and curly, to the sacrifice; and beside it a withered bunch of violets. Why, once he would have staked his hopes of heaven on those fragile tokens; and now—and now he touched a vesta to the altar's base, humming as he did so, "Love like ours can never die."

He drew up his lounging-chair and settled back comfortably. He felt a boyish curiousness as to the behavior of the different articles, and which would succumb first to the destroyer. The tiny flame mounted and spread till a diminutive conflagration roared at his feet. The violets burst into brilliant evanescence, their stems lingering like fine-spun filaments of steel, tense and quivering with heat. The glove glowed somberly against the bright background of flaming paper; while the photograph, like the tower of a lordly castle, sent aloft black columns of smoke, then tottered, swayed for a moment indecisively, and crashed into the fiery embers beneath. Slowly the glow of life went out of the sunken pyre as light leaves a drying eye; soon the little nothings—yesterday they were everythings—that to him had been pledges upon the future for his happiness were only a dead heap of black and gray ash shivering on the hearth.

It was all over. He was free now, free as the wind. A short month past he would have deemed it impossible to break the gyves so easily. Yet emancipation—he would have called it banishment then—had come without effort, without that strange orgasm of the blood, that fiery tumult of the emotions one would so naturally expect.

Over the charred fetters he could sit there and think of her calmly; there was not an extra beat to his pulse; he was perfectly normal. Well, it showed on the face of how transitory had been the fancy.

Yes, it was fancy; mere fancy—that was the word. It could not have been genuine love, else the separation of their paths of life could have brought to him but one emotion—a sense of agonizing loss. But he felt no loss; he was as easy in mind now that she had gone out of his life as he had been in the old days before she had made entry into it. And now he was free; free to go back to the old life, the old ways. It was early yet. The several little arrangements attendant on departure had been seen to, and the train was not scheduled till midnight. He would dine down town and look up some of the fellows for old sake's sake.

Free, free as the wind! There was an exhilaration to the phrase. It obtruded itself among his thoughts like some pleasant refrain. He had never been in sympathy with the simple little word, he thought, as he came down the steps, never understood its strength before. And she? No doubt she was pleased at the termination, and could already look back pleasantly upon the episode. That was all it was, an episode. And she would marry, as a matter of course, and be happy ever after.

He wondered what the husband might be like, and tried to pick him from all the eligibles he could think of. But he could conjure no harmonious union; now their tastes ran counter, now their temperaments; perhaps the lucky fellow still lay in the lap of the future. Yes, lucky fellow! There was no denying she was a nice girl; and yet "nice" did not rightfully convey the sense of her choiceness. It told but half the tale. Certainly there was room for improvement in the vernacular.

He followed his many-mirrored fancy through endless turnings, and before he knew it came to himself at the entrance of the "Grotto." He pulled out his watch. It was absurd to eat at such an hour, but he was hungry and went in. He fell to planning for his new life; but the waiter, pausing for his order, reminded him of the day they had dined there—the day when the volunteers marched through the streets and the city went dizzy with enthusiastic patriotism. He realized the trend of his mind with a start. He must put her away. That was past and done with. It was an episode. He must concern himself with the days to come, and in them she had no place. But a woman's laughter floated across from the other side and wove itself into his fancy as her laughter. How happy they had been that day! What silly nonsense they had prattled in the burlesque seriousness; and then how they had laughed at the graver things, the austerities of life! What a thoroughly wholesome creature she was, meeting mood with mood in a way which was not given to man women!

He remembered a thousand and one little incidents—trivial events, so unimportant at the time, but now fair mile-stones to look back upon. It began to dawn upon him how large a place she had filled in his life. For the time he had lived his days in here, and now—to-morrow? The future loomed before him like a blank wall. He had no wish to contemplate it. There were the fellows—but the fellows would not understand. The old equality could never be the same. He felt so much broader, stronger than they. She had led his feet in paths they little dreamed of, and, through her, life had taken upon itself a significance which they might never come to know. The secret of woman! He had caught glimmerings of it, he knew there was yet more for him to learn; but they—they were deep in outer darkness. Could he go back to them, and forget all this? What would he do to-morrow, and the next day, and the next? The emptiness of the immediate future pressed against him. He must remodel his life, look about him, get some new interest into it.

After all, he did not care to eat. It was too early. He strayed up the street in an absent fashion. A sudden distaste for the fellows came upon him. He would not look them up. He wished it were train-time, and knew already the promised dullness of the night. He felt strangely solitary among the shop-people hurrying home from their work. Any other evening he would have gone to her. What was she doing now? The vision of the tea-table came to him vividly, and with it her sweet face and her mother's, and the paneled roses which hung opposite his accustomed seat just over her head. He remembered the smallest details; even the napkin-rings were in his mind as perfectly as had he designed them himself. And there were to be no more such evenings! Well, he was a man; she would see that he could stand it. He glanced up to the library clock. Yes, it was just tea-time. Now, he was not sentimental; he drew back from such nonsense and thanked his gods frequently that he had escaped such affectation of exquisite feeling. It was only that he was going away, and the familiar atmosphere of the books appealed to him. He entered the library. At this hour, save for the noiseless attendants and certain weird creatures that infest such places, it was deserted. He passed by the shelves, whose transient occupants came and went unceasingly. In the upper galleries they rarely left their peaceful abode, and were consulted at infrequent periods by musty antiquarians and eager, hungry-looking collectors of worthless facts and figures. In those alcoves pale-faced students were wont to study, and, it must be confessed, sometimes to doze over the weary text.

Turn after turn he ascended the spiral staircase, fine-ribbed, of steel, like a gigantic cork-screw. At last he came to "their" alcove,

and drew a stool to its farthest recess. The lights had not yet been turned on and the day was growing dim. Yes, "their" alcove! He remembered the days when he had coached her there through the Elizabethan period, and the time they lost themselves among the metaphysical subtleties of "Alastor." "Their" alcove—why, all the habitues of the library acknowledged their ownership; and he smiled at the recollection of the young student they had found there one day, and his embarrassment, conscious of having trespassed, and his apologetic manner as he glided away. And their post-office, too! And parcels delivery! He nodded knowingly at a short, fat volume sandwiched between two ponderous tomes on an upper shelf. Come to think of it, the letter, the last letter, must be there yet. He had left it there that morning before—before it all happened. Of course, she would never come for it now. Should he take it? He had his own ideas on such things, but this was an unlooked-for contingency. Was it his or hers? Should it lie there until resurrected on some problematic cleaning-day by an attendant, who perhaps would remember the romance of the alcove when it was "theirs?" He debated the question with great seriousness. No, he was not sentimental.

Somebody paused on the gallery—a woman—then entered. He felt irritated at the intrusion. He barely noticed her. She would go away soon, he hoped, and leave him alone. She reached hesitatingly toward the short, fat volume. This was desecration, he thought; and how had others come to know the secret of "their" alcove? She turned in his direction, kissing the letter as she did so. In the failing light he noticed in her sweet eyes a moistness he had never seen before. He cried her name softly and sprang toward her.

The soft-footed attendant forgot to turn on the light before "their" alcove. Later, when a long-haired, elderly gentleman asked for Mechan's *Mirror of Alchemy* he informed him that it was out. The "Mirror of Alchemy" was the short, fat volume.

A THOUSAND DEATHS

I HAD been in the water about an hour, and cold, exhausted, with a terrible cramp in my right calf, it seemed as though my hour had come. Fruitlessly struggling against the strong ebb tide, I had beheld the maddening procession of the water-front lights slip by, but now I gave up attempting to breast the stream and contended myself with the bitter thoughts of a wasted career, now drawing to a close.

It had been my luck to come of good, English stock, but of parents whose account with the bankers far exceeded their knowledge of child-nature and the rearing of children. While born with a silver spoon in my mouth, the blessed atmosphere of the home circle was to me unknown. My father, a very learned man and a celebrated antiquarian, gave no thought to his family, being constantly lost in the abstractions of his study; while my mother, noted far more for her good looks than her good sense, sated herself with the adulation of the society in which she was perpetually plunged. I went through the regular school and college routine of a boy of the English bourgeoisie, and as the years brought me increasing strength and passions, my parents suddenly became aware that I was possessed of an immortal soul, and endeavoured to draw the curb. But it was too late; I perpetrated the wildest and most audacious folly, and was disowned by my people, ostracised by the society I had so long outraged, and with the thousand pounds my father gave me, with the declaration that he would neither see me again nor give me more, I took a first-class passage to Australia.

Since then my life had been one long peregrination—from the Orient to the Occident, from the Arctic to the Antarctic—to find myself at last, an able seaman at thirty, in the full vigour of my manhood, drowning in San Francisco bay because of a disastrously successful attempt to desert my ship.

My right leg was drawn up by the cramp, and I was suffering the keenest agony. A slight breeze stirred up a choppy sea, which washed into my mouth and down my throat, nor could I prevent it. Though I still contrived to keep afloat, it was merely mechanical, for I was rapidly becoming unconscious. I have a dim recollection of drifting past the sea-wall, and of catching a glimpse of an upriver steamer's starboard light; then everything became a blank.

I heard the low hum of insect life, and felt the balmy air of a spring morning fanning my cheek. Gradually it assumed a

rhythmic flow, to whose soft pulsations my body seemed to respond. I floated on the gentle bosom of a summer's sea, rising and falling with dreamy pleasure on each crooning wave. But the pulsations grew stronger; the humming, louder; the waves, larger, fiercer--I was dashed about on a stormy sea. A great agony fastened upon me. Brilliant, intermittent sparks of light flashed athwart my inner consciousness; in my ears there was the sound of many waters; then a sudden snapping of an intangible something, and I awoke.

The scene, of which I was protagonist, was a curious one. A glance sufficed to inform me that I lay on the cabin floor of some gentleman's yacht, in a most uncomfortable posture. On either side, grasping my arms and working them up and down like pump handles, were two peculiarly clad, dark-skinned creatures. Though conversant with most aboriginal types, I could not conjecture their nationality. Some attachment had been fastened about my head, which connected my respiratory organs with the machine I shall next describe. My nostrils, however, had been closed, forcing me to breathe through my mouth. Foreshortened by the obliquity of my line of vision, I beheld two tubes, similar to small hosing but of different composition, which emerged from my mouth and went off at an acute angle from each other. The first came to an abrupt termination and lay on the floor beside me; the second traversed the floor in numerous coils, connecting with the apparatus I have promised to describe.

In the days before my life had become tangential, I had dabbled not a little in science, and, conversant with the appurtenances and general paraphernalia of the laboratory, I appreciated the machine I now beheld. It was composed chiefly of glass, the construction being of that crude sort which is employed for experimentative purposes. A vessel of water was surrounded by an air chamber, to which was fixed a vertical tube, surmounted by a globe. In the centre of this was a vacuum gauge. The water in the tube moved upwards and downwards, creating alternate inhalations and exhalations, which were in turn communicated to me through the hose. With this, and the aid of the men who pumped my arms, so vigorously, had the process of breathing been artificially carried on, my chest rising and falling and my lungs expanding and contracting, till nature could be persuaded to again take up her wonted labour.

As I opened my eyes the appliance about my head, nostrils and mouth was removed. Draining a stiff three fingers of brandy, I staggered to my feet to thank my preserver, and confronted--my father. But long years of fellowship with danger had taught me self-

control, and I waited to see if he would recognise me. Not so; he saw in me no more than a runaway sailor and treated me accordingly.

Leaving me to the care of the blackies, he fell to revising the notes he had made on my resuscitation. As I ate of the handsome fare served up to me, confusion began on deck, and from the chanteys of the sailors and the rattling of blocks and tackles I surmised that we were getting under way. What a lark! Off on a cruise with my recluse father into the wide Pacific! Little did I realise, as I laughed to myself, which side the joke was to be on. Aye, had I known, I would have plunged overboard and welcomed the dirty fo'c'sle from which I had just escaped.

I was not allowed on deck till we had sunk the Farallones and the last pilot boat. I appreciated this forethought on the part of my father and made it a point to thank him heartily, in my bluff seaman's manner. I could not suspect that he had his own ends in view, in thus keeping my presence secret to all save the crew. He told me briefly of my rescue by his sailors, assuring me that the obligation was on his side, as my appearance had been most opportune. He had constructed the apparatus for the vindication of a theory concerning certain biological phenomena, and had been waiting for an opportunity to use it.

"You have proved it beyond all doubt," he said; then added with a sigh, "But only in the small matter of drowning." But, to take a reef in my yarn—he offered me an advance of two pounds on my previous wages to sail with him, and this I considered handsome, for he really did not need me. Contrary to my expectations, I did not join the sailor's mess, for'ard, being assigned to a comfortable stateroom and eating at the captain's table. He had perceived that I was no common sailor, and I resolved to take this chance for reinstating myself in his good graces. I wove a fictitious past to account for my education and present position, and did my best to come in touch with him. I was not long in disclosing a predilection for scientific pursuits, nor he in appreciating my aptitude. I became his assistant, with a corresponding increase in wages, and before long, as he grew confidential and expounded his theories, I was as enthusiastic as himself.

The days flew quickly by, for I was deeply interested in my new studies, passing my waking hours in his well-stocked library, or listening to his plans and aiding him in his laboratory work. But we were forced to forego many enticing experiments, a rolling ship not being exactly the proper place for delicate or intricate work. He promised me, however, many delightful hours in the

magnificent laboratory for which we were bound. He had taken possession of an uncharted South Sea island, as he said, and turned it into a scientific paradise.

We had not been on the island long, before I discovered to horrible mare's nest I had fallen into. But before I describe the strange things which came to pass, I must briefly outline the causes which culminated in as startling an experience as ever fell to the lot of man.

Late in life, my father had abandoned the musty charms of antiquity and succumbed to the more fascinating ones embraced under the general head of biology. Having been thoroughly grounded during his youth in the fundamentals, he rapidly explored all the higher branches as far as the scientific world had gone, and found himself on the no man's land of the unknowable. It was his intention to pre-empt some of this unclaimed territory, and it was at this stage of his investigations that we had been thrown together. Having a good brain, though I say it myself, I had mastered his speculations and methods of reasoning, becoming almost as mad as himself. But I should not say this. The marvellous results we afterwards obtained can only go to prove his sanity. I can but say that he was the most abnormal specimen of cold-blooded cruelty I have ever seen.

After having penetrated the dual mysteries of physiology and psychology, his thought had led him to the verge of a great field, for which, the better to explore, he began studies in higher organic chemistry, pathology, toxicology and other sciences and subsciences rendered kindred as accessories to his speculative hypotheses. Starting from the proposition that the direct cause of the temporary and permanent arrest of vitality was due to the coagulation of certain elements and compounds in the protoplasm, he had isolated and subjected these various substances to innumerable experiments. Since the temporary arrest of vitality in an organism brought coma, and a permanent arrest death, he held that by artificial means this coagulation of the protoplasm could be retarded, prevented, and even overcome in the extreme states of solidification. Or, to do away with the technical nomenclature, he argued that death, when not violent and in which none of the organs had suffered injury, was merely suspended vitality; and that, in such instances, life could be induced to resume its functions by the use of proper methods. This, then, was his idea: To discover the method--and by practical experimentation prove the possibility--of renewing vitality in a structure from which life had seemingly fled. Of course, he recognised the futility of such endeavour after decomposition had

set in; he must have organisms which but the moment, the hour, or the day before, had been quick with life. With me, in a crude way, he had proved this theory. I was really drowned, really dead, when picked from the water of San Francisco bay--but the vital spark had been renewed by means of his aerotherapeutical apparatus, as he called it.

Now to his dark purpose concerning me. He first showed me how completely I was in his power. He had sent the yacht away for a year, retaining only his two blackies, who were utterly devoted to him. He then made an exhaustive review of his theory and outlined the method of proof he had adopted, concluding with the startling announcement that I was to be his subject.

I had faced death and weighed my chances in many a desperate venture, but never in one of this nature. I can swear I am no coward, yet this proposition of journeying back and forth across the borderland of death put the yellow fear upon me. I asked for time, which he granted, at the same time assuring me that but the one course was open--I must submit. Escape from the Island was out of the question; escape by suicide was not to be entertained, though really preferable to what it seemed I must undergo; my only hope was to destroy my captors. But this latter was frustrated through the precautions taken by my father. I was subjected to a constant surveillance, even in my sleep being guarded by one or the other of the blacks.

Having pleaded in vain, I announced and proved that I was his son. It was my last card, and I had played all my hopes upon it. But he was inexorable; he was not a father but a scientific machine. I wonder yet have it ever come to pass that he married my mother or begat me, for there was not the slightest grain of emotion in his make-up. Reason was all in all to him, nor could he understand such things as love or sympathy in others, except as petty weaknesses which should be overcome. So he informed me that in the beginning he had given me life, and who had better right to take it away than he? Such, he said, was not his desire, however; he merely wished to borrow it occasionally, promising to return it punctually at the appointed time. Of course, there was a liability of mishaps, but I could do no more than take the chances, since the affairs of men were full of such.

The better to insure success, he wished me to be in the best possible condition, so I was dieted and trained like a great athlete before a decisive contest. What could I do? If I had to undergo the peril, it were best to be in good shape. In my intervals of relaxation he allowed me to assist in the arranging of the apparatus

and in the various subsidiary experiments. The interest I took in all such operations can be imagined. I mastered the work as thoroughly as he, and often had the pleasure of seeing some of my suggestions or alterations put into effect. After such events I would smile grimly, conscious of officiating at my own funeral.

He began by inaugurating a series of experiments in toxicology. When all was ready, I was killed by a stiff dose of strychnine and allowed to lie dead for some twenty hours. During that period my body was dead, absolutely dead. All respiration and circulation ceased; but the frightful part of it was, that while the protoplasmic coagulation proceeded, I retained consciousness and was enabled to study it in all its ghastly details.

The apparatus to bring me back to life was an air-tight chamber, fitted to receive my body. The mechanism was simple—a few valves, a rotary shaft and crank, and an electric motor. When in operation, the interior atmosphere was alternately condensed and rarefied, thus communicating to my lungs an artificial respiration without the agency of the hosing previously used. Though my body was inert, and, for all I knew, in the first stages of decomposition, I was cognizant of everything that transpired. I knew when they placed me in the chamber, and though all my senses were quiescent, I was aware of hypodermic injections of a compound to react upon the coagulatory process. Then the chamber was closed and the machinery started. My anxiety was terrible; but the circulation became gradually restored, the different organs began to carry on their respective functions, and in an hour's time I was eating a hearty dinner.

It cannot be said that I participated in this series, nor in the subsequent ones, with much verve; but after two ineffectual attempts of escape, I began to take quite an interest. Besides, I was becoming accustomed. My father was beside himself at his success, and as the months rolled by his speculations took wilder and yet wilder flights. We ranged through the three great classes of poisons, the neurotics, the gaseous and the irritants, but carefully avoided some of the mineral irritants and passed the whole group of corrosives. During the poison regime I became quite accustomed to dying, and had but one mishap to shake my growing confidence. Scarifying a number of lesser blood vessels in my arm, he introduced a minute quantity of that most frightful of poisons, the arrow poison, or curare. I lost consciousness at the start, quickly followed by the cessation of respiration and circulation, and so far had the solidification of the protoplasm advanced, that he gave up all hope. But at the last moment he

applied a discovery he had been working upon, receiving such encouragement as to redouble his efforts.

In a glass vacuum, similar but not exactly like a Crookes' tube, was placed a magnetic field. When penetrated by polarised light, it gave no phenomena of phosphorescence nor the rectilinear projection of atoms, but emitted non-luminous rays, similar to the X ray. While the X ray could reveal opaque objects hidden in dense mediums, this was possessed of far subtler penetration. By this he photographed my body, and found on the negative an infinite number of blurred shadows, due to the chemical and electric motions still going on. This was an infallible proof that the rigor mortis in which I lay was not genuine; that is, those mysterious forces, those delicate bonds which held my soul to my body, were still in action. The resultants of all other poisons were unapparent, save those of mercurial compounds, which usually left me languid for several days.

Another series of delightful experiments was with electricity. We verified Tesla's assertion that high currents were utterly harmless by passing 100,000 volts through my body. As this did not affect me, the current was reduced to 2,500, and I was quickly electrocuted. This time he ventured so far as to allow me to remain dead, or in a state of suspended vitality, for three days. It took four hours to bring me back.

Once, he superinduced lockjaw; but the agony of dying was so great that I positively refused to undergo similar experiments. The easiest deaths were by asphyxiation, such as drowning, strangling, and suffocation by gas; while those by morphine, opium, cocaine and chloroform, were not at all hard.

Another time, after being suffocated, he kept me in cold storage for three months, not permitting me to freeze or decay. This was without my knowledge, and I was in a great fright on discovering the lapse of time. I became afraid of what he might do with me when I lay dead, my alarm being increased by the predilection he was beginning to betray towards vivisection. The last time I was resurrected, I discovered that he had been tampering with my breast. Though he had carefully dressed and sewed the incisions up, they were so severe that I had to take to my bed for some time. It was during this convalescence that I evolved the plan by which I ultimately escaped.

While feigning unbounded enthusiasm in the work, I asked and received a vacation from my moribund occupation. During this period I devoted myself to laboratory work, while he was too deep

in the vivisection of the many animals captured by the blacks to take notice of my work.

It was on these two propositions that I constructed my theory: First, electrolysis, or the decomposition of water into its constituent gases by means of electricity; and, second, by the hypothetical existence of a force, the converse of gravitation, which Astor has named "apergy". Terrestrial attraction, for instance, merely draws objects together but does not combine them; hence, apergy is merely repulsion. Now, atomic or molecular attraction not only draws objects together but integrates them; and it was the converse of this, or a disintegrative force, which I wished to not only discover and produce, but to direct at will. Thus, the molecules of hydrogen and oxygen reacting on each other, separate and create new molecules, containing both elements and forming water. Electrolysis causes these molecules to split up and resume their original condition, producing the two gases separately. The force I wished to find must not only do this with two, but with all elements, no matter in what compounds they exist. If I could then entice my father within its radius, he would be instantly disintegrated and sent flying to the four quarters, a mass of isolated elements.

It must not be understood that this force, which I finally came to control, annihilated matter; it merely annihilated form. Nor, as I soon discovered, had it any effect on inorganic structure; but to all organic form it was absolutely fatal. This partiality puzzled me at first, though had I stopped to think deeper I would have seen through it. Since the number of atoms in organic molecules is far greater than in the most complex mineral molecules, organic compounds are characterised by their instability and the ease with which they are split up by physical forces and chemical reagents.

By two powerful batteries, connected with magnets constructed specially for this purpose, two tremendous forces were projected. Considered apart from each other, they were perfectly harmless; but they accomplished their purpose by focusing at an invisible point in mid-air. After practically demonstrating its success, besides narrowly escaping being blown into nothingness, I laid my trap. Concealing the magnets, so that their force made the whole space of my chamber doorway a field of death, and placing by my couch a button by which I could throw on the current from the storage batteries, I climbed into bed.

The blackies still guarded my sleeping quarters, one relieving the other at midnight. I turned on the current as soon as the first man arrived. Hardly had I begun to doze, when I was aroused by a

sharp, metallic tinkle. There, on the mid-threshold, lay the collar of Dan, my father's St. Bernard. My keeper ran to pick it up. He disappeared like a gust of wind, his clothes falling to the floor in a heap. There was a slight wiff of ozone in the air, but since the principal gaseous components of his body were hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen, which are equally colourless and odourless, there was no other manifestation of his departure. Yet when I shut off the current and removed the garments, I found a deposit of carbon in the form of animal charcoal; also other powders, the isolated, solid elements of his organism, such as sulphur, potassium and iron. Resetting the trap, I crawled back to bed. At midnight I got up and removed the remains of the second black, and then slept peacefully till morning.

I was awakened by the strident voice of my father, who was calling to me from across the laboratory. I laughed to myself. There had been no one to call him and he had overslept. I could hear him as he approached my room with the intention of rousing me, and so I sat up in bed, the better to observe his translation--perhaps apotheosis were a better term. He paused a moment at the threshold, then took the fatal step. Puff! It was like the wind sighing among the pines. He was gone. His clothes fell in a fantastic heap on the floor. Besides ozone, I noticed the faint, garlic-like odour of phosphorus. A little pile of elementary solids lay among his garments. That was all. The wide world lay before me. My captors were no more.

TWO GOLD BRICKS

THE heavy portiers were rudely thrust aside and a young man of twenty-two or thereabout flung, himself into the apartment to the evident astonishment of its inmate, who paused long enough in the act of lighting a cigarette to burn his fingers with the paper-lighter. "Ye gods! preserve us from the faddist!" he cried, dramatically elevating his arms heavenward as though invoking the protection of his divine friends, and then collapsing into the comfortable embrace of the nearest easy-chair.

His audience, having recovered his equanimity at the expense of a muffed curse upon all stage-struck friends, shoved the smoking stand at him. For a space they yielded to the soothing caress of the weed, then proceeded to an elucidation.

"Well, Ollie, old man, out with it. What's the rub?" interrogated he of the burned fingers. Has your tailor taken to dunning on a wheel? Have your auburn lovelocks come into demand? or are they trying to enlist your sympathies in that artistic crusade among the unaesthetical denizens of Mott and Mulberry streets."

"No. It's not so bad as that; but what do you think they've been up to?"

"What? which? who? the aesthetics or the nonaesthetics?"

"I mean the crowd."

"Oh, Archie and his friends. What have they been doing? Nothing serious I hope; and yet, they always were a serious crowd."

It's not serious. Oh, no; and still it concerns a very serious subject. Ha! ha! ha! you'd never guess! He! he! he! you'd—Ho! ho! ho!"

"Confound you and your paradoxes! Not serious—concerns a serious subject; a serious crowd, a foll's laughter—fine material for an epigram. By Jove, if I don't think it up."

"Mercy, Oh, Damon, I pray you. A truce to your epigrams. I plead an arrest of judgment till I explain."

"Proceed, I may be lenient."

"You know I intended going down to Cape Weola for canvas-back and had made arrangements to start today. I packed up, expressed my traps, and said goodbye all around, only to find the hunting-party had fallen through. Finding my pleasure nipped in the bud and because I had nothing to do, I became virtuous and made a long-delayed call upon that long-suffering maiden aunt of mine, in Brooklyn. Nice old girl! I tried not to be bored, and made the acquaintance of her two Persian cats, to say nothing of an angular female, who called and spent the afternoon in discussing equal suffrage and all that rot. What with that and the tea, I returned with a very bad headache and a very good intention of going early to bed.

"However, I thought I would drop in and see Archie—nice brother, archie—and entice him into making a call upon the long-suffering maiden aunt aforesaid. Archie was out, and tired of waiting I made myself comfortable in his boudoir—it's a real boudoir, you know—and fell asleep. I've no idea how long I was there, but suddenly I was awakened by the popping of corks and by conversation in his studio. 'Archie and a lot of his cronies,' I thought. 'Evidently they don't know I'm here.'

"They were as serious as usual. That melancholy rascal! Le Blanche, whose 'Bridge of Sighs,' and 'The Requital' you'll remember at the exhibition, was there, as was also Schomberg, his twin brother of personified misery. They were discussing the death of Willis '89—used to chum with Archie and that crowd. The conversation turned to monuments, headstones, and epitaphs, and became quite interesting, I can assure you.

"That idiot, Fessler, opened the ball by deploring the conventional inconsistency with which our moderns remember the dead by the inscriptions they place on their headstones; and Schomberg quoted Shakespeare, revised; 'The good that men do lives'—etc., while Le Blanche favored them with the following from Byron, which I happened to know:

"When some proud son of man returns to earth,
Unknown to glory but upheld by birth,
The Sculptor's art exhausts the pomp of woe,
And storied urns record who rests [sic] below;
When all is done, upon the tomb is seen,
Not what he was, but what he should have been."

"Finally, that band of morbid-minded pessimists took up funeral sermons and unmercifully berated our pious divines for their hypocrisy in the perpetration of the same. They decided that the custom was all wrong and a blot upon our cultured civilization. In

the first place, they decided it was impossible to obtain anything but flattery when a man was paid to preach the sermon; in the second place, that it should be delivered by one who was conversant with the whole life of the deceased; and in the third place that, if he were an enemy he could not be induced to officiate, if a friend he would be certain to flatter. They at last reached the conclusion that all funeral sermons were snares and deceptions, and since the only one who could properly officiate and tell the brutal, naked truth, would be the person being buried, it were better to abolish the wicked and immoral custom.

"Here the subject would have been dropped but for that brother of mine, who thought it would be 'so original, you know, for a man to make his own funeral oration.' Then he was ably supplemented by Moore, who enthusiastically cried out 'Why not?'

"It dawned upon them all—why not—the phonograph. Then and there they organized into a 'Voice from the Beyond,' or 'Every Man His Own Minister,' society. They gave it some Greek name and this is my free rendition of it. They elected their officers, swore ironclad oaths to tell all the mean little things and mean big things they had done during their lifetime, and promised to criticize unsparingly each other's faults and vices. After a voluntary assessment had been levied to procure a phonograph and the necessary paraphernalia they adjourned. They expect to have all their sermons in by this day week, and Archie is to take charge of them. He is to put them in that little safe you'll remember stands in a corner of his studio.

"While the crowd was departing I slipped Out by another door, and here lam."

"Like the girl that you are, come to tell me the secret while yet warm. But, Ollie, it seems to me as though there is more in it than you have told. I have a scheme."

"A scheme?"

"Yes, we will give an entertainment in your parlors. You know we have been running too big a margin, and I, for one, am rather short. This quarter's was all gone before I received it, and what I shall do till next quarter is an enigma. You are in just as bad a fix, too, so we'll give an entertainment."

"An entertainment?"

"Yes, and clear a cool ten hundred apiece."

"Whew! Ten hundred! Why I could square up and go on swimmingly! But, Damon, how are you going to do it?"

"Give an entertainment."

"Now don't talk in riddles. Come, explain."

And Damon explained while Ollie went into ecstasies of delight. Late that night, Ollie departed, and during the next ten days many were the consultations he held with Damon regarding the scheme.

Ten nights later, Ollie's parlors are all ablaze and perhaps threescore and ten male guests are assembled, for this is the night of the entertainment. Damon and Ollie are all bustling and important, and why not? Is not Professor Armstrong engaged this evening at a hundred dollars? Has not one of Edison's assistants come all the way from New Jersey with expenses paid and another hundred? And is there not the phonograph specialist? to say nothing of Crooke's tubes, electrical apparatus, kinetoscopes, and phonographs? Indeed, is it not to be a veritable treat to those lovers of popular science that have received invitations?

By nine, Ollie introduces Professor Armstrong, who took up Roentgen's discovery and applied it in many curious and instructive experiments. The kinetoscope man then engrossed their attention with thrilling scenes of life, and was followed by Edison's assistant, who presented illustrated demonstrations of several of the "wizard's" marvelous inventions.

In the meanwhile Damon drew Ollie aside and asked: "Is Archie's crowd all here?"

"Yes, all except Staunton. He has received the telegram and by this time is speeding across Connecticut."

"Good! But I'm sorry we had to get rid of him. Won't he be angry when he finds it out?"

"Won't he though."

To conclude the very enjoyable evening in experimental science, the phonograph specialist was introduced. After a few introductory remarks, in which, incidentally, the possibility of the voice of the dead coming back, was mentioned, he proceeded to arrange his apparatus. Taking one from a number of cylinders and inserting it in the phonograph, he applied the electric current and the delicate machinery was in motion.

A voice—Staunton's voice—in solemn tones, was heard, preaching a funeral sermon. The members of the "Voice from the Beyond" society looked inquiringly at each other, then in turn, perplexed, indignant, and amused. Staunton's rich, deep voice ground out of the machine, sternly moralizing in a manner demoralizing to the audience. How he criticized his own vices and trivialities! He had been weighed by himself in the balance and found wanting. Then he turned on his friends and upbraided them unsparingly for their follies. It was rich! Titters and suppressed giggles turned into continued roars of laughter, and when the phonograph ceased, after a bestowal of fatherly advice and solemn benedictions all round and a requiescat in pace, the audience went fairly wild.

The specialist was inserting another cylinder and the members of the "Voice from the Beyond" society were doing some hard thinking. There were hasty reviews of sermons preached recently into phonographic receivers, and many imparted secrets—secrets to be made known only after death—were remembered. They became alarmed. They knew not whose turn was next and they were all convinced that it was a scurvy trick.

Again the phonograph was started; but when Archie's voice was heard, soaring in the eloquent lights of his funeral oration, the members of the "Voice from the Beyond" society sprang to the little platform, stopped the machinery, and took possession of the cylinders. Ollie postulated; Damon feigned indignation. Finally, amid much confusion and many questions, Damon dismissed the audience, which soon departed, with the exception of the "Voice from the Beyond" society, which remained to talk it over and to take summary vengeance.

Ollie was cool, determined, dramatic—he would have made a model villain. He demanded two hundred and fifty dollars for the return of each of the cylinders. They refused. Why should they pay? Were they not in possession of the cylinders? Then Ollie talked vaguely of duplicate cylinders, which might find their way into the nickle-in-the-slot [sic] machines; of funeral orations going abroad from every street and public place in New York; of the possibility of disposing of these same duplicates among friends of the late deceased; and ominously hinted of many things decidedly worse.

"I say, Damon, we've squared up the Doldrums' racket, with interest, haven't we?"

"Didn't we though. By the way, Ollie, how much is ten times two hundred and fifty, minus five hundred, divided by two?"

"Ten hundred! By Jove! You're a brick, Damon, in planning."

"So are you, Ollie, in execution."

"Then we're both bricks, good gold bricks, worth ten hundred apiece."

THE UNMASKING OF THE CAD

THERE are gentlemen and gentlemen, and yet again are there gentlemen. Somewhere in this rather incoherent category Percy Hilborn held a footing. Like many another, he possessed a certain veneer of good manners and conventional conduct, which passed for the real thing among those who knew him best. Now those who knew him best knew him least—a paradox, but none the less a truth. This veneer was as impenetrable as ten-inch armour-plate to such friends, whom, because of shekels or position, he wished to retain. But to those who knew him not, whether from caprice or definite purpose, he was not at all adverse to showing another side of his nature, which, to say the least, was the ungentlemanly side.

The reason for this might have been found in the fact that acquired characteristics do not receive the stamp of heredity in one generation—his father was a self-made man, and had taught himself rigidly to conventionalise; and it might have been found in the fact that his mother had impressed upon his youthful mind the code of polite procedure in a way which made it appear an unpleasant duty—a mask, highly distasteful, but which must perforce be donned under certain conditions. Be this as it may, Percy Hilborn was a cad, a plain, unadulterated cad—but nobody knew it.

He was accounted of good family, made an excellent appearance, and was considered one of the most delightful of the younger set. Moreover, he was engaged, engaged to a very nice young girl, whose refinement was something more than skin-deep. Maud Brammane was sweetly womanly and all that, but there was also about her a certain broad wholesomeness, a thorough normality, which added to the not slight charms nature had invested her with. She had learned not to carp unmercifully at a peccadillo on the one hand, and forgive a great wrong on the other; and she had also learned to discriminate between petty infractions and gross enormities. She also held ideals. "A gentleman," she once said to him, "is above all a man; and he is cast in such a mold that he never, no matter where he finds himself or what may arise, forgets his manhood." Upon this there had really been a perceptible straightening of his back and thrusting forward of his breast-bone, as he took it upon himself as a choice exponent of this particular breed of men.

At another time she had said, "I cannot understand, nor can I have any regard for a person that would wittingly wound or hurt the sensibilities of another whose only offense is their inoffensiveness." And he echoed the sentiment so nobly that she

thought him a very superior young man indeed. There was her brother Hallam, she went on. He was more a gentleman of the old school, of which one hears so much and sees so little. Why, she remembered on the visit she had made during the previous winter, the uniform courtesy he extended, from the guest at his board down to his humblest working man. Yes, he was a brother well to be proud of. He was coming north soon, she said, and she was sure they would get along well together. There was so much alike in them, so much they would find in common. Percy Hilborn exhibited the proper show of interest in his future brother-in-law, and was equally sure they would get along splendidly.

"I tell you, Hay, I sometimes think she's altogether too good for me," he said one night to the friend of his bosom, as they entered one of the choicest cafes in town. That last cocktail had given to his tongue the necessary lucidity, and for the nonce his elementary frankness asserted itself. The various contradictory segments of his nature were in just the mood to vindicate their existence.

Because it was one of those enticing summer nights, when to remain indoors was to experience a foretaste of the tomb, the cafe was crowded. Half the city seemed to have come abroad, and thereby gained an uncompromisable appetite. The lynx-eyed ushers were hard put to discover accommodation for the throng, and theatres were not out yet.

"Yes," Percy Hilborn added complacently, "I do think I'm a lucky dog. And she's not one of those foolishly good kind, either—sensible, practical, everyday sort of girl."

Hay smiled with some cheery cynicism. He could well afford to look quizzically down from his freedom upon the pre-benedictal condition of his friend. "Aw, go on!" he said. "They all get that way, they do. Just a little soft something, a wisp of hair, a pair of eyes, and a bunch of millinery, and away they go, clean daft. Can't understand it myself. Why, look at me! Don't catch me in any such nonsense. A year from now you'll be coming around telling me what a fool you were, and how much you envy me. Maybe you think I don't know—sort of spring sickness, that's what it is."

And thereupon Percy Hilborn proceeded to descant fluently upon the preeminent advisability of a young man taking such a step, upon the sanity of his conduct, and last, but not least, the felicity of his choice and the infinite virtues of Maud Brammane.

And in the midst of this descantation, an usher seated another gentleman and lady—strangers—at their table. Hay heaved a sigh of

relief at the interruption. But Percy Hilborn glowered blackly at the offending usher. The question of the right or wrong of it never entered his head. It simply did not suit him to have his conversation thus broken in upon. Such intrusion was not to be tolerated. As has been noted before, his elementary frankness, natural self, was at the surface, and he at once made up his mind to get rid of these people who had been innocently quartered upon his privacy.

The usher had gone away, so he transferred his scowl to them. But they took little heed, being busy with their own affairs; in fact, it might be said they did not even notice him, much less his black looks. But his boorishness was not to be conquered so easily as that. He could not very well ask them to get up and go away; but he could talk, and within him there was a devil to act as prompter.

He chose an objectionable subject, and proceeded to embellish it with the necessary slang and rough expressions. Oh, no! he did not swear or do anything of that sort. He simply exceeded the bounds of good taste. But he raised his voice pointedly to advertise his intention, though he refrained from looking in their direction.

At first his victims were unheeding, but in the end they could not fail to comprehend. Nor did he mince words, now that his caddishness had come to the top. Though the lady was greatly perturbed she gave no hint of it, preferring rather to raise her voice a little and talk with greater vivacity to her escort. And that gentleman followed her cue, not being particularly desirous for a brawl in a public place. Their order had come, and they hurried through it. The theatre crowd was arriving by then, and they could not move to another table. So they talked fast, and asked for their check before they were half through.

Percy Hilborn glanced exultantly at Hay. His victims were preparing to leave. Yet apparently there was no unseemly haste in their manner of departure, no pained surprise in their eyes nor indignant flush to their cheeks. A look of placid contentment shone in their faces, as if their experience at the table had been of the pleasantest. They simply ignored the boorishness of the young man who was actually driving them away. They were victorious in their defeat.

But at this moment, just as they had risen to go, and just as triumph was perching upon Percy Hilborn's helm, in came another theatre party. Miss Brammane, and her sister and mother, and several mutual friends, went to make up the group which

approached their table. Greetings began to pass all around. Percy Hilborn felt a sudden sinking sickness come upon him. Miss Brammane was speaking. What was she saying? No! Impossible!

But this is what Miss Brammane was saying: "Hallman, this is Mr. Hilborn—Percy, you know, and—"

And therein was the mingling of all the materials for a very pretty tableau.

UP THE SLIDE

WHEN Clay Dilham left the tent to get a sled-load of fire-wood, he expected to be back in half an hour. So he told Swanson, who was cooking the dinner. Swanson and he belonged to different outfits, located about twenty miles apart on the Stuart River; but they had become traveling partners on a trip down the Yukon to Dawson to get the mail.

Swanson had laughed when Clay said he would be back in half an hour. It stood to reason, Swanson said, that good, dry fire-wood could not be found so close to Dawson; that whatever fire-wood there was originally had long since been gathered in; that fire-wood would not be selling at forty dollars a cord if any man could go out and get a sled-load and be back in the time Clay expected to make it.

Then it was Clay's turn to laugh as he sprang on the sled and *mushed* the dogs onto the river-trail. For, coming up from the Siwash village the previous day, he had noticed a small dead pine in an out-of-the-way place which had defied discovery by eyes less sharp than his. And his eyes were both young and sharp, for his seventeenth birthday was just cleared.

A swift ten minutes over the ice brought him to the place, and figuring ten minutes to get the tree and ten minutes to return made him certain that Swanson's dinner would not wait.

Just below Dawson, and rising out of the Yukon itself, towered the great Moosehide Mountain, so named by Lieutenant Schwatka long ere the Klondike became famous. On the river side the mountain was scarred and gullied and gored; and it was up one of these gores or gullies that Clay had seen the tree.

Halting his dogs beneath, on the river ice, he looked up, and after some searching rediscovered it. Being dead, its weather-beaten gray so blended with the gray of rock that a thousand men could pass by and never notice it. Taking root in a cranny, it had grown up, exhausted its bit of soil, and perished. Beneath it the wall fell sheer away for a hundred feet to the river. All one had to do was to sink an ax into the dry trunk a dozen times and it would fall to the ice, and most probably smash conveniently to pieces. This Clay had figured on when confidently limiting the trip to half an hour.

He studied the cliff thoroughly before attempting it. So far as he was concerned, the longest way round was the shortest way to the

tree. Twenty feet of nearly perpendicular climbing would bring him to where a slide sloped more gently in. By making a long zigzag across the face of this slide and back again, he would arrive at the pine.

Fastening his ax across his shoulders so that it would not interfere with his movements, he clawed up the broken rock, hand and foot, like a cat, till the twenty feet were cleared, and he could draw breath on the edge of the slide.

The slide was steep and its snow-covered surface slippery. Further, the heel-less, walrus-hide soles of his *muclucs* were polished by much ice travel, and by his second step he realized how little he could depend upon them for clinging purposes. A slip at that point meant a plunge over the edge and a twenty-foot fall to the ice. A hundred feet farther along, and a slip would mean a fifty-foot fall.

He thrust his mittened hand through the snow to the earth to steady himself, and went on. But he was forced to exercise such care that the first zigzag consumed five minutes. Then, returning across the face of the slide toward the pine, he met with a new difficulty. The slope steepened considerably, so that little snow collected, while bent flat beneath this thin covering were long, dry last-year's grasses.

The surface they presented was glassy as that of his *muclucs*, and when both surfaces came together his feet shot out and he fell on his face, sliding downward, and convulsively clutching for something to stay himself.

This he succeeded in doing, though he lay quiet for a couple of minutes to get back his nerve. He would have taken off his *muclucs* and gone at it in his socks, only the cold was thirty below zero, and at such temperature his feet would quickly freeze. So he went on, and after ten minutes of risky work made the safe and solid rock where stood the pine.

A few strokes of the ax felled it into the chasm, and peeping over the edge, he indulged in a laugh at the startled dogs. They were on the verge of bolting when he called aloud to them, soothingly, and they were reassured.

Then he turned about for the back trip. Going down, he knew, was even more dangerous than coming up, but how dangerous he did not realize till he had slipped half a dozen times, and each time saved himself by what appeared to him a miracle, Time and

again he ventured upon the slide, and time and again he was balked when he came to the grasses.

He sat down and looked at the treacherous snow-covered slope. It was manifestly impossible for him to make it with a whole body, and he did not wish to arrive at the bottom shattered like the pine-tree.

But while he sat inactive the frost was stealing in on him, and the quick chilling of his body warned him that he could not delay. He must be doing something to keep his blood circulating. If he could not get down by going down, there only remained to him to get down by going up. It was a Herculean task, but it was the only way out of the predicament.

From where he was he could not see the top of the cliff, but he reasoned that the gully in which lay the slide must give inward more and more as it approached the top. From what little he could see, the gully displayed this tendency; and he noticed, also, that the slide extended for many hundreds of feet upward, and that where it ended the rock was well broken up and favorable for climbing. Here and there, at several wide intervals, small masses of rock projected through the snow of the slide itself, giving sufficient stability to the enterprise to encourage him.

So, instead of taking the zigzag which led downward, he made a new one leading upward and crossing the slide at an angle of thirty degrees. The grasses gave him much trouble, and made him long for soft-tanned moosehide moccasins which could make his feet cling like a second pair of hands.

He soon found that thrusting his mittened hands through the snow and clutching the grass-roots was uncertain and unsafe. His mittens were too thick for him to be sure of his grip, so he took them off. But this brought with it new trouble. When he held on to a bunch of roots the snow, coming in contact with his bare warm hand, was melted, so that his hands and the wristbands of his woolen shirt were dripping with water. This the frost was quick to attack, and his fingers were numbed and made worthless.

Then he was forced to seek good footing where he could stand erect unsupported, to put on his mittens, and to thrash his hands against his sides until the heat came back into them.

This constant numbing of his fingers made his progress very slow; but the zigzag came to an end, finally, where the side of the slide was buttressed by perpendicular rock, and he turned back

and upward again. As he climbed higher and higher, he found that the slide was wedge-shaped, its rocky buttresses pinching it away as it neared its upper end. Each step increased the depth which seemed to yawn for him.

While beating his hands against his sides he turned and looked down the long slippery slope, and figured, in case he slipped, that he would be flying with the speed of an express-train ere he took the final plunge into the icy bed of the Yukon.

He passed the first outcropping rock, and the second, and at the end of an hour found himself above the third and fully five hundred feet above the river. And here, with the end nearly two hundred feet above him, the pitch of the slide was increasing.

Each step became more difficult and perilous, and he was faint from exertion and from lack of Swanson's dinner. Three or four times he slipped slightly and recovered himself; but, growing careless from exhaustion and the long tension on his nerves, he tried to continue with too great haste, and was rewarded by a double slip of each foot, which tore loose and started him down the slope.

On account of the steepness there was little snow; but what little there was, was displaced by his body, so that he became the nucleus of a young avalanche. He clawed desperately with his hands, but there was little to cling to, and he sped downward faster and faster.

The first and second outcroppings were below him, but he knew that the first was almost out of line, and pinned his hope on the second. Yet the first was just enough in line to catch one of his feet and to whirl him over and head downward on his back.

The shock of this was severe in itself, and the fine snow enveloped him in a blinding, maddening cloud; but he was thinking quickly and clearly of what would happen if he brought up head first against the second outcropping. He twisted himself over on his stomach, thrust both hands out to one side, and pressed them heavily against the flying surface.

This had the effect of a brake, drawing his head and shoulders to the side. In this position he rolled over and over a couple of times, and then, with a quick jerk at the right moment, he got his body the rest of the way round.

And none too soon, for the next moment his feet drove into the outcropping, his legs doubled up, and the wind was driven from his stomach with the abruptness of the stop.

There was much snow down his neck and up his sleeves. At once and with unconcern he shook this out, only to discover when he looked up to where he must climb again, that he had lost his nerve. He was shaking as if with a palsy, and sick and faint from a frightful nausea.

Fully ten minutes passed by ere he could master these sensations and summon sufficient strength for the weary climb. His legs hurt him and he was limping, and he was conscious of a sore place in his back, where he had fallen on the ax.

In an hour he had regained the point of his tumble, and was contemplating the slide, which so suddenly steepened. It was plain to him that he could not go up with hands and feet alone, and he was beginning to lose his nerve again when he remembered the ax.

Reaching upward the distance of a step, he brushed away the snow, and in the frozen gravel and crumbled rock of the slide chopped a shallow resting-place for his foot. Then he came up a step, reached forward, and repeated the manoeuvre, And so, step by step, foot-hole by foot-hole, a tiny speck of toiling life poised like a fly on the mighty face of Moosehide Mountain, he fought his upward way.

Twilight was beginning to fall when he gained the head of the slide and drew himself into the rocky bottom of the gully. At this point the shoulder of the mountain began to bend back toward the crest, and in addition to its being less steep, the rocks afforded better hand-hold and foot-hold. The worst was over, and the best yet to come!

The gully opened out into a miniature basin, in which a floor of soil had been deposited, out of which, in turn, a tiny grove of pines had sprung. The trees were all dead, dry and seasoned, having long since exhausted the thin skin of earth.

Clay ran his experienced eye over the timber, and estimated that it would chop up into fifty cords at least. Beyond, the gully closed in and became barren rock again. On every hand was barren rock, so the wonder was small that the trees had escaped the eyes of men. They were only to be discovered as he had discovered them—by climbing after them.

He continued the ascent, and the white moon greeted him when he came out upon the crest of Moosehide Mountain. At his feet, a thousand feet below, sparkled the lights of Dawson.

But the descent on that side was precipitate and dangerous in the uncertain moonshine, and he elected to go down the mountain by its gentler northern flank. In a couple of hours he reached the Yukon at the Siwash village, and took the river-trail back to where he had left the dogs. There he found Swanson, with a fire going, waiting for him to come down.

And though Swanson had a hearty laugh at his expense, nevertheless, a week or so later, in Dawson, there were fifty cords of wood sold at forty dollars a cord, and it was he and Swanson who sold them.

WHO BELIEVES IN GHOSTS!

“A REMARKABLY good one—for you; but I know of one that beats—”

“No, no, Damon. I know you always have a story to cap the last one; but I meant this in all honesty, and if you doubt its truth, at least believe my sincerity in telling it.”

“George! You don't mean to tell me that you really believe in ghosts? Why, the very idea is absurd, and to connect credence in such a thing with you is—is—” and Van Buster, otherwise known as Damon, paused for lack of an expletive, and finally exploded in “Preposterous!”

“But I do believe in it, and in my faith I am not alone, for on my side I can array the greatest lights of every age from the days of Chaldean necromancy down to the cold, scientific 'to day.' Pause and reflect, O Damon and Pythias, too, for I can see the skeptical twinkle in your eye. Remember that in every time, in every land, and in every people, there have been and there are many who did believe in the soul's return after death. Can you, with this great mass of evidence staring you in the face, say that it is all the creation of diseased brains and abnormal imaginations?” And as Damon and Pythias both affirmed his accusation, he concluded with a pious hope that some day they would be forced to change their minds by a proof very unpleasantly applied.

“Come, come, Pythias! What have you to say in our mutual defense? Show our credulous friend the firm foundation on which we stand. Bring all your mighty logic to bear, and sophistry, too, for it is a very bad case. Show him that this psychic force is but the creation of man's too fertile imagination; prove to him that these earth-bound spirits, astral forms and disembodied entities are but chimeras!”

“Ah, Damon,” he lazily drawled, “I care not to waste my stupendous knowledge and laborious research on such petty subjects. If I were challenged into controversy on the land, tariff or finance question, I fain would reply; but this seems too much like the nursery babble on the bogie man. Earth-bound spirits forsooth! All I can say to dear George is that he is an ass, and until he can introduce me to some astral form, I dismiss the subject.”

In no wise put out by the sarcasm of his friends, George said: “I feel like singing that old doggerel—

Just go down to Derby town,
And see the same as I!

For I have seen many, and what I consider authentic, proofs of the existence and activity of this force. I know that all argument is useless when I have opposed to me, two such master minds; yet so far have they sank into intellectual stagnation, that they know not, and know not that they know not.

We all view the world through colored glasses; but their glasses are so very, very green, that one almost feels—

“And you must confess that yours are rather smoky,” interrupted Damon. “But come, George, we’ll not quarrel over such a subject. You know the position I always assume when dealing with the unknown. I neither affirm nor deny, and I can but say that plausibility, if not possibility, is with your belief. In justice to you, to myself and to the world, all I can say is that I do not know, but would like to know. And I coincide with Pythias in asking you to bring us personally in contact with these disembodied souls.”

“There’s the old Birchall mansion,” drawled Pythias; “perhaps we can gain an introduction there. They say it’s haunted.”

“The very place!” cried Damon. “Do you think the ghost that walks the gloomy corridors at midnight’s dread hour, etc., would condescend to become visible for the edification of two such miserable, unbelieving mortals as we are? Here’s a grand opportunity—it’s only ten, and we can be there by eleven. Pythias and I will arm ourselves with a couple of dozen candles, half a dozen ounces of Durham, and ‘Trilby’ to read aloud turn about,—the last to affect and prepare our imaginations. What say you, Pythias, to the lark?”

“I am always agreeable,” he replied. “I’ve got the time to spare now from my grind. I’m through the ex’es, you know. But I move to amend by striking out ‘Trilby’ and inserting chess. Also that we bring a bunch of fire-crackers to let off when the ghost makes his appearance. It might be a Chinese devil, you know. And of course you’ll accompany us, George? No? Then you had better find a companion and keep guard outside in case of accidents, and to see that we do not run away.”

“That’s easily arranged,” answered George. “I can get Fred. He will just be going out now to hunt cats.”

“Hunt cats!” from Damon and Pythias.

“Yes, hunt cats. You see he's deep in *Gray's Anatomy* now, and is hard run for subjects. Why, he even did away with his sister's big Maltese, and so proud was he when he had articulated it, that he had the cheek to show it to her, telling her it was the skeleton of a rabbit.”

“The brute!”

“The cat?”

“No, Fred. How poor Dora must have mourned for her lost tabby.”

“He ought to be thrashed.”

“No, dissected, the articulated and presented to his bereaved relatives as the missing link. They would no more recognize him than did Dora her cat.”

“If cats had souls I would be afraid to venture out at night if I were he. Have they got souls, George?”

“I don't know; but don't let's waste any more time, if we intend carrying this project out. We must all meet by eleven sharp, in front of the house.”

They agreed. So paying their reckoning, they left the restaurant—George to hunt up Fred, and Damon and Pythias to invest their spare cash in candles, fire-crackers and Durham.

By eleven, the four friends had assembled in front of the Birchall mansion. They were all high-spirited, and when they came to part, George addressed them as follows:

“O Damon, the agnostic, and Pythias, the skeptic, heed well my last words. Ye venture within a place purported by the vulgar to be haunted. The truth of this as yet remains to be proven; but remember that this power, which you will have to contend with, will not be resisted as those earthly forces of which you have knowledge. It is mysterious, imponderable and powerful; it is invisible, yet oftentimes visible; and it can exert itself in innumerable ways. Opening locked doors, putting out lights, dropping bricks, and strange sounds, cries, curses and moans, are but the lower demonstrations of this phenomena. Also, as we have in this life men inclined to good and evil, so have we, in the life to come, spirits, both good and bad. Woe betide you if you are thrown in contact with evil spirits. You may be lifted up bodily and

dashed to the floor or against the walls like a football; you may see grewsome sights even beyond the conception of mortal; and so great a terror may be brought upon you, that your minds may lose their balance and leave you gibbering idiots or violently insane. And again, these evil spirits have the power to deprive you of one, two or all your senses, if they wish. They can burst your eardrums; sear your eyes; destroy your voice; sadly impair your sense of taste and smell, and paralyze the body in any or every nerve. And even as in the days of Christ, they may make their habitation within bodies, and you will be tormented with evil spirits, and then—the asylum and padded cells stares you in the face. I have no advice to give you in dealing with this mysterious subject, for I am ignorant; but my parting words are, 'keep cool; may you prosper in your undertaking, and beware!'"

They then separated—Damon and Pythias in quest of ghosts, and George and Fred in quest of cats.

The first couple strode up to the front door; but finding it locked, and that the spirits did not respond after they had duly exercised the great, old fashioned knocker, they tried the windows on the long portico. These were also locked. After quite a scramble, they scaled the portico and found a second story window open. As soon as they gained an entrance they lighted a couple of candles and proceeded to explore.

Everything was old fashioned, dusty and musty; they had expected this. Commencing on the third floor, they thoroughly overhauled everything—opening the closets, pulling aside the rotten tapestries, looking for trapdoors and even sounding the walls. These actions, however, are accounted for by the fact that both had recently read "Emile Gaborian." Emulating Monsieur Lecoq, they even descended to the basement; but this was such a complex affair that they gave it up in despair.

Returning to the second floor with a couple of stools and a box they had found, they proceeded to make themselves comfortable in the cleanest room they could find. Though half a dozen candles illuminated the apartment, it still seemed dreary and desolate, and dampened their high spirits "to just the pitch," as Damon said, "for a good game of chess."

By the time an hour and a half had elapsed, they concluded their first game, and a magnificent game it had been. Pythias opened his watch and remarked, "Half past twelve and no ghost."

“The reason is the room is so smoky that the poor ghosts can't become visible,” replied Damon. “Throw open the window and let some of it out.”

This task accomplished, they arranged the board for another game. Just as Damon stretched forth his hand to advance the white king's pawn, he suddenly stopped with a startled expression on his face, as also did Pythias. Silently, and with questioning look, they glanced at each other, and their mutual, yet incomprehensible consternation, was apparent.

Again did he essay to advance the pawn, and again did he stop, and again did they gaze, startled, into each other's faces. The silence seemed so palpable that it pressed against them like a leaden weight. The tension on their nerves was terrible, and each strove to break it, but in vain. Then they thought of the warning George had given them. Was it possible? Could it be true? Had they been deprived of the power of speech by this conscious, psychic force, which neither believed in? As in a nightmare, they longed to cry out; to break the horrible, paralyzing influence. Pythias was deathly pale. while the perspiration formed in great drops on Damon's forehead, and trickling down the bridge of his nose, fell in a minute cataract upon his clean, white tie and glossy shirt front.

For an age it seemed to them, but not more than a couple of minutes they sat staring agonized at each other. At last their intuition warned them that affairs were approaching a crisis. They knew the strain could not last much longer.

Suddenly, weird and shrill, there rose on the still night air, and was wafted in through the open window, the cry of a cat; then there was a scramble as over the fence, the sound of rocks striking against boards, and the cat's triumphant cry was changed to a yowl of pain and terror which quickly turned to a choking gurgle, and they heard the enthusiastic voice of Fred cry, “Number one!”

As a diver rising from depths of ocean feels the wondrous pleasure when he drives the vitiated air from his lungs and breathes anew the essence of life, so felt they—but for a moment. The spell was not broken. Then their consternation returned, multiplied a thousand fold. Both felt a hysterical desire to laugh, so ludicrous appeared the situation. But by the mysterious power, even this was denied, and their faces were distorted in an idiotic gibber, This so horrified them that they quickly brought their wills to bear, and their faces resumed the expression of bewilderment.

Simultaneously a light dawned upon them. They had the power of motion left. The movement of their lips had demonstrated this. They half rose, as though to flee, when the cowardice of it shamed them, and they resumed their seats. Pythias touched a bunch of fire-crackers to the candle and threw them in the middle of the room.

The crackers sputtered and whizzed, snapped and banged, filling the room with a dense cloud of smoke, which hung over them like a pall, weirdly oppressive in the terrifying silence that followed.

Then a strange sensation came over Damon. All fear of the supernatural seemed to leave him, being replaced by a wild, fierce all-absorbing desire to begin the game. In a vague sort of way, he realized that he was undergoing a reincarnation. He felt himself to be rapidly evolving into some one else, or some one else was rapidly evolving into him. His own personality disappeared and as in a dream, he found another and more powerful personality had been projected into, or had overcome—swallowed up his own. To himself he seemed to have become old and feeble, as he bent under a weight of years; yet, he felt the burden to be strangely light, as though upheld by the burning, enthusiastic excitement, which boiled and bubbled and thrilled within him. He felt as though his destiny lay in the board before him; as though his life, his soul, his all, hung in the balance of the game he was to play.

Then implacable hatred and horrid desire for revenge quickened to life within him. A thousand wrongs seemed to rise before him with vivid brightness; a thousand devils seemed urging him on to the consummation of his desire. How he hated that thing—that man who was Satan incarnate, who opposed him across the chessboard. He cast a defiant glance at him, and with the swiftness of a soaring eagle, his hatred increased as he looked on the treacherous, smiling face and into the half-veiled, deceitful eyes. It was not Pythias; he was gone—why and where he did not even wonder.

As these strange things had happened to Damon, so happened they to Pythias. He despised the opponent who faced him. He felt endowed with all the cunning and low trickery of the world. The other was within his power; he knew that and was glad, as he smiled into his face with exasperating elation. The exultation to overthrow, to cast him down, rose paramount. He also desired to begin.

The game commenced. Damon boldly opened by offering the gambit. Pythias responded, but played on the defensive. Damon's

attack was brilliant and rapid; but he was met by combinations so bold and novel, that by the twenty-seventh move it was broken up and Pythias still retained the gambit pawn.

Exerting himself anew, Damon, by a most sound and enduring method of attack, so placed Pythias that he had either to lose his queen or suffer mate in four moves. But by startling series of daring moves, Pythias extricated himself with the loss of two pawns and a knight.

Elated by success, Damon attacked wildly, but was repulsed by the more cautious play of his opponent, who, by creating a diversion on the right flank, and by delicate maneuvering recovered himself, and once more grappled his adversary on equal ground. And so the game, one of the greatest the world had ever seen, proceeded. It was a mighty duel in which the participants forgot that the world still moved on, and when the first gray of dawn appeared at the window, it found Damon in a serious predicament.

He would be forced to double his rooks to avoid checkmate—he saw that. Then his opponent would check his queen under cover, and capture his red bishop. Checkmate would then be inevitable. Suddenly, however, a light broke upon the situation. A brilliant move was apparent to him. By a series of moves which he would inaugurate, he could force his adversary's queen and turn the tables.

Fate intervened. The shrill cry of a cat rose on the air and distracted his concentration. The contemplated move was lost to him, and the threatened mate so veiled the position to his reason, that he doubled his rooks, and inevitable mate in six moves confronted him.

His brain reeled; all the wrongs of a life-time hideously clamored for vengeance; all the deceits, the lies, the betrayals of his opponent, rose to his brain in startling brightness. He cursed the smiling fiend opposite him, and staggered to his feet. Murder raged like a burning demon through his thoughts, and springing upon Pythias with an awful cry, he buried both hands in his throat. He threw him, back down, upon the chess board, and not with the rage of a fiend, but with a wonderfully sublime joy, choked him till his face grew black and agonized.

It would have gone very bad for Pythias had not a rush of feet been heard on the stairs, a couple of policemen dashed in, and with Fred and George, tore them apart.

Then Damon came, bewildered, to his senses, and helped to restore his chum.

“It was the old Birchall-Duinsmore murder, nearly enacted over again,” said the sergeant, as they stood on the corner talking it over. “Duinsmore, his nephew, had been his life's curse. From boyhood he had always brought him trouble. As a man, he broke Birchall's heart a dozen different ways, and at last, by cunning, thievish financering, he robbed him of all he had, except the mansion. One night, he prevailed upon the old man to stake it on a game of chess. It was all that stood between him and the potter's field, and when he lost it, he became demented, and throttled his nephew across the very board on which had been played the decisive game.”

“Good chess players?”

“It has been said that they were about the best the world has ever seen.”

HOUSEKEEPING IN THE KLONDIKE

HOUSEKEEPING in the Klondike - that's bad! And by *men* - worse. Reverse the propositions, if you will, yet you will fail to mitigate, even by a hair's-breadth, the woe of it. It is bad, for a man to keep house, and it is equally bad to keep house in the Klondike. That's the sum and substance of it. Of course men will be men, and especially is this true of the kind who wander off to the frozen rim of the world. The glitter of gold is in their eyes, they are borne along by uplifting ambition, and in their hearts is a great disdain for everything in the culinary department save "grub." "Just so long as it's grub," they say, coming in off trail, gaunt and ravenous, "grub, and piping hot." Nor do they manifest the slightest regard for the genesis of the same; they prefer to begin at "revelations."

Yes, it would seem a pleasant task to cook for such men; but just let them lie around cabin to rest up for a week, and see with what celerity they grow high-stomached and make sarcastic comments on the way you fry the bacon or boil the coffee. And behold how each will spring his own strange and marvelous theory as to how sour-dough bread should be mixed and baked. Each has his own recipe (formulated, mark you, from personal experience only), and to him it is an idol of brass, like unto no other man's, and he'll fight for it - ay, down to the last wee pinch of soda - and if need be, die for it. If you should happen to catch him on trail, completely exhausted, you may blacken his character, his flag, and his ancestral tree with impunity; but breathe the slightest whisper against his sour-dough bread, and he will turn upon and rend you.

From this is may be gathered what an unstable thing sour dough is. Never was coquette so fickle. You cannot depend upon it. Still, it is the simplest thing in the world. Make a batter and place it near the stove (that it may not freeze) till it ferments or sours. Then mix the dough with it, and sweeten with soda to taste - of course replenishing the batter for next time. There it is. Was there ever anything simpler? But, oh, the tribulations of the cook! It is never twice the same. If the batter could only be placed away in an equable temperature, all well and good. If one's comrades did not interfere, much vexation of spirit might be avoided. But this cannot be; for Tom fires up the stove till the cabin is become like the hot-room of a Turkish bath; Dick forgets all about the fire till the place is a refrigerator; then along comes Harry and shoves the sour-dough bucket right against the stove to make way for the drying of this mittens. Now heat is a most potent factor in accelerating the fermentation of flour and water, and hence the unfortunate cook is constantly in disgrace with Tom, Dick, and

Harry. Last week his bread was yellow from a plethora of soda; this week it is sour from a prudent lack of the same; and next week — ah, who can tell save the god of the fire-box?

Some cooks aver that they have so cultivated their olfactory organs that they can tell to the fraction of a degree just how sour the batter is. Nevertheless they have never been known to bake two batches of bread which were at all alike. But this fact casts not the slightest shadow upon the infallibility of their theory. One and all, they take advantage of circumstances, and meanly crawl out by laying the blame upon the soda, which was dampened "the time the canoe overturned," or upon the flour, which they got in trade from "that half-breed fellow with the dogs."

The pride of the Klondike cook in his bread is something which passes understanding. The highest commendatory degree which can be passed upon a man in that country, and the one which distinguishes him from the tenderfoot, is that of being a "sour-dough boy." Never was a college graduate prouder of his "sheepskin" than the old-timer of this appellation. There is a certain distinction about it, from which the new-comer is invidiously excluded. A tenderfoot with his baking-powder is an inferior creature, a freshman; but a "sour-dough boy" is a man of stability, a post-graduate in that art of arts — bread-making.

Next to bread a Klondike cook strives to achieve distinction by his doughnuts.

This may appear frivolous at first glance, and at second, considering the materials with which he works, an impossible feat. But doughnuts are all-important to the man who goes on a trail for a journey of any length. Bread freezes easily, and there is less grease and sugar, and hence less heat in it, than in doughnuts. The latter do not solidify except at extremely low temperatures, and they are very handy to carry in the pockets of a Mackinaw jacket and munch as one travels along. They are made much after the manner of their brethren in warmer climes, with the exception that they are cooked in bacon grease — the more grease, the better they are. Sugar is the cook's chief stumbling-block; if it is very scarce, why, add more grease. The men never mind — on trail. In the cabin? — well, that's another matter; besides, bread is good enough for them then.

The cold, the silence, and the darkness somehow seem to be considered the chief woes of the Klondiker. But this is all wrong. There is one woe which overshadows all others — the lack of sugar. Every party which goes north signifies a manly intention to

do without sugar, and after it gets there bemoans itself upon its lack of foresight. Man can endure hardship and horror with equanimity, but take from him his sugar, and he raises his lamentations to the stars. And the worst of it is that it all falls back upon the long-suffering cook. Naturally, coffee, and mush, and dried fruit, and rice, eaten without sugar, do not taste exactly as they should. A certain appeal to the palate is missing. Then the cook is blamed for his vile concoctions. Yet, if he be a man of wisdom, he may judiciously escape the major part of this injustice. When he places a pot of mush upon the table, let him see to it that it is accompanied by a pot of stewed dried apples or peaches. This propinquity will suggest the combination to the men, and the flatness of the one will be neutralized by the sharpness of the other. In the distress of a sugar famine, if he be a cook of parts, he will boil rice and fruit together in one pot; and if he cook a dish of rice and prunes properly, of a verity he will cheer up the most melancholy member of the party, and extract from him great gratitude.

Such a cook must indeed be a man of resources. Should his comrades cry out that vinegar be placed upon the beans, and there is no vinegar, he must know how to make it out of water, dried apples, and brown paper. He obtains the last from the bacon-wrappings, and it is usually saturated with grease. But that does not matter. He will early learn that in the land of low temperatures it is impossible for bacon grease to spoil anything. It is to the white man what blubber and seal oil are to the Eskimo. Soul-winning gravies may be made from it by the addition of water and browned flour over the fire. Some cooks base far-reaching fame solely upon their gravy, and their names come to be on the lips of men wherever they forgather at the feast. When the candles give out, the cook fills a sardine-can with bacon grease, manufactures a wick out of the carpenter's sail-twine, and behold! the slush-lamp stands complete. It goes by another and less complimentary name in the vernacular, and, next to sour-dough bread, is responsible for more men's souls than any other single cause of degeneracy in the Klondike.

The ideal cook should also possess a Semitic incline to his soul. Initiative in his art is not the only requisite; he must keep an eye upon the variety of his larder. He must "swap" grub with the gentile understandingly; and woe unto him should the balance of trade be against him. His comrades will thrust it into his teeth every time the bacon is done over the turn, and they will even rouse him from his sleep to remind him of it. For instance, previous to the men going out for a trip on trail, he cooks several gallons of beans in the company of numerous chunks of salt pork and much bacon

grease. This mess he then moulds into blocks of convenient size and places on the roof, where it freezes into bricks in a couple of hours. Thus the men, after a weary day's travel, have but to chop off chunks with an axe and thaw out in the frying-pan. Now the chances preponderate against more than one party in ten having chilli-peppers in their outfits. But the cook, supposing him to be fitted for his position, will ferret out that one party, discover some particular shortage in its grub-supply of which he has plenty, and swop the same for chill-peppers. These in turn he will incorporate in the mess aforementioned, and behold a dish which even the hungry arctic gods may envy. Variety in the grub is a welcome to the men as nuggets. When, after eating dried peaches for months, the cook trades a few cupfuls of the same for apricots, the future at once takes on a more roseate hue. Even a change in the brand of bacon will revivify blasted faith in the country.

It is no sinecure, being cook in the Klondike. Often he must do his work in a cabin measuring ten by twelve on the inside, and occupied by three other men besides himself. When it is considered that these men eat, sleep, lounge, smoke, play cards, and entertain visitors there, and also in that small space house the bulk of their possessions, the size of the cook's orbit may be readily computed.

In the morning he sits up in bed, reaches out and strikes the fire, then proceeds to dress. After that the centre of his orbit is the front of the stove, the diameter the length of his arms. Even then his comrades are continually encroaching upon his domain, and he is at constant warfare to prevent territorial grabs.

If the men are working hard on the claim, the cook is also expected to find his own wood and water. The former he chops up and sleds into camp, the latter he brings home in a sack — unless he is unusually diligent, in which case he has a ton or so of water piled up before the door. Whenever he is not cooking, he is thawing out ice, and between-whiles running out and hoisting on the windlass for his comrades in the shaft. The care of dogs also devolves upon him, and he carries his life and a long club in his hand every time he feeds them.

But there is one thing the cook does not have to do, nor any man in the Klondike — and that is, make another man's bed. In fact, the beds are never made except when the blankets become unfolded, or when the pine needles have all fallen off the boughs which form the mattress. When the cabin has a dirt floor and the men do their carpenter-work inside, the cook never sweeps it. It is much warmer to let the chips and shavings remain. Whenever he

kindles a fire he uses a couple of handfuls of the floor. However, when the deposit becomes so deep that his head is knocking against the roof, he seizes a shovel and removes a foot or so of it.

Nor does he have any windows to wash; but if the carpenter is busy he must make his own windows. This is simple. He saws a hole out of the side of the cabin, inserts a home-made sash, and for panes falls back upon the treasured writing-tablet. A sheet of this paper, rubbed thoroughly with bacon grease, becomes transparent, sheds water when it thaws, and keeps the cold out and the heat in. In cold weather the ice will form upon the inside of it to the thickness of sometimes two or three inches. When the bulb of the mercurial thermometer has frozen solid, the cook turns to his window, and by the thickness of the icy coating infallibly gauges the outer cold within a couple of degrees.

A certain knowledge of astronomy is required of the Klondike cook, for another task of his is to keep track of the time. Before going to bed he wanders outside and studies the heavens. Having located the Pole Star by means of the Great Bear, he inserts two slender wands in the snow, a couple of yards apart and in line with the North Star. The next day, when the sun on the southern horizon casts the shadows of the wands to the northward and in line, he knows it to be twelve o'clock, noon, and sets his watch and those of his partners accordingly. As stray dogs are constantly knocking his wands out of line with the North Star, it becomes his habit to verify them regularly every night, and thus another burden is laid upon him.

But, after all, while the woes of the man who keeps house and cooks food in the northland are innumerable, there is one redeeming feature in his lot which does not fall to the women housewives of other lands. When things come to a pass with his feminine prototype, she throws her apron over her head and has a good cry. Not so with him, being a man and a Klondiker. He merely cooks a little more atrociously, raises a storm of grumbling, and resigns. After that he takes up his free out-door life again, and exerts himself mightily in making life miserable for the unlucky comrade who takes his place in the management of the household destinies.